



### Bocce Concepts and Strategies

#### Pointing

This concept is used when describing the need for an athlete to attempt to gain the “point” or increase the number of “points” his/her team already holds. This is possibly the most commonly used shot played on a bocce court.

#### Hitting

This concept is used when describing the need for an athlete to attempt to disturb the head (?) and lessen the number of “points” his/her team is down.

#### Throw Away

This concept is used when a team may already be holding a “point” and, rather than try to play a shot and possibly then lose the advantage, a player may just drop the bocce ball in front of his/herself and hence “throw away” the ball.

#### Banking or Rebounding

This concept is used when an athlete may need to roll a bocce ball toward a side wall and have the ball ricochet off the wall. It would usually allow a player to play around another ball whether that ball is his/her own or the opposing team’s. This maneuver can be used to gain more points or lessen the number the opposition is holding at the time. An athlete would need to be made aware of angles.



### Two Basic Shots

#### The Pointing Shot

This bocce shot is played more as a gentle smooth shot. It is generally rolled, as opposed to being thrown/tossed, and is used to either gain a point or increase the number of points already held. This is in contrast to trying to displace other balls through a forceful delivery.

#### The Hitting or Spocking Shot

The hitting or spocking shot is played more as a powerful shot. It is rolled or tossed/thrown with great force to displace a ball or balls to either gain the point by displacing the opponent’s ball/s or reduce the number of points the opponent is holding. This is in contrast to trying to get your ball closer through a slow gentle roll-up.

## **Bocce Coaching Guide**

### **Teaching Bocce Skills**

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#### **Coaching Tips**

- Each of the above two shots can be used at various stages of a game or even various stages of a frame.
- While some athletes may never attempt some of the shots mentioned, this is no reason why they should not be made aware of them
- Safety of both coaches and athletes should always be paramount during all training and competition settings



### Understanding the Game

Do not assume that lower ability players will know even the basic aim of the game. Such players may have difficulty with simple concepts such as distinguishing between teammates and opponents.

### Basics and Aim of the Game of Bocce

Bocce is played with a set of eight large balls and one small target ball called a pallina (Italian for little ball). The pallina is sometimes also called a jack, kitty, cue ball or pill. The larger balls are roughly 107mm in diameter and weigh approximately 900 grams. Each of the opposing team's balls are of two distinct different colors, and sometimes markings. The different markings assist people who may have a visual impairment and require touch to differentiate balls.

Events are usually singles, doubles or teams (any more on a court can lead to overcrowding). A game is begun by the toss of a coin to establish who goes first. Once the initial toss has been made, the pallina and the first ball of that team is rolled. The opposition will then roll their first ball down the court and hope that they get closer to the pallina.

If the opposition is successful in their attempt, the first team will try and better it again. If they are not successful, they will continue to try until they achieve their goal or have rolled all their balls. Each team gets to roll or toss their four larger Bocce balls towards the pallina.

The object of the game is to get as many of your balls as close to the target ball as your opponent. After both teams have thrown all their balls, the frame has ended and the distances between the Pallina and the Bocce balls are considered and points awarded. Only one team can score in each frame or end. Scoring is one point for each ball that is closer to the pallina than the opponents balls. In this way you can score up to four points in each frame or end.

Competition games are usually scored up to 12 or 16 points per game; however, scoring in recreational games is limited only by the time players have to spare. It can be from three or four ends to nearly 30, depending on the number of points awarded following completion of each end. Depending on the skill of the players, a game can last anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour.



### Physical and Social Benefits of Bocce

Even when played on official courts, bocce is not a physically demanding sport. There is no pounding on the spine and knees as in basketball, no sprinting and sliding as in athletics or softball.

You don't have to be in shape to play bocce, though physical fitness controls the fatigue factor in any competitive sport. On the other hand, the mental and social benefits of bocce are incalculable. Competing in any sport fosters a healthy outlook on life. And after all things are considered, bocce meets today's health and fitness standard of favoring lifetime sports over those that you can enjoy only in your youth.

There are also the social mainstreaming benefits that occur when the "playing field" is level, in that this game does not require a vast amount of intellectual acumen for a player to be at the top level of the sport. Therefore a person with a disability can compete on an even basis against a competitor who has no impairment.