

■ HYDE PARK BOCCE BALL RULES

Starting the Game

Bocce takes place in two teams of two players each. Each player has two large balls called bocce. A smaller ball called the pallino is the target. Officially, people play on a court, but players generally play bocce wherever they find enough ground on which to roll the balls. Teams should decide which side will go first. IBocce.com suggests that players flip a coin to determine who should go first.

Gameplay

The team going first throws the pallino and the place where it comes to a stop becomes the target. All players should then stand behind a line to make their throws. Generally, everyone agrees on where it is fair to stand. The team that threw the pallino throws the first bocce. Teams and players alternate throws until all eight balls have been thrown. Players try to make their team's bocce be the closest to the pallino. According to IBocce.com, players should alternate by allowing the team farthest from the pallino to throw; in many friendly games, however, players just alternate from one team to the next.

Scoring

Only the team with the closest bocce to the pallino scores any points. The team that is closest, or inside, gets a number of points equal to how many of their bocce are closer to the pallino than the other team's nearest bocce. If the player's bocce touches the pallino, it is called a baci and the team earns 2 points for that ball. A game of bocce is called a round and it lasts until a team reaches a predetermined point value. Common point values are 9, 11, 12 and 15. Any disputes can be settled using a tape measure or even a stick to check the distance from the pallino. In the case of a tie, or any dispute that cannot be settled, no points are awarded to either team.

Violations

If a player steps over a designated line when making a throw, that is a foot fault. The penalty can be either a warning or an invalidation of that throw. Bocce is a friendly game and a warning will keep most people within the rules. If a player makes a throw out of order, the teams can agree to let it go or to replace the balls approximately where they previously were. Last, no one from the opposite team should try to distract a thrower.

