

## Unified Bocce Rules

### Teams and Uniforms

1. Each team will consist of two partners and two athletes. All team members will be required to play in all games.
2. All teams must supply their own uniforms. A team may borrow sport uniforms from their school, or just wear a matching t-shirt; numbers are not required. The purpose of uniforms is simply to have the team easily identifiable for the referees. All participants must wear appropriate footwear as to not damage the artificial turf.
3. There is no maximum number of teams that schools can enter.

### The Game

1. The playing court will be on indoor turf. Each court will be 60 feet in length and 12 feet wide. For this event, courts will be marked with lines on the ground but there will be no court walls for players to bank their shots off of.
2. Bocce is played with eight bocce balls and one smaller target ball called a pallina. There are four balls to each team, each team is distinguished by a different colour. If your school does not have a bocce set to practice with, please contact Shanna.
3. A coin toss by the referee will determine which team starts with the pallina and has the choice of ball colour.
4. The players on a team must alternate between athletes and partners, provided the one who tosses the pallina delivers the first bocce ball (e.g. if a partner tosses the pallina, that partner will also toss the first ball. The next person to deliver a ball from that team will be an athlete). The specifics of the player rotation may vary from frame to frame; however, no player may deliver more than one ball per frame.

### Competition

1. Sequence of play:
  - a. The pallina is rolled or tossed by a member of the team having won the coin toss at the start of the game. This can be either a partner or an athlete.
    - i. Three-attempt rule: after the coin toss, the team possessing the pallina will have three attempts at throwing the pallina to the opposite end. If these three attempts are unsuccessful, the referee will place the pallina in the centre of the court.
  - b. The player who tosses the pallina must then deliver the first ball.
  - c. The opposing team will then take turns delivering their bocce balls until they have a ball closer to the pallina than the opposing team OR they have exhausted their four balls (each player having thrown one ball).
    - i. This “nearest ball” rule governs the sequence of played balls. The side whose ball is closest to the pallina is called the “in” ball and the opposing side is the “out” ball. Whenever a team gets “in”, they must step aside and allow the “out” team to deliver.
    - ii. Example: Team A wins the coin toss and therefore gets to throw the pallina and one ball. Team B throws their first ball too far and their

second ball makes it closer to the pallina than Team A's ball. Now, it's Team A's turn to throw until they have a ball closer than Team B or are out of balls. The frame is over when each team is out of balls.

- d. Each player throws only one ball per frame.
2. Initial Point: It is always incumbent upon the team with the pallina advantage to establish the initial point.
  - a. Example: Team A tosses the pallina and delivers the first ball. Then, Team B knocks Team A's ball out of position. In doing so, both balls (Team A's and Team B's) fly out of the court, leaving only the pallina in the court. Team A will throw the next ball because it is incumbent upon Team A to re-establish the initial point.
3. Ball Delivery:
  - a. A player must use an underhand throw (i.e. the player can grip the ball either overhand or underhand, but the ball must be released in an underhand delivery. An underhand delivery is defined as releasing the ball below the waist).
  - b. There will not be walls on the court for the player to bank off of. The student must roll the ball down the court in attempt to either land his or her ball closest to the pallina, knock a teammate's ball closer to the pallina, or knock the opposing team's ball further from the pallina or out of bounds. If a player throws their own ball out of bounds, they do not get a re-throw.

## Scoring

1. At the end of each frame (when both teams have exhausted their balls), scoring will be determined as follows:
  - a. Points are awarded to the team whose balls are closer to the pallina than the closest ball of the other team. This can be determined by viewing or by mechanical measurements. All players should look at the court at the pallina end before the balls are removed after each frame to ensure they agree with the points announced by the referee. Any player or coach can request a mechanical measurement before the balls are removed.
  - b. The scoring team for each frame will be the team to throw the pallina and first ball at the start of the next frame.
  - c. Winning score: First team to 16 points, or the team with the highest number of points after 20 minutes of play (whichever comes first). If the 20 minute-mark is reached before a frame ends, teams will finish playing that frame and points will be awarded for that frame.
  - d. Ties during a frame: In the event that two opposing balls are equidistant from the pallina (tied), the team that rolled last will continue to roll until the tie is broken.
  - e. Ties at the end of a frame: In the event that the two balls closest to the pallina belong to the opposing teams and are tied, no points will be awarded. The pallina returns to the team which delivered it last.
  - f. Tie at the end of regular time: In the event that teams are tied when the frame at the 20-minute mark is completed, one extra frame will be played. The team

that scored the tying point(s) in the previous frame will throw the pallina in the extra frame. Should play continue to be tied after the extra frame, a second one will be played with the pallina being thrown by the same team as in the first extra frame.

### **Hosting your own Unified Bocce Tournament**

Unified Bocce is a relatively simple tournament to host with lots of opportunity to engage multiple students across your school. Bocce can be played year-round, indoor or outdoor, and rules can easily be modified to match the venue and suit the needs of the participants. Sobeys gift cards are available to purchase food, should your tournament run over lunch or dinner.

If you are interested in hosting a Unified Bocce tournament, contact [shanna@asaa.ca](mailto:shanna@asaa.ca) for more information.