

Special Olympics Northern California

Bocce



2026 Rules & Guidelines

Team Competition

(There are no rules changes for Bocce)



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**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide athletic opportunities to children and adults with intellectual disabilities which instill the confidence needed to succeed in life.

Preparing for life through sports

SO NORCAL PLAYS BY THE RULES...

All Special Olympics competitions will be conducted in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and the National Governing Body of Rules for each sport offered in our program. These rules are designed to protect the athletes, provide equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity so that no competitor shall obtain an unfair advantage over another.

The International Olympics Committee (IOC) has granted its official recognition to Special Olympics International, Inc., and its accredited programs.

Special Olympics Northern California

COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SO NorCal) volunteer coaches are models whose behavior should serve as a positive example for their athletes. Their behavior should reflect a concern that the fairest and most positive competitive experience is equally available to every Special Olympics athlete in each training or competition. The coach has the unique opportunity to influence the development and personal growth of many individuals. For this reason, it is important that the coach adhere to the standards of ethical decision making and teaching. In addition, it is the position of SO NorCal that each volunteer coach shall agree to:

HAVE RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SO NorCal staff members, and friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.

ENSURE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminaries/heats and finals in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

ACT PROFESSIONALLY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS/HER ACTIONS

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will dress and act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in Special Olympics, including to the athletes, other coaches and volunteers, opponents, officials, administrators, SO NorCal staff members, parents, spectators and the media.
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not use any alcohol or tobacco products, vaping products, or cannabis products while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competitions.
- I will not engage in any form of personal abuse towards, or inappropriate contact or relationship with, athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SO NorCal staff members, family members, or spectators in Special Olympics, including verbal, physical or emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes or others in my care.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy that prohibits coaches/volunteers from dating athletes.

PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICE TO THE ATHLETES

- I will seek continued improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the Sports Rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a planned training program.
- I will keep copies of the registration, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics and National Governing Body rules for my sport(s) coached, as well as all SO NorCal policies and procedures as amended.

ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE ATHLETES

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities for my sport(s) coached are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's registration form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes, coaches and volunteers to seek medical advice when needed.
- I will report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.
- I will maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

Should the behaviors and/or abilities of any volunteer coach or other faction of a school/organization violate either the principles stated above (including the SO NorCal policies and procedures as amended) or the philosophy of the Special Olympics movement, then any of the following actions may be taken by SO NorCal in its sole discretion:

1. The coach may be notified by official warning of the undesirable behavior and be requested to remedy the situation immediately in order to continue his or her participation in Special Olympics;
2. The coach may be requested to withdraw personally or with his/her team from the remainder of any Special Olympics event or competition;
3. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be suspended from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events for a specified period of time; and/or
4. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be permanently prohibited from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events.

Special Olympics Northern California

ATHLETES CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SO NorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All SONorCal Athletes and Unified Partners agree to the following code:

SPORTSMANSHIP

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the official and ask questions when I do not understand
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning, and competitions.
- I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.
- I will follow the International Federation and the National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not use any alcohol or tobacco products, vaping products, or cannabis products while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competition, or during Games.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.
- If I exhibit behavior that violates the code of conduct, I may face disciplinary actions, which could include a warning letter, a suspension, or an expulsion.

Special Olympics Northern California

PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all parents and spectators to honor sport and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics parents and spectators should observe the following code:

- Remember athletes are participating for their enjoyment. Encourage participation, but do not force it.
- Applaud good performances and efforts from all individuals and teams. Congratulate all participants on their performance, regardless of the event's or game's outcome.
- Focus on the athletes' effort and performance, rather than whether they win or lose.
- Encourage athletes to play according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence.
- Never ridicule or yell at participants for making a mistake or losing the competition.
- Remember that athletes learn best by example. Appreciate good performance and skillful plays by all participants.
- Respect the decisions of officials, Games Management Team and Staff, and teach athletes to do the same.
- Show appreciation for event volunteers, coaches, and officials and staff. (Remember, without them there would be no opportunities for athletes).
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, whether it is by spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Show respect for your team's or individual's opponents. Without them, there would be no event or game.
- Encourage athletes and coaches to follow the rules and the officials' decisions.
- Swearing and/or inappropriate language will not be tolerated at SONorCal events
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- Abide by all posted and written policies, including SONorCal's Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events.

By attending an event, parents and spectators have agreed to abide by this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct. SONorCal reserves the right to dismiss parents and/or spectators from any SONorCal event for violation of this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct.

DIVISIONING CRITERIA

1. Every team participating in a competition must designate a team level based on the “Bocce Leveling” chart below. Divisions for competitions will be determined based on these levels.
2. Program Championship (Summer Games) Leveling
 - a. Teams will be leveled based on Regional competition results. 4-Person Teams will be placed in divisions according to the total team composition.

Bocce is a team sport and teams will be divisioned based on total team composition.

USE THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA KEEPING YOUR FOUR BEST PLAYERS IN MIND.

BOCCE DIVISIONING (LEVELING)		
	Understanding of Rules and Strategy	Ability
Level 2	High understanding of rules and violations. Understand match and frame score at all times. Understand when to request for ball measurement. Understand which player should roll based on game situation. High understanding of concepts and can implement offensive and defensive strategies. Strategic placement of pallina and first bocce ball to establish initial point. Understand all Bocce terms.	Can regularly deliver pallina and bocce balls with accuracy and appropriate velocity. Can successfully utilize sideboards and backboard for bank or rebound deliveries when necessary. Can successfully displace (“hit” or ”spock”) pallina, own bocce ball(s) or opponents’ bocce ball(s) to gain an advantage or score. Can successfully place own bocce ball to block opponent. Can maximize scoring opportunities during frame.
Level 3	Basic understanding of rules and violations. Understand match and frame score at all times. Understand when to request for ball measurement. Understand which team should roll based on “nearest ball” rule. Basic understanding of some concepts and can sometimes implement offensive and defensive strategies. Strategic placement of pallina and first bocce ball to establish initial point. Understand most Bocce terms.	Can frequently deliver pallina and bocce balls with accuracy and appropriate velocity. Can sometimes successfully utilize sideboards and backboards for bank or rebound deliveries when necessary. Can sometimes successfully displace (“hit” or “spock”) pallina, own bocce ball(s) or opponents’ bocce ball(s) to gain an advantage or score. Can sometimes successfully place own bocce ball to block opponent. Can maximize scoring opportunities during frame.
Level 4	Limited understanding of rules and some violations. Understand match and frame score at most times. Does not request for ball measurement. Order of play usually predetermined. Limited understanding of some concepts and can occasionally implement offensive strategies. Understand how to place pallina within allowed area. Understand some Bocce terms.	Can deliver pallina and bocce balls with some accuracy, but does not always use appropriate velocity. Rarely utilize sideboards and backboards for bank or rebound deliveries. Can occasionally successfully displace (“hit” or “spock”) pallina, own bocce ball(s) or opponents’ bocce ball(s) to gain an advantage or score.
Level 5	Low understanding of rules and violations. Understand match score at most times. Order of play usually predetermined. Low understanding of concepts and do not implement strategies. Understand how to place pallina within allowed area.	Can deliver pallina and bocce balls with limited accuracy, and does not always use appropriate velocity. Rarely successfully displace (“hit” or “spock”) pallina, own bocce ball(s) or opponents’ bocce ball(s) to gain an advantage or score. May require more than one attempt to place pallina within allowed area.

SO NORCAL BOCCE RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Bocce competitions. As an international Sports Program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon International Federation for Bocce (FIB) and national governing body (NGB) rules for Bocce, United States Bocce Federation (USBF). For Northern California Programs, USBF rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.

SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

1. Each Special Olympics athlete is required to have a current Application for Participation on file in order to participate. This is in accordance with Special Olympics General Rules.
2. Each team is required to play all team members listed on the roster of each match. If there is a substitute listed on the competition registration form, the substitute must play in at least one entire match throughout the competition.
3. Each team must qualify by playing in a SO NorCal Regional Competition prior to the participation in the Program Championship (Summer Games).
4. SONorCal has a strict Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events, which must be followed by all athletes, volunteers, parents and spectators at all times. Please visit sonc.org/resources/coach-athletes-resources/ for the full policy.

SECTION B - OFFICIAL EVENTS

The following are Official Bocce Events offered by SO NorCal:

1. Bocce 4-Person Team: 4 players on same end of the court (each player delivers 1 ball each frame), with all players moving from one end of the court to the other for each Frame.
 - a. Teams with athletes who are not physically able to move from one end of the court to the other for each Frame, may request an exception as part of the Competition Registration process, which will be approved or denied by the Competition Director.

SECTION C - DIVISIONS

1. Every team participating in a competition must designate a team level based on the “Bocce Leveling” chart on Page 6. Divisions for competitions will be determined based on these levels.
 - a. Divisions:
 - i. Level 2 (Highest)
 - ii. Level 3
 - iii. Level 4
 - iv. Level 5 (Lowest)
2. Program Championship (Summer Games) Leveling
 - a. Teams will be leveled based on Regional competition results. Teams will be placed in divisions according to the total team composition.

SECTION D - MATCH ROSTER

1. Regional Entry Form (Registration Information due prior to competition):
 - a. A Regional Entry Form must contain at least four players and a maximum of five players.
 - b. Regional Entry Forms are considered frozen when submitted to the Games Director at the time that Registration Information is due. The Program office must approve any requests for a roster change.
 - c. Regional Entry Forms will also be used for advancement to Summer Games, as the Summer Games Entry Forms. If a team is selected for advancement to Summer Games, the roster MUST remain intact,

and changes are not allowed from the original four- or five-person Regional Entry Form roster. A Regional Entry Form with five players listed may drop down to four players for advancement to Summer Games, but may not be advanced with only three players.

2. Official Match Roster (Players from Regional Entry Form that are present for competition) for Bocce 4-Person Team:
 - a. Only players who are listed on the Regional Entry Form may play in a match at a competition.
 - b. Each team must designate a Team Captain for each match, who can request measurements and make decisions on fouls and penalties during the match.
 - c. Teams must start the match with a minimum of three players.
 - d. Teams starting with less than three players will forfeit the match.
 - i. If a team drops to two players due to illness or injury, it may still continue the match without penalty and placement will not be affected.
 - ii. If a team drops to two players due to discipline, they will forfeit the match and will only be eligible for participation.
 - iii. At no time may a team drop to one player. Should this occur, the team will forfeit any scheduled matches and will only be eligible for participation.

SECTION E – SPRING COMPETITIONS AND SUMMER GAMES

1. Athletes may train in as many Spring sports as desired and allowed by practice schedules, given the athlete is only training with one team for a given sport.
2. Athletes cannot compete in more than one Spring sport at the Same Regional competition (i.e., Spring Games) or in two different competitions on the same day. Athletes may compete in more than one Spring sport at the Regional level, given the competition for each sport takes place on a different day and location.
 - a. For Example: A program is attending a Spring Games where Swimming, Tennis and Track & Field are all offered on the same day at the same location and the following day there is a Bocce competition. Athletes **MUST** pick **ONE** sport to participate in for the Spring Games and may also compete in Bocce.
3. Athletes who train and compete in more than one Spring sport in the same year and who are on the roster of a four- or five-person Bocce team that is selected to advance to Summer Games **MUST** be registered for Bocce for Summer Games. **NO** members of the four- or five-person Bocce team may forfeit their spot on the selected Bocce team to register for any other sport for Summer Games. Athletes may only be registered for **ONE** sport for Summer Games.

SECTION F - UNIFORMS

1. Collared Shirt (Recommended, unless required by venue), and shorts or pants. Shorts or pants must be neat and clean (no rips, holes, tears, etc.). Jeans are strongly discouraged.
2. Players will not be permitted to wear shoes that may damage or disrupt the court surface. Players will not be permitted to play without shoes, or open-toed shoes or sandals.

SECTION G - THE COURT

1. The Court is an area 12 feet wide by 60 feet long (See Court Diagram on Page 16).
2. Court sizes (length only) may be adjusted due to the competition site. Court length may vary between 60 feet and 90 feet, though most courts are 76 feet in length.
3. Court Surface may be composed of stone-dust; dirt, clay, grass or artificial surface provided there are no permanent or temporary obstructions in the court that would interfere with the straight-line delivery of a ball from any direction. These obstructions do not include variations in grade, consistency or terrain.
4. Court walls are the side and end walls of the court and may be composed of any rigid material. The walls must be at least as high as the bocce balls at all points. The side or end walls may be utilized during play for bank shots or rebound shots.
5. Court grooming

- a. All courts must be groomed to satisfaction of the Games Director before the start of each game.
 - b. Courts may not be re-groomed during the course of the match. However, obstacles such as stones, leaves, sticks, etc. may be removed during the course of the match.
 - c. If, in the opinion of the Games Director, the court conditions are such that play is impractical, the match can be stopped and resumed on another court or another designated time.
6. Court markings should consist of (see diagram on Page 16):
- a. Foul line for pointing, hitting or spocking (10-foot line from the backboards).
 - b. Half court marker: Midpoint line between the two backboards.
 - c. 3-foot marker: Only applies for Initial Pallina Toss.

SECTION H - EQUIPMENT

1. Bocce balls
 - a. 4.25" – 4.5" in diameter
 - b. 8 large balls (wood, metal, or composite material), 4 balls to a team
 - c. 4 balls of one team are distinct in color from the 4 balls of the opposing team
 - d. Also can be inscribed with distinctive lines to identify the balls of the players on the same team
2. Pallina
 - a. 1.875" – 2.5" in diameter
 - b. Smaller target ball
 - c. Distinct color from both sets of bocce balls

SECTION I - DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

1. Live ball: Any ball in play that has been delivered.
2. Dead Ball: Any ball that has been disqualified or forfeited.
 - a. A ball may be disqualified if:
 - i. It is the result of a penalty.
 - ii. It has gone out of the court.
 - iii. It has come in contact with a person or object that is out of the court.
 - iv. It hits the top of the court boards.
 - v. It hits the covering over the courts or any supports thereof.
3. Frame: The period in the match where balls are played from one side of the court to the other and points are awarded.
 - a. In 4-Person Team play this would consist of 4 players from each team on the same side rolling balls.
4. Dead Frame: The period in the match where balls are played, but due to certain circumstances (disruption of play, interference, etc.) the frame is considered complete with no points awarded.
5. Hitting or spocking: A powerful shot. It is delivered with great force to displace the ball(s) to either gain the point by displacing the opponent's ball(s) or reduce the number of points the opponent is holding.
6. Bank or Rebound: Refers to playing a ball off either the sideboards or backboards.
7. Pointing: Ball delivery to obtain a position close to the pallina.
8. Initial Point: Team with the pallina advantage delivers the first bocce ball after delivering the pallina, establishing the initial point.
9. Measurement: The distance between the pallina and a ball in contention, measured by any of the following methods, as determined by the Competition Director:
 - a. Visual Inspection – the Court Official views the pallina and balls in contention.
 - b. Tape Measure – the distance between the closest (inside) edges of the pallina and balls in contention.
 - c. Tomato Paste Can – using an empty standard-size tomato paste can and a string threaded through the bottom of the can. The can fits over the pallina and the string is stretched out to determine which ball in contention is closest.
10. In Contention: Ball(s) close enough to the pallina to require measurement to determine whether a point may be awarded. Team Captains may request a measurement from the Court Official, who has final determination on granting a measurement.

11. Point (Scoring): At end of each frame, one, team will receive a point for each ball that is closer to the pallina than the opposing team's closest ball.

SECTION J - RULES OF COMPETITION

1. Game Play
 - a. No individuals other than registered athletes and officials are allowed on the court during competition.
 - b. A coin toss by the Court Official will determine which team has the pallina and the choice of ball color to start the match.
 - c. Sequence of Play
 - i. The pallina is delivered by a member of the team having won the coin toss to start the match.
 1. The pallina must be past the half court mark and with initial delivery and must be at least 3 ft from the back wall. After the initial delivery, all walls are considered in play.
 2. Three-Attempt Rule: The team possessing the pallina will have 3 attempts at placing the pallina within the acceptable playing area described above. If these 3 attempts are unsuccessful, the opposing team will have one opportunity to deliver the pallina. If this attempt is unsuccessful, the referee will place the pallina in the center of the court at the half-court marker. At no time does a team lose its earned pallina advantage of being able to deliver the first ball.
 - ii. The player delivering the pallina must deliver the first ball, establishing the initial point. The opposing team will then deliver their bocce balls until one of their balls is nearest to the pallina or they have exhausted their 4 balls.
 1. Player designation/order of ball delivery
 - a. The players of any given team may elect to play their ball in any order, provided the player who tosses the pallina delivers the first bocce ball. The order may vary from frame to frame; however, no player may deliver more than his/her allotted number of balls per frame. In 4-Person Team play, each player delivers 1 ball each from the end of the court in each frame.
 - b. If a 4-Person Team starts the game with 3 players, all 3 players must rotate who delivers a second ball in each frame and may do so in any order.
 - i. Example (not a requirement) – Team A has 3 players. In Frame 1, ball delivery is: Player 1, Player 2, Player 2, Player 3. In Frame 2, ball delivery is: Player 1, Player 2, Player 3, Player 3. In Frame 3, ball delivery is Player 1, Player 2, Player 3, Player 1.
 - iii. The “nearest ball” rule governs the sequence of played balls. The team whose ball is the closest to the pallina is called the “in” team and the opposing team the “out” team. Whenever a team becomes the “in” team, that team steps aside and allows the “out” team to deliver.
 - d. Ball Delivery
 - i. A player can grip the ball by placing his/her hand over or under the ball, as long as the ball is released in an underhand delivery. An underhand delivery is defined as releasing the ball below the waist.
 - ii. Athletes must be able to deliver the ball independently and without the physical assistance of another person.
 - iii. A team has the option of rolling, tossing, bouncing, banking, etc., its ball down the court, provided it does not go out of bounds or the player does not violate the foul markers. A player also has the option of spocking out any ball in play.
 - e. No player may play his/her ball until the pallina or another ball has come to a complete rest.
 - f. Checking Position of Bocce Balls
 - i. Players may only proceed to the half-court mark to check position of bocce balls before delivering their balls. If a player proceeds past their half of the court to check the position of a ball, they will receive a warning. Subsequent warnings will result in the loss of a ball delivery.
 - g. End of Frame
 - i. At the end of each frame, all players will walk to the other end of the court, to verify ball placement and score.
 1. For matches including a team that has at least one athlete who is not physically able to move from one end of the court to the other for each Frame, and has been granted approval, all frames will begin from one designated end and balls are returned to that end after scoring is determined for the

Frame.

- ii. The subsequent frame will begin from that end of the court, with play in the direction of the starting end.
 - iii. This continues until the time or score limit for the match is reached.
 - h. Scoring: At the end of each frame (when both teams have exhausted all balls), points will be determined as follows:
 - i. One team will receive a point for each ball that is closer than the opposing team's closest ball. This can be determined by one of the methods detailed in Section H, Item 9.
 - ii. The scoring team for each frame will also win the pallina advantage for the subsequent frame.
 - i. Ties
 - i. Tied during frame: In the event that two opposing balls are equidistant from the pallina, the team that rolled last will continue to roll until the tie is broken.
 - ii. Tied at the end of frame: In the event that the two balls closest to the pallina belong to opposing teams and are tied, no points will be awarded. The pallina returns to the team that delivered it and the same side which it began.
 - j. Match Scores
 - i. All SO NorCal competitions will use time limits and set a number of points required to determine a winner. The below scoring procedure is most common in SO NorCal competitions. However, variations in time limits and the number of points required may be adjusted by the Games Director.
 - 1. 4-Person Team (4 players at each end of court, 1 ball/player)
 - a. All frames must be played to completion (all balls exhausted for both teams) for all matches.
 - b. First team to reach 12 points, or the team that is ahead when the time limit is reached and the last frame is completed (if time limits are being used), is declared the winner.
 - c. If the match is tied when time expires and the last frame is completed, one additional frame will be played and will follow the regular rotation of play. The team that scores one or more points in the additional frame will be declared the winner.
 - d. All points scored in the final frame will be credited to the scoring team, including any points above 12 in the final frame (i.e., a team could have 11 points and score up to four (4) points in the final frame, and all points would be counted).
 - k. Scorecard: It is the responsibility of the Court Official to sign the scorecard after each match. The signature will indicate the indisputability of the final score.
2. Substitutions
- a. Substitution of Players (for different matches)
 - i. Officials and Scorekeepers must be notified of substitutions prior to scheduled match time or it will result in a forfeiture of the match.
 - ii. Coaches must submit their rosters to the Court Official/Scorekeepers for the match prior to the scheduled start time.
 - iii. Once a player has registered to substitute for one team during the competition, he/she may not substitute for any other team during that competition – the original registration forms for the competition are considered final.
 - b. Substitutions During a Match
 - i. Only in the event of illness, injury or behavioral/disciplinary action, may a player be substituted during the process of a match. Emergency substitutions will only be made at the end of a frame; if this is not possible, the frame will be considered dead. However, once the substitution has been made, the substitute must complete the match.
3. Time Outs, Coaching and Delay of Game
- a. Time out
 - i. The Court Official may grant a time out whenever the circumstances explained appear to be of sufficient validity to do so. The time out will be limited to 2 minutes.
 - b. Coaching
 - i. Once athletes enter the court to begin the match, coaching is not allowed (verbal or otherwise).
 - ii. Coaches are not allowed to step onto the court to coach their team.
 - iii. Coaches may physically assist an athlete to a position, but may not roll, throw or otherwise move the ball during play.

- c. Intentional delay of game
 - i. If, in the opinion of the Court Official, the match is intentionally delayed without sufficient or valid reasons, the official must give a warning. If play is not resumed immediately, the team causing the delay will forfeit the match. This includes any delays caused by coaches or if a coach steps onto the court.
- 4. Penalties, Fouls and Protests
 - a. For any penalties and fouls below that provide an option for the non-offending team to decline, the designated Team Captain will communicate on behalf of their team with the Court Official.
 - b. Penalties & fouls
 - i. Immediately upon determination by the Court Official that a foul has been committed, the official will notify both teams and inform them of the penalty imposed. The ruling of the Court Official is final.
 - ii. Each team will receive one warning, after which, the penalties for the foul infraction will be enforced. A Court Official must call all fouls.
 - iii. Foul line fouls:
 - 1. In ball delivery, the foremost part of the specific foul line will not be surpassed by any part of the foot before the ball leaves the player's hand.
 - 2. The penalty for a team committing a second foul line infraction will consist of one of the following options as chosen by the opposing team (team fouled against):
 - a. The team fouled against will be awarded points as they were immediately preceding the foul, and the frame will end. The Court Official will make the final judgment as to how many points were actually "in" at the time of the foul. The team that committed the foul will be awarded no points for the frame.
 - b. The team fouled against will have the option of declining the penalty and completing the frame.
 - iv. Illegal movement of a ball belonging to your own team:
 - 1. If a player moves one or more of his/her team's balls in contention, the ball(s) are removed from the court and considered dead and play continues. Balls not immediately in contention may be replaced as close as possible to their original position.
 - v. Illegal movement of an opponent's ball:
 - 1. If a player moves one or more of his/her opponent's ball(s) in contention, those balls will be awarded one point each and play continues. Only the team fouled against can be awarded points for that frame unless the penalty is declined.
 - a. The team fouled against will have the option of declining the penalty and completing the frame.
 - vi. Illegal movement of the pallina by a player:
 - 1. If the pallina is moved by a player, the team fouled against may be awarded as many points as the number of live balls of their own team, that were in contention, plus the number of this team's balls not played during the frame in which the foul occurred.
 - a. The team fouled against will have the option of declining the penalty and completing the frame.
 - c. Protests
 - i. Protests can only be made by the Head Coach and must be made immediately following an incident. At that point, match play stops. If the team protesting plays its next ball, the protest is considered null and void. The protest must be given to the Court Official or Court Manager.
 - ii. Protests are only allowed for rules interpretations and implementation issues. Protests are not allowed on judgment calls.
 - iii. Protest forms will be available with the Court Supervisor.
- 5. Broken ball:
 - a. If, during the course of a frame, a ball or pallina should break, the frame will be considered dead. Replacement of ball or pallina will be the responsibility of the Games Director.
- 6. Accidental or premature movement of balls or pallina by official:
 - a. Accidental movement of a ball or pallina during play (when more balls are yet to be played): If an official, either in the course of measuring, or otherwise, moves a ball in contention, or the pallina, the frame is considered dead and started over at the same end.

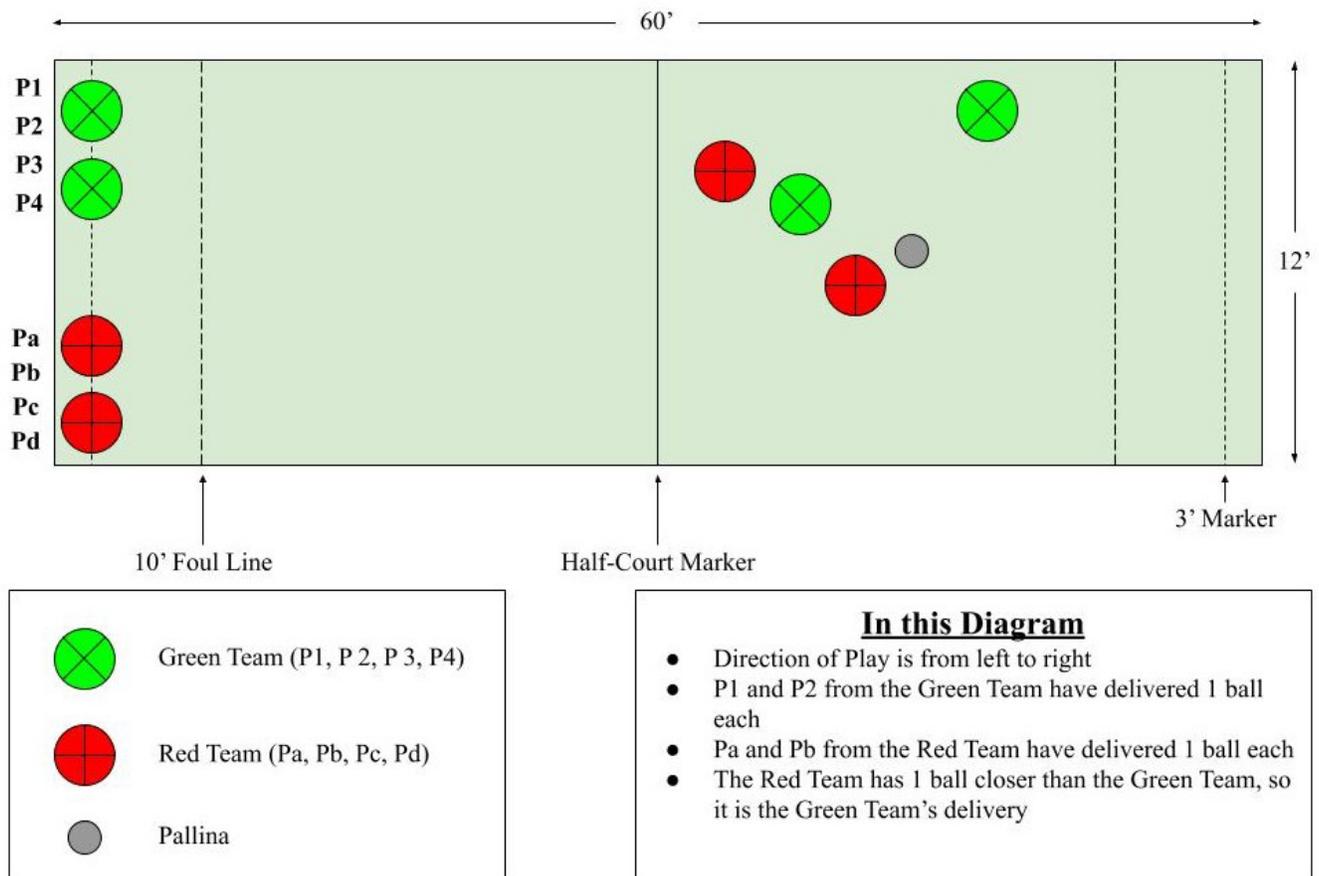
- b. Accidental or premature movement of a ball or pallina by an official (after all balls are played):
 - i. If the point or points were obvious to the Court Official, they will be awarded. All uncertain points will not be awarded.
- 7. Interference with a ball in motion:
 - a. By one's own team: If a player interferes with his/her team's ball in motion, his/her team automatically forfeits the ball and play continues.
 - b. By opponent's team: If a player interferes with an opponent's ball in motion, the team fouled against has one of the following options:
 - i. Playing the ball over.
 - ii. Declaring the frame dead.
 - iii. Declining the penalty.
 - 1. If declined, the team must accept the lie of the touched ball and continue playing.
 - c. With no disruption of position: If anyone/thing other than a player/official interferes with a ball in motion and that ball does not touch another ball already in play, it must be played over by the same player.
 - d. With disruption of position: If anyone/thing other than a player/official interferes with a ball in motion and the ball touches another ball already in play and in contention, the frame is considered dead.
- 8. Other disruption of play:
 - a. Any other action that interferes with the position of the pallina or the ball of each team closest to the pallina (such as balls from another court, foreign objects, spectators, or animals) renders the frame dead. In the event balls other than the pallina are moved, they may be replaced as close as possible to their original position by the Court Official.
 - b. If the pallina exits the court as the result of displacement by either team's ball, this renders the frame dead and the frame is replayed from the same end.
- 9. Wrong color delivery
 - a. Replaceable: If a player delivers a wrong color ball, the ball may not be stopped by another player or the official, and must be allowed to come to rest and be replaced with the proper colored ball by the Court Official.
 - b. Unidentifiable: If a player delivers a wrong color ball that cannot be identified by the referee as a result of hitting or scattering of balls, the frame will be considered dead and no points will be awarded.
- 10. Wrong rotation of play
 - a. Initial roll: If a team wrongly delivers the pallina and its first ball, the referee will return both pallina and ball and begin the frame over from the same end.
 - b. Subsequent rolls of proper color in improper sequence: If a player delivers his/her ball when his/her team is "in" and the other team still has balls left, the Court Official shall replace any ball(s) disrupted by the improper delivery, including the pallina, to where they were before the out-of-rotation delivery took place, and the ball delivered out of turn will become a dead ball and removed from the court.
 - i. The team fouled against has the option to decline the penalty imposed by the Court Official and accept the lie of the ball(s) and the frame continues.
 - c. Failure for the proper player to deliver a second ball within a frame for a team playing with three players (regardless of reason it is not playing with four players): If the player who is designated to deliver a second ball does not, the Court Official shall replace any ball(s) disrupted by the improper delivery, including the pallina, to where they were before the out-of-rotation delivery took place and the ball delivered out of turn will become a dead ball and removed from the court.
 - i. The team fouled against has the option to decline the penalty imposed by the Court Official and accept the lie of the ball(s) and the frame continues.

SECTION K - TIE BREAKERS

1. For divisions at a competition where, at the discretion of the Competition Director, places do not need to be determined for advancement purposes (in final division play), the following procedures will take place:
 - a) Head to Head: counting only matches between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to b).
 - b) The remaining tied teams will receive the same award (double, triple, etc.) and subsequent places will be skipped.
 - c) Forfeit Rule:
 - i. If any team involved in a tie has forfeited a match (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches), it will be placed in the lowest position of the teams involved.
 - ii. If any team involved in a tie received a win as the result of a team forfeiting to them, ALL matches involving the team that forfeited will be omitted and the resulting records will be used in the foregoing tiebreaker procedures.
2. For divisions at a competition where, at the discretion of the Competition Director, places need to be determined for advancement purposes (to final divisions, medal or placement matches), the following procedures will take place:
 - a) Head to Head: counting only matches between the teams that are tied; if still tied proceed to b).
 - b) Lowest total defensive points allowed, counting only matches (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to c).
 - c) Highest point differential (difference between points scored and points allowed in each match), counting only matches (not including divisioning, leveling or play-in matches) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to d)
 - d) Highest total offensive points scored, counting only matches (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to e)
 - e) Lowest total defensive points allowed, counting all matches (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches) between common opponents; if still tied, proceed to f)
 - f) Highest point differential (difference between points scored and points allowed in each match), counting all matches (not including divisioning, leveling or play-in matches) between all common opponents; if still tied, proceed to g)
 - g) Highest total offensive points scored, counting all matches (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches) between common opponents; if still tied, proceed to h)
 - h) If all of the tiebreakers described above still do not decide the outcome of a tie, a coin flip will be used, where the winner will be given the higher placement.
 - i) Forfeit Rule:
 - i. If any team involved in a tie has forfeited a match (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches), it will be placed in the lowest position of the teams involved.
 - ii. If any team involved in a tie received a win as the result of a team forfeiting to them, ALL matches involving the team that forfeited will be omitted and the resulting records will be used in the foregoing tiebreaker procedures.

SECTION L - DIAGRAM

1. Court Diagram



SECTION M - 2026 RULE CHANGES

1. There are NO rule changes for BOCCE in 2026.