

# HOW TO PLAY BOCCE

Are you a bocce beginner? Learn how to play the classic yard game with the help of this Pro Tips guide on bocce ball rules, scoring and equipment.

First brought to the United States by Italian immigrants, bocce ball is one of the oldest yard games in the world, with some claiming evidence of its origins in Egyptian cave paintings. The ancient game is still popular today and can be found everywhere from the beach to brunch. Bocce is played competitively around the world, but it's also easy for anyone to pick up and play for fun. Before you begin to play, it's important to understand the basics of the equipment, court and teams.

## BOCCE EQUIPMENT

Bocce features limited equipment, which makes it easy to bring along to the beach or park. All you need to play is a [bocce set](#), which consists of two different types of balls:

- **Bocce Balls** – A bocce set consists of eight larger balls known as “bocce balls.” They may come in different sizes depending on skill level and age, but a regulation-size ball has a diameter of about 4.2 inches. The balls come four to a set in two different colors to easily represent each team. They will often be red or green, but other colors may be available as well.
- **Pallino** – The pallino, which is sometimes referred to as a “jack,” is a smaller ball that is used to represent the target for the bocce balls during game play.

## PLAYERS

Bocce can be played with anywhere from two to eight people, which makes it great for small and large groups alike. The number of bocce balls per player is determined by team size. Teams with one player will ‘bowl’ all four balls, while two- and four-player teams will have the balls divided evenly among them.

## BOCCE RULES

Once you have your court set up and teams divided, it's time to play. Each bocce game consists of a series of rounds called “frames,” after which points are awarded. Game play goes as follows:

1. The first player to roll will toss the pallino to set the target for the frame. The pallino must fall behind the center line.
2. After throwing the pallino, the same player will bowl a bocce ball. Try to cup the ball from the bottom and toss it underhand. The goal of the toss is to get the bocce as close to the pallino as possible.
3. Next, a player from the opposing team will throw one of their bocce balls with the intent of getting closer to the pallino than their opponent. If they succeed, the ball will be considered "inside." If they do not, they will continue throwing all of their balls, rotating turns among their players, until one is inside.
4. The team that does not have the ball closest to the pallino will always be the one to throw. Frames will end once all balls have been thrown.

It's also important to note that you are allowed to hit your opponent's bocce balls or even the pallino during your turns. This can be a strategy to be closer or to, change the area of, the target.

## **BOCCE SCORING**

At the completion of a frame, one or more points may be awarded to one team. Whichever team has a bocce ball closest to the pallino will receive point(s). If two teams are equal in distance from the pallino, no points are awarded in the frame. Most of the time this can be determined from sight alone, but you can also use a measuring tape for accuracy.

Each ball that is inside is typically worth one point. If a team has multiple balls closer to the pallino than the opponent's closest ball, they will receive a point for each one.

Some versions of the rules allow bocce balls that are directly touching the pallino — referred to as a "kiss" — to count for two points.

The game will continue until one team scores the predetermined number of points, which is typically 12, but can be any number that meets personal needs or time constraints.