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The International Federation for Bocce is Special Olympics Inc. and therefore the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Bocce shall govern all Special Olympics competitions.

Refer to Article1, http://resources.specialolympics.org/article1.aspx,for more information pertaining to Codes of Conduct, Training Standards, Medical and Safety Requirements, Divisioning, Awards, Criteria for Advancement to Higher Levels of Competition and Unified Sports.

SECTION A — OFFICIAL EVENTS

The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics.

The range of events is intended to offer competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities. Programs may determine the events offered and, if required, guidelines for the management of those events. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each athlete's skill and interest.

1. Singles (one player per team)
2. Doubles (two players per team)
3. Team Competition (four players per team)
4. Unified Sports® Bocce Doubles (two players per team)
5. Unified Sports Bocce Team (four players per team)

SECTION B — THE COURT AND EQUIPMENT

1. **Court**
   a. The court is an area 3.66 meters (12 feet) wide by 18.29 meters (60 feet) long.
   b. The court surface may be composed of stone dust, dirt, clay, grass or artificial surface, provided there is no permanent or temporary obstruction 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.
   c. The court walls are the side and the end walls of the court and may be composed of any rigid material. The end walls should be at least 304 mm (12 inches). The end walls should be composed of a rigid material such as wood or Plexiglas. The side walls must be, at minimum, as high as the bocce balls. The side or end walls may be utilized during play for bank shots or rebound shots. Lines measuring 50 mm (2 inches) in width should be marked on all courts for the following:
      1) Foul line for pointing or shooting (hitting)—3.05 meters (10-foot line) from the backboards.
      2) Half-court marker — minimum distance pallina is played at the start of the frame. During the course of play, the position of the pallina may change as a result of normal play; however, the pallina may never come to rest closer than the half-point marker, 9.15-meter (30-foot) line, or the frame is considered dead.
      3) The 3.05-meter (10-foot) and 9.15-meter (30-foot) lines should be permanently drawn from sideboard to sideboard.

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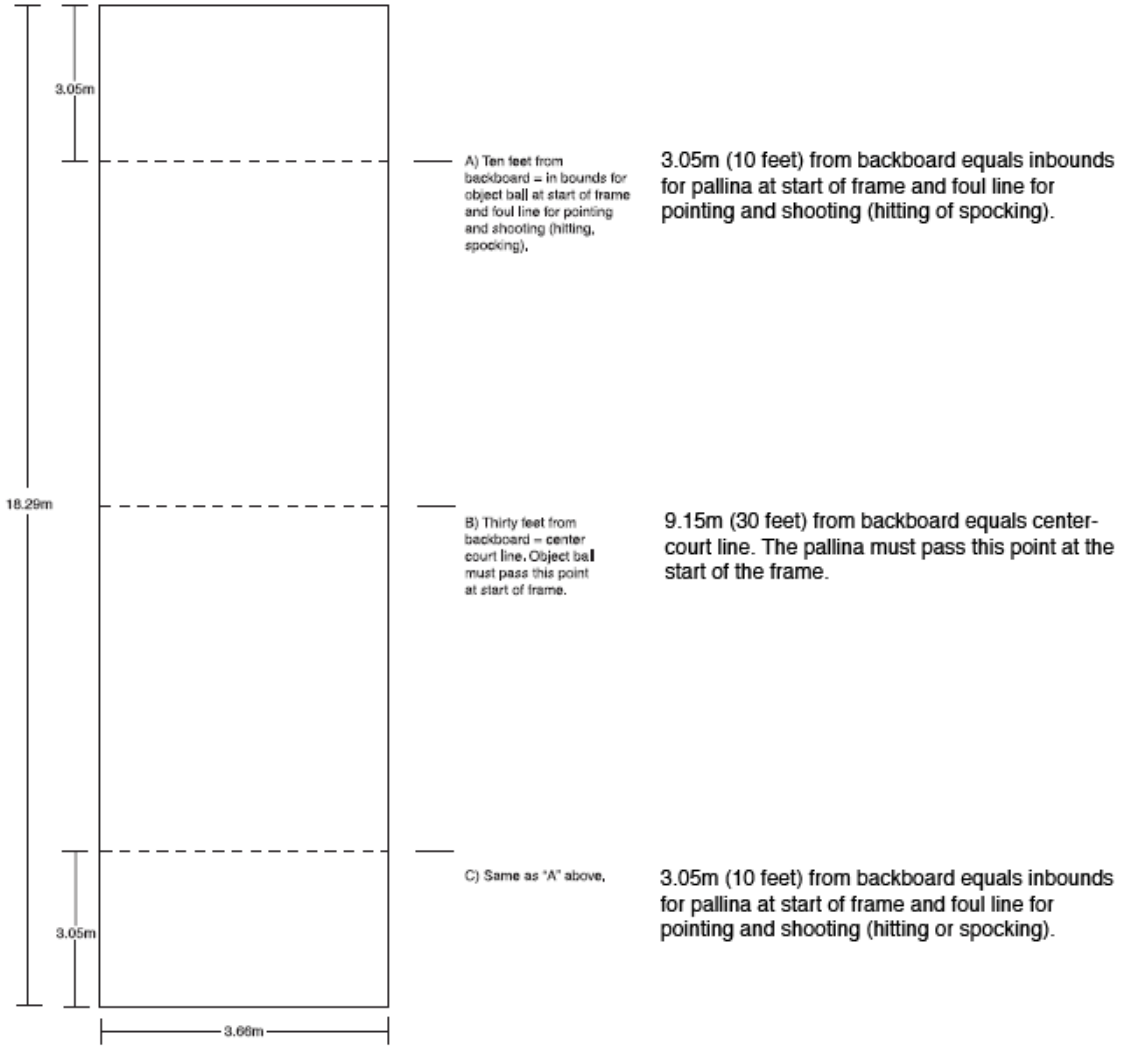

2. **Equipment**

   a. Bocce balls may be manufactured of wood or a composition material and must be of equal size. Official tournament ball sizes may be from 107 millimeters (4.20 inches) to 110 millimeters (4.33 inches) in diameter. The color of the balls is immaterial provided that the four balls of one team are clearly and visibly distinct from the four balls of the opposing team.

   b. The pallina must not be larger than 63 millimeters (2.5 inches) or smaller than 48 millimeters (1.875 inches) in diameter and should be of a color visibly distinct from both teams' bocce ball colors.

   c. A measuring device may be any device that has the capacity to accurately measure the distance between two objects, and is acceptable to tournament officials. For divisioning purposes, a retractable steel tape graduated in millimeters should be used.

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SECTION C — DIVISIONING

1. It is suggested that, before competition begins, the Tournament Director ensures that divisions are appropriate. Athletes may be divisioned based on previous experience or, in the case of larger competitions, modified games. The modified game procedure below will provide a score that will help place athletes in the most equitable divisions possible.
2. Each athlete should play three modified games, called a set. The athlete should alternate from each end of the court and play the following allotted balls The athlete should not surpass the foul line when he/she plays the allotted balls:
    a. The referee will place the pallina at the marked spot (center) of the 9.15-meter (30-foot) line, and the player should play eight balls. The referee will measure the closest three balls and record their distance in centimeters.
    b. The referee will then place the pallina at a marked spot in the center of the court at the 12.20-meter (40-foot) mark, and the player should play eight balls. The referee will measure the closest three balls and record their distance in centimeters.
    c. The referee will then place the pallina at the marked spot (center) of the 15.24-meter (50-foot) line, and the player should play eight balls. The referee will measure the closest three balls and record their distance in centimeters.
    d. During the divisioning process, if the pallina is moved from its spot at 9.15-meters (30ft), 12.20-meters (40ft) or 15.24-meters (50ft), it is to be replaced on the spot before the next ball is rolled and before any measurements are taken.
    e. Measurements will be taken from the center side of the bocce ball to the center side of the pallina, for a total of nine measurements, the sum of which becomes the athlete's divisioning score.
    f. For Doubles and Teams, the sum of the athletes divisioning scores shall be the Doubles and Team's divisioning score.
    g. These divisioning procedures comply with the Special Olympics maximum effort rule.

SECTION D — RULES OF COMPETITION

1. **The Game**
    a. Equipment — Bocce is played with eight balls and one smaller target or object ball called the pallina (jack, cue, beebee, etc.). There are four balls to a side or team, and they are generally made in two colors to distinguish the balls of one team from those of the opposing team. The bocce balls may also be inscribed with distinctive lines to identify the balls of the players on the same team.
    b. Pallina and color — A coin toss by the referee will determine which team has the pallina and choice of ball color. In the absence of a referee, the two team captains will execute the coin toss. The coin toss should take place on the court.
    c. Three-attempt rule — The team possessing the pallina will have three attempts at placing the pallina beyond the 9.15-meter (30-foot) mark and before the 3.05-meter (10-foot) mark on the opposite end. If these three attempts are unsuccessful, the opposing team will have one opportunity to place the pallina. If this attempt is unsuccessful, the referee will place the pallina in the center of the court at the 15.24-meter (50-foot) mark (opposite end foul line). However, at no time does a team lose its earned pallina advantage of being able to deliver the first ball.
    d. Sequence of play — The pallina is rolled or tossed by a member of the team having won the coin toss to start the game. The player tossing the pallina must deliver the first ball. The opposing team will then deliver their bocce balls until the point is taken or they have exhausted their four balls. This "nearest ball" rule governs the sequence of played balls. The side whose ball is the closest to the pallina is called the "in" ball and the opposing side the "out" ball. Whenever a team gets "in," it steps aside and allows the "out" team to deliver.
    e. Initial point — It is always incumbent upon the team with the pallina advantage to establish the initial point. Example: Team A tosses the pallina and delivers the first ball. Team B elects to hit

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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. It is incumbent upon Team A to re-establish the initial point.

f. Ball delivery — 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 hitting out any ball in play in trying to obtain a point or decrease the opposing team's points. 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.

   1) The Event Manager/Tournament Director shall have the discretion to allow for certain modifications/interpretations of the current technical rules based upon a physical disability characteristic. Such interpretation shall be requested and ruled on prior to the athlete's participation in a competition and shall not give advantage over another athlete. Delivery action interpretations will be concerned with the action a limb(s) is performing while delivering a pointing or hitting shot.

g. Number of balls played by a player

   1) One-Player Team—the player is allowed to play four balls.

   2) Two-Player Team — each player is allowed to play two balls.

   3) Four-Player Team — each player is allowed to play one ball.

h. Coaching

   1) Discussion with any athlete and/or partner is prohibited once the athlete and or partner steps onto the court.

   2) If an official determines that a coach/ partner/ spectator is violating this rule, the official may sanction the offending individual. Sanctions may include: verbal warning, citing the coach/partner with unsportsmanlike conduct or expulsion from the game.

i. Scoring—At the end of each frame (when both teams have exhausted all balls), scoring will be determined as follows: points are awarded to the team whose balls are closer to the pallina than the closest ball of the opposing team, which can be determined by viewing or by mechanical measurements. A player may request a mechanical measurement (Measurements will be taken from the center side of the bocce ball to the center side of the pallina). At the end of a frame, the referee announces the winning points and color to the players outside the court at the pallina end and before the balls are removed, the referee should look to the players for agreement. The players have a right to request a measurement if the players disagree with the referee. When the player or team agrees with the number of points awarded, the court official then proceeds to remove the balls to start the next frame. The scoring team for each frame will also win the pallina advantage for the subsequent frame. The referee will be responsible for validity of the scoreboard and scorecard, so it is incumbent upon the team captain to verify the accuracy of the posted score at all times.

j. Ties during 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. Example: Team A rolls a ball toward the pallina and establishes the point. Then Team B rolls its ball toward the pallina, and the referee determines that they are both exactly the same distance from the pallina. Team B must continue to roll until it has a point closer than Team A's ball. If Team B does roll up to the point, and Team A hits that ball out re-establishing a tie, Team A must continue to roll until the tie is broken.

k. Ties at the end of a 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 which last delivered it. Play resumes from the end of the court from which the frame was last played.

l. Winning score

   Four-player team (one ball per player) = 16 points

   Two-player team (two balls per player) = 12 points

   One-player team (four balls per player) = 12 points

   The above scoring procedure is most common in major tournaments: however, variations may be

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acceptable.

m. Scoring procedure for tournaments: At the discretion of the Competition Manager, games may be played to reach the target number of points or to a time duration.

n. Scorecard — It is the responsibility of each team captain to sign the scorecard after a match. The signatures will indicate the indisputability of the final score. Games in which protests will be filed should not be signed by any captain who disagrees with the score or its validity.

2. **Player Designation**

a. Captain — On any team, the captain must be designated and made known to the officials before play begins. The captain may not be changed during the course of a game, but may be changed during the course of a tournament. The tournament officials must be notified of this change prior to any subsequent games.

b. Rotation of players — The players of any given team may elect to play their balls in any rotation, provided the one who tosses the pallina delivers the first bocce ball. The rotation may vary from frame to frame; however, no player may deliver more than his/her allotted number of balls per frame.

3. **Unified Sports Team**

a. Each Unified Sports doubles team shall consist of one athlete and one partner.

b. Each Unified Sports team event shall consist of two athletes and two partners.

c. Each game shall commence with a coin toss. Either member of the team that wins the toss starts the game by throwing the pallina and the first ball. The second ball is thrown by either member of the opposing team.

4. **Substitutions**

a. Official notification — Officials must be notified of substitutions prior to a scheduled game time or it will result in forfeiture of the match.

b. Substitution of players

1) Substitution of players — Only one substitute may be allowed per team per game. Substitutes may take the place of any player on the team and may substitute for different players on the same team during different games.

2) Limitations — Once a player has registered to substitute for one team during the tournament, he/she may not substitute for any other team during that tournament. Substitutes should have a Divisioning score equal to or less than the person they are substituting.

c. Substitution during game: Emergencies — Only in the event of medical or other verified emergencies may a player be substituted during a game. 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 game.

1) Forfeiture — Teams with less than the prescribed number of players will forfeit the match.

5. **Timeouts, Delays of Games and Checking Position of Points**

a. Timeout — The official may grant a timeout whenever the circumstances appear to be valid. The timeout will be limited to ten minutes or less as predetermined by the Tournament Director.

b. Intentional delay of game — If, in the opinion of the official, the game is intentionally delayed without sufficient or valid reason, the official must give a warning. If play is not resumed immediately, the delaying team will forfeit the match.

c. Delays caused by weather, acts of God, civil disorder or other unforeseen reasons — In such delays, the ruling of the Tournament Director will be decisive and final.

d. Checking position of points — One player from each team may proceed down the outside of the court before delivering his/her ball and the player must remain outside of the court while checking the position of points.

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6. **Penalties**

a. Enforcement of penalties

1) Determination — Immediately upon determination by the official that a foul has been committed, the official will notify the captains of both teams and inform them of the penalty imposed. The team fouled against has the option to decline any penalty imposed by the official and accept the lie of the ball(s) and continues playing. The ruling of the official is final, except as otherwise provided for hereafter.

2) Conditions not covered — For conditions not specifically covered in these rules, the Tournament Director's ruling shall be decisive and final.

3) Protests — Any protest to an official's or Tournament Director's decision must be made by a Special Olympics certified bocce coach within 15 minutes of the completion of any game or the decision made by the official or Tournament Director will be considered as accepted. Protests will be acknowledged and judged on the basis of merit in circumstances not specifically proved for hereunder.

4) Protest to forfeiture — If a team must forfeit a match as a result of not being present for a scheduled match, or as a result of violations hereunder prescribed, no official protest will be acknowledged.

b. Specific Fouls

1) Foul-line fouls — In both pointing and hitting, the foremost part of the specific foul line will not be surpassed by any part of the player's foot, or any apparatus used by an athlete such as a wheelchair, crutches, cane, etc., after the ball is released and before the ball touches any part of the playing field in front of the specific foul line. An official as a result of witnessing the foul, must call all fouls. The penalty for a player (team) committing the foul will be to declare the specific ball being thrown dead. If possible and safe, the referee will seek to stop the ball just delivered before it reaches the pallina and the other balls "in contention", remove the just released ball from the court and declare the just released ball to be a dead ball. If the just released ball does come in contact with the pallina and/or other balls "in contention" and these balls are moved from their original position, then the referee will place the balls back as close to their original position as possible and play will continue.

2) Player plays more than his allotted number of balls with respect to a two- or four-player team — When a player rolls an extra ball during a frame, the ball in question is declared dead. If possible and safe, the referee will seek to stop the ball just delivered before it reaches the pallina and the other balls "in contention", remove the just released ball from the court and declare the just released ball to be a dead ball. If the just released ball does come in contact with the pallina and/or other balls "in contention" and these balls are moved from their original position, then the referee will place the balls back as close to their original position as possible and play will continue. This condition will exist when a player on a two-player team plays three balls instead of two or a player on a four-player team plays two balls instead of one. Two-Player Team — the remaining player on a two-player team will only have one ball to play. Four-Player Team — the remaining players who haven't played any balls must decide who is to play the remaining unplayed balls.

3) Illegal movement of a ball belonging to your own team — If a player moves one or more of his or her team's balls, the ball(s) are removed from the court and considered dead and play continues.

4) Illegal movement of an opponent's ball — If, after all eight balls have been thrown, a player moves one or more of his/her opponent's balls, the opponent's balls that were moved will be awarded one point each. If a player moves one or more of his/her opponent's balls, and there are remaining unplayed balls, the referee will place the balls as close to their original position as possible and play will continue.

5) Illegal movement of the pallina by a player — If the pallina is moved by a player, the opposite team will be awarded as many points as the number of live balls that were "in contention" plus the number of balls yet unplayed. If the team fouled against has no balls "in contention" and no balls remaining, then the frame will be declared dead by the referee and started over at the same end.

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c. Accidental or premature movement of balls or pallina by a referee

1) Accidental movement of a ball or pallina during play (when more balls are yet to be played) — If a referee, 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.

2) Accidental or premature movement of a ball or pallina, by a referee, after all balls are played. If the point or points were obvious to the referee, the points will be awarded. All uncertain points will not be awarded and the frame is considered dead and started over at the same end.

d. Interference with a ball in motion

1) By one’s own team — When a player interferes with his/her team’s ball in motion, the referee, as a result of witnessing the foul, must declare the ball being thrown dead. If possible and safe, the referee, will seek to stop the ball just delivered before it reaches the pallina and the other balls “in contention”, remove the just released ball from the court and declare the just released ball to be a dead ball. If the just released ball does come in contact with the pallina and/or other balls “in contention” and these balls are moved from their original position, then the referee will place the balls back as close to their original position as possible and play will continue.

2) 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:

a) Play the ball over.

b) Declare the frame dead.

c) Decline the penalty, accept the lie of the touched ball(s) and continues playing.

3) With no disruption of position — If a spectator, animal or object 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.

4) With disruption of position — If a spectator, animal or object interferes with a ball in motion and that ball touches another ball already in play and “in contention” the frame is dead.

5) Other disruption of play — Any action which interferes with the position of the pallina or the ball of each team closest to the pallina renders the frame dead. In the event balls other than the pallina or the two opposing balls closest to it are moved, they may be replaced as close as possible to the original position by the two captains or the referee. Such disruptive action may be the result of a dead ball from another court, foreign objects, spectators or animals entering the court and changing the position of the ball(s) in play.

e. Wrong color delivery

1) Replaceable — If a player delivers a wrong color ball, the ball may not be stopped by another player or the referee. The ball must be allowed to come to rest and replaced with the proper colored ball by the referee.

2) Not replaceable — If a player delivers a wrong color ball which cannot be replaced without disturbing another ball already in play the frame is declared dead and replayed from the same end.

f. Wrong rotation of play

1) Initial point — If a team wrongly delivers the pallina and its first ball, the referee will return the pallina and the first ball which was played out of rotation. The referee will then ask the other color player or team to deliver the pallina when restarting the frame from the same end of the court.

2) Subsequent rolls of the proper color in an incorrect sequence — If a player delivers his or her ball when his or her team is “in” and the other team has balls left, the ball in question should if possible and safe be stopped by the referee before it reaches the “balls in contention”, be declared a dead ball and removed from the court. If the referee cannot stop the ball before it reaches the “balls in contention”, the referee should replace the pallina and nearest balls to where they were before the out of rotation delivery took place.

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7. **Officials**

   a. Objections

      1) Objections to official — Each team has the right to object to a designated official for any reason prior to the start of a game. This objection will be considered and decided upon by the Tournament Director.

      2) Participant officials — No member of a team or registered substitute of a team will be allowed to assist in the officiating of a game in which that team is also playing.

   b. Substitute officials

      1) During a game — Substitutions of officials may occur during a game only with the permission of the Tournament Director and both team captains.

      2) Additional officials — Additional officials may be assigned to any games during the course of play, provided permission is granted by the Tournament Director.

      3) Team requests — Officials may be changed during the course of a game if either team presents sufficient cause to the Tournament Director.

      4) Official's uniform — Referees should be clearly distinguishable from players.

   c. Ethics

      1) Official's Code of Ethics — A referee will:

         a) Have a thorough knowledge of the rules.Be fair and unbiased in his decisions, rendering them without regard to the score.

         b) Be firm, but not overbearing; courteous, but not ingratiating; positive, but never rude; dignified, but not arrogant; friendly, but companionable; calm, but always alert.

         c) Be prepared, both physically and mentally, to administer the game.

         d) Not give information which would benefit or give advantage to one team over another.

8. **Other Circumstances**

   a. Broken ball — If during the course of a frame a ball or pallina should break, the frame will be considered dead. Replacement of a ball or pallina will be the responsibility of the Tournament Director.

   b. Court grooming

      1) Prior to play — All courts must be groomed to the satisfaction of the Tournament Director before the start of each game.

      2) Court grooming during play — Courts may not be reconditioned during the course of the game. Obstacles or objects such as stones, cups, etc., may be removed during the course of a game.

      3) Unusual court conditions — If in the opinion of the Tournament Director, the court conditions are such that play is impractical, the game can be stopped and resumed on another court or at another designated time.

   c. Moving ball or pallina — No player may play his or her ball until a pallina or another ball has come to a complete rest.

   d. Mechanical Aid — If due to a medical or physical condition an athlete requires the use of a mechanical aid to spot the position of the pallina, then discretion can be given to the Event Manager/Tournament Director for this to be permitted. Items such as a bell or bright colored cone for a visually impaired athlete are examples of this type of mechanical aid. If a cone is used as a mechanical aid it should be placed as close as possible to the Pallina, usually behind, and removed from the court once the Bocce ball is released from the athlete's hand. If a bell is used it should be rung while held over the Pallina.

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9. **Player Behavior**

   a. Whenever possible, a player should move off the court when an opponent is playing.

   b. Unsportsmanlike conduct — Players shall act in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Any act which is deemed as poor sportsmanship, such as insulting language, gestures, actions or words which engender ill will, if flagrant, may result in disqualification.

   c. Attire

      1) Proper attire — Players will dress in a manner which will bring credit to them and the sport of bocce.

      2) Footwear — Players will not be permitted to wear shoes which may damage or disrupt the court surface. It is recommended that all players will wear close-toed shoes.

      3) Objectionable attire — Players who wear objectionable or offensive clothing, or who are improperly attired, may not be allowed to participate in a tournament.

SECTION E — DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

1. **Ball: Live and Dead**

   a. A live ball is any ball in play that has been delivered.

   b. A dead ball is any ball that has been disqualified or forfeited. A ball may be disqualified if:

      1) It is the result of a penalty.

      2) It has gone out of the court.

      3) It has come in contact with a person or object which is out of the court.

      4) It hits the top of the court boards.

      5) It hits the covering over the courts or any supports thereof.

      6) It is the result of a foot foul.

      7) It is the result of an illegal movement of your (team's) ball.

      8) It is the result of interference with a ball in motion by one's own team.

2. **Bocce Ball and Pallina**

   a. The pallina is a small object ball sometimes called cue ball, beebee, etc.

   b. The bocce ball is the larger playing ball.

3. **Other Terms**

   a. Hitting is sometimes known as shooting. Hitting is the action of rolling a ball which is thrown with sufficient velocity that it would hit the backboard if it missed the target. Bank or rebound shot refers to playing a ball off either the sideboards or backboard.

   b. Pointing is the action of rolling a ball to obtain a point close to the pallina. Frame is the period in the game in which balls are played from one side of the court to the other and points are awarded.

   c. "In contention". Used across any section of the rule book means, balls that an official would deem to be balls that he/she will potentially need to measure or award as scoring balls.

4. **Foul**

   A foul is a rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.

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