

Howard County Recreation and Parks Encore Programs: Bocce League Rules
League Director: Scott Ripley [\(Adapted from Bocce Standards Assoc. Standard Rules\)](#)

TEAMS:

1. A team on the court has 4 players maximum (2 stationed at each end of the court) with each player throwing 2 balls. Players are not allowed to switch ends during a game. A team may have one or more substitute (alternate) players on the team.

2. A team may play a match if only 2 or 3 players are present; however, no player is permitted to throw more than 2 balls (a penalty of 2 balls per missing player). A team without at least two players present at the scheduled game start time forfeits the game with zero points and the opponent is awarded 16 points. WAIVED FOR SUMMER LEAGUE- Reason- Vacations etc.....

3. A team must have one player designated as the team captain. The team captain participates in the coin toss and assigns players to their position on the court for the match. The team captain may designate a player as an "end captain" for the end opposite that of the captain. Only the team captain or designee and end captain may go on the court for measurements.

COIN TOSS:

1. Begin the match with the flip of a coin between the captains of each team. The winner of the coin flip has either the first toss of the pallino or chooses the color of the team's balls.

2. If playing the same team in the next game, players must switch ends between games and the winning team throws the pallino to start next game (players may be replaced by substitutes, however, a player never plays 2 consecutive games from the same end of the court). If playing a different team play starts over with the coin toss, and players may be reassigned as desired by the captain. (2-Game Rule)

PALLINO THROW:

1. The pallino is the first ball put into play and is thrown underhand from behind the pointing foul line. The pallino may be bounced off the sideboards.

2. The pallino must end up across the center line and at least 12 inches away from the sideboards or backboard without hitting the backboard. If a thrower fails to do this, he/she has a second try and if this fails, the throw goes to other team. If after two tries the second team's throws fail to place the pallino legally into play, the pallino is placed approximately in the center of the pointing foul line at the opposite end of the court in order to speed up play.

3. If a player throws pallino and/or first ball when other team should throw the pallino, the balls are returned and the frame starts over.

4. Once pallino is in play, the pallino can be knocked anywhere on the court except back over the center line or out of the court (frame ends, play resumes at opposite end, and same team throws the pallino).

BOCCE BALL THROWS:

1. The initial pallino thrower always throws the first bocce ball. All balls are thrown underhand. If the first ball hits the backboard without hitting the pallino first, the ball is removed and the team throws again until they have a ball in play.
2. All bocce balls must end up across the center line. If the ball does not go over the center line it is considered a dead ball and removed from play. Standard Penalties apply.
3. All bocce balls are thrown from behind the pointing foul line. Any ball released behind the pointing foul line is considered a throw for points, with the intent of getting ball closest to the pallino, knocking opponent's ball away, or hitting the pallino so it is closer to your team's ball. **Foul Line rules apply.**
4. Each succeeding ball is thrown by the team that does NOT have the ball closest to the pallino. A team whose ball ties the opponent's closest ball must throw again. The "IN" team only throws if opponents have thrown all four balls. Team members can throw in any order.
5. Hitting or spocking is **NOT** permitted. *A declared underhand bowling type hard throw directly at the balls on the court to purposely hit and move an opponent's ball or the pallino. A player must first inform the official referee (or their opponent if there is no official referee) that they intend to go past the pointing foul line to deliver a "hit" or "spock". The thrown ball is removed from play if the pallino or another ball is not hit, even if the ball does not hit the backboard.* Standard Penalties apply.
6. If a player throws wrong color ball, it is replaced with a correct color ball after the ball comes to rest.
7. Balls may be bounced off or played against sideboards.
8. A ball hitting the backboard without first touching the pallino or another bocce ball is a dead ball and is removed from play. Standard Penalties apply.
9. If a player throws when the other team should throw or throws more than 2 balls, that ball is removed from play. Standard Penalties apply.
10. If a player throws, when the other team should throw due to a miscall by the Referee - the ball is returned and the correct player throws. Standard Penalty #2 applies.
11. If a team's legally thrown ball is interfered with while moving by someone or something not on the playing surface before the throw, the ball is returned to be thrown again. If possible, any balls moved by the throw are reset to their approximate original position. If balls are sufficiently moved that the approximate original positions cannot be determined, the frame is replayed. However, if the interference is caused by a team member, the ball is removed from play and the Standard Penalties apply.
12. If a team's legally thrown ball is moved (accidentally or intentionally) from its resting position by an opposing player or referee before the points are determined and the end of the frame is declared, it is reset to

its approximate original position. If the ball is sufficiently moved that the approximate original position cannot be determined, the offended team has the option to leave the balls as they lay or replay the frame.

13. If a team's legally thrown ball is moved from its resting position (accidentally or intentionally) by a team member, the ball is removed from play. Standard Penalties apply.

14. The person(s) doing the measuring must press and rotate balls and the pallino before measuring to mark their original position on the court surface. If a ball or pallino is accidentally moved while measuring, it is replaced to its original marked position. Typical measuring is from the face edge of the bocce ball to the top center of the pallino.

15. A bocce ball, for whatever reason, that goes out of the court is a dead ball and is removed from play for that frame.

16. Volo shooting (lofting the ball high in the air beyond the center line of the court) is NOT permitted.

FOUL LINES:

1. Pointing foul lines must be clearly marked across the playing surface for foul line violations to be officially called and penalties applied.

2. Players may step on but not over the proper foul line before releasing the pallino or a bocce ball. (Toe of foot cannot exceed the width of the foul line mark.)

3. If a player's toe exceeds the width of the proper foul line before releasing a ball (bocce or pallino), they will receive one warning. Subsequent fouls will result in nullifying the pallino throw or removal of the thrown bocce ball from play. Standard Penalties apply.

STANDARD PENALTIES:

1. For the violation of any rule that requires the removal of a bocce ball from play, that ball is immediately removed from play until that frame has been completed. The violation must be called and the ball removed before the next ball is thrown. If the ball is not removed before the next ball is played, the ball remains in play for the rest of the frame.

2. If possible, any balls moved because of the action of the violation ball are reset to their approximate original position. If balls are sufficiently moved that the approximate original positions cannot be determined, the opposing team has the option to leave the balls as they lay or replay the frame.

SCORING:

1. The official score for frame is determined after all 8 balls have been played and measured to the captains' satisfaction. One point is awarded for each ball of a team that is closer to the pallino than the opponent's closest ball (1 to 4 points).

2. The team that scores in the last frame throws the pallino in the next frame and play continues as above.

3. If each team's closest balls are tied, the team delivering the last ball must throw the next ball if there are any left. If at the end of the frame there is a tie, it is a "No Point" frame and play continues at opposite end with the team scoring the point(s) in the previous frame delivering the pallino.
4. The team that first scores 16 points wins the game.
5. Matches are determined by the league or tournament and may be by games won, 2 out of 3 games, single or double elimination, etc.

SUBSTITUTION:

1. It is the responsibility of each team player to obtain a substitute and notify the Team Captain if they cannot play a scheduled game.
2. Substitutes must be extra players on the team or on the League Substitute Roster. A team player who is playing a scheduled game that week may not substitute on another team. (Optional: Team players that are not scheduled to play that week may be used for substitutes if the roster substitutes are not available).
3. Substitutions may only be made between games or between frames. A late arriving missing player or substitute may enter the game in a vacant position at any time between frames.
4. A team with 4 players on the court may make up to four substitutions between games but only one substitution during a game. A player replaced during a game cannot reenter that game or the next game.

TEAM CAPTAINS:

1. The team captain participates in the coin toss and assigns players to their position on the court.
2. The team captain may designate a player as an "end captain" for the end opposite that of the captain.
3. The team captain or an end captain may go on the court for measurements. A captain may observe and call for measurements to determine the official score for a frame.
4. A captain may approach and observe the positions of balls in play. A captain after observing the balls must return behind the pointing foul line and may not instruct partners at opposite end of court.
5. The captains and designated players from each team shall return balls for the next frame after points have been determined.
6. The team captain is responsible for assuring that the team's points are posted correctly and for reporting final game scores to the record keeper. Team scores are reported within 24 hours to Scott Ripley, Howard County Recreation and Parks, sripley@howardcountymd.gov. 410-313-7281 or 443-277-5438

TEAM PLAYERS:

1. Players must remain behind the foul line at all times except the thrower may go out to the center line just prior to throwing to observe the position of balls on the court.

2. Players may request an "IN" count or a measurement at any time. An "IN" count is not official until all 8 balls have been played and necessary measurements made.
3. Players may converse with one another but only with players on their end of the court.
4. Players shall not talk to or interfere with a thrower on the court prior to the release of the ball. When the thrower is on the court, all other players must be off the court and remain behind the backboard.
5. No player may go up to the balls and instruct a team player how or where to throw the ball.
6. Player practice before the game start time is allowed time permitting.
7. To preserve the condition of the court, players shall minimize walking on the court and not wear ripple or spiked sole shoes.

OFFICIAL REFEREES: (Tournament/Championship Play)

1. Referees shall be fully knowledgeable of the league/tournament rules.
2. Referees shall have a copy and enforce all game rules.
3. All "IN" determinations and measurements are made by the Referee. (Measurements may be made with any device that reliably and repeatedly indicates the difference between the measurements.)
4. The referee determines the points for each frame and reports the point score to scorekeepers.
5. The referee shall not give advice to either team or coach players as to where to direct their throw.
6. The referee has the final word in disputes and must document any formal objections/protests for future action by the club/league/tournament committee. Formal objections/protests must be made by the team captain before the next ball is played.
7. A referee for valid reasons may allow a time-out up to 10 minutes maximum.
8. The official referee has the option, after one or more warnings to the player and team captain, to eject a player for continued rule violations, arguing, or disrupting play.

TEAM PLAY WITHOUT OFFICIAL REFEREES: (7 Week League Play)

1. Team Captain assigns team members to each end of court. Team Captain appoints one of the team members at the opposite end of the court to be the 'End Captain' for that end. The Team Captain is the 'End Captain' for their end of the court.
2. The End Captain determines who throws and in what order for the team members on their end of the court.
3. The End Captain of each team at the non-throwing end of the court stand at the side of the court near the pallino and serve as the referees (Official Referee rules apply). If they agree on the 'IN' color they notify the other end of which color should throw (the "Out" team). If they disagree, they measure and then notify the

other end of which color should throw. The same procedure applies to determining the point count. The End Captains report the point score to scorekeepers.

4. The End Captains are the only 2 people allowed on the court to make measurements, determine points, challenges, etc.

The captains and designated players from each team shall return balls for the next frame after points have been determined. All other players must remain behind the end backboards at these times.

5. The End Captains refereeing cannot verbally coach their team members on the throwing end, however they can respond on the court to a thrower's question as to which balls are 'IN'.

LOCAL RULES:

1. Due to specific local conditions, a club, league, or tournament may add additional local environmental rules relative to safety, behaviors, equipment use, court grooming, noise, footwear, dress, uniforms, etc.

2. Due to specific local conditions, a league or tournament may add additional local operational rules relative to officials, protests, non-playing captains/coaches, spectators, records, scorecards, tie-breakers, missing players, substitutions, breaks/time-outs, weather delays, delay-of-game, etc.

COURTS & EQUIPMENT:

Bocce Courts are located at Cedar Lane Park West, 5081 Cedar Lane Columbia, M., near entrance on left

1. Howard County Recreation and Parks is responsible for the bocce courts – good repair, maintenance, leaf blowing and boundary markings. Courts should be ready 1 hour before start of games.

2. Howard County Recreation and Parks provides all equipment – bocce balls, pallino, scoring devices, score sheets, first aid box. Leagues are responsible for their own measuring device.

3. League Managers or designees can call park maintenance operations personnel on duty _____ to request maintenance or other field issues that need attention ½ hour before start of game.

CANCELLATIONS: Field Status Line: Cedar Lane Park West, 410-313-4453

1. If a game is in progress and is called due to weather and if the match is over 30 minutes into play, the scores in place at that time will stand and be recorded as such. If the match is under 30 minutes, the entire match will be made up at the next session during regular play.

2. Captains should notify its members of closures. League Managers will schedule replay dates and times.

PLAYOFFS & CHAMPIONSHIP SPECIAL RULES:

1. All of the above regular season rules apply.

2. A team without at least three original team players present at the scheduled game start time forfeits the game. Only one player substitution is permitted to make a full team of four. If a team has 6 players and one or two do not show, then that team has 4 or 5 players and no substitution is permitted.

3. The tournament will be single elimination team playoff matches based on team wins and points and team standings, and all games will be officiated by Howard County Recreation and Parks and/or their designees.