



**PETANQUE FEDERATION
AUSTRALIA**

PLAYER TRAINING MANUAL

For Affiliated Clubs

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An Introduction to the Sport of Pétanque

Object of the Sport of Petanque

Pétanque is a simple sport. The object of the sport is to throw your boules so that they come to rest close a “jack”. A player or team scores points by having one or more of the boules closer to the cochonnet than the opposition after all boules have been thrown. In other words, after each “end”.

The winner is the first team to reach 13 points.

This document contains an introduction to the equipment needed to play and a basic description of a game with simplified rules to get you playing.

There is also a complete set of the “Official International Rules of Sport of Pétanque” for competitions and those tricky situations that inevitably arise during even “friendly” games.

Good luck!

Pointing and Shooting

Pétanque is basically a game about throwing boules. There are 2 categories of throw:

- Pointing - you attempt to have your ball stop close to the jack and gain the point.
- Shooting - you attempt to hit the other teams boule (and sometimes the cochonnet) which is in the way or has the point.

Ideally you should be able to point *and* shoot, but players tend to specialise and are either “pointers” or “shooters”.

When you start playing you will tend only to point (particularly if you play with experienced players). It is important however that you practice shooting as well and add this skill to your game. You too may then wish to specialise.

There are different techniques to achieve both pointing and shooting and these are explained in the section “Playing Techniques and Tactics”.

About Pétanque in Australia

Introduction

Pétanque Federation Australia (PFA) is a not-for-profit organization that has as its primary objective the promotion of the sport of pétanque in Australia. It is a member of the Federation Internationale de Pétanque and Jeu Provençal (FIPJP). Pétanque Australia acts as a liaison between all pétanque players and all pétanque clubs in Australia and throughout the world.

Objectives

The objectives of PFA are to:

- raise the awareness of the Australian public to the sport of pétanque.
- introduce pétanque to public and private educational institutions throughout the nation.
- promote championships at all levels; Regional, State, National and International. For all people; young, junior, and senior citizens, both men and women.
- increase the number of PFA clubs, individuals and independent members.
- encourage the Australia Park Service and the Park and Recreation Departments of major cities to develop pétanque courts in their parks.
- publicise pétanque in sport magazines, radio and television, local newspapers and special videos.

Benefits for PFA Affiliated Clubs

Clubs receive the following benefits as members of Pétanque Federation Australia.

- National and international contacts.
- The opportunity for club members to participate in many national and international championships. Every year PFA sends several pétanque teams to the World Championships, Men, Women and Juniors.
- The opportunity for the junior members to learn from excellent players and participate also in many types of championships.
- Through members' fees Pétanque Federation Australia protects the clubs, the officers of the clubs and Pétanque Federation Australia, and all PFA members, including volunteers, against liability that may be incurred as a result of accidents to others while playing the game of pétanque, in or out of competitions, wherever you play.
- Current affiliation fee is \$100 (free for the first year a Club joins the PFA)

Benefits for Club Members

As a member of a PFA Affiliated Club you benefit in the following ways:

- You benefit from the general liability insurance.
- Your Pétanque Federation Australia licence is recognised by all national federations and international clubs of pétanque.
- You can participate in many competitions when you travel overseas. So long as the championship is "open" all foreign clubs will let you play upon presenting your PFA licence.
- You will get the schedules of pétanque tournaments and the latest news through the PFA newsletter.

- You can join PFA executive and help in promoting the Sport of pétanque.
- While participating in tournaments and championships outside your city, you will meet people from all over the world and all walks of life.
- If you are a veteran player, your experience can help educate our junior members in their high schools and junior high schools, maybe both in English and French.

Insurance Cover

All affiliated clubs are covered by an extensive \$20m Public Liability cover. Licenced players (current fee \$35.00) are included under the Club Public Liability as well as Limited Volunteer Workers insurance policy covering such matters as lost luggage, medical expenses, cancellation and curtailment expenses and personal liability (\$1m).

Note: Usual exceptions and exemptions apply.

All information about insurance should be directed to your Affiliated Club and then to the Secretary of Pétanque Federation Australia.

Contacting PFA

You can contact PFA by through the Contact Us form on the Pétanque Federation Australia website.

www.petanqueaustralia.org.au

or through the following email

admin@petanqueaustralia.org.au

The Equipment You Need to Play Pétanque

The Boules

Buying boules to suit YOU. It is quite possible that you may have never played pétanque before and do not own a set of boules or you may already own a set of boules. It is also very likely that you will eventually want to buy a set you consider more suitable as your game develops.

If you have the opportunity, try using boules of different sizes and weights and get a “feel” for what is suitable for you.

The information provided in the section will help in that decision.

Categories of Boules

There are 2 categories of boules. These are:

- **Competition Boules**
These vary in size from 70.5 mm to 80 mm in diameter and between 650 gms and 800 gms in weight and are sold in sets of 3. (These must be identical). They must be made by manufacturers recognised by the Federation Internationale de Pétanque et Jeu Provençal (F.I.P.J.P. and Pétanque Federation Australia (PFA). Refer The Official International Rules of Pétanque. Available on the PFA Website.
- **Leisure Boules**
These are boules without weight or identification code markings and vary in size and weight from manufacturer to manufacturer. They cannot be used in certain Pétanque Federation Australia competitions.

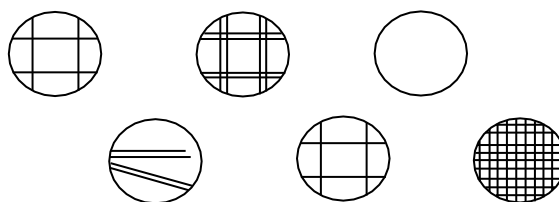
Boules Patterns

Both leisure and competition types of boules have different types of patterns, although some boules have no pattern at all.

The groove pattern affects your grip on the boule, the spin as you throw, and the way it rolls on impact. It also differentiates your boules from other players'. In general, the smoother the surface, the smoother it leaves the hand; the more striations, the easier it is to grip and the more it grips the ground.

If you roll the boule or are a pointer, you should choose one with more striation; if you throw the boule, you should choose a smoother surface.

The groove patterns assists in distinguishing which boules belong to which players when it is time to add up the score. For this reason most leisure sets are sold in groups, 3 or 2 boules each with 1, 2, 3 or 4 grooves.



Boule Marks

If you want to play in tournaments the boules must have specific marks clearly visible. This includes:

- the manufacturer's trademark (e.g.; JB, Obut, Boule Bleu, Marathon, etc.)
- identification number, e.g.; E9
- weight, e.g.; 700.
- optional engravings of a player or team's initials, name, or logo, all of which help in identifying your own boules during a match.

As potentially you could have all competitors in a match using boules that have the same pattern, these markings are very important in distinguishing each player's boules.

Leisure boules do not have these markings.

Steel Types and Hardness

Competition boules are also made from different types of steel. Some are stainless steel or steel alloy, which don't rust others are normal steel, often chromed. Leisure boules are usually mild steel and will rust.

Both types of steel are tempered to different degrees of hardness that is measured in kilograms per millimetre (kg/mm). The softer the steel the less rebound when your boules is hit by another boules.

- **Hard boules** 130-140 kg/mm. These are:
 - the most durable and will last for many years of constant use making them excellent as a practice boule,
 - good for pointing on smooth and softer surfaces,
 - not generally used for shooting, and
 - very "lively", as they do not absorb shock as well as softer boules and tend to rebound easily.
- **Semi-soft boules** (120-125 kg/mm). These are:
 - reasonably durable, having a lifespan of between 2-5 years,
 - good for most surfaces, and
 - good for shooting as they absorb shock well.
- **Soft boules** (110-115 kg/mm). They are:
 - not durable and may need replacing after on a yearly basis. Can also give off splinters when used on terrains with large, rough stones,
 - good for most terrains, and
 - good for shooting and pointing on hard stony grounds when pointing using a high "lob", as they absorb shock very well.

Note: The lifespan of the boule is dictated by its ability to retain its shape and by taking proper care particularly with regard to rust.

Selecting the Right Boules For You

When choosing the boules to for yourself to use you must consider:

- **Your Strength and the Weight Of The Boule**

The weight of a boule affects how accurately you throw, how tired you get, and how the boule reacts on impact. In general, the heavier the boule, the less it moves after impact; the lighter the boule, the easier it is to throw. A boule that is too heavy for you will tire your arm faster and

cause you to throw short of your target; a boule that is too light, may cause you to overthrow your target. If you roll the boule, you should choose a heavier one since they take a straighter path

- **The Size of Your Hands and The Diameter of The Boule**

The diameter of a boule affects how much control you have and how comfortable you feel throwing it. If the boule is too small or too large you will have less control when throwing it and your hand will tire out more quickly. In general, the smaller your hand, the smaller the boule.

- **Whether you are a “shooter” or a “pointer”**

Pointers usually prefer smaller, heavier boules and shooters usually prefer larger, lighter ones.

- **The Surface You Usually Play On**

If you play on a hard, rocky surface for example, you may choose a “soft” boule for less rebound

- **How often you play.**

If you play every day you may choose “hard” boule for durability.

- **How much you can afford.**

- **Whether you are likely to enter competitions or not.**

A compromise must be found to suit each individual. Observation indicates that 680-710 gm – 73-76 mm boules is common among shooters and 700/720 gm - 70-73 mm is common among pointers.

Caring for The Boules

- After playing on grass – wipe clean and keep dry.
- After playing near beach or putting them away for a few weeks - wash in fresh water, dry and wipe with light oil (unless the boules are rustproof).
- If you are putting the boules away for longer – wash in fresh water, dry and wipe with light oil then wrap in a dry material. Store in a dry place.

Other Equipment

The Cochonnet

The cochonnet must be entirely made of wood (or the newly approved VMS resin) and with a diameter of 30 mm (tolerance: + or – 1 mm). Their weight must be between 10 and 18 grams.

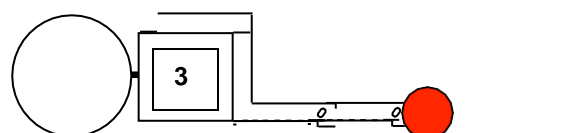
Painted jacks are authorised, but at no time must they, nor the jacks made of wood, be capable of being picked up with a magnet.

Measuring Devices

Measuring the distance between the cochonnet and the boules is an important part of the game. When measuring always set your device from the centre of the boules and cochonnet. There are a number of devices that can be used.

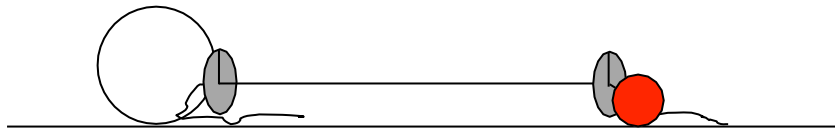
- **Tape Measure**

A standard 3-5 m measure is a good size and convenient to carry. There are special pétanque tape measures with a small “lug” on the tape measure body for placing against the centre of the boules.



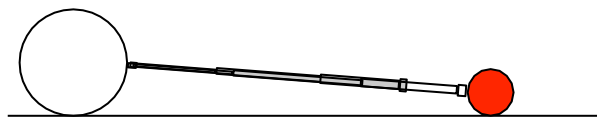
- **String Marker**

This device is often supplied with leisure boule sets and whilst not the easiest to use or most accurate is handy nonetheless. It consists of 2 plastic ends each with a split that a piece of string passes through.



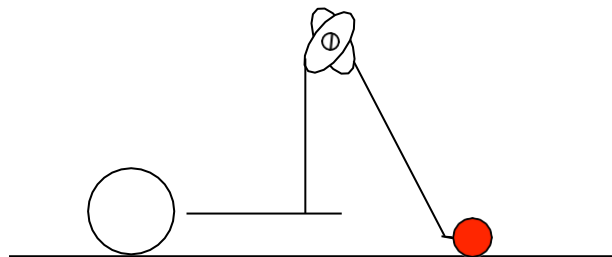
- **Telescopic ("Car Aerial") Measure**

The telescopic measure is a very handy and accurate device for shorter distances.



- **Calliper Measures**

The most accurate for short distances.



Throwing Techniques and Tactics

A Few General Points About Throwing

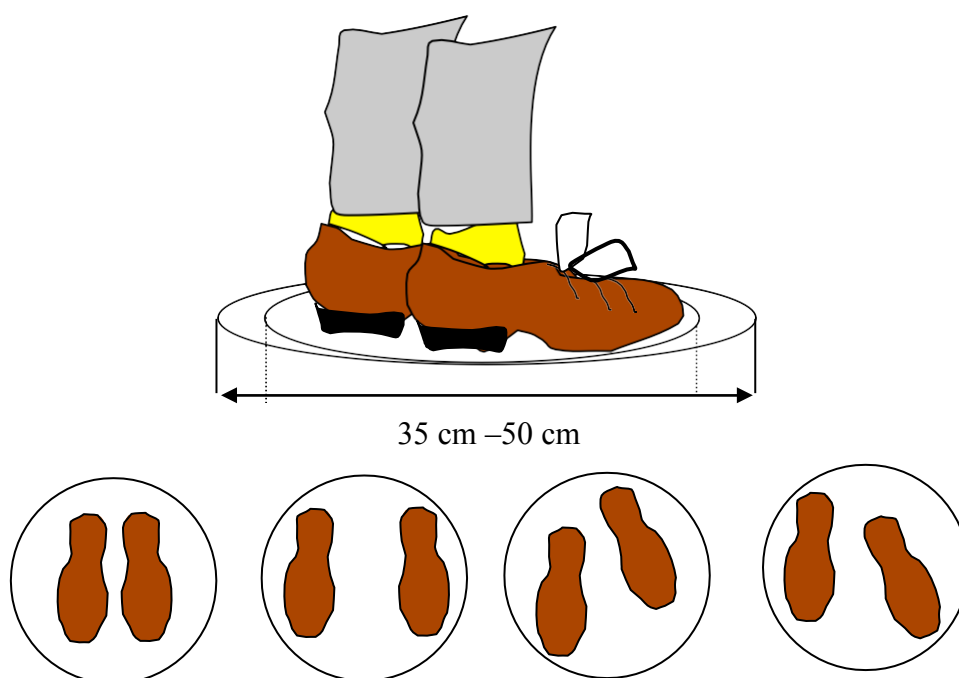
Introduction

Throwing techniques vary greatly between individuals and what works for one may not work for someone else. There are certain principles that apply but after that it's up to you.

You must:

- be comfortable - if you are comfortable the position is probably right for you,
- be well balanced,
- be relaxed,
- throw with a smooth action,
- be within the rules.

Standing In The Circle



When you throw your boules **both feet must be fully in the throwing circle**.

(Refer "Drawing the circle", page C-21). The feet do not have to be together but should be on the ground.

Holding the Boule – Palm Down

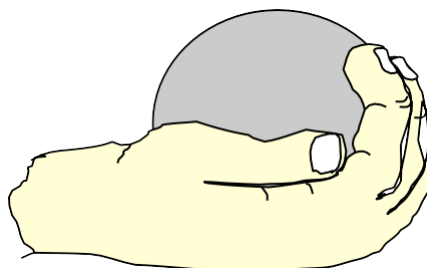
Whether you are a pointer or a shooter and whichever technique you use to throw the boule, either standing or squatting, the most widely used method of throwing is with the palm of the hand **facing down**.

There is no rule to say you must throw this way but is better for control as it imparts backspin.

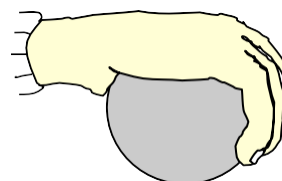
Holding the Boules

The most common (and considered best) method of holding the boules is described below.

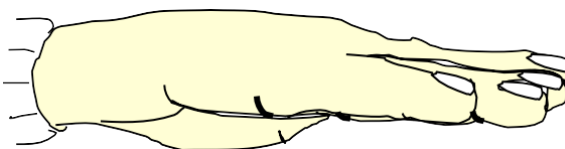
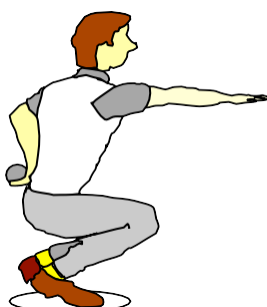
- The boule should **initially** be held loosely in the palm of the hand with the palm facing up as you "take aim".
- The boule should not be "gripped". The fingers should be close together with the hand facing towards the intended target.



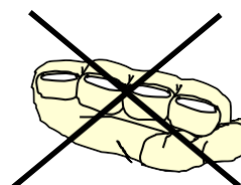
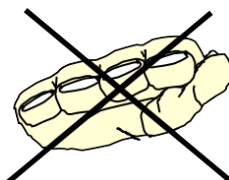
- As you swing your arm back you twist your arm so that the boule is facing down.



- Swing your arm forward straightening the fingers at the top of the arc to release the boule.



- Keep the hand flat so as not to impart unwanted spin on the boules which can change it's direction upon landing or when rolling. **Tilting the hand is a common fault, imparting unwanted spin and offline shooting!**



Note: You can of course tilt the hand deliberately to impart spin to go around obstacles. Initially, however concentrate on keeping your hand flat until your technique is solid. It is hard to break a habit once it is set in!

The Arm Swing

There are two main factors affecting the arm swing and subsequently the speed and distance that the boules is thrown. These are:

- the speed of the return, and
- the height that the arm is raised when the boule is released.

By throwing high after a good arm swing you can achieve a good distance with less strain.

During the swing the elbow should be close to your body

Imparting Extra Backspin

Backspin on the boule is desirable both when shooting and pointing.

- When pointing, it adds more control, keeping the boule on a straighter trajectory and preventing it from going too far.
- When shooting it prevents your boule from rolling to far and can often bring it back a distance.

Backswing can be accentuated by bending your wrist back on the backswing.

As you swing your arm forward, your wrist naturally straightens and causes the boule to spin backward.

Squatting or Standing?

Whether you squat or stand depends partially on the terrain and the distance, usually squatting when playing short (6 to 8 metres), standing after 8 metres. Shooters nearly always stand.

Pointing Techniques

The Art of Pointing

Pointing is a skill (and an art!) that requires observation, assessment, accuracy, improvisation and memory. You have to contend with your opponent *and* the terrain.

You must:

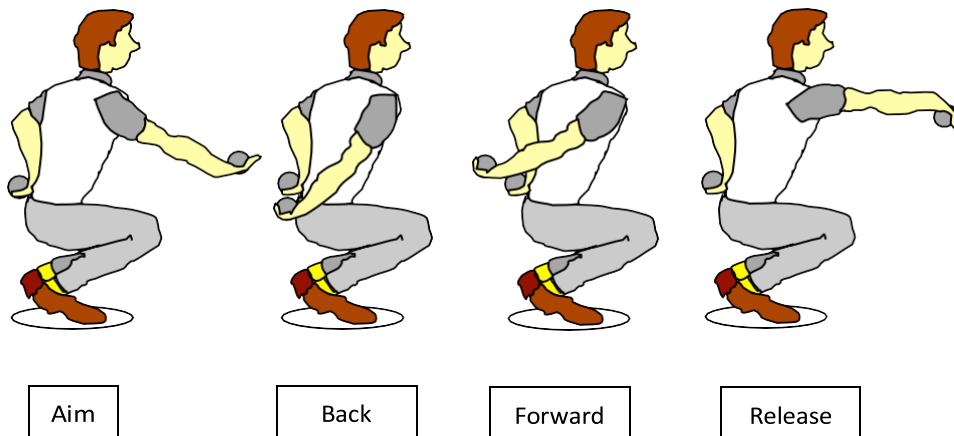
- Observe and assess the terrain for slopes and undulations and whether the surface is hard, soft, smooth, bumpy. You are looking for the “right spot” to land your boule, the right line and the “speed” of the ground.
- Observe and assess your opponents pointing so that you benefit from *their* experience as well as your own.
- Accurately throw the boule to land in the “right spot”. This spot may be metres away from the place that you want the boule to come to rest.
- Remember where the “right spots” are!
- Accurately throw the boule to avoid the opposition boules, (if it means knocking them closer to the cochonnet), hit the opposition boules (if it knocks them out of the way!) or hit your own boules to knock it closer to the cochonnet.
- You must also decide the appropriate technique for the surface; whether to roll or lob the boule.

Note: If you are a beginner you will generally start off as a pointer but you should practice your shooting until you are confident to do it in matches. Then you may choose to specialise in either roll.

Pointing is a skill that is sometimes undervalued, with shooters attracting the glory, but pointing is really the essence of the game and a skilled practitioner is highly prized.

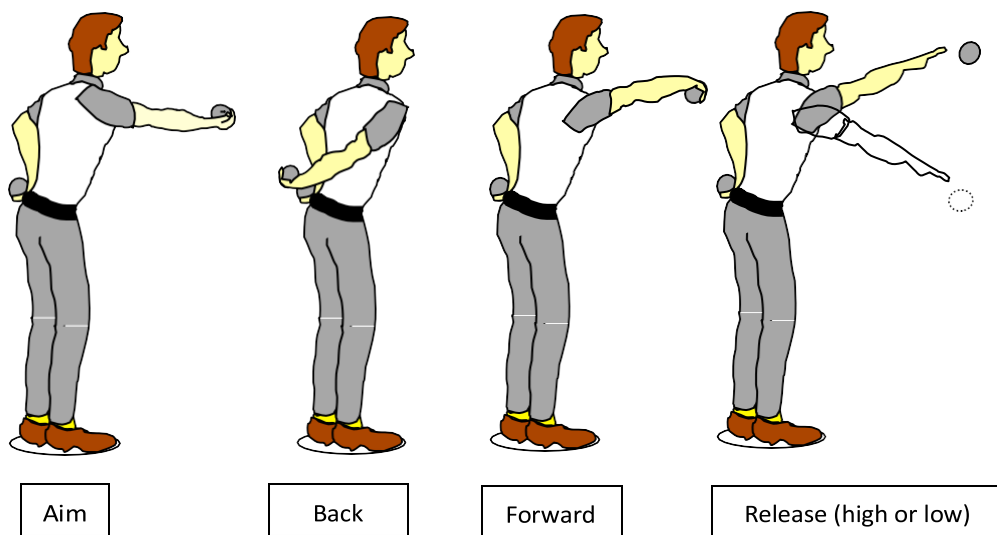
Squatting

Some people squat down where they can see the undulations of the terrain and either “roll” or gently “lob” the boules. This is best for smoother surfaces and shorter distances.



Standing

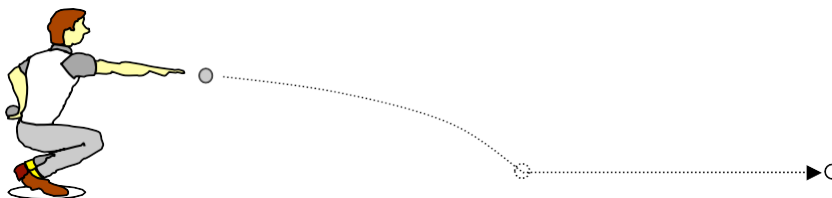
This is better for longer distances or if squatting is uncomfortable.



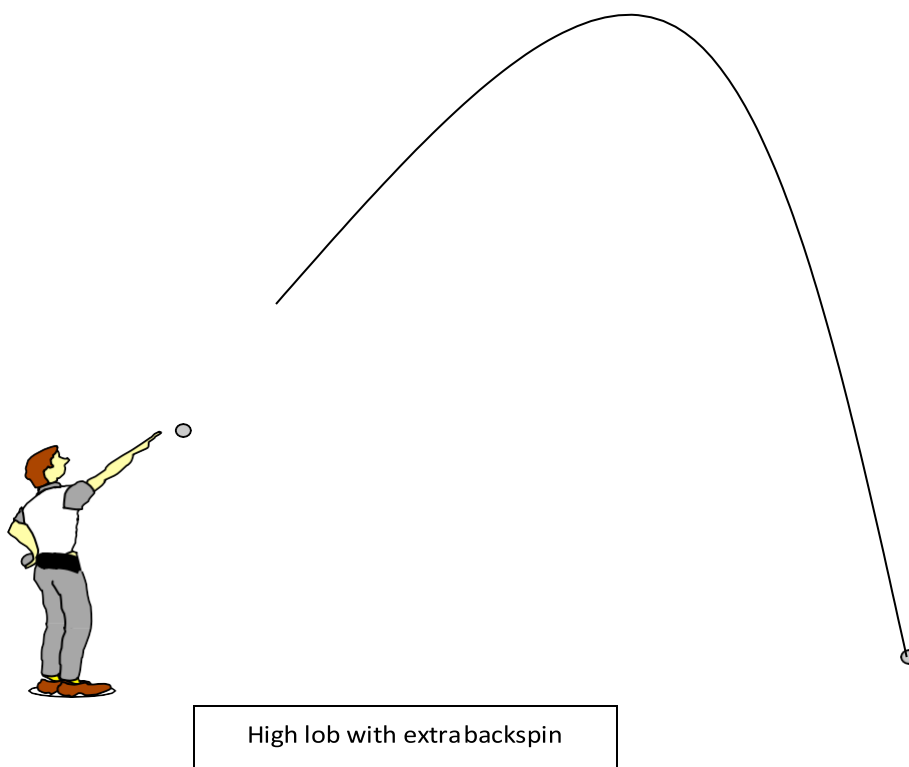
Note: In both styles the non-throwing arm is used for balance, often with un-thrown boule in the hand.

Rolling your boules in a manner not unlike lawn bowls requires a smooth surface without undulations and bumps and as such is often unreliable.

The most common technique is a low lob that lands the boule a few metres short of the cochonnet (on the "right spot") and allowing it to roll into the desired resting place. This reduces the risk of the boule deviating. This can be done in a squatting or standing position.



A more difficult, but highly effective technique is a high lob with extra backspin, dropping closer to the cochonnet with minimal roll on. This requires a lot of backspin and is usually performed standing. It is effective on all surfaces. It requires considerable practice!



Shooting Techniques

Why Shoot?

Depending on the surface and your ability, it is sometimes better to try to remove the opposition boule rather than trying to beat a good point.

On other occasions you may wish to shoot a boule that does not have the point but may be preventing your team from gaining *more* points.

The ultimate shooting shot is called a "carreau" whereby you hit the opposition ball on the full such that their ball is removed and your ball takes its place and thereby retains the point as well!

Types of Shooting

There are a number of different shooting techniques. They are as follows:

- Shooting along the ground or raspaille (ras/pie)
- Shooting part of the way in the air (demi-portee) landing 50cm to 1meter in front of the boule.
- Shooting “on the full” (au fer, literally “on the iron”)

The first two can be effective on some surfaces and in certain circumstances but in the long term it is best to shoot on the full.

Shooting Techniques

The information provided in “A Few General Points About Throwing” page B-12 are relevant to shooting. When shooting remember to:

- Take aim, concentrate *only* on the boule you want to hit. Most people start with the boule in the hand in front of them like a gun barrel.
- Get a good back swing - shooting should be a smooth relaxed throw, not as you often see, a forced effort to propel the boule as fast as possible. Let the boule do the work, not your arm.
- Lift the arm through an arc that ends slightly above shoulder height if you are shooting short or au fer, lower if you raspaille.
- Make sure that as your wrist straightens up to release the boule that is in-line with the rest of your arm.

The techniques described in this manual are based on observations of many shooters and as such are most common, but there *are* distinct variations and there is no *one way* that Shooting requires the correct technique for *you*; This requires experimentation to find what works. It then requires practice to make this technique absolutely consistent.

Practice does not necessarily make perfect, but it can make *permanent*, so practice the right technique, not the wrong one! These techniques are a good starting point.

Stance

Some shooters throw with their feet together their chest at right angles to the line of projection. Most shooter however advance the foot on the throwing side of the body slightly. This turns the chest slightly and effectively narrows the hips allowing the arm-swing to be closer to the body.

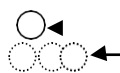
Ultimately there is no “one true way”. The position of the feet in the circle is a matter of comfort and balance.

The position of the feet *can* have a considerable bearing on the accuracy of your shooting.

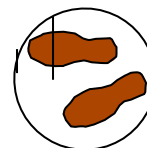
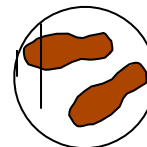
Whether you have your feet together or one advanced, they generally should be facing the target boule. If however you find that you are consistently missing to one particular side, adjusting the position of your feet slightly can correct this.

Example

If your misses are mostly on the left, then pointing your feet *slightly* to the right or left can correct this. The opposite also applies.

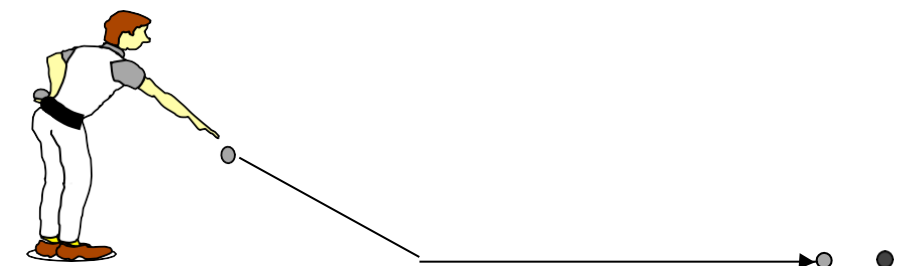


Missed shots

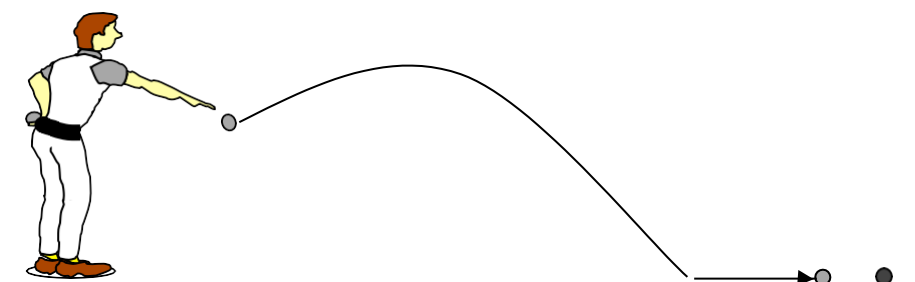


Note: Consider also the straightness of your hand. Inaccuracy is not just about feet position.

Many beginners try shooting along the ground. This is fine for very smooth surfaces or when there are no obstacles; i.e., other boules. This has obvious limitations and is probably not worth practicing too much.

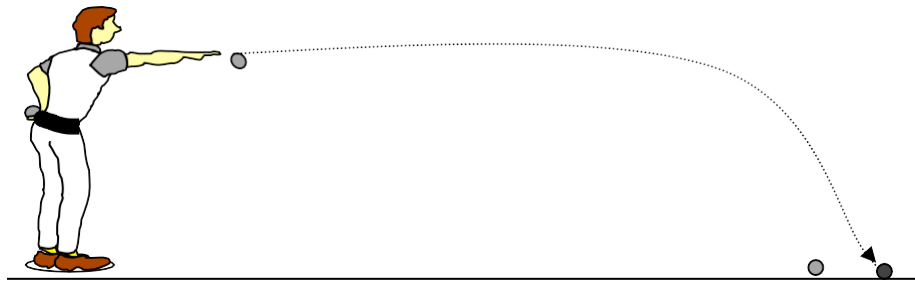


Shooting part of the way in the air (short lob) is good on softer surfaces and very hard surfaces with little bounce. There is a good chance that your boule will stay close to the point of impact if you hit the target. There is the chance of hitting a stone or other boules.



Shooting on the full requires practice and courage but is well worth the extra effort.

It is best to practice hitting on the full. In games, have the courage to try and hit on the full as well, particularly while you are still mastering the art, even at the expense of results! What you lose in the short term you will make up for in the long term. Shoot with conviction!



Practicing Shooting with Conviction

In order to become a successful shooter you must practice. It is important that you practice with conviction. For example, some people advocate using blocks of wood place in front of your target boules to force you to shoot “on the full” or au fer. Many players can hit the boules well when doing this.

The problem arises that when players shoot without the barrier they opt for safety and shoot in front as they believe it will increase their chances of a hit. They lose conviction!

By practicing without the barrier you must use will power to always try to shoot “au fer”. This will stay with you when the pressure is on. Willpower is what makes champions!

A suggestion which may help is to practice with the target boules on an old carpet. When shooting you must hit the target or your boule will bounce over.

You can then practice in your driveway or car park.

Practice Exercises

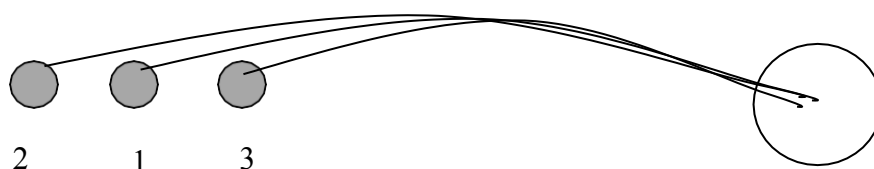
When you are starting out as a shooter, you should practice over short distances i.e. 5-6 metres (less for children) and as you become more successful, gradually increase the distance.

To start, try these exercises.

- Line the boules up in a row at right angles to your shooting line, about 200 mm apart. Shoot right to left and then left to right. As you improve gradually close the gap between the boules.



- Line the boules up in a row parallel to your shooting line, about 300 mm apart. Shoot the middle boule then the back boule and finally the front boules. As you improve gradually close the gap between the boules.



Playing a Game of Pétanque

Before a Boule is Thrown

Introduction

This section describes how to play a game of pétanque. It is ideal for beginners as it is simple but provides a bit more important detail than the average set of instructions provided in recreational boules sets.

The section on tactics will be of use to beginners and more experienced players alike.

Selecting the Teams

Pétanque can be played one on one (if you have 2 or 3 or less participants), but is generally played in pairs (doublettes) or triples (triplettes).

Teams generally have:

- a specialist “opener” (pointeur) who throws the team’s first 2 boules,
- a specialist “shooter” (tireur) who steps in to the ring when an opponent’s boules must be removed, and
- an all-rounder who can point and if necessary, shoot.

If you are a beginner you will probably start as a pointer, usually in the “opener” position. If you are all beginners, you may just take turns.

The Number of Boules For Each Player

In competition, participants in singles or doubles use 3 boules each and in triples, 2 boules each. Socially however you may vary this.

Tossing the Coin

Once teams have been selected there should be a toss of the coin

The team that wins the toss (we’ll call them Team 1) has the right to:

- Select the terrain – if not allocated by organiser
- Draw the starting circle
- Throw out the jack (cochonnet)
- Throw the first boule

Selecting the Terrain – if not allocated

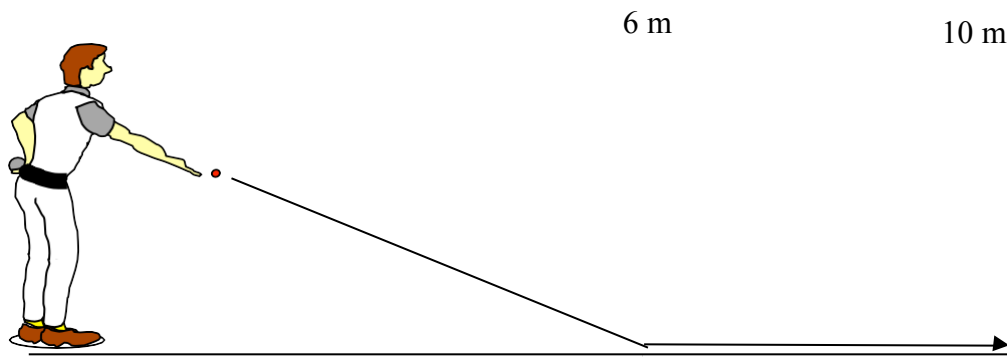
The team selects a terrain that it feels will give it an advantage by playing to its strengths or if familiar with the opposition, playing to **their** weakness.

Throwing the cochonnet

The cochonnet must be thrown to a distance of between 6 and 10 metres and when it comes to rest must be more than 1 metre from a “fixed obstacle”.

Team 1 is allowed 1 attempt to achieve a throw between the legal distance. If they fail the throw-out the throw reverts to Team 2. Team 2 must place by hand the cochonnet at a valid distance, Team 1 retains the right to throw the first boule of the end.

Note: Where there are marked playing areas the cochonnet is thrown within the confines of the space. In unmarked areas it is possible to throw in any direction, but please show respect to other people and games.



Note: During the course of the match there is no penalty for hitting or moving the cochonnet, indeed it can be an important tactic, particularly if you move it closer to your own boules. However if the cochonnet is knocked out of the marked playing area (where there is one) or if it goes beyond 20 metres from the circle, the end is declared over.

The team that threw the cochonnet on the cancelled end, starts the new end.

The circle

Where a prefabricated circle is used, it must be rigid and have an internal diameter of 50cms (tolerance: + or – 2mm).

Folding circles are permitted but on condition they are of a model and the rigidity approved by the FIPJP. The players are required to use the regulation circles provided by the organisers.

They must also accept the regulation circles, rigid or folding and approved by the FIPJP, provided by their opponent. If both teams have these circles the choice will be decided by the team that won the draw.

In all cases the circles must be marked before the jack is thrown.

A drawn circle at the starting of the first end must be no less than 35 cm and no more than 50 cm in diameter.

All boules are thrown from the circle. Player's feet must be fully in the circle when the boule is thrown.

The Game

The Game Begins - The First End

After team 1 has thrown the first boule, team 2 must reply. The pointeur may try to out-point the opposition boules or if it is a particularly well-placed effort, the shooter may decide to step in to the circle and shoot it out of the way.

If the boule is out-pointed by Team 2 then Team 1 must go again. If the shooter hits the boule the teams must check which boule is closest or if the shooter misses then Team 2 must go again.

In other words, the team with the boules closest to the cochonnet stays out of the circle until the other team has a boule closer to the cochonnet or run out of boules, in which case they again step into the circle.

If the opposition has thrown all their boules, the other team then attempts to get more boules closer to the jack than any of the opposing teams boules.

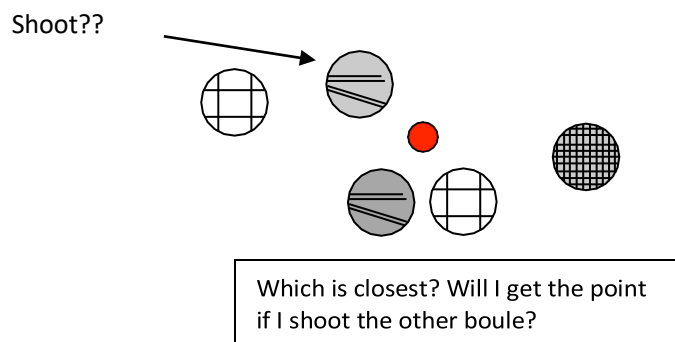
Important: Often it may be very obvious which of the boules are closest to the cochonnet, but on occasions the distances may be deceptive or difficult to judge. On these occasions use a tape measure or special pétanque measuring device. When in doubt, **check!!**

Note: In tripléttes the most a team can score on one end is 6 points. So it is possible to win a game in three ends, 6, 6 and 1.

Measuring

You may measure the distance of any boules from the cochonnet during the course of an end. This may have an important bearing on your actions.

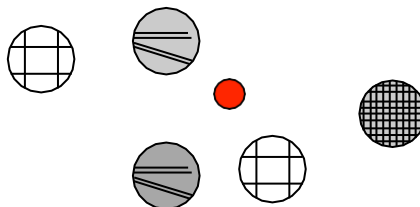
You may want to check who actually has the point for example, or you may want to know which boules are second and third, as this may influence you on whether to shoot or not. When in doubt, check!



Of course, you may need to measure when an end is finished to verify the number of points gained. Refer also “Marking the boules and cochonnet” page B-22

Scoring The End

The number of boules a team has **closer** to the cochonnet than the opposition is the number of points they gain for the end. These are added to the previous total.



Example

In this case, the grey boules belong to Team 1 and the white boule to Team 2. Team 1 gains one point only because Team 2 has the second closest boule. Team 2 gain no points.

The Game Continues - The Following End

The team that wins the end must draw the circle for the next one, usually around the resting place of the jack on the just completed end. They also throw out the jack and the first boules of the end.

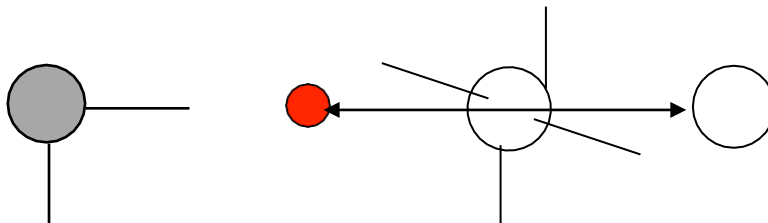
Play continues until one of the teams reaches 13 points.

Marking The Boules and Cochonnet

“Marking” refers to drawing 4 lines of approximately 5 cms at right angles to each other forming a cross, meeting at the cochonnet or boules using a stick or finger.

This may be done during the game in case boules or the cochonnet are accidentally moved, for example, by a boule from another game. If not marked, they must remain where they end up.

A boule should also be marked as shown below if it is in the way when measuring the distance between the cochonnet and another boule.



After marking the boule, be sure not to move it accidentally. Then lift it carefully and make your measure. Carefully replace the boule. Never tap or push a boule down to mark its position.

Tactics

Introduction

Tactics play a large part in a game of pétanque. Here are a few examples.

Throwing the cochonnet

Throwing the cochonnet gives you the chance to dictate the tactics of the end taking into account the relative playing strengths and weaknesses of both teams.

You can select the:

- ground or part of the ground and surface that suits you, and
- the distance that you want to play

Watching the opposition and where they throw the cochonnet may give you some clues as to *their* preferences. Watching the cochonnet and how it rolls may indicate how the terrain will play.

Selecting the Ground

When choosing a terrain to play, you should try to choose one that either suits you or/and does not suit the opposition.

Example

You may be comfortable playing on any surface but your opponents pointer or shooter is a “roller” and not effective unless the ground is smooth. You may choose a rough ground.

Selecting the Distance

When you are throwing out the cochonnet, you must take into account the relative playing strengths of the teams.

One team may have a fantastic shooter who is less effective beyond 8 metres. You may choose to throw to 9.9 metres (!) to negate their effectiveness. If you have an effective shooter also up to 8 metres, you may not care.

You may have a great long distance pointer, so you could choose a long end to take advantage of that.

The “Ideal” Opening Point

If you are your teams “opener” for the first throw of the game, the “ideal” point is approximately 30 cm in front of the cochonnet. In this position your boule is a great distraction to the opposition. They will be forced to avoid your boule (they won’t want to “promote” it) and may be tempted to shoot it.

Either way you are applying pressure that can force mistakes.

A boule behind the cochonnet can be used by the opposition to rest against, which is not an ideal target for your shooter, but it also gives the opposition the chance to block the front and exert pressure on *you*!

Promoting Your Boules

Sometimes the best way to take the point is to promote your boules by knocking or “nudging” them with another boule. In this way you may end up with two points.

This is another reason why you should keep your boules in front of the cochonnet.

Moving the Cochonnet

If you have a number of boules behind the cochonnet, you should try and move it toward them with one of your throws.

If the cochonnet is hit and leaves the playing area (where there is one) or moves beyond 20 metres from the circle, the end is finished. If one team has boules still to be thrown they get a point for each of these boules. If both teams have boules, then the end is void.

This tactic can save or win an end or even a game.

Playing a Stronger Team

If you are playing a stronger team (and this often means they have one or two good shooters) keep the game tight, shooting when absolutely necessary, *force* the other team to shoot often and try to capitalise on their misses.

Crowding the Cochonnet

If the opposition makes a good point early and your shooter misses the boule (or you don’t have a shooter), you may choose to crowd the cochonnet, close the game with boules in front and limit the number of points the opposition can gain.

This particularly applies when the opposition has most of their boules still to play.

Shooting

Shooting can be attacking or defensive. You may be shooting to remove a well-placed opposition boule that holds the point and force your opponents to point again, or to clear the way for your own team.

You may shoot an opposition boule that does not hold the point but is preventing your team from scoring more.

When and how often you shoot depends on your teams shooting capabilities.

If you have one good shooter you will shoot more cautiously and shoot as more or less a last resort, but with two good shooters you can be aggressive and shoot often.

Some teams will try to out-point a good initial boule from the opposition, or at least get close whilst others will immediately shoot to remove it, particularly if it is in front. If you try to point first you may then make it more difficult for your shooter.

Ultimately you must choose the method most likely to succeed.

Shooting the cochonnet

This is a difficult shot but can be devastatingly effective in a number of ways.

If the opposition has established a good point early in the end and your team has wasted a number of boules trying to out-point or remove it, you may attempt to shoot the cochonnet out of bounds and void the end to prevent conceding too many points.

If the opposition team have thrown all their boules and your team has a few left, you may choose to shoot the cochonnet. You would do this if scoring points looks difficult (due to blocking boules, for example). If successful you score a point for each boule your team still has “in the hand”.

Common French Words and Phrases in Pétanque

Introduction

It is not necessary to speak French to play pétanque but it adds a bit of flavour if you use some of the key words and phrase!

Here are some common examples. Give it a go, c'est facile!!

- Pétanque (paytonk or paytank)
- Boule[s] (both pronounced bool) a single ball or boules more than one ball.
- Cochonnet (coshonnay) literally, "little pig". The jack, sometimes called the bouchon (booshon). The 'but'.
- Commencez (Commohsay) - Start
- Tir! (teer) - "Shoot!" also Tir la boule!
- Bien Tiré – (byen teeray) Well shot
- Raté (ratay) - Missed
- Point (pwant) - Point
- Comme tu veux (Com to vuh) – "As you want". Meaning do what you want, shoot or point.
- Dommage – (Dohmarj) – Pity
- Merde! – I think you know this one!!
- C'est pas possible - It's not possible
- Arrête! – Stop!
- Soit pas court - (Swa pa coor) - Don't be short!
- Soit pas long – (Swa pa longuh) – Don't be long!
- Doucement - (doosemon) – Softly!
- Fanny - A team that has the "fanny" has been beaten without scoring; i.e., 13-0. Most clubs have a porcelain lady (or man) showing a bare backside. The team must kiss the backside!
- La revanche – The revenge (usually requested after a team has lost a match)
- La belle – The deciding game in a best out of 3 series.