

BEGINNERS GUIDE TO PÉTANQUE



1. Size of teams, number of boules

You can play Pétanque with two teams of one, two or three players on each side. In teams with one or two players, each player has 3 boules; in teams of three players, each has 2 boules.

2. Choosing the throwing place

Toss a coin to choose which team plays first. Any player in this team chooses where to draw a circle on the ground. Every player will stand in this circle to throw their boules. The circle should be about 0.5m in diameter and at least 1m from any obstacle (wall, tree, edge of playing area, etc).

3. Throwing the cochonnet (the little ball)

The team which won the toss throws the first cochonnet. Thereafter the side which won the previous end throws the cochonnet for the next end. The cochonnet is thrown between 6m and 10m from the circle in any direction. It also must not be closer than 1m from any obstacle.

4. How to throw the boule

The correct way to throw is with the boule held in the palm of the hand, with the back of the hand facing the cochonnet. With an upward movement of the arm and hand the boule is released.



5. The first boule

Any player from the first team throws the first boule, trying to get it as close as possible to the cochonnet. Both feet must be on the ground and within the circle while throwing and until the boule has landed.



6. The other team

A player from the other team then steps into the circle and tries to throw a boule closer to the cochonnet than their opponent, or to knock the opponent's boule away. The boule nearest to the cochonnet is said to be "holding the point".

7. Who plays when?

The players in the team that is not "holding" continue throwing until they manage to place a boule closest to the cochonnet. Players on the same team do not have to take alternate throws, but a player must always play their own boules.



8. When one team has no more boules

When a team has no more boules to be played, the players of the other team throw theirs and try to place them as close as possible to the cochonnet.



9. Counting the points

When both teams have no more boules, the game ends, and the points are counted. The winning team scores one point for each boule which is nearer the cochonnet than the opponents' closest. Only one team can score points in each round.



10. Starting the next round

A player from the team that has won throws the cochonnet from a new circle drawn round the cochonnet's last position. In Shipley Pétanque Club we also start from the other end of the piste.

The winners are the first team to reach 13 points (or whatever total you decide).