

Simple Petanque Rules

How to Play Petanque (Pay-tonk) Boules (Boolz)

The Place to Play

Petanque is also known as Boules and is played outdoors on any reasonably firm surface: your yard, the park, a field, a gravel parking lot, cinder running track, etc. Hard surfaces like concrete or asphalt or very soft like a fine sand beach or long grass are not recommended. The [ideal surface](#) is hard packed earth with coarse sand or pea gravel approximately 1/8" - 1/4" deep covering the surface. Find a place that is open and fairly flat. If there are a few bumps and hollows that's fine and can even add more challenge to the game.

Choose Teams

Divide up into two teams. You can play Singles with one player on each side, Doubles with two players on each side, or Triples with three players on each side. For leisure play a good way to choose teams is for one person to take a boule from each player and throw them out all at the same time. The owners of the boules that lie closest to the thrower make up the first team.

Select Boules

Both teams select their boules. Each team's boules should have Groove Patterns that distinguish them from the other side's boules: that way, they will be easy to identify when counting up points. When playing Singles or Doubles, each player uses three boules and for Triples each player uses two.

Decide Who Goes First

Toss a coin to see which side goes first.

Toss the Jack

The team that wins the coin toss chooses the starting location and then selects one of their players to throw out the jack. The starting location is indicated by a circle that is 14 to 20 inches in diameter and at least three feet from any obstacles. The circle can be drawn with chalk, etched in the dirt with a stick, or made from a piece of rope whatever works. Once the circle is drawn, the player then stands with both feet inside the circle and throws the jack. The jack can be thrown in any direction but must land within 20 to 30 feet of the starting circle and three feet from any obstacle.

Throw the Boules

All boules must be thrown from within the starting circle and with both feet on the ground. The player attempts to throw the boule so that it lands as close to the jack as possible it is okay to hit the jack. The player must remain inside the circle until the boule has landed. A player from the opposing team then steps into the circle and attempts to land his boule closer to the jack even if it means knocking his opponents out of the way. The boule closest to the jack leads or is said to be "holding the point." The other team must continue throwing boules until they take the lead or run out of boules. There is no order that team members must follow when throwing their boules however, they must only throw their own boules, and they must go one at a time from within the starting circle. If they take the lead, the other team then tries to recover by landing a lead boule.

Winning the Round

Once a team has used all its boules, the other side is allowed to throw the rest of its boules. When all boules are thrown, the points are counted. The team that has the boule closest to the jack wins the round. In addition, they also receive a point for each boule that is closer to the jack than their opponents' closest boule. Only one team scores points during a round.

Beginning a New Round

Once the points are counted, the next round begins with previous round's winners drawing a new starting circle. This starting circle is drawn around the final position of the jack in the previous round. The winning team then selects a player to toss out the jack from this new starting circle and then throw out the first boule.

Winning the Game

The first team to earn a total of 13 points wins the game. There is not a required number of rounds that must be played.