

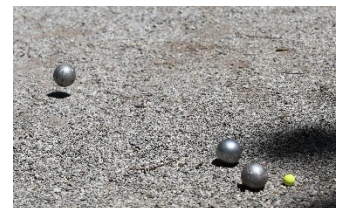
What is Pétanque?

Pétanque is a game. Some say it may be traced back to the simple game of throwing or rolling a ball as close as possible to a target. Pétanque, as we play it, was developed in the Mediterranean and legend says that in the early 1900s a game called Le Jeu Provençale was modified by a man named Jules LeNoir which eventually became the modern sport of Pétanque. In the Jeu Provençale, players threw a small ball 12 to 20 meters while standing in a circle drawn on the ground. The object of the game was to toss or roll your ball, referred to in French as boules, as close to the target ball as possible. Players would take one step from the circle drawn on the ground, in any direction, and — while perched on one leg — roll or throw the ball into the air toward the target ball. Opponents would then try to knock the ball away from the target ball by running three steps from the circle and, on the third step — while in the air — throw their boules before the next foot (the fourth step) touches the ground. Jules LeNoir was an experienced Jeu Provençale player until an accident left him paralyzed from the waist down. Although confined to a wheel chair, he began challenging players to a new game, involving pointing and shooting at the target ball by players standing in the circle instead of running and jumping. The word — Pétanque — is simply short for pieds (feet) tanqués (“securely fastened,” or “nailed down,” in the local French dialect).



The Classic City Pétanque Club was formed in 2018 and has grown from eight founding members to over fifty members today. The club is a member of the Federation of Pétanque USA, the official governing body of the sport of Pétanque in the US. We play at Lay Park in downtown Athens, GA where we partnered with the Athens-Clarke County Leisure Services Department to build ten courts.

It doesn't take much time to learn to play the game or much equipment. We use steel boules, a target ball, and a manufactured ring to play the game and play on a field of uneven gravel. Players stand in the circle and toss the target 6-10 meters, or 20 to 32 feet, out onto the gravel. The first player throws the target ball out then tries to toss his boules as close to the target as possible. Then the opponent throws a boules and tries to either get closer to the target or to hit the opponent's boules and knock it away with their boules remaining closest to the target. If they are unsuccessful in getting a ball closer, they throw another one until they do. Games may be played one-on-one, referred to as singles, teams of two on two known as doubles, or teams of three on three. In singles and doubles matches each player has three balls. In triples players may only use two balls each.



Points are tallied at the end of each round, after all of the boules have been played by both teams. The team that has the boule closest to the target gets one point, plus a point for every other boule that lies closer to the target than the other teams nearest boule.

So, in doubles or triples, a team could score six points, if each of their boules is closer to the target than the other's team's best boule. Games are divided into what the French call mènes, and we refer to as ends, or rounds. Games are won by the first player or team to reach 13 points. Only one team scores in an end and games can last between 45 minutes and an hour.

The field of play, referred to as the terrain, may be sand or hard concrete, filled with rocks and sticks, or smooth clay and sand.

Pétanque, also known as boules, is a fun and competitive game requiring concentration, strategy, and focus. Classic City Pétanque Club players value inclusiveness, communication, sportsmanship, and fun while playing the game. Our mission is to promote and enjoy the game of Pétanque in Athens and the surrounding area and we play regularly throughout the year and promote the game through introductory classes and demonstrations, recruiting new members, and planning and conducting tournaments and competitions. The club plays on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays and sometimes in between. It costs nothing to begin playing Pétanque because the club provides boules and rings and a place to play.

I play because it requires skill, the use of strategy, and there is always socializing before, during, and after the games. It's both exciting and satisfying to see and hear a ball I've thrown 7 or 8 meters hit another ball with a loud crack. I've met so many fun people playing Pétanque over the last several years. We have players in the club from all across the country and several from France and Germany. It's easy to learn the basics and surprisingly addictive. From a casual day at the park to national and international competitions, the game has something for nearly everyone. In Pétanque, finesse is more important than force and you don't have to be athletic to play well. So, it's a great game for families, parties, or just enjoying some outdoor time with friends.

Whether you're interested in mastering a new sport or just looking for a fun way to pass some time, Pétanque may just be the best game you never heard of. You can learn more about the game and our club at our website: <https://www.athenspetanque.org/about-us/>