

## OFFICIAL RULES FOR THE SPORT OF PÉTANQUE

Applicable to all territories of the national federations, members of the FIPJP

(With annotations by FPUSA National Umpire Gary Jones in red text.)

### GENERAL RULES

#### Article 1, Composition of teams

Pétanque is a sport in which:

- 3 players play against 3 players (triples).

It can also be played by:

- 2 players against 2 players (doubles).

- 1 player against 1 player (singles).

In triples, each player uses 2 boules.

In doubles and singles, each player uses 3 boules.

No other formula is allowed.

The composition of teams for social (also called leisure or recreational) pétanque can be different than that allowed for the sport of pétanque. The overriding principle of social pétanque is that both teams have the same number of boules. Example: 2 players with three boules each may play against 3 players with two boules each.

#### Article 2, Characteristics of approved boules

Pétanque is played with boules approved by the F.I.P.J.P. and which conform to the following criteria:

1) To be made of metal.

2) To have a diameter between 7.05 cm (minimum) and 8 cm (maximum).

3) To have a weight of between 650 grams (minimum) and 800 grams (maximum).

For competitions reserved for players who are aged 11 years or less in the year, they may use boules that weigh 600 grammes and are 65 mm in diameter

provided that they are made under one of the approved labels. **This does NOT allow players who are aged 11 years or less to play with such boules in tournaments where people over age 11 in the year are also participating.**

The trademark of the manufacturer and the weight must be engraved on the boules and must always be legible.

The player's first and last names (or initials) may also be engraved on them, as well as various logos, initials, acronyms or similar detail, in accordance with the specifications relating to the manufacture of the boules

4) The boule must be hollow and not contain any material such as lead, sand, mercury etc. As a general rule, the boules must not be tampered with in any way, nor altered or modified after machining by the approved manufacturer. Importantly, re-tempering of the boules in order to modify the hardness applied by the manufacturer is forbidden.

**Social pétanque also allows recreation boules that are only approximately correct as to weight, diameter, and construction. Both social and sport pétanque allow reasonable marking of boules with ink, paint, after-market engraving, etc. for easy identification of one's boules; however, specific tournament guidelines sometimes prohibit the complete painting of boules for tournament play. As long as each singular boule meets established guidelines, there is no requirement that they match.**

#### **Article 2a, Penalties for irregular boules**

Any player guilty of breaking the above condition 4) is immediately disqualified from the competition together with their partners.

If a boule not "tampered with" but worn, or of defective manufacture, does not pass the official examination successfully, or does not comply with the norms set out in paragraphs 1), 2) and 3) above, the player must change it. They may also change the set.

Complaints relating to these three paragraphs and made by players are admissible only before the start of a game. It is in the interests of the players, therefore, to ensure that their boules and those of their opponents comply with the above rules.

Complaints relating to 4) are admissible at any time during the game, but they must be made between ends. However, from the third end onwards, if a complaint made about the boules of an opponent is proved to be unfounded, 3 points will be added to the score of the opponent.

An umpire or the jury may, at any time, require examination of the boules of one or several players.

The wording that disallows complaints relating to Article 2. conditions one, two, and three after the start of the game does not prevent the umpire from requiring that non-conforming boules be changed. Rather, it dictates that no penalty will be imposed against the offending team regarding play up to the point that non-conforming boules are discovered.

### **Article 3, Approved jacks**

Jacks are made of wood, or of a synthetic material bearing the manufacturer's mark and having obtained the FIPJP's approval in line with the precise specification relating to the required standards.

Their diameter must be 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.

Though the above wording may be confusing to some, to be approved for FPUSA tournament play: 1) Jacks made of wood, whether painted or unpainted, may not be able to be picked up with a magnet, do not require the manufacturer's mark, do not require FIPJP's approval, and must meet the stated diameter and weight requirements. 2) Jacks made of a synthetic material, whether painted or unpainted, may be able to be picked up by a magnet, do require the manufacturer's mark, do require FIPJP's approval, and must meet the stated diameter and weight requirements. NOTE: FIPJP approval is relative to the fact that the jack is of an approved synthetic, but approval does NOT exempt the jacks from diameter and weight requirements.

## Article 4, Licences

To be registered in a competition each player must present their licence, or, in accordance with the rules of their federation, a document proving their identity, and that they are a member of that federation. **The wording “in a competition” means any organized play that requires a membership to enter. The wording “must present” means “must present if asked to do so.”**

## PLAY

### Article 5, Area of play and terrain rules

Pétanque is played on any surface. However, by the decision of the organising committee or an umpire, the teams may be required to play on a marked and defined terrain. In this case, the terrain for National Championships and International Competitions, must have the following minimum dimensions: 15 metres long x 4 metres wide. **Even though the wording dictates that National Championships must be held on lanes that are 15m x 4m, the FPUSA has allowed smaller terrains. Any deviations should be approved in advance by the FPUSA Sport Committee, National Sport Director, or President.**

For other competitions, the Federations may permit variations relative to these minimum dimensions, subject to them not being below 12 metres x 3 metres.

A playing area comprises of an indeterminate number of lanes defined by strings, the size of which must not interfere with the course of play. **There have also been deviations granted for painted or chalked lane dividers and “strings” greater than 1mm. Deviations should be sought from the NSD, Sport Committee, or President when in doubt.** These strings marking separate lanes are not dead ball lines except for those marking the end of the lane and the exterior of the terrain. **Exception: when games are timed, all strings are dead ball lines.**

When the lanes are placed end to end, the end lines connecting the lanes are dead ball lines.

When the terrains of play are enclosed by barriers, these must be a minimum distance of 1 metre from the exterior line of the playing area. **Wording “enclosed by barriers” refers to walls, scoreboards, crowd barriers, etc. that might keep a player from having unrestricted throwing motion. Boards that function to stop**

errant boules are not normally considered to be “barriers.” Current FPUSA regulations state that such boards should be 50cm from strings, but deviations have been granted. If such a deviation allows boards to be less than 50cm from the string, a pointing obstacle is created. Deviations should be sought from the NSD, Sport Committee, or President when in doubt.

Games are played to 13 points, with the possibility of leagues and qualifying heats being played to 11 points. FPUSA regulations state untimed games are played to 13 points.

Some competitions can be organised within time limits. These must always be played within marked lanes and all the lines marking these lanes are dead ball lines. FPUSA regulations dictate timed games as: 45 minutes for singles, 60 minutes for doubles, and 75 minutes for triples unless lighting becomes an issue.

#### **Article 6, Start of play and rules regarding the circle**

The players must draw lots (toss a coin) to decide which team will choose the terrain, if it has not been allocated by the organisers, and to be the first to throw the jack.

If the lane has been designated by the organisers, the jack must be thrown on this lane. The teams concerned must not go to a different lane without the umpire’s permission. (For a jack to be considered as “on this lane,” its base must rest on the ground inside the boundary string. This is different from when a jack goes out-of-bounds during the play of an end. In that case, a jack which has its base resting in out-of-bounds area is still in play unless it is totally outside the string when viewed from directly above.)

Any member of the team winning the draw chooses the starting point and places or traces a circle on the ground of a size that the feet of each player can fit entirely inside it. However, a drawn circle may not measure less than 35 cm or more than 50 cm in diameter. Note that a drawn circle's diameter must be within 35cm to 50cm **and** be large enough that the feet of each player can be placed entirely inside it. In the unlikely event that a player can show that both feet are not able to fit inside the circle, it can be extended in the direction away from the jack until that player's feet are accommodated.

Where a prefabricated circle is used, it must be rigid and have an internal diameter of 50 cm (tolerance: + or – 2 mm). Circles made of string, twine, cord, etc. do not meet the requirement of being “rigid.” Homemade rigid circles meeting size tolerances are allowed, unless specifically banned by tournament regulations. FPUA regulations for official title tournaments do NOT allow homemade circles at present.

Folding circles are permitted but on condition they are of a model approved by the FIPJP with regard, in particular, to the rigidity. Homemade folding circles are not permitted, as they are not of a model approved by the FIPJP.

The players are required to use the regulation circles provided by the organisers.

They must also accept the regulation rigid circles or the FIPJP approved folding circles provided by their opponent. If both teams have one of these circles, the choice will be decided by the team that won the draw. If the organizers provide circles, they must be within prescribed tolerances. Once that requirement is met, players may not refuse to use them. If organizers do not provide circles, but one of the two competing teams has a regulation circle, the other team cannot refuse to use it unless the organizers have specifically prohibited use of manufactured circles.

The circle must be drawn (or placed) more than 1 metre from any obstacle and at least 1.5 metres from another throwing circle or jack in use. An obstacle, as it relates to placing the circle, would be something that might restrict a player's throwing motion (tree, wall, scoreboard, etc.) Boards that function to stop errant boules are not normally considered to be obstacles to throwing.

The interior of the circle can be completely cleared of grit/pebbles etc. during the end but must be put back in good order when the end is over. Wording “In good order,” means substantially consistent with the terrain surrounding the circle.

The players’ feet must be entirely on the inside of the circle and not encroach on its perimeter and they must not leave it or be lifted completely off the ground until the thrown boule has touched the ground. No part of the body may touch the ground outside the circle. Any player not respecting this rule shall incur the penalties as provided in article 35.

No part of a player's body may contact the ground outside the circle until the thrown boule or jack has hit the ground; however, if a player's heel hovers above the circle, but does not touch the circle at any time before the thrown boule lands, that should not be called as a foul. The umpire has some discretion re a player who stands on the back of the circle as no advantage is gained by doing so. Some players stand on the back of the circle when preparing to throw but raise their heel before releasing the boule, but my position is to allow this practice.

As an exception, those disabled in the lower limbs are permitted to place only one foot inside the circle, but the other foot must not be in front of it. For players throwing from a wheelchair, at least one wheel (that on the side of the throwing arm) must rest inside the circle.

If a player picks up the circle when there are boules still to be played, the circle is replaced but only the opponents are allowed to play their boules.

The prohibition against picking up the circle while there are still boules to be played should also be understood to apply to deliberately kicking the circle away from its marked position. Accidental kicking or moving of the circle does not warrant a penalty. The circle should simply be returned to its original position. If for any reason the original position's marked location cannot be precisely determined, teams may agree to an approximate position or call on an umpire for adjudication. When the prescribed penalty for prematurely picking up a circle cannot be applied, because the offending team has no boules remaining to be played, Article 35 penalties may be assessed for repeated offenses. Though the penalty for picking up the circle while there are boules to be played may seem to be disproportionate to the offense, my understanding is that there are no changes to this rule to be considered by the FIPJP prior to the year 2025.

The circle is not considered to be an out of bounds area. If a boule or jack rebounds through the circle, it remains in play if the requirements of other articles re dead boules or jacks are met.

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

A team that fails to mark the position of the circle before the jack is thrown is subject to penalties as described in Article 35 after having been first cautioned.

The team that is going to throw the jack must erase all throwing circles near the one it is going to use. "Near," leaves room for interpretation. I suggest that an umpire should be lenient in allowing erasing of circles between ends of play. The team should also erase the circle (or markings of the circle) that was just used.

The team winning the toss, or the previous end will have only one attempt to throw the jack. If this jack is not valid it is handed to the opponent who must place it on the terrain at a valid position. If the jack is not placed in a valid position by the second team, the player who placed it shall be subject to the penalties outlined in article 35, In the event of a repeat offence, a new card will be issued to the whole team, in addition to any cards previously received. **NOTE: TEAM PENALTY. For the repeat offense, not only the offender, but the entire team would get a new card in addition to any cards previously received.**

The throwing of the jack by one member of the team does not imply that they are obliged to be the first to play.

The players must mark the position of the jack initially and after each time it is moved. **A team that fails to mark the position of the jack after being cautioned is subject to penalties as described in Article 35. It falls to the player who MOVED the jack to MARK IT; however, they may allow teammates or opponents to mark it for them.** No claims will be allowed for an unmarked jack and the umpire will rule only on the position of the jack on the terrain.

### **Article 7, Valid distances for the thrown jack**

For the thrown jack to be valid, the following conditions apply:

1) That the distance separating it from the internal edge of the circle must be - 6 metres minimum and 10 metres maximum for Juniors and Seniors. **If the nearest part of the thrown jack is at least six meters from the interior edge of the circle and no more than ten meters from same, it meets distance requirements of bullet #1.**

- For competitions intended for **[and restricted to]** younger players, shorter distances may be applied.

2) That the throwing circle must be a minimum of 1 metre from any obstacle and 1.5 metres from another circle or jack in use. **Obstacle = tree, wall, scoreboard, etc. that restricts throwing.**



3) That the jack must be a minimum of 50 cm from any obstacle [that restricts pointing] and from the end line of the lane, it must also be a minimum of 1.5 metres from another jack or circle in use. *(note: no minimum distance is required from the "side" line that separates the lanes or the dead ball lines at the side of the lanes).*

4) That the jack must be visible to the player whose feet are placed astride the extreme limits of the interior of the circle and whose body is absolutely upright. In case of dispute on this point, the umpire decides, without appeal, if the jack is visible.

At the following end the jack is thrown from a circle placed or traced around the point where it finished at the previous end,

...unless the jack finished in an out-of-bounds area or in another lane/area than the one in which the game was being played. EXAMPLES:

In the diagram below, assume: There are three lanes of play. The red circle represents the circle for your game in the middle lane (yellow). The jack is resting at point A. The jack is then hit and passes over point B before coming to rest at point C. The game is timed.; therefore, the jack is now dead.

The next end should begin with the circle being placed at point A (the position the jack occupied before being displaced). If point A was not marked, the circle should be placed at point B (the nearest point of relief to where the jack crossed into an out-of-bounds area). If teams can't agree on where point B is, in other words where the jack crossed into an out-of-bounds area, the circle should be placed at point D (the nearest point of relief from where it eventually came to rest).

Note: If the game was NOT timed, the jack being hit and moved to point C would NOT result in the jack becoming dead. Therefore, the end would continue. When the end is finished, the circle should be placed at point D.



except in the following cases:

- The circle would be less than 1 metre from an obstacle, 1.5 metres from another circle or jack in use. **An obstacle, as it relates to placing the circle, would be something that might restrict a player's throwing motion (tree, wall, scoreboard, etc.).**
- The throwing of the jack could not be made to all regulation distances.

In the first case the player places or traces the circle at the regulation distance from the obstacle or object in question.

In the second case, the player may step back, in line with the previous end's play, without exceeding the maximum distance authorised for the throwing of the jack. This opportunity is offered only if the jack cannot be thrown to the maximum

distance in any other direction. Once the circle's valid position has been determined, if the jack could not be thrown to all valid distances, the team that is to throw the jack has the option of moving the circle back as explained above. If when moving the circle back one would encroach into another lane (or area), one may move it as far as possible in line with the previous end's play, then in parallel with the lane (or area) divider. One may NOT move it any further than necessary to allow throwing to all distances between 6 and 10 meters, NOR move it off the previous end's line of play except as noted above.

If the jack has not been thrown in accordance with the rules defined above, the opposing team will place the jack in a valid position on the terrain. They may also move the circle back, in accordance with the conditions defined in these rules, if the first team's positioning of the circle did not allow the jack to be thrown the maximum distance. If the circle is to be moved, move it **before** placing the jack in a valid position.

In any case, the team which lost the jack after the invalid throw must play the first boule.

The team that won the right to throw the jack have a maximum of one minute to do so. The team that won the right to place the jack after the unsuccessful throw of the opponent must do so immediately. If the first team has not thrown the jack to a valid position, placing (not throwing) of the jack by the second team must be in a valid position; if not, team 2 must repeat the procedure subject to penalties in Article 35 (see TEAM PENALTY statement in Art.6 notes).The word "immediately" should be understood to mean no longer than it takes to quickly walk the distance to ensure placement in a valid position. The one minute allowed for tossing of the jack begins as soon as the previous end has been completed, in other words, after points have been decided. Tournament directors may reduce the time allowed to throw a jack to expedite play.

### **Article 8, For the thrown jack to be valid**

If the thrown jack is stopped by an umpire, an opponent, a spectator, an animal or any moving object, it is not valid and must be thrown again.

If the thrown jack is stopped by a member of the team the opponent will place the jack in a valid position. If the thrown jack is stopped by a member of the

throwing team, placing (**not throwing**) of the jack by the second team **must** be in a valid position; if not, team 2 must repeat the procedure subject to penalties in Article 35. (see TEAM PENALTY statement in ART.6 Notes)

If after the throwing of the jack, a first boule is played, the opponent still has the right to contest the validity of its position except in the case when the jack has been placed by a team member. **When a jack is moved by the first boule played in an end, the opponent's right to contest the validity is accomplished by measuring to the point where the thrown jack was marked before being moved. However, if the thrown jack's position was not marked, the opponent may measure to where the moved jack now rests, as the team that threw the jack is not allowed to make any claim regarding the position of a jack that was not marked. (See Article 6.)**

Before the jack is given to the opponent to place, both teams must have recognised that the throw was not valid, or an umpire must have decided it to be so. **If opponent picks up jack before teams have agreed jack throw to be invalid, jack must be thrown again. If the throwing team picks up jack before teams have agreed jack throw to be invalid, placing (**not throwing**) of the jack by the second team **must** be in a valid position; if not, team 2 must repeat the procedure subject to penalties in Article 35. (See Art. 6 re repeat offenses TEAM PENALTY)**

If the opponent has also played a boule, the jack is definitely deemed valid and no objection is admissible.

### **Article 9, Dead Jack during an end**

The jack is dead in the following 7 cases:

1) When the jack is displaced into an out of bounds area, even if it comes back on to the authorised playing area. A jack straddling the boundary of an authorised terrain is valid. It becomes dead only after having completely crossed the boundary of the authorised terrain or the dead ball line, that is to say, when it is entirely beyond the boundary when viewed from directly above. A puddle, on which a jack floats freely, is considered to be an out of bounds area. **The wording “on which a jack floats freely,” re whether a puddle constitutes an out-of-bounds area, has in the past been interpreted by the FPUSA to mean “on which a jack is actually floating,” **not** “on which a jack is likely to float.” Until such a time as new FPUSA interpretations may be issued, that distinction remains in effect.**

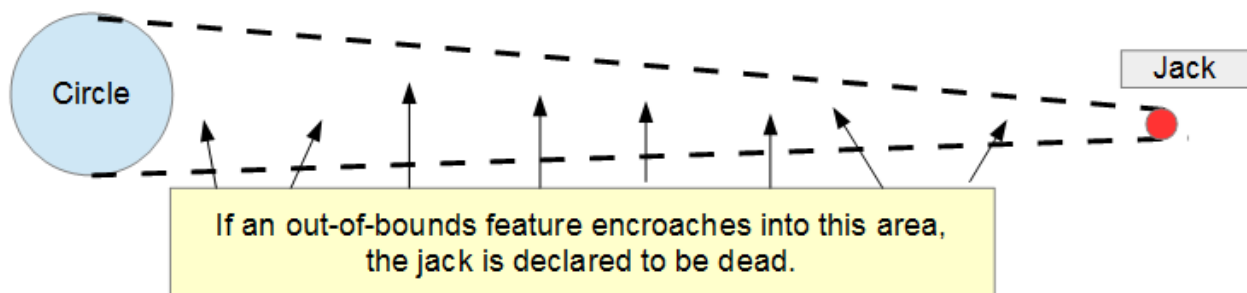
2) When, still on the authorised terrain, the moved jack is not visible from the circle, as defined in article 7. However, a jack masked by a boule is not dead. The umpire is authorised to temporarily remove a boule to declare whether the jack is visible. **The umpire may not dig into the terrain to find a buried jack nor move a rock that obstructs vision. This rule applies even after the last boule of a round has been thrown!**

3) When the jack is displaced to more than 20 metres (for Juniors and Seniors) or 15 metres (for the younger players) or less than 3 metres from the throwing circle. **Junior players are ages 12 through 17; Seniors are ages 18 and over—in the year of the event.**

4) When on marked out playing areas, the jack crosses more than one lane immediately to the side of the lane in use and when it crosses the end line of the lane.

5) When the displaced jack cannot be found, the search time being limited to 5 minutes.

6) When an out of bounds area is situated between the jack and the throwing circle.



7) When, in time limited games, the jack leaves the designated playing area

### **Article 10, Displacement of obstacles**

It is strictly forbidden for players to press down, displace or crush any obstacle whatever on the playing area. **The FPUSA allows removal of man-made clutter that drops or blows onto the terrain during play. The umpire has discretion, but typically allows natural obstacles like leaves, twigs, etc. to remain wherever they**

drop or blow. An example of something that might be removed would be a large limb falling from overhead. However, the player about to throw the jack is authorised to test the landing point with one of their boules by tapping the ground no more than three times. Furthermore, the player who is about to play, or one of their partners, may fill in a hole which would have been made by one boule played previously. Filling a hole no longer encompasses a boule's trail that is, sometimes on a soft terrain, contiguous to the hole being filled. Only the "landing point" may be filled.

For not complying with this rule, especially in the case of sweeping in front of a boule to be shot, the players incur the penalties outlined in article 35.

"Sweeping" is activity such as smoothing, stamping, or flattening an area when there is not an actual hole to be filled. Excessive stamping after filling is not allowed. Using one's hand or foot to brush a large area that is not part of the minimal act required to fill a hole is also prohibited.

### **Article 11, Changing of jack or boule**

Players are forbidden to change the jack or a boule during a game except in the following cases:

- 1) The one or the other cannot be found, the search time being limited to 5 minutes. Though players are forbidden from changing jacks during a game, an umpire may decide to allow it in a case where a player has a visual impairment and is unable to see certain colored jacks or where darkness becomes an issue, and a brighter colored jack allows play to proceed. It is unlikely that a boule would ever be lost in competitive play, but the umpire would have leeway to insist that play continue if time or darkness was an issue.
- 2) The one or the other is broken: in this case the largest part is taken into consideration.

If boules remain to be played, it is immediately replaced, after measuring, if necessary, by a boule or a jack of identical or similar diameter. At the next end the player concerned can take a new complete set of boules.

## JACK

### Article 12, Jack masked or displaced

If, during an end, a leaf or a piece of paper accidentally masks the jack these objects are removed. **Leaves cannot normally be removed from the playing area. However, in an instance where the jack becomes obscured, it is allowed. On the other hand, if a jack is moved into a pile of leaves and can no longer be seen from the circle, it is dead.**

If the jack comes to be moved by the wind or the slope of the terrain, for example or by an umpire, a player or spectator accidentally treading on it, a boule or a jack coming from another game, an animal or any other mobile object, it is returned to its original position, provided this was marked. **The Article 6 admonition re claims made about jacks that have not been marked as to their position is a general one and is pertinent in all situations that may be encountered during a game. If an umpire is called to rule, the ruling must be based upon what can be seen on the ground, not on any claims that a jack was moved-- unless those claims can be supported by marks made by the players regarding positions of the objects in question.**

If the jack is moved by a boule played in this game, it is valid.

### Article 13, Jack moved into another game

If, during an end, the jack is displaced onto another terrain of play, marked out or not, the jack is valid subject to the conditions outlined in article 9. **Article 9 relates to the seven cases where a jack is declared to be dead.**

The players using this jack will wait, if there is room, for the players in the other game to complete their end, before completing their own.

The players concerned by the application of this rule must show patience and courtesy.

At the following end the teams continue on the terrain which had been allotted to them and the jack is thrown again from the place it occupied when it was displaced, subject to the conditions of article 7. **Article 7 relates to the proper placement of the circle at the following end.**

## **Article 14, Rules to apply if the jack is dead**

It does not matter which team or what action caused the jack to be declared dead. Article 14 applies in any case. If, during an end, the jack is dead, one of three cases can apply:

- 1) Both teams have boules to play, the end is void and the jack is thrown by the team that scored the points in the previous end or who won the toss.
- 2) Only one team has boules left to play, this team scores as many points as boules that remain to be played.
- 3) The two teams have no more boules in hand, the end is void and the jack is thrown by the team that scored the points in the previous end or who won the toss.

## **Article 15, Positioning the jack after it has been stopped**

- 1) If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or deviated by a spectator or by an umpire, it remains in this position. If it has passed into an out-of-bounds area, follow Article 14. If not, and it comes to rest in another terrain of play, follow Article 13.
- 2) If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or deviated by a player in the authorised playing area, their opponent has the choice of: (“their opponent” refers to the opponent of the player who stopped or deviated the jack, not necessarily the opponent of the player in the circle.)
  - a). leaving the jack in its new position; If it has passed into an out-of-bounds area, follow Art.14. If not, and it comes to rest in another terrain of play, follow Article 13.
  - b). putting it back in its original position;
  - c). placing it anywhere on the extension of a line going from its original position to the place that it is found, up to a maximum distance of 20 metres from the circle (15 metres for the younger players) and such that it is visible. The jack may be placed in an out-of-bounds area or adjoining lane and still satisfy Article 15, 2c. If such is the case, follow Article 14 or Article 13 as appropriate.



Paragraphs b) and c) can only be applied if the position of the jack was previously marked. If this was not the case, the jack will remain where it is found. **If it has passed into an out-of-bounds area, follow Article 14. If not, and it comes to rest in another terrain of play, follow Article 13.**

If, after having been struck, the jack travels into an out of bounds area before returning, finally, on to the playing area, it is classed as dead and the actions defined in article 14 apply.

## **BOULES**

### **Article 16, Throwing of the first and following boules**

The first boule of an end is thrown by a player belonging to the team that has won the draw or has been the last to score. **The first player does not have to be the one who has thrown the jack, nor is there a prescribed order of play within the team. A team can decide who should play next depending upon the situation and the type of play desired. Though teams have defined roles for each player (pointer, middle, shooter), they are free to deviate from these roles in any way they desire.** After that, it is the team that does not hold the point that plays. **Though the rules say that the team not holding the point must play, a new interpretation of the handling of a boule played when a team is already holding the point has been issued by the FIPJP and confirmed by its president, Claude Azema. Umpires must now assume that a team playing while holding the point incurs adequate penalty by playing a boule when not required to do so. Therefore, Article 24 (boules played contrary to the rules) must not be invoked in this situation, nor should Article 35. No further penalty should be applied. Play should resume by requiring the team that does not hold the point to play next. Though many officers and umpires in the pétanque universe disagreed with this ruling, the FPUSA has committed to abide by the decision that was made.**

The player must not use any object or draw a line on the ground to guide them in playing a boule or mark its landing point. **The prohibition against using objects or lines on the ground to aid in throwing a boule does not preclude a teammate from standing near or pointing to a desired landing spot. Whilst playing their last boule, it is forbidden to carry a boule in the other hand. The prohibition against holding a boule while playing your last boule means you are not allowed to use one of your**

teammate's unplayed boules, nor one of your own spare boules or dead boules as a balancing device when playing your final boule.

The boules must be played one at a time. The regulation that requires boules to be played "one at a time" does **not** mean that the same player cannot play consecutive boules. It means that a player cannot throw two or three boules simultaneously, nor can they play another boule while the previous boule is still rolling.

Any boule thrown cannot be replayed. However, boules must be replayed if they have been stopped or deviated accidentally from their course between the throwing circle and the jack by a boule or jack coming from another game, or by an animal or any moving object (football, etc.) and in the case defined in article 8, third paragraph. There is one more case where a boule may be replayed besides the two mentioned here in Article 16. Article 20 allows a team whose played boule is accidentally stopped or deviated by an opponent the option of leaving it where it comes to rest **or** replaying the boule.

Before throwing their boule, the player must remove from it any trace of mud or whatever deposit, under threat of penalties outlined in article 35. Note that the rules no longer prohibit a player from carrying a wet cloth or moistening a boule or jack. This makes removal of mud, or whatever, easier to accomplish.

If the first boule played goes out-of-bounds, it is for the opponent to play first then alternately so long as there are no boules on the designated terrain. A point has not yet been established until a boule remains on the designated terrain, therefore, teams continue to alternate play.

**In all other cases:** If, after shooting or pointing, there are no boules left in the authorised area, the provisions of article 29 relating to boules equidistant from the jack apply.

### **Article 17, Behaviour of players and spectators during a game**

During the regulation time allowed for a player to throw a boule the spectators and players must observe total silence. It is particularly important that opponents not talk or move about while the opposing team is in the circle. However, the time allowed to play is defined in Article 21 as the short period (one minute unless tournament regulations dictate otherwise) starting from the moment when the

previous boule or jack stops or, if it is necessary to measure a point, from the moment the latter has been carried out.

The opponents must not walk, nor gesticulate nor do anything that could disturb the player about to play. The non-playing team should not intrude upon the playing area until after the playing team declares their boule to be holding the point or they have exhausted all their boules unless the non-playing team suspects the team about to play may already be holding the point, at which time both teams may consult and/or measure to decide which is holding the point. (exception: non-playing team may view any measurements from a distance close enough to ensure nothing is moved). To proceed otherwise violates the regulation against doing “anything” that could disturb the player about to play. Only their team-mate/s may remain between the throwing circle and the jack.

Teammates of the person in the circle may stand anywhere they choose.

The opponents must remain beyond the jack or behind the player and, in both cases, to the side with regard to the direction of play and at a distance of at least 2 metres the one from the other. The rules allow the non-playing team to stand behind the circle, as well as beyond the jack, if they are 2 meters off the line of play; however, serious, experienced players almost always stand beyond the jack in order to be better aware of what is transpiring in the round. Congregating behind the circle also makes it more likely that the prohibition against talking may be penalized as a disturbing activity. An umpire should allow reasonable accommodation for players who step off terrain, sit on a fixed bench, etc. between the circle and jack, but should insist on compliance if anything they’re doing could disturb the player about to play.

The players who do not observe these regulations could be excluded from the competition if, after a warning from an umpire, they persist in their conduct. Note that behavior penalties, unlike playing penalties, do not follow the WARNING-DISQUALIFICATION OF A BOULE-EXCLUSION FROM THE GAME order of application described by Article 35.

## **Article 18, Throwing of the boules and boules going outside the terrain**

Absolutely no-one, as a test, may throw their boules during a game including away from the lane where they are playing. Players who do not observe this rule could be penalised as set out in article 35. **The wording “as a test” means practicing ones throw, release, backspin, etc. as well as testing the terrain. Practice is not allowed whether on or off the paying terrain.**

During an end, boules going outside the marked terrain are valid except as in the application of article 19. **“Outside the marked terrain” is not the same as “out of bounds.”**

### **Article 19, Dead boules**

Any boule is dead from the moment that it enters an out of bounds area. A boule straddling the boundary line of the authorised playing area is valid. The boule is dead only after having completely crossed the boundary of the allotted playing area, that is to say, when it is situated entirely beyond the boundary when viewed from directly above. The same applies when, on marked lanes, the boule completely crosses more than one of the lanes alongside the lane in use or when it crosses the end line of the lane.

In timed games played on a marked lane a boule is considered dead when it completely crosses the line of the designated lane.

If the boule comes back into the playing area, either because of the slope of the ground or by having rebounded from an obstacle, moving or stationary, it is immediately taken out of the game and anything that it has displaced after its passage into an out of bounds area is put back in place provided these objects have been marked. **A dead boule that rebounds into the live area does not “infect” (make dead) boules or the jack upon contacting them.**

Any dead boule must immediately be removed from the game. By default, it will be considered live the moment another boule is played by the opposing team. **2016 FPUSA guidelines, as a safety precaution, allowed the team playing to play consecutive boules, without being interrupted by their opponents, even if the previous boule played was dead and not yet removed. Here is the 2016 wording: “It is the responsibility of the team playing to remove any dead boule that has re-entered the playing area. If the dead boule is not removed and the next boule is**

*played by the same team, and as a result of that play the dead boule is struck or strikes other boules, the opponent may choose to accept all the new positions of those boules or declare them all dead. The same applies if the jack hits, or is moved by, the dead boule or boules set in motion by it. Regardless of the opponent's choice, the re-entered boule remains dead and must be removed."* No subsequent guidelines on this topic have been issued, but one may infer from the last sentence of Article 19 that the team playing should not be interrupted even if they have failed in their obligation to remove dead boules "immediately." The umpire may, however, choose to caution or issue a WARNING (yellow card) to the player who ignores the obligation to remove dead boules immediately.

### **Article 20, Stopped boules**

Any boule played that is stopped or deviated by a spectator or an umpire, will remain where it comes to rest.

Any boule played, that is stopped or deviated accidentally by a player to whose team it belongs, is dead.

Any boule pointed that is stopped or deviated accidentally by an opponent, can, according to the wishes of the player, be replayed or left where it comes to rest.

When a boule shot, or hit is stopped or deviated accidentally by a player, the opponent may:

- 1) leave it where it stopped;
- 2) place it on the extension of a line which starts from the original position it occupied to its stopping point, but only on the playable area and only on condition that it had been marked. *Re a boule shot or hit, when the rule says "the opponent," may exercise one of two options, it means the opponent of the player who stopped or deviated the boule-- not necessarily the opponent of the player who played the boule from the circle.*

The player purposely stopping a moving boule is immediately disqualified, along with their team, for the game in progress. *The umpire must adjudicate whether a boule was stopped/deviated accidentally or on purpose.*

## **Article 21, Time allowed to play**

Once the jack is thrown each player has the maximum duration of one minute to play their boule. This short period starts from the moment when the previous boule or jack stops or, if it is necessary to measure a point, from the moment the latter has been carried out.

The same requirements apply to the throwing of the jack.

All players not respecting this rule, incur the penalties outlined in article 35. **The one minute allowed for tossing of the jack begins as soon as the previous end has been completed, in other words, after points have been decided. Tournament Directors may reduce the time allowed to throw a jack or a boule to expedite play. (See article 35 for notations re TEAM PENALTY).**

## **Article 22, Displaced boules**

If a stationary boule is moved by the wind or slope of the ground, for example, it is put back in its place, provided it has been marked. The same applies to any boule accidentally displaced by a player, an umpire, a spectator, an animal or any moving object.

To avoid any dispute, the players must mark the boules. No claim will be admissible for an unmarked boule, and the umpire will give a decision only in terms of the position the boules hold on the terrain.

However, if a boule is moved by a boule played in the same game, it remains in its new position. **Teams agreeing to approximately replace an unmarked boule should not be considered as guilty of “complicity” as mentioned in Article 35; but, if an umpire is called to intervene, the ruling should be strictly based upon the situation on the ground.**

## **Article 23, A player throwing a boule other than their own**

The player who plays a boule other than their own receives a warning. The boule played is nevertheless valid but must immediately be replaced, possibly after measuring has been done. **An umpire has some discretion and may choose to informally caution a new, or relatively inexperienced, player for a first offense.**

In the event of it occurring again during the game, the guilty player's boule is disqualified and anything it displaced is put back in place, if their positions were marked. **Whether the boule played by mistake belongs to a teammate or to an opponent, it should be returned to its rightful owner and the boule of the player who made the error is not allowed to be played.**

#### **Article 24, Boules thrown contrary to the rules**

Except for cases in which these rules provide specific and graduated penalties as outlined in article 35, any boule thrown contrary to the rules **(examples: from wrong circle, while holding an extra boule, after marking a landing spot, throwing a boule while previous boule is still rolling)** is dead and if marked, anything that it has displaced in its travel is put back in place.

However, the opponent has the right to apply the advantage rule and declare it to be valid.

In this case, the boule pointed or shot, is valid and anything it has displaced remains in its place. **See Article 16 re proper handling of a boule thrown while already holding the point. Article 24 does NOT apply.**

### **POINTS AND MEASURING**

#### **Article 25, Temporary removal of boules**

In order to measure a point, it is permitted, after having marked their positions, to temporarily remove the boules and obstacles situated between the jack and the boules to be measured.

After measuring, the boules and the obstacles which were removed are put back in place. If the objects cannot be removed, the measuring is done with the aid of

calipers.

. Teams are allowed to request an umpire when temporary removal of boules is to be done.

### **Article 26, Measuring of points**

The measuring of a point is the responsibility of the player who last played or by one of their team-mates. The intent of this rule is for the team who just played and is now asserting to be holding the point to measure in order to validate the assertion. The opponents always have the right to measure after one of these players.

Measuring must be done with appropriate instruments, which each team must possess.

Notably, it is forbidden to effect measurements with the feet. The players who do not observe this rule will incur the penalties outlined in article 35. This does not preclude pacing the jack toss to estimate whether a measurement might be necessary.

Whatever positions the boules to be measured may hold, and at whatever stage the end may be, an umpire can be consulted and their decision is final. During the time that an umpire is measuring the players must be at least 2 metres away. FPUSA regulations allow an umpire to penalize a team's captain for repeatedly calling for measurements when the difference is more than 4mm. I suggest that umpires be lenient in resorting to an official warning unless one or more cautions have been given.

By decision of the organising committee, especially in case of televised games, it may be decided that only an umpire is empowered to measure.

### **Article 27, Removed Boules**

It is forbidden for players to pick up played boules before the completion of an end. Dead boules should be placed in an out of bounds area where they are



visible but will not interfere with play or keep an errant boule from crossing the dead boule line.

At the completion of an end, all boules picked up before the agreement of points are dead.

No claim is admissible on this subject.

If a player picks up one of their boules from the playing area while their partners have boules remaining, they will not be allowed to play them. However, if a player picks up one of the opponents' boules, teams are allowed to resolve the issue between themselves by replacing a marked boule or agreeing on replacing an unmarked boule to an approximate position. A TEAM SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BENEFIT FROM AN ILLEGAL ACTION.

#### **Article 28, Displacement of the boules or the jack**

The team, whose player displaces or disturbs the jack or one of the contested boules, while effecting a measurement, loses the point.

If, during the measurement of a point, the umpire disturbs or displaces the jack or a boule, the umpire will make an impartial decision. If a player displaces the jack or one of the contested boules, the procedure should be: Replace the jack or boule to its marked position, or leave it where it now resides if it was unmarked. Then mark the jack and both contested boules. DECLARE the boule of the team who did NOT measure to be holding the point re the two contested boules EVEN IF A MEASUREMENT WOULD SHOW THE OFFENDING TEAM TO BE HOLDING. If during the remainder of the end being played any of the three marked objects of contention are moved the HOLDING DECLARATION is no longer valid and the relative position of the two boules originally contested is determined via a new measurement; otherwise, the relative position is subject to the HOLDING DECLARATION discussed above.

#### **Article 29, Boules equidistant from the jack**

When the two closest boules to the jack belong to opposing teams, and are at an equal distance from it, 3 cases can apply:

1) If the two teams have no more boules to play the end is dead and the jack belongs to the team which had scored the points in the previous end, or who had won the draw.

2) If only one team has boules at its disposition, it plays them and scores as many points as it has boules closer to the jack than the nearest opponent's boule.

3) If both teams have boules at their disposition, it is for the team which played the last boule to play again, then the opposing team, and so on alternately until the point belongs to one of them. When only one team possesses boules, the arrangements set out in the preceding paragraph apply.

If, after completion of the end, no boules remain within the authorised playing area, the end is null and void.

### **Article 30, Foreign bodies adhering to the boules or jack**

Any foreign bodies adhering to the boules or the jack must be removed before measuring a point.

### **Article 31, Complaints**

To be considered, any complaint must be made to an umpire. As soon as the game is finished, no complaint can be accepted. **There is no mechanism for appeal once a game is over. Nor is an appeal of one umpire's decision to another umpire allowed.**

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Article 32, Penalties for absent teams or players**

At the time of the draw and the announcement of its result, the players must be present at the control table. A quarter of an hour after the announcement of these results, the team which is absent from the terrain will be penalised one point which is awarded to their opponents. This time limit is reduced to 5 minutes in games that are timed.

After this time limit, the penalty accrues by one point for each five minutes of the delay.

The same penalties apply throughout the competition, after each random draw.

If a game restarts following an interruption, for any reason, the penalties will be one point for every 5 minutes the team is absent.

The team which does not present itself on the playing area within 30 minutes of the start or restart of games is declared to be eliminated from the competition.

An incomplete team has the right to start a game without waiting for its absent player; nevertheless, it does not use the boules of that player. **The team may choose this option versus the penalty of one-point-per-five minutes as discussed above.**

No player may be absent from a game or leave the playing area without the authorisation of an umpire. In any case this absence will not interrupt the course of the game, nor the obligation for the partners to play their boules in the specified minute. If the player has not returned by the time they are to play their boules, they are cancelled at the rate of one boule per minute. **I suggest that a player who steps away from the playing area for shade, sun, shelter, etc. does not leave the playing area if they are within sight.**

If permission has not been granted the penalties outlined in article 35 shall apply.

In the case of an accident or medical problem officially recognised by a doctor, the player may be granted a maximum absence of fifteen minutes. If using this option should prove fraudulent, the player and their team will be immediately excluded from the competition. **The absence would not stop the play of the game—the team would continue to play but would not use the boules of the missing player.**

### **Article 33, Late arrival of players**

If, after an end has started, the missing player arrives, they do not take part in this end. The player is accepted into the game only as from the following end. **The application of this rule would require all members of the team to be present when the first jack of the game is thrown. Any missing member would join the game in end #2 if they arrived before the last boule of the first end stopped rolling; otherwise, they'd join in end #3. Etc.**

If a missing player arrives more than 30 minutes after the start of a game, they lose all rights to participate in that game.

If their team-mates win this game, the player will be able to participate in the following game provided they were originally registered with that team.

If the competition is played in leagues, the player will be able to take part in the second game whatever the result of the first.

The first end of a game is considered as having started as soon as the jack has been thrown, regardless of the validity of the throw. The following ends are considered to have started as soon as the last boule from the previous end has stopped. **This definition of when an end starts is particularly important in timed games. The FPUSA allows teams to finish the end in progress when the whistle blows, AND play one more end if neither team has reached 13 points. . If the last boule of a game has stopped rolling or passed into an out of bounds area before the whistle blows to signify the end of regulation time, that means a new end has already started. Therefore, the teams would be allowed to finish that new end before playing yet another end: the “+1” end.**

### **Article 34, Replacement of a player**

The replacement of a player in Doubles, or of one or two players in Triples, is permitted before the official announcement of the commencement of the competition (gun, whistle, announcement, etc.), on condition that the substitute(s) was/were not previously registered in the competition as belonging to another team. **Once the competition has started, no replacement of a player is allowed, unless the event allows teams to consist of starting players plus a registered alternate player.**

### **Article 35, Penalties**

For non-observation of the rules during a game, the players incur the following penalties:

1) Warning, which is officially marked by an umpire presenting a yellow card to the player at fault. **An umpire may give an informal caution before issuing an official WARNING (yellow card).**

However, a yellow card for exceeding the time limit will be imposed on all the players of the offending team. If one of these players has already been given a yellow card, they will be penalised by disqualification of the boule played or to be played. **NOTE: TEAM PENALTY! However, the current FIPJP guidelines do NOT allow collective orange cards. An orange card can only be issued to sanction the actual offender. For the first offense of time wasting, each player on the team gets a yellow card, or if any player(s) on the team already has/have a yellow card for a different violation, they each get an orange card. This is **NOT** a “collective” orange card but is based on previous rules violations by the individual(s). For a second offense of time wasting the player who was due to play would receive the new card in addition to any cards previously received.**

2) Disqualification of the boule played or to be played, which is officially marked by an umpire presenting an orange card to the player at fault. **An orange card should be given for a second playing offense during a game. It need not be the same offense for which the yellow card was issued.**

3) Exclusion of the responsible player for the game, which is officially marked by an umpire presenting a red card to the player at fault.

4) Disqualification of the team responsible.

5) Disqualification of the two teams in case of complicity. **Examples: point fixing, game fixing. NOT complicity: agreeing to replace an unmarked boule picked up by opponents, other issues settled by agreement to avoid one team gaining an advantage from an illegal act.**

The warning is a sanction and can only be given after an infringement of the rules. Giving information to players or requesting they should respect the rules at the start of a competition or of a match is not to be considered as a warning.

### **Article 36, Bad weather**

In the event of inclement weather, such as heavy rain, any end started must be completed, unless a contrary decision is made by an umpire, who is the only

person authorised, after consultation with the jury or organising committee, to make the decision to stop the games or, for the cancellation of the competition in the case of force majeure. **The umpire is required to consult but must still make the final decision.**

### **Article 37, New phase of play**

If, after the announcement to start a new phase of the competition (2nd round, 3rd round, etc.), certain games of the previous phase have not been completed, an umpire may, noting that the smooth running of the competition can no longer be assured, ask the jury or the organising committee to stop all outstanding games in progress or even the competition. **Unlike Article 36 where the final decision rests with the umpire, here the final decision rests with jury and/or organizing committee.**

### **Article 38, Lack of Sportsmanship**

The teams that argue during a game, who show lack of sportsmanship and respect towards the public, the organisers or the umpires, will be excluded from the competition. This exclusion can incur non-acceptance of the results, as well as the application of penalties set out in article 39. **No warning need be given for a serious offense.**

### **Article 39, Bad behaviour**

The player who is guilty of bad behaviour, or worse, violence towards an official, an umpire, another player or a spectator incurs one or several of the following penalties, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

- 1) Exclusion from the competition. **. No warning need be given for a serious offense. The team may continue to play, but they may not use the boules of the missing player.**
- 2) Withdrawal of licence or of the official document.
- 3) Confiscation or restitution of expenses and prizes.

The penalty imposed on the guilty player can also be imposed on their teammates.

Penalty 1 is imposed by an umpire.

Penalty 2 is imposed by the jury or the organising committee.

Penalty 3 is imposed by the organising committee which, within 48 hours, sends a report with the expenses and prizes retained to the federation's organisation which will decide on their destination.

In all cases, the Chairman of the Committee for the Federation concerned will make the final decision.

Correct dress is required of the players, specifically it is forbidden to play without a top and for safety reasons, the players must wear fully enclosed shoes protecting the toes and heels.

It's forbidden to smoke during play, including electronic cigarettes. It is also forbidden to use mobile phones during the games.

Any player who does not observe these rules, will be excluded from the competition if they persist after a warning from an umpire. **One official warning (yellow card) to be followed by a disqualification from the competition.**

#### **Article 40, Duties of the Umpires**

The umpires designated to control the competitions are charged to be on the watch for strict application of the rules of play and the administration rules which complete them.

Subject to the seriousness of the offence, they have the authority to exclude for a game or disqualify from the competition, any player or any team who refuses to comply with their decision. **Note that the umpire has the authority to exclude/disqualify any player or any team from a game or from the entire competition without consultation with any other tournament officials. Such an action would only be appropriate for the most serious of offenses.**

The spectators with valid or suspended licences, who, by their behaviour, are the origin of incidents on the terrain of play, will be the subject of an umpire's report

to the Federal executive. The latter will summon the guilty party or parties before a competent Disciplinary Committee who will decide on the penalties to apply.

Umpires should endeavor to teach and assist wherever possible while insisting on respect for the rules and attempting to adhere to the general principle that a team should not be allowed to benefit from an illegal act.

“the umpire is above all a teacher and instructor and not a narrow-minded punisher. He must adapt his behaviour and some of his decisions to suit those he is addressing and the circumstances”. –FIPJP advisory

#### **Article 41, Composition and decisions of the Jury**

Any case not provided for in the rules is submitted to an umpire who can refer it to the competition's jury. This jury comprises at least 3 people and at the most 5 people. The decisions taken by the jury in applying this paragraph are without appeal. In the case of a split vote, the president of the jury has the casting vote.

These rules have been approved by the Executive Committee of the FIPJP - December 2020 Effective 1/1/2021.

Annotations made here by FPUSA National Umpire, Gary Jones, on 7/4/2024 are based upon his personal understanding of rules, interpretations, etiquette, and regulations.