



THE INTERNATIONAL RULES OF THE GAME OF PETANQUE

as approved by the FIPJP at Izmir, Turkey in October 2010
and adapted for use by the Federation of Petanque, USA

** Italic text marked by an asterisk denotes an FPUSA Sport Committee directive
or clarification applicable to tournament play at FPUSA clubs.*

— GENERAL —

Article 1 — Composition of Teams

Petanque is a sport in which

- 3 players play against 3 players (triples) or
- 2 players play against 2 players (doubles) or
- 1 player plays against 1 player (singles)

In triples, each player uses 2 boules.

In doubles and in singles, each player uses 3 boules.

No other version of the game is allowed.

Article 2a — Characteristics of Approved Boules

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

- 1) They must be made of metal.
- 2) Their diameter must be between 7.05 cm (minimum) and 8 cm (maximum).
- 3) They must weigh between 650 grams (minimum) and 800 grams (maximum). The trademark of the manufacturer and the weight must be imprinted on the boules and must always be legible.

In the case of competitions reserved exclusively for players 11 years old or younger, junior boules that weigh 600 grams and are 65 mm in diameter may be used provided that they are made by an approved manufacturer.

- 4) They must not be filled with any foreign material (e.g. sand or mercury). They must not be tampered with in any way, nor altered or modified after manufacture by an F.I.P.J.P.–approved maker. It is particularly forbidden to re-temper boules in order to modify the hardness provided by the manufacturer. A player's name or initials may be engraved on them after manufacture. Various logos and trademarks may be applied by the manufacturer.

Article 2b — Penalties for Non-conforming Boules

A player found to have violated condition (4) of the article above is immediately disqualified from the competition together with his or her teammate(s).

If a boule, though not tampered with, fails examination because it is worn or defective or does not comply with (1), (2) or (3) above, the player must change it. He or she may also change the complete set.

Complaints relating to (1), (2) or (3) made by either team must be made before the first round of the game begins. All players should therefore ensure that their boules and those of their opponents comply with the conditions of Article 2a above.



Complaints relating to (4) may be made between two rounds at any time during the game. However from the third round onwards, if a complaint made about the boules of an opponent is proved to be unfounded, the team or the player complaining will be penalized 3 points which will be added to the opponents score.

The Umpire or the Jury may at any time check the boules of any player(s).

Article 3 — Approved Jacks

Jacks (Cochonnets) are made entirely of wood. *

Their diameter must be 30 mm (within a tolerance of ± 1 mm).

Painted jacks are allowed. On no account may a jack be able to be picked up with a magnet.

** For safety reasons the FPUSA does not permit use of the FIPJP-approved VMS plastic-resin jack.*

Article 4 — Licenses

A valid FPUSA membership card is required of all participants in FPUSA Title Tournaments: Players in these tournaments must be prepared to show their card to the Organizing Committee at the registration table or upon the request of the Umpire.

— PLAY —

Article 5 — Playing Areas and Regulation Courts

The game of Petanque is played on any ground. A playing area may be made up of any number of courts marked out by lines not large enough to interfere with play. The lines between courts are not dead ball lines except for those at court ends and those that mark the limits of the entire playing area.

By decision of the Organizing Committee or the Umpire teams may be asked to play on a marked court whose minimum dimensions must be as follows:

For National Championships and International Competitions: 15 meters long and 4 meters wide. For other competitions the organizers may allow variations down to 12 meters by 3 meters.

If the playing area is enclosed by barriers (*fences, walls, barricades etc.*), they must be at least 1 meter outside the dead ball line.

Games are played up to 13 points*. Games played in pools and qualifying rounds may be played to 11 points by direction of the organizer.

Competitions may be organized with time-limited games. These must always be played on marked courts. In this case all court lines are dead ball lines.

** A 15-point final match may be played at the discretion of the organizer.*

Article 6 — Starting the Game, Playing Circle

A coin-toss is used to decide which team chooses the court and throws the jack first.

If courts have been assigned by the organizers, the jack must be thrown on that court. A team may not play on a different court without the Umpire's permission.

Any member of the team winning the toss chooses the starting point and traces or places a circle on the ground large enough for any player to stand with both feet fully inside it. However it may not measure less than 35 cm or more than 50 cm in diameter. Where a prefabricated circle is used it must be rigid and have an internal diameter of 50 cm (within a tolerance of plus or minus 2 mm).

The use of prefabricated circles is by the decision of the organizer who must supply them. *

This circle, valid for the three consecutive throws allowed to a team, must be drawn or placed at least 1 meter from all obstacles. For competitions on unmarked courts it must be at least 2 meters from another playing circle in use.



The team that throws the jack must erase all playing circles near the one they are going to use.

The interior of the circle may be completely cleared at any time during the round but it must be restored to its original condition at the end of the round.

The circle is not considered to be out-of-bounds.

A player's feet must be entirely inside the circle without touching it, and must not leave the circle or be lifted completely off the ground until the thrown boule has touched the ground. No other part of the body may touch the ground outside the circle.

A player with a lower-body disability may place only one foot in the circle as necessary. For those who play from a wheelchair at least one wheel (that on the side of the throwing arm) must rest inside the circle.

The throw of the jack by one member of the team does not imply that he or she must play the first boule.

** In all FPUSA Title Tournaments, in those games where prefabricated circles are not in use, circles must be drawn clearly and accurately with a finger or pointed implement: use of the feet to draw circles is prohibited.*

Article 7 — Jack Placement

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

- 1) The distance from it to the internal edge of the circle must be between
-6 meters min. and 10 meters max. for Juniors and Seniors.
-Competitions for players 15 and younger may use shorter distances.
- 2) The circle must be at least 1 meter from any obstacle.
- 3) The jack must be at least 1 meter from any obstacle or out-of-bounds area.
- 4) The jack must be visible to a player whose feet are entirely inside the circle and who is standing absolutely upright. In case of a dispute the Umpire will decide if the jack is visible and his or her decision is final.

For the following round, the jack is thrown from a circle drawn or placed around the point where it was at the completion of the previous round, except in the following two cases:

- The circle would be less than 1 meter from an obstacle.
- The jack cannot be thrown out to all valid distances.

In the first case the player draws or places the circle at the regulation distance from the obstacle.

In the second case the player may step back, in line with the previous round's line of play, until he or she is able to throw the jack any valid distance up to, and not beyond, the maximum distance allowed. This may only be done if the jack cannot be thrown to the maximum distance in any other direction.

If after 3 consecutive throws by the same team the jack has not been thrown according to the rules of this article, it is then passed to the opposing team which also has 3 tries and which may move the circle back as described above. After this the circle cannot be moved again even if this team also fails its three throws.

A team has only one minute total in which to make all three throws of the jack.

Whatever the case, the team which lost the jack after the first three tries plays the first boule.

Article 8 — Validity of the Jack

If the thrown jack is stopped by the Umpire, a player, a spectator, an animal or any moving object, it is not valid and must be re-thrown without being included in the three throws to which the player or the team is entitled.

After the first boule is played, an opponent still has the right to contest the validity of the jack's position. If the objection is found valid, both the jack and the boule are re-thrown.

For the jack to be re-thrown both teams must have accepted the throw as being invalid or the Umpire must have declared it so. In either case the jack must be re-thrown. Any team proceeding otherwise loses the throw of the jack.



If the opponent has also played a boule the jack is considered valid and no objection can be accepted.

Article 9 — Jack Out-of-Play

The jack is out of play (dead) in the following 7 cases:

- 1) When it is displaced into an out-of-bounds area even if it comes back onto the playing area. A jack on the line of the boundary is still in play. It only becomes dead after having completely crossed the boundary. A jack floating freely in water is dead.
- 2) When though still on the playing area, the displaced jack is not visible from the circle as defined in Article 7. However a jack hidden by a boule is not dead. The Umpire may temporarily remove a boule to ascertain whether the jack is visible or not.
- 3) When the jack is displaced to more than 20 meters for Juniors and Seniors (or more than 15 meters for players 15 and younger) or to less than 3 meters from the playing circle.
- 4) When on marked-out courts the jack crosses more than one neighboring court or when it crosses the end line of the court.
- 5) When the displaced jack cannot be found after a search lasting no more than 5 minutes.
- 6) When there is an out-of-bounds area between the jack and the playing circle.
- 7) When in time-limited games the jack leaves the assigned court.

Article 10 — Removal of Obstacles

It is strictly forbidden for any player to remove, move or flatten any obstacle whatever on the playing area. However the player about to throw the jack is allowed to test a landing spot by tapping it no more than 3 times with one of his or her boules.

The player who is about to play or one of his teammates may fill any one hole, and only one, that was caused by the impact of a boule played at any time previously.

Infractions of these rules incur the penalties described in Article 34.

Article 10a — Changing, Breaking, Boule or Jack

It is forbidden for any player to change boules or jack during a game, except in the following cases:

- 1) A boule or the jack cannot be found after a 5-minute search.
- 2) A boule or the jack breaks, in which case only the largest piece counts to mark the position. It is immediately replaced, after measuring if necessary, by a boule or jack of diameter identical or similar to the broken one.

Beginning in the following round, the player concerned may use a complete replacement set.

— JACK —

Article 11 — Jack Hidden or Displaced

If the jack becomes completely obscured by a leaf, a piece of paper, etc., these objects are removed.

If the jack is moved by the wind or the slope of the ground it is put back in its place provided the position had been marked. The same applies if the jack is moved accidentally by the Umpire, a player, a spectator, a boule or jack from another game, an animal or any moving object.

To avoid any dispute players must mark the jack's position. No claim can be accepted regarding boules or jack whose position has not been marked.

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

Article 12 — Jack Moved into Another Game

If the jack is displaced onto an area where another game is in progress, either on a marked court or unmarked courts, the jack is valid subject to Article 9.



The players using this jack will wait for the players in the other game to finish their round before completing their own.

The players concerned must show patience and courtesy.

For the following round the teams return to the court assigned to them and the jack is thrown from where it was before it was displaced, subject to the conditions of Article 7.

Article 13 — Jack Out-of-Play, Round Void

If the jack is out-of-play (dead), one of three cases can apply:

- 1) If both teams have boules left to play, the round is void and is replayed. When a voided round is replayed the throw of the jack goes to the team which last put the jack into play. Play of the first boule goes to the team which played first in the voided round.
- 2) If only one team has boules left to play then this team scores as many points as it has boules left to play.
- 3) If neither team has boules to play, the round is void and is replayed as in (1) above.

Article 14 — Placement of Jack after Interference

- 1) If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or diverted by a spectator or by the Umpire it remains where it stops.
- 2) If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or diverted by a player in the authorized playing area the opponent has the choice of:
 - a) Leaving the jack in its new position.
 - b) Putting it back in its original position.
 - c) Placing it anywhere on the extension of a line going from the point where it was hit to where it was stopped, up to a maximum distance of 20 meters from the circle and so that it is visible (or 15 meters for players 15 & younger).

Paragraphs (b) and (c) can only be applied if the position of the jack was previously marked. If it was not marked, the jack will remain where it lies.

If having been hit, the jack crosses into an out-of-bounds area before coming to rest on the playing area, it is out of play and the rules defined in Article 13 apply.

— BOULES —

Article 15 — Playing First, Following Boules

A player belonging to the team that has won the toss or the last scoring round throws the first boule of a round. After that it is the team not holding the point that plays.

Players must not use any object to give aid in playing a boule or draw a line on the ground to indicate or mark the point of landing.

While playing his or her last boule, a player must not carry another boule in the other hand.

Boules must be played one at a time.

Once thrown a boule may not be replayed: except that it must be replayed if it has been stopped or diverted accidentally from its course between the circle and the jack by a boule or jack coming from another game; or by an animal or any other moving object (football, etc.); or in the case defined in Article 8, second paragraph.

It is forbidden to wet boules or jack. *

Before playing a boule a player must remove from it all traces of mud or any other substance. Infractions of this rule incur the penalties described in Article 34.

If the first boule played goes out of play the opponent plays. Play then alternates as long as there are no boules in play.



If after shooting or pointing no boules are left in play, the rules defined in Article 28 apply.

** In dry conditions a player may not carry a moistened boule-cloth.*

Article 16 — Players & Spectators - Game Conduct

During the time allowed for a player to throw a boule the spectators and the other players must observe total silence.

Opponents must not walk, gesticulate or do anything that could disturb the player about to play. Only his or her teammate(s) may stand between the circle and the jack.

Opponents must remain beyond the jack or behind the player and in both cases to the side of the round's line of play and at a distance of at least 2 meters from the one or the other.

Players who break these rules may be banned from the competition if, after a warning from the Umpire, they persist in their conduct.

Article 17 — Practicing, Boules Leaving Court

No one is allowed a practice throw during a game. Infractions of this rule incur the penalties described in Article 34.

Boules going outside the assigned court are valid (except as in Article 18).

Article 18 — Boules Out-of-Play

Any boule that goes entirely outside the boundary of the playing area is out of play (dead). A boule straddling the boundary is valid. It only becomes dead after having completely crossed the boundary, that is to say when it is situated entirely beyond the boundary when viewed from directly above. The same applies when on marked-out courts, the boule crosses more than one neighboring court or when it crosses the end line of the court.

When playing a time-limited game on a marked-out court a boule is dead when it completely crosses the boundary of the assigned court.

If the boule subsequently comes back into the playing area, either because of the slope of the ground or by having rebounded from any object, moving or stationary, it is immediately taken out of the game. Anything that it has displaced after reentering the playing area is put back in place.

Any dead boule must immediately be removed from the playing area*. If it is not it will be considered in-play once the next boule is played by the opposing team.

** 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.*

Article 19 — Interference With Moving Boules

Any boule played that is stopped or diverted by a spectator or the Umpire will remain where it comes to rest.

Any boule played that is stopped or diverted accidentally by a player to whose team it belongs, is out of play.

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

When a boule shot or hit, is stopped or diverted accidentally by a player, the opponent has the choice of:

- 1) Leaving the boule in its new position, or
- 2) Placing it on the extension of a line going from the point where it was hit to where it was stopped, but only within the boundary of the playing area and only if its position was previously marked.



Any player purposely stopping a moving boule is immediately disqualified, along with his or her team, for the game in progress.

Article 20 — Playing Time Allowed

Once the jack is thrown each player has 1 minute at most to play his or her boule*. This time starts from the moment when the previous boule or jack has stopped, or if a point has to be measured, from the moment the measurement is completed.

This rule also applies to the throwing of the jack, in this case a total of 1 minute to complete all 3 throws.

Infractions of this rule incur the penalties described in Article 34.

** The Umpire, acting on the instructions of the Organizing Committee, may reduce the time allowed to play below 1 minute in any game and at any point during a game.*

Article 21 — Displacement of Boules

If the wind or slope of the ground, etc., moves a stationary boule it is put back in its place. The same applies to any boule accidentally displaced by a player, the Umpire, a spectator, an animal or any other moving object.

To avoid any dispute players must mark the positions of the boules. No claim can be accepted regarding a boule whose position has not been marked, and the Umpire will give a decision only according to the position of the boules as they are on the ground.

However, if a boule is moved by a boule played in this game it is valid.

Article 22 — Playing Wrong Boules

A player who plays a boule other than his own receives a warning.

The played boule is nevertheless valid but it must immediately be exchanged, after measuring if necessary.

If it occurs again during the game, the player's boule is disqualified and everything it has displaced is put back in place.

Article 23 — Boules Played Contrary to the Rules

Any boule played contrary to the rules is dead. Anything it has displaced is put back in place, on condition that its position was marked.

However the opponent may apply the advantage rule and count the erroneously played boule as valid. In this case the boule, pointed or shot, is in play and anything it has displaced is left in its new position.

— POINTS AND MEASURING —

Article 24 — Moving Boules for Measuring

In order to measure it is permitted, after marking their positions, to temporarily remove boules and any obstacle situated between the jack and the boule to be measured. After measuring, the boules and the obstacles which were moved are put back in place. If the obstacle cannot be removed, measuring is done with the aid of calipers.

Article 25 — Measuring Points

Measuring of a point is done by the player who played the last boule or by one of his or her teammates.

The opponents still have the right to remeasure the point. Whatever positions the boules to be measured may hold and at whatever stage the round may be, the Umpire may be called to adjudicate and his or her decision is final.

Measuring must be done with appropriate equipment which each team must possess. In particular it is forbidden to measure with the feet. Infractions of this rule incur the penalties described in Article 34.

Article 26 — Removing Boules

Players must not pick up any played boules before the completion of the round.



At the finish of a round all boules picked up before the agreement of points are void if their positions were not marked. No claims can be made on this subject.

Article 27 — Displacement While Measuring

If while measuring a player moves the jack or a boule being measured, his or her team loses the point.

If while measuring the Umpire disturbs or moves the jack or a boule, he or she will make an equitable decision.

Article 28 — Equidistant Boules, Round Void

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 neither team has boules to play the round is void and is replayed. When a voided round is replayed the throw of the jack goes to the team which last put the jack into play. Play of the first boule goes to the team which played first in the voided round.
- 2) If only one team has boules left to play, it plays them and scores as many points as it has boules closer to the jack than the opponent's nearest boule.
- 3) If both teams have boules left to play the team that played the last boule plays again, then the other team, and so on alternately until a boule is holding the point. When only one team has boules left they play them as in the preceding paragraph.

If after completion of any round no boules remain within the boundary of the playing area, the round is void and is replayed as in (1) above.

Article 29 — Removal of Debris for Measuring

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

— DISCIPLINE —

Article 30 — Complaints

Complaints must be made to the Umpire before the end of the game. When the game has finished no complaints can be accepted.

Teams must address any questions they may have about court assignments, team composition, irregular boules, etc. directly to the Umpire or the Organizing Committee.

Article 31 — Penalties for Absent Teams or Players

All players must be present at the time of the draw and the announcement of its result. A quarter of an hour* after the result of the draw has been announced, any team which is absent from the playing area will be penalized one point which is awarded to their opponents. When playing time-limited games this time limit is reduced to 5 minutes.

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

The same penalties apply throughout the competition, after each draw and in the case of a restart of play after a break for whatever reason.

Any team not arriving at the playing area in the hour following the start (or restart) of games will be eliminated from the competition.

Any incomplete team may start without its missing player(s) but may not use their boules.

No player may leave a game or the playing area while a game is in progress without the permission of the Umpire. In time-limited games the player who wants to leave must already have played all his boules in the ongoing round. If permission has not been granted, the provisions of this article and of Article 32 apply.



* *The Organizing Committee has discretion to eliminate the quarter-hour waiting period as it judges necessary for the smooth running of the competition. In this case the rules described above for time-limited games shall apply.*

Article 32 — Arrival of Absent Players

If after a round has started any missing player arrives, he or she may not take part in that round but may join in at the start of the following round.

If a missing player arrives more than one hour after the game has started, he or she loses the right to participate in that game.

A player arriving late may take part in the following games provided he or she was originally registered with that team.

If the competition is played in pools, he or she may take part in the following game whatever the result of the first game.

A round is considered to have started when the jack has been validly put in play according to the rules.

Article 33 — Replacement of Players

The replacement of a player in doubles, or of one or two players in triples is only permitted up to the official notice of commencement of the competition (whether by announcement or by whistle, gun, etc.), and provided that any replacements were not previously registered with another team in the same competition.

Article 34 — Penalties

Players who break the rules incur the following penalties:

- 1) Warning.
- 2) Disqualification of the boule played or about to be played.
- 3) Disqualification of the boule played or about to be played and the following boule.
- 4) Exclusion of the offending player for the duration of the game.
- 5) Disqualification of the offending team.
- 6) Disqualification of both teams in the case of complicity.

Article 35 — Bad Weather

In the case of rain all rounds started must be completed unless a contrary decision is made by the Umpire. Only the Umpire in consultation with the Jury can decide to stop or call off play.

Article 36 — Unfinished Games

If at the start of a new phase of the competition (2nd round, 3rd round, etc.) certain games have not finished, the Umpire acting on the instructions of the Organizing Committee, shall implement such measures as are judged necessary for the smooth running of the competition.

Article 37 — Lack of Sportsmanship

Teams which argue during a game or show a lack of sportsmanship or respect towards the public, the organizers or the Umpires, will be disqualified. This disqualification may affect the relative positions obtained in the standings as well as invoke the penalties found in Article 38.

Article 38 — Disruptive Behavior

A player who refuses to abide by the decision of the Umpire, or who shows violence towards an official, an Umpire, another player or a spectator incurs one or more of the following penalties depending on the seriousness of the fault:

- 1) Exclusion from the competition.



2) Withdrawal of license (FPUSA membership card).

3) Confiscation or restitution of rewards and prizes.

The penalty imposed on the offending player can also be imposed on his or her teammates.

Penalty 1 is imposed by the Umpire.

Penalty 2 is imposed by the Jury.

Penalty 3 is imposed by the Organizing Committee which within 48 hours shall send a report, along with the fees and prizes retained, to the FPUSA which will decide their disposition.

In all cases the Board of Directors of the FPUSA has the final decision.

Decent dress is demanded of every player. Players who ignore this requirement after receiving a warning from the Umpire will be disqualified from the competition.

Article 39 — Umpires' Duties and Spectators' Conduct

Umpires designated to officiate at competitions are charged with ensuring the strict application of the rules of the game and the administrative rules that are in force. They have the authority to disqualify any player or team who refuses to abide by their decision.

Spectators who hold a valid or a suspended license and who by their behavior cause an incident in the playing area, will be reported by the Umpire to the FPUSA Board of Directors. The Board shall act on the Umpire's report in accordance with FPUSA Bylaws.

Article 40 — Composition and Duties of Jury

All cases not provided for in the rules are put to the Umpire who may refer them to the competition's Jury. This Jury comprises at least 3 people and at most 5 people. The decisions taken by the Jury are without appeal. In the case of a split vote, the President of the Jury's vote is preponderant.

CODE OF BEHAVIOR of the FPUSA

The following is an excerpt of the FPUSA Code of Behavior as it applies to players' conduct on the field of play. The complete Code and its means of implementation are described in Article XII of the Bylaws of the FPUSA.

FPUSA members shall behave in such a manner so as not to discredit the sport of Petanque, the clubs of which they are members and the FPUSA. Respect, integrity, good sportsmanship and courtesy should characterize one's behavior toward club members, teammates, opposing teams, the Umpire, the Organizing Committee and spectators.

On the petanque terrain, the following are violations of the Code of Behavior:

1. Foul or abusive language and/or actions directed toward another person be it Player, Umpire, Organizing Committee member or Spectator.
2. Smoking or drinking of alcoholic beverages while playing in a match whether the player is on or off the terrain.
3. Any illegal behavior on or off the terrain, including but not limited to, public intoxication and illegal drug use.
4. Ridiculing the play of another person or acting in a way that demeans another player or disrupts the game or the tournament.
5. Improper attire as determined by FPUSA, the Organizing Committee and/or local ordinances.
6. Disobeying rules established by the Organizing Committee for the competition.
7. Not adhering to the direction of the Umpire.