

## Heritage Placer Vineyard Bocce League Rules

*(Updated 04.28.25)*

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### Overview

*Heritage Placer Vineyards Bocce League has developed these rules to ensure games are enjoyable opportunities to socialize with neighbors and, while lightly competitive, are guided by the rules of good sportsmanship. These rules will be updated periodically by the Heritage Bocce League Rules and Compliance Subcommittee and members will be notified of changes.*

## Definitions

**Pallino:** *The small white ball.*

**Players:** *An active player and team member participating in a game.*

**Team:** *A team must have a minimum of 6 active players, and not more than 12 players, in any combination of men and women. Ideally, each team member should play all or part of a game during each match. All players must be residents of Heritage Placer Vineyards who meet the Homeowners Community Association requirements for residency.*

**Captain:** *A captain is selected by each Team. The captain or the co-captain, if captain is unavailable, is responsible for:*

- 1. Assigning who plays during each game.*
- 2. Understanding league rules.*
- 3. Ensuring team members understand and adhere to league rules.*
- 4. Sign the score sheet.*
- 5. Attending captain's meetings.*
- 6. Ensuring players do not loft the balls but roll balls to protect playing surface.*
- 7. Oversee actions of players so they play according to league rules. If the captain is unable to attend, the co-captain or a designee will assume the duties and responsibilities of the captain.*

**Scorekeepers:**

*Duties include completing and signing score sheets at the end of each game which are kept in the bocce storage shed. Scorekeepers will list total points scored for each game and one scorekeeper will take a photo of the completed score sheet and text the photo to the number provided.*

**Frame:** *The time played to win points. Each frame starts with tossing the pallino. The frame is complete after each team throws their 4 balls and points are awarded.*

**Game:** *A regular game consists of several frames. Each game is played for 35 minutes or until one team reaches 12 points. If there is a dispute between the captains that requires a review of the rules, then the 35-minute timer will be stopped. The time used to resolve dispute shall not be part of the 35-minute game. The timer will resume once the dispute is settled.*

**Match:** *A regular match consists of three 35-minute games.*

**Paddles:** *Teams use either red or green balls. Scorekeepers will use paddles at center court to indicate by color (green or red) which team is to bowl next by holding up a paddle indicating the color of the ball farthest from the pallino.*

**Bowler:** *The person bowling the bocce ball.*

**Lines:** *The lines on the court consist of the Foot Foul Lines and the Center Line.*

**Bocce Balls:** *The eight bocce balls and the pallino are used for playing during a frame. The*

*League provides equipment for play and only League equipment will be used in League games.*

**League:** *Heritage Placer Vineyards Bocce League organizes a set of teams playing at a specified day and time.*

**Forfeit:** *A team automatically loses one or more games when:*

- 1. A team decides not to play a game or match.*
- 2. A team action has resulted in a breach of the rules.*

*A single forfeit game will be recorded as 12 points for the team that was ready to play and 0 points for the team forfeiting. If the second or third game is also forfeited, they will also be recorded as 12 and 0.*

## **Playing Rules**

*A. Bocce is played with eight bocce balls (4 of one color and 4 of another color; typically Green and Red) and one small white ball called the pallino. One team will play with balls of one color and the other team will play with balls of the other color. Only balls supplied by the League shall be used in all League competition. When all balls have been rolled, one team is awarded a point for each of its balls that are closer to the pallino than the opposing team's closest ball. Maximum is four points per frame unless one of the balls is "kissing" the pallino, which awards one additional point. A "Bocce" occurs when all four balls of the same color are closest to the pallino. The scoring team in a frame rolls the pallino to begin the next frame.*

*B. In the event of a tie, where both team's closest balls are equal distance to the pallino, each team will receive one point, canceling out all other balls from scoring. When both team balls are "kissing" the pallino, each team is awarded two points, and all other balls are cancelled out from scoring. The team whose tie ball got there first, starts the next frame and throws the pallino. Only similar colored balls closest to the pallino score points. All other balls in play (including tie balls) do not score.*

*C. A player who is throwing the pallino may hold the pallino and a colored ball at the same time.*

*D. If a player bowls a wrong-colored ball, the Scorekeeper shall replace the ball in its location with the correct colored ball.*

*E. Games always start at the East end of the courts (nearest the swimming pool). A maximum of four players from each team will play each game of a match. Two of those four players are at each end of the court. Each player bowls two balls. The order of which team players bowl is not important except that the player bowling the pallino must be the first to bowl a bocce ball. Other team members must observe from off the court at either end of the court and not at the sidelines.*

*F. Two substitutions will be allowed during each game for each team as a way of giving more players on a team an opportunity to play.*

*G. Captains begin the first game with a coin toss, decided between the captains. The team that wins the coin toss will choose if they want to be the starting team and roll the pallino first or*

*choose the ball color. For the second and third games of the match, the losing team will start by rolling the pallino first.*

*H. A throw is made with a bowling motion only. No throw can arc higher than the player's waist as this is considered lofting and is not allowed because it creates divots in the court surface. Captains should instruct their players with the proper bowling motion to protect the courts.*

*I. Both feet must remain on the court – no feet on the curb while bowling. Players may step on, but not be totally beyond, the designated foot foul line before releasing the pallino or the bocce ball. If this foul is committed with a pallino, the pallino goes to the other team. If a foul is committed with a bocce ball, the ball is removed from play for that frame, the stationary ball or balls are placed in their approximate original position by the Scorekeeper and the same team bowls again because they have failed to put a bocce ball closer to the pallino.*

*J. The starting team in each game must bowl the pallino so that it crosses the court's center line but does not go beyond the opposite foul line. If the pallino comes to rest before the center line or after the foul line, the pallino is thrown again by the opposing team. The process repeats itself until the pallino toss is good. It is OK if the pallino hits the sideboard during a fair toss.*

*K. The player that successfully bowls the pallino then bowls the first bocce ball. The next bowl is made by the opposing team. The team whose ball is furthest away from the pallino bowls next. That team bowls until it has the nearest ball. This continues until both teams have used all their bocce balls.*

*L. If a player bowls and the ball comes to a stop the exact same distance as the opposing team's ball closest to the pallino, the tie ball that got there first determines who bowls next.*

*M. If a bocce ball hits the backboard without first touching a sideboard on any ball or pallino it is a dead ball and is removed from the court. If a ball bowled hits the backboard illegally and then strikes a stationary ball or balls, the shot ball is removed from the court, and the stationary ball or balls are placed in their approximate original position by the scorekeeper. The same team bowls again because they have failed to be closer to the pallino.*

*N. When bowled, if a bocce ball is diverted outside the court, exits the court, or bounces off the top of the wall and falls back in, that ball is dead and removed from the court during that frame.*

*O. If any active or inactive player touches any ball after it has been rolled before the end of the frame, the ball shall be replaced in its proper position by the Scorekeeper. This will be considered a penalty, and the non-offending team will be awarded (1) one additional point for that frame and the frame continues. This does not apply to removing a dead ball.*

*P. For safety reasons, undelivered bocce balls not in a player's hands must be placed on the ball holders. All bocce balls removed for hitting the end board or because of a penalty will be taken out of play and placed in the ball holder. Players can only have 1 bocce ball in hand during play.*

*Q. There will be two Scorekeepers to measure, keep time and score for each game, and pick up balls. Only these individuals will serve as Scorekeepers, as well as keep time and scores. Players on the teams involved in the game cannot serve as a Scorekeeper. Only when there is a single Scorekeeper available, captains will discuss and designate a non-playing team member to retrieve balls.*

*R. If there is a question about a rule, then the time shall stop-the-clock and the rules shall be referenced to answer the question. If the captains can't agree on the application of the rule, and if the captains cannot agree to proceed, after 5 minutes, the match shall be suspended. Said match may then be replayed later/time as agreed by both captains within 7 days. Questions about rules will be referred to in the HBL Rules and Compliance Subcommittee listed on the League website.*

*S. If a ball is played out of turn or if a bowler inadvertently bowls more than two balls in a frame, the thrown ball is considered dead and is to be removed from the court. If the ball in question strikes any stationary balls, the disturbed balls are placed in their approximate original position by the Scorekeeper.*

*T. No player can ever play two consecutive games from the same end of the court. If play has begun, the opposing team gets one point, and the frame is over, with the offending player moving to the other side of the court or is replaced by a substitute, except in a roll-off for the game.*

*U. When 12 points are achieved, the game is won, however, all balls must be played before the game is considered complete. The team reaching 12 points, wins the game.*

*V. In the event time has elapsed, whether 12 points have been achieved or not, the team with the highest score wins. All balls must be played to complete the game.*

*W. Roll-off (tie breaker). If the score is tied, after the last frame and time has expired, a coin toss call will determine who throws the pallino first. The call is made by the team who did not make the opening call, and in a "roll-off (tie breaker) each team will have one throw. The captain may choose "any" player from their team to throw in the roll-off. Whoever is closest to the pallino wins the game with 1 point being added to the score.*

*Coin Flip for roll off: Team that wins coin flip gets to decide whether to roll first or second.*

*During Roll Off: Team throwing the pollino, first must obtain a legal throw and repeat until the pollino is in proper position (i.e. cannot miss throw to change order of teams throwing).*

*X. If a player is taken out of a game, they cannot re-enter the same game. The only two exceptions are for injury, which both captains must be notified, and in a roll-off for the game.*

*Y. The playoffs. Teams selected for the playoffs will be ranked by win-loss record first then by total points using a formula determined each season by the HBL Bocce Committee. The number of teams in the finals may change each year based on the number of teams playing that season.*

## Measurements

*A. Only those designated to serve as scorekeepers for league matches will measure the distance between balls and pallino, keep time and record scores on the scoreboard. Players in the game may not do so.*

*B. Scorekeepers will be trained to use measuring devices. If there is a problem with a measuring device, the scorekeeper may revert to using any device provided by the league.*

*C. If there is any ball or balls closest to the pallino (in front of the tie balls), then the tie balls are not awarded points. In this scenario only the closest ball(s) to the pallino score points.*

*D. Measurements can be requested at any time by the captain. If either captain has reasonable doubt about which balls are closest to the pallino, a measurement should take place. A verbal agreement regarding which ball is closest to the pallino during play does not prevent a measurement after all the balls have been delivered in the game to determine points.*

*E. If a measurement occurs at the end of a frame, the balls can only be moved at scorekeeper's discretion.*

*F. Active players must stay behind the foul line during the match. Only scorekeepers may pick up and deliver balls to the teams playing. If a second scorekeeper is not available to help with this task, the captains may designate non-playing team member to assist. Those picking up balls must step off the court to the side and walk on the concrete to deliver the balls to players at the end of the court to protect the court surface.*

## Substitutions

*A. The league's intent is to provide an enjoyable, friendly, welcoming, and lightly competitive atmosphere for all players. As this is a social club, it would be unsportsmanlike to substitute players with alternative players purely for their ability. Rather, substituting players is intended as a way of giving all players on a team an opportunity to play.*

*B. Two substitutions will be allowed for each team during a game.*

*C. Only registered members of the team are eligible to be a substitute.*

*D. In the middle of a game, when a substitute is necessary, due to illness or injury, only team members not currently in play for that particular game may substitute. No active players may leave one end of the court to play at the other end of the court when a substitution takes place.*

*E. A forfeit will occur when no qualified substitute player is available. The captain shall either forfeit the game, or reschedule the game, as per the rules under Forfeits.*

## Team Roster

- A. Players may not be on more than one League team roster.*
- B. A player may not be added to a team after their roster has been submitted. However, if a team has fewer than 6 players and needs or has lost players, it may petition the board for additional players.*

## Play Conduct

- A. Spectators are not allowed on the courts, or alongside the courts, during regulation play. Only those responsible for measuring can stand alongside the court during play. Spectators should remain behind active team members at either end of the court.*
- B. Team captains are responsible for the actions of their players and spectators. If there is a problem with a spectator that is not involved with any team, both captains will suspend play until the problem is resolved.*
- C. Active team players cannot cross the center line for tactical discussions. However, an active player may cross the centerline to obtain water, shade or rest, or for other medical or physical reasons.*

## Forfeits

- A. A minimum of 4 players must be available to play for each team.*
- B. If a minimum of 4 team members are not available within 10 minutes of the scheduled start time, the match shall be rescheduled to a date within 7 days if that is agreed upon by the two captains and the league.*
- C. The scoring for a forfeit is as follows: a single forfeited game is recorded as 12 points; a second or third forfeited game is recorded as another 12 points with the forfeiting team recording 0 points.*
- D. A team forfeits any game in which they have non-roster players.*

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- A. Unsportsmanlike conduct at the court or via calls or emails directed at players, captains, board members, or volunteers is not acceptable at any time.*
- B. Verbal examples not tolerated include profanity, heckling, offensive words, or name calling at or to another player, talking to a player on the court to distract them, loud noises, yelling, or anything meant to distract a player on the court.*
- C. Physical examples not tolerated include sudden movement, walking into a restricted area, feet*

*on the curb to show their own player where to bank, or anything done to distract the opposing player.*

*D. If an unsportsmanlike event occurs, the offended player shall hold up their hand and yell out "Stop the game." Time will be paused and the offended player will discuss the offense with the captain.*

*E. The captain and opposing captain will discuss the offense. A 5-minute limit will be placed on the discussion. If the offender is removed from the game and leaves the area, the game may continue. The offender's name will be given to the league board in an email to determine any action or discipline. If the offender does not leave the court area, the captain must remove the player from the game and may replace the individual with another player if available.*

*F. If a spectator (not part of team) acts offensively, they should be told by the two captains to leave the courts.*

## **Equipment and Court Maintenance**

*A. For League games, the courts will be prepared by the HBL maintenance crew before the games using equipment provided to ensure a smooth, even surface. Only designated crew members are authorized to use this equipment.*

*B. Once court surfaces are prepared on the day of league play, teams should refrain from using the courts until the scheduled League games begin.*

## **Miscellaneous**

*A. Only flat-soles shoes are to be worn on the courts. No bare feet.*

*B. If there is a light rain, the game shall continue unless both captains agree the courts are not playable. If there is a weather alert, heavy rain or lightning, then the captains should agree to cancel the remainder of the match. The match is to be rescheduled within 7 days or the captains may get approval from the Bocce committee to play at a later date. Play shall resume at the point at which the game was cancelled, including the score at the time the game was stopped, and the remaining time.*

*C. Nothing should prevent an additional person on the court from assisting a player with a disability. At the score keepers discretion, they may pause the timeclock for the player to get into position. If a player is unable to pick up a ball, a teammate may assist the player. If a player is sight impaired, a teammate may be on the court behind the player to provide guidance. The opposing team will exercise respect and patience when this situation occurs.*

*D. Score sheets must be filled out correctly and legibly and signed by both captains, immediately following the match. Once the card is signed, there can be no further changes made. When reporting the scores for games, Scorekeepers should list the number of points each team scored. Cumulative points may be a factor in determining positions in the playoffs.*



*E. When available, the club's reservation software will be used for makeup games and practice play. Please notify the Scorekeepers that this will be taking place.*

*F. The league will provide the schedule of league play. Team schedules will be available at the beginning of each season (TBD). The board will determine which teams are in the playoff and format of play.*

*G. All questions, appeals, or disputes about these rules should be sent by email to the League for review by the Rules and Compliance Subcommittee. The League email is: [contact@hbl55.com](mailto:contact@hbl55.com)*

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