

Simplified Rules of Petanque

The game of petanque is played between two teams of 1, 2 or 3 players. In singles or doubles each player uses 3 boules. In triples each player uses 2 boules.

The game begins by tossing a coin. The team that wins the call must play first and has the right to place the small wooden target ball, the jack, and often has the choice of where to play, though in tournaments this is often pre-determined.

The first player then traces on the ground a circle large enough to stand in (35-50cm diameter) and throws the jack forward, between 6 and 10 meters from the circle and at least 1m from any obstruction or boundary. If it is thrown outside these distances, or too close to the boundary, the team has two further chances to try again, otherwise the opposing team has three attempts to do the same. Nevertheless, the team that won the previous end (or the toss in a new game) still leads to the new jack.

The first player of the team, who won the toss or the preceding end, throws the first boule. The players must be careful to keep both feet inside the circle and on the ground until the boule thrown touches the ground.

When the boule has stopped rolling, the first player of the opposing team throws their first boule from the same circle and must try to place their boule nearer to the jack than the opponents'.

The act of trying to put one's boule closer to the jack is called *pointing*. They can also try to knock the opponent's boule out of contention and this is called *shooting*.

If they succeed in placing their boule nearer to the jack, it is then the turn of the opposing team to throw a boule to try to outpoint it or shoot it. As long as a team has one of their boules nearest to the jack, the players of the other team must try to get a better boule by pointing or shooting. They may also try to hit the jack towards their own boules. Players may sometimes need to measure which boule is on with a tape to determine who plays next.

There is no set order of play within a team. Anyone with boules left may play the next shot but players usually have a role within the team. Usually one is the team's main pointer, one is the team's shooter, and (in triples) the other player is called a *milieu*, who may have to switch between pointing or shooting as the situation demands. The decision as to who plays in any particular situation is part of the tactics of the game.

If one team has no more boules to play, it is the turn of the other team to throw their remaining boules to gain extra points. When all the boules have been played, the team which has the boule nearest to the jack counts one point for each boule nearer the jack than its opponents' nearest boule. Thus it is possible to score anything from 1 to 6 points on an end.

Another *end* then commences in the same way as before, a player of the team which won the previous end traces a new circle, normally around the spot where the jack finished, throws the jack and starts to play.

When the jack has been thrown, no natural obstacle, even the smallest stone, may be removed between the circle and the jack, though manufactured objects (plastic bags, pieces of paper, etc) may be removed. One divot (hole in the terrain) made by any previous boule may be filled in before playing another boule. A boule, once played, may not be removed unless it has passed completely over the boundary of the game or touched surrounding dead areas. In the latter case, it should be removed immediately if there are boules still to be played, though with safety in mind.

If the jack goes dead while both teams have boules left, the end is void and must be replayed. If one team is out of boules when the jack goes dead and the other still has boules left, it counts up its *boules in hand* and scores that many points. Thus it is possible to deliberately kill the jack if the opposition is out of boules.

It may happen that two boules touch the jack or are at equal distance from it. In this situation, the last team to play has the next go and then each team plays alternately until the situation changes or one team runs out of boules.

The game continues until one team has reached 13 points.