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A Guide to the Rules of Petanque

A guide to "Official Rules of the Game of Pétanque"
as approved 7th October 2010 in Izmir, Turkey
by the International Congress of *Fédération Internationale de Pétanque et Jeu Provençal*

by
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The most recent revision of this document may be downloaded from <http://petanquerules.wordpress.com/rules-guide>

For Mike Pegg, for his pioneering work in making the rules of petanque and their interpretation available to English-speaking players around the world.

?? indicates text that may need to be revised after the FIPJP releases a new version of the rules in December 2016.

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Preface

About this book

When I started playing petanque, I thought that if I was going to play the game I should know its rules. So I started studying the rules— the FIPJP international rules of petanque and the FPUSA national rules.

It quickly became clear that the rules were a mess, and that there were many confusions and controversies about how they should be interpreted. At that time (2012) there were no guides to the interpretation of the rules, not even for umpires.¹ That meant that in order to study the rules, I needed to do my own research. So I did. As I did it, I kept notes about what I found. Eventually those notes evolved into this guide.

As part of my study I downloaded the French and English versions of the rules and put them into a Microsoft Word document, formatted in columns, side-by-side. As I studied, when I found a problem with the English translation I revised the English text and noted the reason for the change. Eventually I found myself with an extensive set of notes and a substantially revised translation. They are both included in this guide. Together, they constitute the most accurate and useful English translation of the rules of petanque available anywhere. That opinion, of course, is completely objective and unbiased.

As I collected information, I wrote posts on two blogs –

- "All about Petanque" (<https://petanque.wordpress.com/>)
- "The Rules of Petanque" (<https://petanquerules.wordpress.com/>)

Many posts from those blogs (especially from "The Rules of Petanque") appear here in a revised form. Sometimes those posts stimulated useful comments, and I would like to express my thanks to two gentlemen who posted especially useful comments. They are Gary Jones, an FPUSA national umpire, and Jac Verheul (*jacpetanque*), author of several works on petanque including the wonderful *Pétanque, la fabuleuse histoire*. Jac is the only person I know who shares my interest in the history and evolution of the rules of petanque.

In 2015 and 2016, both FPUSA and Petanque New Zealand published guides to assist their umpires in interpreting the rules. The umpires of these two national federations deserve special recognition for their energy and dedication in creating these documents. I heartily recommend them. You can find them on the web sites of their respective national federations (see below).

– Stephen Ferg (Tucson, Arizona, USA), September 2016

¹ The French *Code d'Arbitrage* is a PowerPoint introduction to the rules, not a serious umpire's guide. Since writing this, I have learned that the Dutch Petanque Federation for many years has maintained a version of the rules with extensive interpolated notes on the interpretation of the rules. The notes are binding for Dutch umpires. See [INJBB], below. Thanks to Boudewijn Waijers for telling me about this document.

Sources and references

While writing this book, I did a lot of online research. I found rulings by national umpires (published on the web sites of various national petanque federations) and online forums devoted to the rules of petanque. Most of those sources, however, were too ephemeral for systematic citation. In lieu of more extensive references, I here offer URLs of some of the more stable web sites that I found useful.

Ask the umpire	https://www.facebook.com/groups/128791213885003
Winning Petanque	http://www.winningpetanque.com
petanque.org	http://petanque.org/news/rules
Petanque710	http://www.petanque710.com
Boulistenaute	http://www.boulistenaute.com
Educanaute-Infos	http://www.educnaute-infos.com
Petanque New Zealand	http://www.petanquenz.com
Federation of Petanque USA	http://usapetanque.org
FIPJP	http://fipjp.org

One online source that deserves special mention is Mike Pegg and his "Ask the Umpire" Facebook group. Mike is the only FIPJP international umpire from an English-speaking country. He has been president of the British Petanque Association and the English Petanque Association. In 2014 he was elected President of the European Petanque Confederation (CEP), the most important of the FIPJP continental confederations. He was also, I believe, instrumental in getting the FIPJP to start publishing its rules in English as well as in French. It is probably accurate to say that umpires in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Australia, and New Zealand look to Mike for authoritative interpretations of the rules of petanque.

"Ask the Umpire" describes itself as a group "for asking questions about the rules of petanque". It is basically a forum where players can ask Mike how he, as an umpire, would rule in certain situations. There are several French-language forums for discussing the rules, but "Ask the Umpire" is a unique resource for English-speaking players.

When I began my research, I found "Ask the Umpire" to be a useful source of information about the rules, and also for information about the confusions, opinions, and questions that petanque players have about the rules. However, as I followed the exchanges on "Ask the Umpire" I also occasionally noticed rulings that seemed to me debatable or wrong. I came to the conclusion that umpires are human, too. They make mistakes. Sometimes they misinterpret the rules. Occasionally they contradict each other. No single umpire (not even one with Mike's credentials) can be considered the final authority on the rules. The ultimate authority for any interpretation must be the text of the rules themselves (muddy as that text is). Even an umpire must be able to explain and justify his rulings by referring to that text. This conclusion led me to a careful study of the text of the FIPJP rules. And it gave me the courage to research and to develop my own conclusions. Some of those thoughts and conclusions became chapters in this book.

Without Mike this book might still have existed, but it certainly never would have existed in its present form. It is to Mike, then, that this book is dedicated.

Some terminology and abbreviations

- [ATU] "Ask the Umpire" is a Facebook group hosted by English international umpire Mike Pegg. Its URL is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/128791213885003/>
- [IFPUSA] *Official Rules Interpretations for Umpires* by Federation of Petanque USA
(1st edition: December 1, 2015)
This publication is formatted as a series of numbered questions — Q1, Q2, Q3 ...
The URL of the FPUSA web site is <http://usapetanque.org/>
- [IPNZ] *Umpiring Rules and Interpretations* by Petanque New Zealand
(1st edition: May 1, 2016) ??
This publication is formatted as comments on articles — Article 1, Article 2 ...
The URL of the Petanque New Zealand web site is <http://www.petanquenz.com>
- [INJBB] The rules committee (*reglementencommissie*) of the Dutch Boules Federation (*Nederlandse Jeu de Boules Bond*, NJBB) provides a Dutch translation that includes extensive rules interpretations that are binding for umpires in the Netherlands. The URL is <http://www.njbb.nl/Portals/5/NJBB/Over%20NJBB/Reglementen/Toernooireglementen/ISPPlus.pdf>
In the filename "ISP" stands for *Internationaal Spelreglement Petanque* (International Game Rules of Petanque) and "Plus" indicates the additional interpretation information.
- mene A *mène* is the basic subdivision of a game of petanque, like an inning in baseball or a round in boxing. The word *mène* is a French word, pronounced like the English word "men". The FIPJP English rules translate *mène* as "end". It is sometimes translated as "round". In fact there is no good English translation for the word. This guide, therefore, treats *mène* as an untranslatable technical term and transliterates it as "mene".
- ball Rather than write "boule or jack" I sometimes write simply "ball".
- the head The "head" is the area around the jack.
- location I translate the French expression *sa place* as "its location". The FIPJP English translation renders it as "its position", which may be idiomatic to British English.
- original location If a boule or jack is illegally moved, its "original location" is the place on the terrain where it was located before it was illegally moved.
- relocate The English verb "relocate" means simply "to move something from one place to another". In this guide, I use "relocate" as a technical term meaning "to put an illegally moved boule or jack back in the location it occupied before it was illegally moved". In the case of a boule or jack that was stopped or deviated while it was in motion, "relocating" it includes the option of putting it approximately where it would have gone if it hadn't been interfered with.

About the rules

Who makes the rules?

Petanque was invented in the south of France, in La Ciotat, a small town near Marseille, in 1910. It is, therefore, a French game and its native language is French. English versions of its rules are translations from the French.

The international governing body of the sport is the *Fédération Internationale de Pétanque et Jeu Provençal*, the FIPJP. Prior to the creation of the FIPJP in 1958 there had been only national organizations (notably the French *Fédération Française Bouliste du «Jeu Provençal et Pétanque»*), each with its own set of rules. The FIPJP issued the first version of the international rules of petanque in 1959, and there have been periodic revisions since then – most recently in 2002, 2006, 2008, and 2010. ??

The FIPJP rules are written and revised by the FIPJP International Umpires Committee, a committee composed of FIPJP-authorized international umpires (*arbitres internationaux*). Every two years the Committee considers changes to the rules, and may propose revisions of the rules.

The normal practice is for the Committee to work on revisions to the rules for 12 months or more, and then to forward the revised version of the rules to the FIPJP Executive Committee. The Executive Committee then considers the revisions during its spring meeting (usually in April).² Finally, the revised version is formally introduced and approved at the FIPJP World Congress, which is convened along with the Men's World Championships. This usually takes place in the last quarter of even-numbered years. Revised versions of the rules go into effect immediately upon approval by the World Congress.

The FIPJP releases two versions of the rules. One version is in French (the official language). The other is an English translation of the French original. Current versions of both of these documents are available on the FIPJP's web site, <http://www.fipjp.com/>.

Once the FIPJP releases a new version of the rules, each national federation adapts the new version of the international rules to create a new version of their own national rules. For some nations (e.g. France) the national rules are identical to the international rules. For other nations, adopting the new revision means at least translating the French original into their own national language. Some nations may modify the English version to make it more idiomatic for a particular dialect (American English, British English, Australian English, etc.) National federations may also make moderate changes to the actual rules. In 2006, for instance, the FIPJP approved the use of hard, resin plastic jacks. This was an unpopular decision, and several national federations (including the FPUSA) modified their national versions of the rules to prohibit use of the plastic jacks.

One way that national federations can add rules to the FIPJP's rules is to add them to a quasi-separate document called the *Code of Behavior* or *Code of Conduct*. In the Code of Behavior national federations typically include specific prohibitions on such things as smoking and drinking during games.

Because national federations need some time to update their own national rules, most national versions of the rules are adopted and dated in the early months of the year after the version was approved at the FIPJP World

² One would expect the Executive Committee, after receiving a new revision of the rules, to forward the revision to the national federations for review and comment. As far as I can determine, however, the national federations see the latest revision only after it has been approved at the International Congress. National federations may influence rules changes only through their international umpires on the FIPJP Umpires Committee. As of 2015 France has 12 of the 44 members of the Commission. Belgium, Morocco, and Monaco each have three umpires on the commission. No other nation has more than two. Australia has two. England has one. Canada has none. USA has none.

Congress. The result is that FIPJP rules versions are dated in even-numbered years and the corresponding national rules versions are typically dated in the following odd-numbered years.

The international rules are used for tournaments at the international level. That is, they are used for tournaments of the continental confederations (such as the EuroCup for the European continental confederation) and at the FIPJP world championships. National rules are used for tournaments at the national and regional level.

For any competition or tournament (*concours*), the competition organizers may specify additional rules, modifications, or clarifications that are to be in effect during that particular competition. Competition organizers may specify, for instance, rules about what constitutes going out-of-bounds for the terrains upon which the tournament is being played, rules about when menes begin and end (for time-limited games), rules about the size of "the landing strip", and so on. This means that for any particular tournament, competitors should be alert and pay careful attention to the competition organizer's stipulations about the rules that will be in effect for the tournament.

If you think of the rules as forming a sort of layer cake, it would look like this—

- international rules specified by the FIPJP
- national rules specified by the national federation
- competition rules specified by the competition organizer

The picture won't be complete, however, until we add a fourth layer to the bottom of the cake. That layer is for local rules. If a club plays in a covered boudrome, for example, the players in the club might adopt a local rule that a jack which hits the ceiling of the boudrome is (or is not) dead.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with local rules, but they can be a source of mythical rules—rules that players think are rules of petanque, but are not. There is a large community of retired British expatriates in Spain. If a Briton on holiday in Spain learns to play petanque with them, what he (or she) learns is a mixture of local rules and international rules. When the new player returns to Britain and joins a local boules club, there may be tense situations when he insists that X is one of the rules of petanque, while more experienced players know that it is not.

Before we leave the subject, it might be useful to mention another cause of confusion and questions about the rules. French television sports channels broadcast coverage of sporting events just as sports channels do in other countries. In France, that includes coverage of high-profile petanque competitions such as the FIPJP world championships and the *Masters de Petanque* series. These televised competitions are watched closely by petanque fans. Sometimes those fans see the umpires enforcing unfamiliar rules. Online petanque forums start to buzz. Questions start to fly. "*Has there been a change in the rules?!*"

The answer is NO. The official international rules of petanque have not changed. But the organizers of the competition may have modified the rules *for that competition*. There are any number of reasons why they might do it. They might be "test driving" proposed modifications to the rules. (The French federation does that occasionally.) They might be responding to local weather conditions or time constraints.³ In any event, the fans didn't know that they were seeing a routine example of competition-specific rules, and it caused confusion.

³ During one world championship an entire day was lost to heavy rain. The following day, in an effort to speed up play, the umpires instituted an ad hoc rule that teams were allowed only one attempt (rather than the usual three) to throw a valid jack.

Problems with the rules

The FIPJP International Rules of Petanque are very badly written. They aren't complete, systematic, rigorous, or well-organized. Sentences are poorly written. Important terms are undefined. Important rules are unstated or ambiguous. Cryptic rules are enunciated but not explained. This poor quality of the written rules has its roots in French history, petanque tradition, and the organizational cultures of the FIPJP and its Umpires Committee. Almost certainly this problem will never be resolved.

A significant problem is that the FIPJP's rules are not in fact rules for the game of petanque. From the very first draft by Ernest Pitiot in 1910, the "rules of petanque" were designed and intended to be rules for running tournaments. That's why today the FIPJP rules are a messy mixture of (a) rules for the game of petanque and (b) FIPJP internal administrative rules for running FIPJP-sanctioned competitions, and (c) guide lines for umpires. Having the different kinds of rules mixed up together this way causes serious problems for anyone trying to interpret the rules. It obscures the inadequate way that the FIPJP rules specify the rules of the game. It makes it difficult to determine whether a particular rule is a rule of the game, a guide line for umpires, or an FIPJP administrative procedure. (See "If I were King of the Rules".)

Petanque can be played in at least two different ways— as a social activity among friends, and as a competitive sport. By far the biggest problem with the rules is the fact that they are designed for competition petanque and not for social petanque. It is not an exaggeration to say that the FIPJP rules are written by FIPJP umpires, for FIPJP umpires.⁴ Many of the rules are written from the point of view of an umpire and make sense only in the context of an umpired competition. This makes them inherently unsuited for social petanque, where friends compete with friends and there is no umpire.

The rules' implicit assumption that an umpire is always present has other negative consequences as well. It produces in the minds of petanque players an unhealthy dependence on umpires. Players should be able to interpret and apply the rules themselves. But all too often, in response to a suggestion that there might be problems with the rules, players just shrug their shoulders and say "The rules are fine. When in doubt, just ask the umpire."

The bottom line is that there are serious problems with the FIPJP rules. They are, however, the only universally-recognized rules that we have. We have to be able to work with them. I wrote this guide to help us do it.

⁴ Because the FIPJP's international umpires regard the FIPJP rules of petanque as (merely) the rules that they will use in running FIPJP competitions, they modify the rules to address problems that they personally have experienced during tournaments (see, for example, Article 6, about clearing the circle). They do not solicit input from players or national umpires.

Subjects NOT covered in this guide

The subject of this guide is the rules of the game of petanque as such. It ignores rules for the administration of FIPJP-sanctioned competitions. It does not discuss, for example, when and where tournament participants are required to show their membership cards (Article 4).

Guidelines for umpires are also out-of-scope for this guide, unless they have some bearing on our understanding of the rules of the game itself. This guide does not discuss, for example, whether umpires, in making their decisions, can or must consider tracks left in the dirt by rolling boules. The appropriate place for those discussions is in documents like the umpire's guides published by FPUSA and Petanque New Zealand.

Why do we need a better English translation?

The rules of petanque can be difficult for English-speaking players to understand.

The biggest problem is that the rules – the original rules, written in French – are simply badly written. This is something that cannot be fixed by improving the translation.

There are also problems in the translation. The FIPJP translators tried to produce an accessible and helpful English translation. In trying to be helpful, they often deviated from what the French text actually says. Important technical terms are translated inconsistently. Sometimes the wording of the English translation introduces distinctions or qualifications that don't exist in the French original; in other cases it hides ones that do. Occasionally the translation is simply wrong.

In addition, a translation that is ONLY a translation is not enough to meet the needs of English-speaking players. French players can draw on a large community of petanque players and long-standing oral traditions to help them when interpreting the rules. But Australian, Kiwi, British, and American players have no such large community and body of oral tradition upon which to draw. They need more than just a translation of the rules document. They need additional support— notes and commentary on the text.

The English translation in this guide attempts to address these problems. To insure clear and consistent use of important technical terms, I do four things.

- For each important French term I choose a single term as its English translation.
- I document and explain that choice in the notes on the translation.
- I am careful to use that English term consistently throughout the entire translation.
- When I know that there are differences between my translation and other English translations, I note the differences and explain the reasons for the differences.

In addition, in order to provide context and background information, I supply notes and comments on rules that otherwise might be difficult (or even impossible) to understand.

Some basic concepts

The petanque playing area - Five fundamental concepts

In this chapter I will discuss the five fundamental concepts of a petanque playing area –

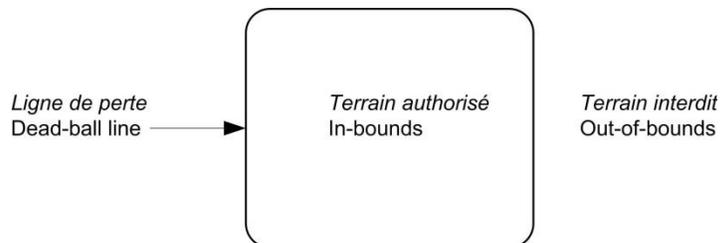
1. in-bounds
2. out-of-bounds
3. dead-ball line
4. terrain
5. lane

Without prior experience with the game it can be difficult to extract these concepts from the written rules, and difficult even to understand some of the rules. My hope is that by explaining these basic concepts here, early, you will find it easy to understand the rules when you go on to study them

[#####]

In the beginning, petanque players played in the town park. The area inside the park was in-bounds (*terrain autorisé*) and the area outside the park was out-of-bounds (*terrain interdit*).

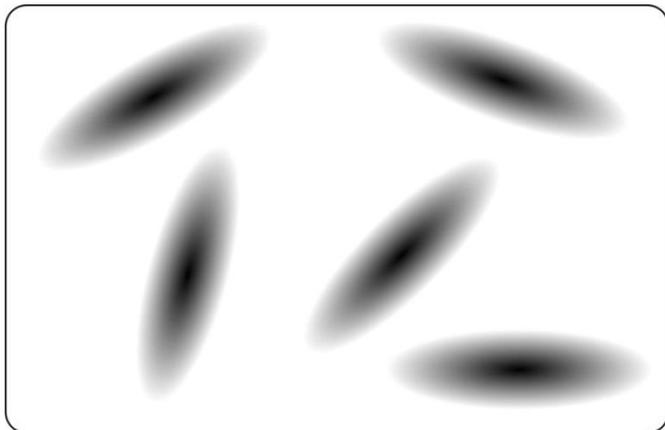
The edge of the park, which was the boundary between the in-bounds and out-of-bounds areas, was called "the dead-ball line" (*ligne de perte*) because when a ball went out-of-bounds, it went dead (*perte*, "lost"). In English, an out-of-bounds area is sometimes referred to as "dead ground".



If only one game was being played in the park, then the players could throw the jack (*cochonnet* or *bouchon*) in any direction (*mène*) that they wished, and the game could roam all over the park.

If several games were being played at the same time in the park, then the players in each game picked a particular area in the park, a *terrain*, and played their game in that area. The game terrains were located wherever the topography allowed – that is, wherever there was open space between other features in the park such as rocks, trees, benches, utility poles, etc.

Here is my diagram of a playing area in a park, with five different games being played on five different *terrains*. The locations and limits of the terrains aren't formally marked in any way. I've tried to suggest that in the diagram by showing the terrains as blurry areas without sharp boundaries.



If a jack is shot out of one game's terrain and goes into the terrain of a neighboring game, there is a standard way to deal with the situation. The owners of the jack mark its location with lines scratched on the ground, pick it up, and wait for the neighbors to finish their mene. Then they put their jack back down in the marked spot, finish their own mene, and return to their own terrain.

[#####]

This practice—playing different games in different areas of the park— continued when players started holding organized competitions. The competition organizers took note of the areas in the park that were suitable for play. During the competition, each game was assigned to one of those areas. The area where a game was assigned to be played was called the game's "assigned terrain" (*terrain affecté*).



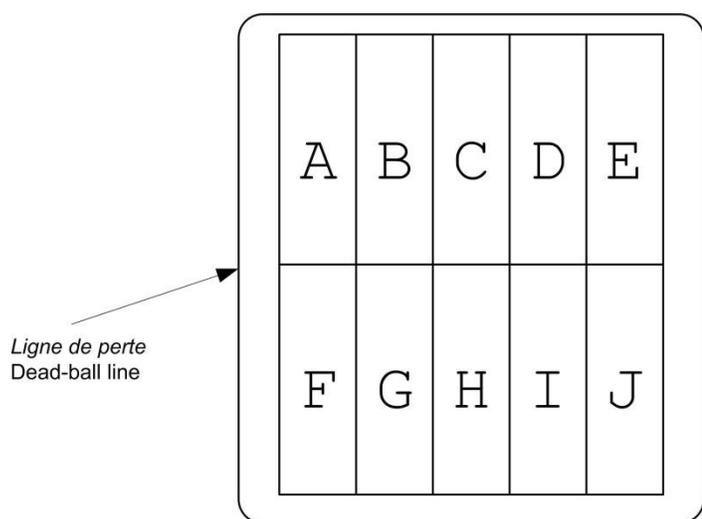
Le Mondial la Marseillaise à Pétanque is the biggest and most famous petanque tournament in the world. Every year in July, thousands of players compete, playing on over 1,000 terrains located in parks and boulodromes all over the city of Marseille. In order to be able to assign games to terrains, the competition organizers identify each terrain with a unique ID number. During the competition, small tent signs with terrain numbers (like this one) can be seen all over the city.

After a while, the competitions became too big for the parks, so they were held in facilities specially designed for the playing of petanque. Such a facility is called a *boulodrome*.

In order to use the space in the *boulodrome* efficiently, the playing area (*aire de jeu*) was divided into a grid of terrain-sized rectangles called lanes (*cadres*). In this new environment, the words "terrain" and "lane" came to be used almost interchangeably. People started referring to the "assigned terrain" (*terrain affecté*) as the "assigned lane" (*cadre affecté*).

Here is my diagram of a playing area inside a *boulodrome*. Around the outside edge of the playing area runs the dead-ball line (*ligne de perte*), just the way it used to run around the outside edge of the park. Inside the dead-ball line, the playing area has been marked off into 10 lanes (*cadres*).

This is very much like the facilities of a tennis club marked off into 10 tennis courts. Like tennis courts, the lanes in a *boulodrome* could be located outdoors (*boulodrome ouvert*) or indoors (*boulodrome couvert*).



The basic idea was good, but there were problems with this arrangement. The lanes were now so small and so closely packed that balls frequently escaped their own lane and travelled into neighboring lanes. A jack could easily be knocked from lane B into lane D, interfering with games on both C and D. Boules shot from lane B could easily end up in F, G, and H.

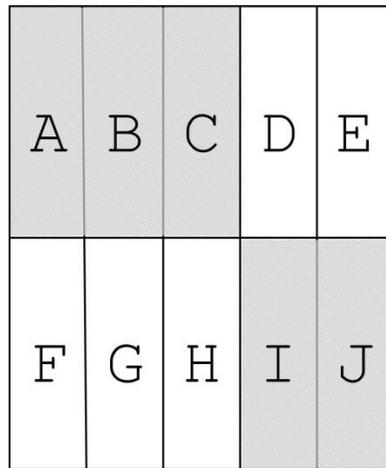
To deal with these problems, two changes were made to the rules.

1. Any ball that crossed a short end (*fond*, "bottom") of its assigned lane was declared dead.
2. Any ball that crossed a long side of its assigned lane and entered a neighboring lane was still alive. But if the escapee ball went any farther than that, and entered any other lane or completely left all the lanes, it was declared dead.

These changes in effect abolished the old dead-ball line (*ligne de perte*) around the playing area. Now, in effect, each game had its own in-bounds area and its own dead-ball line.

So today, when a game is played on a grid of lanes, the in-bounds area for the game includes the game's assigned lane and any lane with which it shares a long side. If a game is played on a lane that has neighboring lanes on both sides, its in-bounds area is three lanes wide. If a game is played on a lane that has a neighboring lane on only one side, its in-bounds area is two lanes wide. In the diagram below—

- The in-bounds area for a game assigned to lane B includes neighboring lanes A and C.
- The in-bounds area for a game assigned to lane J includes only one neighboring lane, I.



Traditionally, the lines in the grid are indicated by strings strung tightly between nails driven into the ground. In English, these strings are called “guide lines”. In French they are called simply “strings” (*ficelles*) or “lines” (*lignes*).

Note that even if a game's in-bounds area includes multiple lanes, the game's "home base" is still its assigned lane (*cadre affecté*). During the game, whenever a circle is placed, the circle must be placed within the boundaries of the assigned lane. Whenever a jack is thrown, the jack must be thrown within the boundaries of the assigned lane.

There is one last thing to note. In big tournaments, games (especially early, elimination-round games) must sometimes be played within a specified time limit. When that happens, time is precious. If a jack is knocked from lane B into lane C, the players from B can't pick up their jack and wait for the game on C to pause. So there are special rules for time-limited games. In time-limited games the in-bounds area is only the game's assigned lane—it does not include any neighboring lanes. If a jack is knocked out of its assigned lane, it is immediately declared dead, the points are agreed, and the next mene is started on the assigned lane.

The two games known as "petanque"

Sometimes it can be helpful to think of the rules of petanque as *two* sets of rules. That is, as a combination of rules for two different ways of playing.

TRADITIONAL PETANQUE is played on an unmarked terrain (*terrain libre*). The fundamental rules of this game are expressed in terms of **distances**. The distances are measured from the only fixed point on the terrain, the circle. The important distances are —

- 6 meters – A thrown jack is invalid if it comes to rest less than 6 meters from the circle.
- 10 meters – A thrown jack is invalid if it comes to rest more than 10 meters from the circle.

- 3 meters – A hit jack is dead if it comes to rest less than 3 meters from the circle.
- 20 meters – A hit jack is dead if it comes to rest more than 20 meters from the circle.

MARKED PETANQUE is played on a marked lane (*cadre*) in a grid of lanes. The fundamental rules of this game are expressed in terms of **lines** and **areas**.

- The playing area is marked off by **guide lines** into a grid of **lanes**.
- Each game is assigned to be played on one of those lanes, which is called its **assigned lane**.
- Any lane that shares a long side with a game's assigned lane is a **neighboring lane** for the game.
- Except in time-limited games, the **in-bounds area** (*terrain autorisé*) for a game includes its assigned lane and any neighboring lanes. In time-limited games, the in-bounds area for a game includes only its assigned lane.
- The area outside of the game's in-bounds area is **out-of-bounds** (*terrain interdit*) for the game.
- A guide line that marks a boundary between the in-bounds and out-of-bounds areas for a game is a **dead-ball line** (*ligne de perte*) for the game. Out-of-bounds areas for a game are called **dead ground** for the game. If a live boule or jack crosses one of the game's dead-ball lines and goes onto dead ground, it is dead.
- The circle must always be placed on the game's assigned lane.
- The jack must always be thrown on the game's assigned lane, and may not come to rest closer than one meter from any of the game's dead-ball lines.

Some thoughts about the rules

The biggest problem— how to undo an illegal event

Illegal events

By far the biggest problem with the FIPJP rules is the way that they handle illegal events.

By an "illegal event" I mean an event that is physically possible, but is not recognized as legal by the rules of the game. I'm thinking of events in which something on the terrain (a boule or the jack or the circle) is moved (or deviated or stopped or picked up) when it should not have been.

Illegal events often involve the people on the terrain—

- A player picks up a boule or the circle before all boules have been thrown.
- A player moves a boule or the jack.
- A moving boule or jack hits the foot of a person on the terrain.
- A player throws a boule illegally or out of turn.

Outside objects and forces can also cause illegal events—

- The wind moves the jack
- An animal or a child runs through the playing area, scattering the balls in the game.
- Some foreign object, like a soccer ball, comes onto the terrain, scattering the balls.
- A boule that has been hit out-of-bounds rebounds onto the terrain and moves some balls.

Options for dealing with illegal events

When an illegal event occurs, there are basically three ways of dealing with it.

1. Undo it. Put everything that was illegally moved back in its original location.
2. Leave everything where it is and carry on.
3. Abandon the mene—declare it to be scoreless—and start again.⁵

Undoing the illegal event— returning the terrain to the state it was in before the illegal event occurred— is of course what we would always like to be able to do. Usually, though, it is impossible. When a moving ball is illegally stopped or deflected, we have no way to put it into motion again with its original speed and direction. When a stationary ball is moved, its original location is usually not marked or recorded in any way.

The alternative—leaving everything where it is— is easier but uglier. It requires us to do nothing, but it is almost always unfair (sometimes very unfair) to at least one of the teams. It is an option to be avoided if at all possible. The ugliness of this alternative gives us a good reason to return to the first alternative and to reconsider it. When we do, we confront the biggest and nastiest question about the rules of petanque.

Is it possible to undo an illegal event when none of the locations of the illegally-moved balls was marked?

The answer is— it depends on whether you are playing social or umpired petanque.

⁵ The third option, abort the mene and start a new mene, is certainly an option. But it is an option that is never mentioned in the rules, so there is not much that we can say about it.

Social vs umpired play

Players and umpires often distinguish between "social" (or "casual") play and "competition" (or "sanctioned") play. They say things like "Putting the jack back might be allowed in social play, but not in competition play." The distinction is an important one, but is not precisely defined. Therefore, I will use a slightly different distinction, one that I will define.

- In "social petanque" there is no umpire. When an illegal event occurs, the teams decide between themselves how to handle it.
- In "umpired petanque" an umpire is available and on call. When an illegal event occurs, the umpire is called, and he makes the decision about how to handle it.

I think we can assume that the invention of petanque preceded the invention of petanque umpires. Back in the primordial era, when dinosaurs roamed the earth and before umpires were invented, when an illegal event occurred during a petanque game the two teams had to decide between themselves what to do about it. If the damage to the game was too great to be repaired, they might decide to abort the mene and start another one. If there was disagreement about how to repair the damage, but unwillingness to abandon the game on the ground, the teams might decide to leave everything where it was and carry on with the game. But in most cases the two teams would find a way to put illegally-moved things back where they were located before they were illegally moved. The locations might be approximate, but that wasn't important. What was important was that the locations were close enough to being right to be acceptable to both teams.

When petanque tournaments were invented, this way of playing—social petanque— did not work well in the new setting. It is harder for teams to reach agreement when the opponents are strangers and the stakes are high. The solution to agreement issues was the invention of the umpire. After umpires were invented, rules were invented to tell umpires how to make decisions in such a way that their impartiality would be unquestionable. After that, further rules were invented to tell players that umpires' decisions were *sans appel*, could not be challenged. These inventions were natural evolutionary steps that allowed the game to adapt to the new environment of tournament play.

One of the rules for umpires said that if a ball was illegally moved, the umpire couldn't pay attention to either team's (possibly biased) story about where the ball had originally been located. The umpire was told that he could relocate the ball only if he could see hard evidence—marks on the ground— indicating the ball's original location. If there were no marks, the umpire was required to rule that, since he had no way of determining the ball's original location, everything was to be left in its current location. This rule guaranteed the impartiality of the umpire, but at a cost. If a player accidentally kicked an unmarked boule, even if the teams were happy to put the ball back (approximately) in its original location, the umpire was forced to rule that the boule should be left where lay.

The final link in this unhappy chain of events came when the umpires wrote down the rules of the game of petanque. They wrote down the rules that they knew and used, including the rules about how umpires must deal with illegal events. Those written rules contained not even a hint of a possibility of a suggestion that games could be played without an umpire, or that teams could agree to decisions in the absence of an umpire.

That is where we find ourselves today. We have a set of FIPJP rules that have completely erased our memories of how to play without umpires. Now, many players and umpires cannot conceive that it is in any way possible to relocate a boule whose original location is unmarked. When teams agree to relocate an illegally moved boule, the game is dismissed as "casual petanque"— a degenerate form of sloppy, informal petanque: not REAL

petanque. This is astounding because it is exactly the reverse of the truth. Social petanque is the real, true, original form of petanque. It is umpired petanque that is the distorted form of real petanque.

The moral of this story is that in games without umpires, when an illegal event occurs players should ignore rules designed for umpires. They should put back an illegally moved ball, if both teams agree. And they should feel good about it because this is the way the game was meant to be played. If the teams can't agree, they can simply decide as an umpire would, and leave everything where it is.

Conversely, if players find themselves in an umpired competition, they should realize that they are playing literally by different rules. They should know what to expect from the umpires, and they should be prepared to accept it unconditionally.

Approximately is good enough

It is sometimes argued that you can't put an unmarked, illegally moved ball back because you don't know its original location. "The only way to know its original location is if that original location was marked," some players insist. But that's simply not true. In many cases players know EXACTLY where that location is. Almost always they know APPROXIMATELY where it is. And approximately is good enough for the game to continue in a way that is acceptable to both teams.

Sometimes, putting something back approximately in its original location is the only fair way to carry on with the game. If a player accidentally and prematurely picks up an opponent's boule, that boule should not be declared dead, as the FIPJP rules stipulate. It should be put back, in the best way that that can be done. If a player accidentally kicks and moves the playing circle, it should be put back in its place, even if this can be done only approximately.⁶

Playing social petanque, even when there is an umpire (part 1)

Magnus Halleen reports on "Ask the Umpire" that—

In Sweden we have an amendment to the marked jack or boule rule. It says "Marked, or in any other way known, place." This gives the players the right to put the jack back in play and give the teams the points they should have in the round. This gives me the right as an umpire to at least discuss with the teams where the jack was and hope they are in for sportsmanship.

The Swedes are a sensible folk. They have made "acceptable to both teams" legal, even when there is an umpire.

Playing social petanque, even when there is an umpire (part 2)

A question posted on "Ask the Umpire" provides a good illustration of the tension that exists between social petanque and umpired petanque.⁷

A player accidentally kicks one of his own boules (whose location was not marked). The kick moved the boule closer to the jack so that it now holds the point. What should be done?

⁶ See the ruling issued in 2011 by Jean-Claude Dubois, President of the French National Umpires Committee.

⁷ See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/128791213885003/permalink/1008621659235283/>

The problem here is that if an umpire is called in to make a decision, his ruling must be that "no claim will be admissible for an unmarked boule"⁸... so the boule stays where it is. If the umpire is called in, he will be compelled by the rules to make a decision that is obviously unreasonable and unfair.

Mike Pegg's answer to this question was surprising, but sensible.

The boule was moved accidentally, so it should be replaced. [If it wasn't marked] then agree with your opponent. Do not call the umpire because if you do, he or she will say that the boule must remain where it is.

It is better for the two teams to agree replacing a boule that was moved accidentally. It happens all the time without incident or need to call the umpire. But ... [if the umpire is called in] the umpire has one choice because the players did not bother to mark the jack or boules.⁹

One commenter was upset with this reply

Are you suggesting that teams can move unmarked boules to and fro (or do other things against the rules), if they agree to do so?

Mike didn't answer that question, but I will. The answer is NO. Nobody is suggesting that the teams can agree to move boules around willy-nilly.

What is being suggested is that in specific circumstances specific actions are permissible—that when a ball is illegally moved, and when its original location is not marked, the teams can agree to relocate it. This isn't rocket science. The ideal action in response to an illegal event is to undo the illegal event. Therefore—

If an illegal event happens, and if the teams can agree on an action that will undo the illegal event in a way that is acceptable to both teams, then the teams can and should perform that action.

So if the teams are smart, they will follow Mike's advice. They will not call the umpire. They will relocate the illegally moved boule and carry on with the game.

Teams are not required to call the umpire

Mike's answer was interesting, but even more interesting was what his answer implied. Let's lay it out on the table for everyone to see, because it is important.

In umpired play, teams are not required to call an umpire to deal with illegal events.

I've seen a small indication that other umpires share Mike's point of view. In one of the games of the 2016 *Masters de Petanque*, under the watchful eyes of two umpires, a player accidentally kicked a boule. An opposing player (Marco Foyot) helped put the boule back in its original location, and the game continued as if nothing had happened. The umpires didn't blink an eye.

⁸ See Articles 11 and 21.

⁹ See the discussion of "Marking everything, all the time".

Verbal actions

One of the remarkable features of the FIPJP rules is that they do not recognize any sort of verbal actions.

The most notorious example can be found in the rules about challenging the jack, which allow team B to verbally accept team A's throw of the jack but then later turn around and challenge the jack. If the rules were to recognize verbal agreement of the jack, that would prevent such behavior (which some players consider unsportsmanlike). It would also help to prevent the notorious "Pushed Jack" disagreements. (See the discussion of Article 8.)

Also important, in my opinion, is the rules' non-recognition of acts of asking for verbal agreement. The act of asking for verbal agreement constitutes a sort of due diligence. This sort of due diligence (or its lack) can be important when dealing with some kinds of illegal events. (See the discussion of "Boules thrown out of turn".)

Interestingly, the action of requesting (and presumably also of receiving) verbal agreement was recognized in the FIPJP rules of 1972.

Art. 14. —

Après le jet du but, demander l'acceptation de l'adversaire sur la validité avant l'envoi de la première boule.

After throwing the jack, ask the opponents to agree that it is valid before throwing the first boule.¹⁰

One important verbal action— reporting how many unplayed boules your team has— is not mentioned in the rules. Because there is no written rule to the effect that "a team, if asked, must report the number of unplayed boules that it has", there have been cases where a team, when asked, refused to say how many unplayed boules they had. That is appalling sportsmanship. But it was not, technically, illegal.

Finally— the act of asking a team how many unplayed boules it has, is also a way of doing due diligence. If the rules were to recognize that fact, it would be easier to deal fairly with some "forgotten boule" situations. (See the discussion of "Dealing with a forgotten boule".)

¹⁰ That was back in the days when each national federation had its own version of the rules, and the FIPJP had its own different version for use in international competitions. That all changed in 1984. The FIPJP adopted the French national rules as the international rules, and the national federations agreed to adopt the international rules as their own national rules. The upside of that development is that today the rules of petanque are the same the world over. The downside is that this nice little rule got lost in the shuffle.

General principles for applying the rules

Sometimes we encounter situations in which we're not sure how to apply the rules. When we're dealing with one of the more poorly-written rules, studying the rules won't help. We need some higher principles that we can appeal to, to help us make decisions. We have such higher principles in our natural intuitions about fairness. Here are my ideas about what those higher principles are. Note that these are not FIPJP rules and they are not recognized by the FIPJP.

(1) The Consensus Rule

When an illegal action has been performed, it is permissible to continue the game in any way that is agreeable to both teams. Any other principle may be over-ridden by the Consensus Rule.

(2) When a player has performed an illegal action, the motive or cause for the illegal action is irrelevant when considering what to do next.

Players are responsible for playing carefully as well as ethically. Carelessness and clumsiness are as unacceptable as deliberate cheating. *In social play, this rule may be over-ridden by a consensus decision that the violation was accidental and not to be taken seriously.*

(3) An offending team may not benefit from its illegal action.

A team that performs an illegal action (deliberately or not) may not benefit from, or gain an advantage because of, that illegal action.

(4) The Advantage Rule

The Advantage Rule is a corollary to Rule 3. When an illegal action has been performed, the best way to insure that the offending team does not benefit from its illegal action is to give the offended team the choice of how to proceed. Different sets of choices are appropriate in different situations. They might include:

- undoing the effects of the illegal action and then continuing play.
- leaving the effects of the illegal action unchanged and continuing play.
- stopping play and declaring the mene *nul*, scoreless.

When a member of one team accidentally moves a boule, it might seem reasonable to apply (4) the Advantage Rule and say that the boule should be relocated by a member of the opposing team. But as a practical matter, the player that accidentally moved the boule is usually the one who knows best where to put it back. It is better to apply (1) the Consensus Rule and say that the boule should be put back in a location acceptable to the two teams.

(5) Reasoning by analogy is permitted.

This is necessary when there is no rule that *exactly* applies to a particular situation.

If I was King of the Rules

It's pointless to waste time thinking about how the rules should be changed or rewritten. The FIPJP isn't going to do it. And if they do, they won't be asking you or me for suggestions about how to do it. Still, it can be fun to daydream about what you would do if you could change the FIPJP rules in any way you thought best.

If I (!) was King of the Rules, I would split the current FIPJP rules document into three separate documents.

The **Competition Rules** document would be FIPJP-specific. It would contain the FIPJP's rules for how it runs FIPJP-sanctioned competitions. It would have sections for:

1. Administrative rules for running FIPJP-sanctioned competitions
2. Rules for equipment to be used in FIPJP-sanctioned competitions, including rules for:
 - a. terrains (dimensions of marked terrains during competitions)
 - b. boules and jacks (certification, material, weight, size, markings, etc.)
 - c. plastic circles (physical properties, dimensions)
3. Rules for special types of competition, including rules for:
 - a. time-limited competitions
 - b. competitions for different age groups

The **Game Rules** document would contain the rules of the game of petanque, as such. It would not be FIPJP-specific. It would describe how the game is played outside of the context of tournaments, without umpires. To create it, the rules of the game would be extracted from the current FIPJP rules document and then be rewritten and reorganized. Two important changes would be—

1. Every rule that says that a ball should be relocated if and only if its original location was marked would be changed to "Put it back in its original location if possible." A note would specify that in this context "if possible" means "if the two teams can agree on a location." That way, the meaning of the words "if possible" could easily be modified in competition-specific rules.
2. Something like the "General Principles for the Interpretation of the Rules" (see above) would be included in the rules, perhaps in an appendix or special section.

The **Umpire's Guide** document would be a guide for the use of umpires in FIPJP-sanctioned competition. Its contents would be created by the FIPJP International Umpires Committee. I imagine that it would cover procedures for handling situations where teams disagree, where there are player behavior issues, where play must be suspended due to weather conditions, and so on.

Finally, I would change the process by which the rules are written and revised. The new process would use the Web and modern computer technology. It would use procedures modeled on international standards bodies such as the World Wide Web Consortium. Ultimate responsibility for the rules of petanque would continue to rest with the FIPJP umpires committee, just as the ultimate responsibility for Web standards rests with the W3C committee. The committee, however, would operate differently than it does today. An area of the FIPJP web site would allow anyone (individual players, national umpires, national federations) to submit or comment on proposals for changes to the rules. When a new version of the rules is drafted, the draft proposal would be published on the FIPJP web site along with a request for public review and comment. At the close of the review period, the umpires would consider the results of the public review. The draft proposal might be revised and reissued before being submitted to the FIPJP Executive Committee for final approval.

Notes on individual rules

Article 2 – The boules

About the certification of boules

Article 2 begins with the following words.

Petanque is played with boules approved by the FIPJP and conforming to the following characteristics:...

First of all, this is wrong. You can play petanque with boules that are NOT approved by the FIPJP. They are called "leisure" boules, and many players play with them. What the rule SHOULD say is —

In FIPJP-sanctioned competitions players must play with boules approved by the FIPJP and conforming to the following characteristics:...

Boules that are approved for use in FIPJP-sanctioned competitions are called "competition boules". In order to be sold as competition boules, a set of boules must have been made by an FIPJP-approved manufacturer and must conform to a set of technical specifications laid out in an FIPJP publication titled *Conditions Requises Pour L'homologation De Boules De Petanque De Competition* ("Requirements for the Certification of Competition Petanque Boules").

To determine whether or not a new set of boules are competition boules, look at the box in which the boules are packaged. Look for words like *boules de compétition homologuées* ("certified competition boules"), *homologué en compétition par la FIPJP*, or *agrés par la FIPJP en compétition*.

Stuffing the boules

Article 2 specifies that boules "must not be filled with lead or sand." It would be clearer and more precise if it said simply that boules must be hollow, and that it is forbidden to put anything inside a boule after it has been manufactured.

And why would anyone want to put something inside a boule?

"Stuffed" boules (*boules farcies*)¹¹ give a pointer an advantage because when a stuffed boule is pointed, after it hits the ground it tends to stay close to the *donée* rather than rolling away. In order to gain this illegal advantage, players have been known to fill boules with a variety of substances — mercury is the substance of choice, but oil, iron filings, and sand have also used. One French player says that finely ground glass works well.¹²

One simple way to detect a stuffed boule is simply to hold it up to your ear and shake it. If you can hear something rattling inside it, it has been stuffed.

In big-money tournaments, umpires sometimes have special devices designed to detect stuffed boules. One traditional device is called (in both English and French) the *rail*. It is a wooden board with a steel runner, with a metal spring at one end. A boule is placed in the middle of the runner and a sharp flick of a finger sends the boule toward the spring. The spring pushes the boule back toward the other end of the rail. A normal boule

¹¹ Such boules are also known as *boules truquées*, "tricked" or "rigged" boules, or *boules fadées*.

¹² On the internet you can find photographs of metal boules filled with bundles of rubber bands or coil-type springs. These are not pictures of illegally stuffed petanque boules. They are pictures of "Italian style" fillings that are normal in some Italian boules games.

will return all the way back to its starting point, but a stuffed boule will stop on the way. This shows the bounce-suppression that a stuffed boule displays in play.

Another device is the *toboggan* (slide). It is a board with a track in which there are two dips called (in French) *dos d'âne* (literally, donkey backs). A boule is placed at one end of the slide and released. A normal boule will roll from one end of the slide to the other, but a stuffed boule will slow down and stop in one of the dips.

There is also a device called *La Boulhonnete* (The Honest Boule). It consists of a round metal disk about the size of a dinner plate, with a slight dip in the center. To use it, the device is first carefully leveled. Then the boule is placed at the edge of the disk and released. The boule is timed as it rolls back and forth on the disk. A stuffed boule will come to rest in much less time than an honest boule.



Stamping the boules

Players sometimes wonder if they can stamp or scratch their initials onto their boules. The answer is NO. The only way and time that boules can be stamped is by the original manufacturer at the time the boules are manufactured. [IPNZ, Art.2] To get customized stamping, specify what you want stamped on the boules when you place your order with the manufacturer. If you special-order boules from a retailer like Petanque America, you can specify the stamped text that you want at the time that you place your order, and they will pass it on to the manufacturer.

The weight of the boules

Article 2 specifies three weight-related requirements for boules.

1. Boules must weigh between 650 and 800 grams
2. The manufacturer must engrave the weight on the boules.
3. The manufacturer's weight mark (*le chiffre du poids*) must be legible.

The reason for the weight-mark is to make it easy (or easier) to detect a "stuffed" boule. Injecting a substance like mercury into a boule will, all else being equal, increase its weight. So an umpire can simply weigh a boule and be reasonably certain that it has been tampered with if it weighs more than the weight mark.

The requirement for a manufacturer's weight mark was first added to the French (FFPJP) rules in 1974, and one guesses that the number of stuffed boules has been dropping steadily ever since. As recently as October 2016, at the European (CEP Eurocup) Championships held in Monaco, there was an incident in which the German team was disqualified when it was found to be playing with a stuffed boule. The interesting thing is that the competition was the veterans' triples competition— the old guys. As the older generation of players dies out, I expect incidents of stuffed boules eventually will stop altogether.

An interesting fact is that a boule slowly loses weight as it is played with over the years, so a boule that has been heavily used for decades can lose as much as 5 to 10 grams of weight. This fact of weight loss prompts players to wonder if there is any amount of weight loss that is too much. Is there some fixed number of grams, they ask, or some fixed percentage of its original weight, that a boule can lose that will render it illegal?

The answer is YES, but not in the rules of petanque. The FIPJP publishes a document that lays out requirements for the manufacture of certified competition boules— *Conditions Requises Pour L'homologation De Boules De Petanque De Competition* ("Requirements for the Certification of Competition Petanque Boules"). Buried in that document are several requirements for what can and cannot happen to boules after they leave the manufacturer.

Article 7 – Note: boules of steel or bronze cannot be subjected to any heat treatment after sale to the user.

Article 9 – In no case can the regulatory marking be changed [retouché] after sale to the user.

Article 8 ("Weight") says this (I have bolded the part that is important for us here)—

The weight of the boules must be between 650 grams minimum and 800 grams maximum. The following tolerances are allowed:

(a) Manufacturing tolerance for each boule: The maximum difference between the engraved weight and the actual weight may not be greater than plus/minus 5 grams.

b) Tolerance of wear due to use in play: Weight loss should not exceed 15 grams below the marked weight.

When Ray Ager brought up this question on "Ask the Umpire", Mike Pegg replied that this document contained rules only for the manufacturing of boules, not rules for boules in play. And if the FIPJP rules were well organized, that would be true. But, as we have seen, Articles 7, 8, and 9 actually do contain rules for boules in play. And the meaning of Article 8, clause (b) is quite clear. So there really should be a fourth weight-related requirements for boules in Article 2 of the rules of petanque.

Weight loss due to wear and use in play may not be greater than 15 grams below the marked weight.

Coloring the boules

People sometimes believe that you cannot paint boules because this contravenes Article 2's clause forbidding "tampering" with boules. But the prohibition on tampering is primarily meant to prevent (a) re-tempering (re-heating) a boule to change its hardness, and (b) drilling a hole into the boule and filling it with something. So we should make it clear that **coloring a boule is not considered to be tampering**.

There are two common and acceptable ways and reasons to color boules.

1. Carbon-steel boules often come from the manufacturer with a thin layer of paint to protect against oxidation (rust). Boules sold by La Boule Bleue and La Boule Noire, for example, are not really blue and black. They come from the manufacturer with a thin layer of blue or black paint that quickly wears off during normal play.
2. Some players like to make their boules easier to identify by putting paint, fingernail polish, or color from a permanent marker in the grooves (striations) and engraved markings of their boules. Paint inside the striations and engravings will not come into contact with the ground or with other boules, so it will not affect the performance of the boule. If any paint overflows the grooves, it quickly wears off during normal play.

There are two cases, though, in which coloring or painting boules might cause an umpire to reject the boule.

1. The first is if the boule is covered in such a way or to such a degree that the paint (or coating, or whatever it is) might alter the playing characteristics of the boule. That is the FPUSA forbids boules that are entirely covered in paint from FPUSA-sanctioned title competitions. [IFPUSA, Q13]
2. The other is if the boule is painted in a way that might conceal the fact that the boule has been tampered with. A popular way to "stuff" a boule is to inject it with mercury. To get the mercury into the boule, a hole is drilled into the center of a letter "O" or a numeric zero "0", in the hope that the round shape of the stamped character will help conceal the round hole. Putting paint in the stamped lettering might further conceal such tampering. Some national federations, concerned about this possibility, forbid any kind of paint on a boule, including in the striations or stamped lettering.

The Dutch Petanque Federation is concerned about both of these kinds of situations, and so takes a very hard line on painting the boules in any way.

*The Rules Committee considers that trickery may involve more than just heating or mechanical operations on the iron boule; it may also involve paint. Applying a coat of paint or ink can affect the properties of a boule. In particular, a boule can be made rougher (slower? **stroever**). According to the article 23, before a boule is thrown, anything sticking to it must be removed. This applies not only to mud and leaves, but also to paints, inks and the like. In the past, paint was misused to hide drill holes used in the trickery of boules. That was why the FIPJP explicitly prohibited the use of paint. [IN]JBB, Article 2bis]*

[IN]JBB goes on to say, however, that for social play and smaller tournaments, a few dabs of color from a magic marker in the stripes of the boules are acceptable "provided that they do not change the properties of the boule."

Cooking the boules

The FIPJP's full requirements for certified (*homologuées*) competition boules are laid out in a document called "Requirements for the Certification of Competition Petanque Boules" (*Conditions Requises Pour L'homologation De Boules De Petanque De Competition*). One issue that the document takes quite seriously is **safety**. According to the Preamble, one of the goals of the document is

To insure the safety of players and spectators by providing binding standards for materials and manufacturing processes, with the goal of avoiding any risk – in particular, any risk of being hit by a piece of metal.

In keeping with the goal of safety, Section II, article 3 specifies a minimum and maximum permissible hardness for boules— between 35 HRC and 55 HRC. HRC is the **Rockwell C hardness index**.

When a manufacturer submits an application for certification for a new model of boule, he must specify the material of which it is made and "the hardness and its method of production." Steel's hardness is determined by the way it is "tempered", that is, heat-treated. When steel is worked, it is first heated to a very high temperature and then cooled very rapidly (quenched). This leaves it in a very hard, brittle condition. It is then reheated to a lower temperature and allowed to cool slowly (tempered). Tempering removes some of the steel's hardness and brittleness, and makes it softer, tougher, and more ductile. To achieve any specific level of softness, the steel must be heated to a specific temperature, maintained at that temperature for a specific period of time, and then allowed to cool slowly in still air.

In theory, a trained engineer could re-temper a certified boule after it left the factory, to make it even softer than the 35 HRC permitted by the "Regulations for Certification". That's why Article 2 says—

It is specifically forbidden to heat treat [boules] in order to modify the hardness given by the manufacturer.

It is a safety issue.

The hardness of a boule

At this point, let's take a short detour and explore the topic of the hardness of a boule. It will help us to understand the rules about the hardness of boules, but it's also just interesting information that isn't easily available elsewhere.

When you shop for competition boules, you will see their hardness (*dureté*) described as hard (*dure*, "D"), semi-soft (*demi-tendre*, "½T"), soft (*tendre*, "T"), very soft (*très tendre*, "TT"), or perhaps even *super tendre*. The problem with these labels is that they conceal the fact that there are two quite different kinds of "hardness".

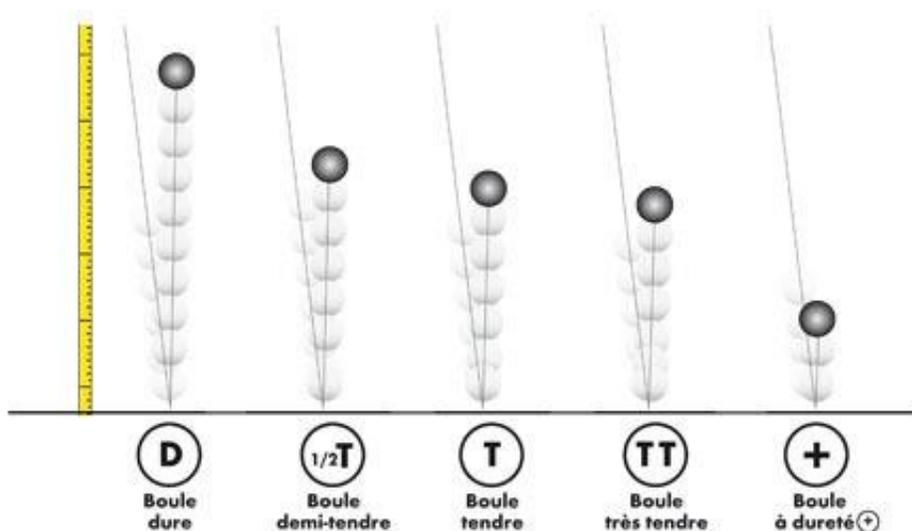
Elasticity

Elasticity is a way of describing how "bouncy" a boule is. When a boule hits the ground or another boule, the pressure of the collision deforms the boule. A boule's elasticity is its ability to recover from such a collision and return to its original shape.

A boule's "elastic limit" or "yield point" is the greatest amount of pressure that it can take without breaking or being permanently deformed. Engineers determine a boule's elasticity by putting it in a big press and mashing it under greater and greater pressure, until they find a pressure where the boule breaks. That pressure is the boule's elastic limit.

In the USA we usually express pressure (tire pressure, for instance) in pounds per square inch (p/i² or PSI.) France uses the metric system, so French boules manufacturers express the pressure of a boule's elastic limit in kilograms per square millimeter (kg/mm²). The higher this number is, the more bouncy a boule is. A very "soft" (low-bounce) boule has an elasticity of 110 kg/mm², while a very "hard" (high-bounce) boule has an elasticity of 140 kg/mm².

When Obut discusses "hardness", what it means is elasticity.



Scratch resistance

The technical term for “scratch resistance” is “penetration resistance” or “indentation hardness”. Basically it is a measure of how likely it is that your boule will get scratched or gouged if it hits a sharp rock on the terrain.

Engineers test the scratch resistance of a boule by taking a diamond with a standard angle of sharpness and pressing it into the boule with a standard amount of pressure. This makes a hole in the boule. How deep the hole is tells them how hard the boule is— the softer the boule, the deeper the hole.

The standard way to express penetration resistance is a dimensionless number called the **Rockwell C hardness index** (HRC, or HrC). For safety reasons, the FIPJP requires all competition boules to have an HRC between 35 and 55.

Is there any correlation between elasticity and scratch resistance?

Yes. There is a rough correlation. Or at least there used to be, back in the days before manufacturers started playing with new steel alloys and “anti-rebound” technologies (see next section). Back then you could map an elasticity number to a scratch resistance number. Here are the numbers, from soft to hard, from the **boulipedia.com** web site.

HRC Rockwell	Résistance à la rupture kg/mm ²
35	110
35.9	115
37	120
38.9	125
40	130
41.8	135
43.5	140

© Boulipedia.com

Boules that are both hard and soft

Generally speaking, petanque players (and especially shooters and high-lob pointers) want boules that are both hard (durable, scratch resistant) and soft (low-bounce). To satisfy this desire, skilled boule-engineers have devised ways to make boules that are BOTH hard (scratch resistant) AND soft (low-bounce).

The exact details of how they do this are of course trade secrets. Different manufacturers do it different ways. One way is to use special steel alloys and special tempering techniques. When this is done, the boule may be described as being made of "SPECIAL carbon steel" or "carbon steel ALLOY" (*allié au carbone*).

Another way to do it is to specially design the boule's surface and/or interior structure to reduce bounciness. MS Petanque does this with their MS 2110 line of boules. "These boules are made with internal ribs that reduce the shock of impact, giving low bounce and reduced rebound. Their hardness makes them resistant to wear."



These are called "anti-rebound" or "controlled rebound" technologies. Basically the goal is to create boules that have, as Obut advertises, "the playing behavior [*comportement au jeu*] of a 'very very' soft boule, while boasting a wear resistance comparable to that of a traditional half-soft boule." Obut invented a new term for such boules—*dureté+*, or in English "hardness+". Obut's high-end *dureté+* boules are the RCC and RCX. RC stands for *Rebond Contrôlé*— controlled rebound. "C" stands for *carbon*, carbon steel. "X" stands for *inox*, stainless steel.

It is important to realize that there are no precise, industry-standard definitions for words like "hard", "soft", "semi-soft", and "very soft". They really indicate no more than the relative softness of the different models available from the same manufacturer. What one manufacturer calls "soft", another manufacturer might call "semi-soft" or even "very soft".

Article 3 – The jack

The rules for jacks can be found in two places.

1. Article 3 "Approved Jacks" of the FIPJP international rules of the game of petanque.
2. An FIPJP document called *Fabricants de Boules: Labels des Boules et Buts agréés en compétition*. It is a list of certified manufacturers, boules, and synthetic jacks.

Here is a quick overview of the history of the rules about the jack.

1. In 1957 and 1962 jacks could be made of wood, with a diameter of 30mm (\pm 5mm). This allowed for a lot of variation in the size of the jack.
2. In 1959 and 1964 jacks were explicitly forbidden to be made of metal. But then this specification was dropped from the rules. It was, after all, pointless, since the rules also specified that the jack was to be made of wood.
3. In 1970, jacks were permitted to be painted white.
4. In 1984, jacks were permitted to be painted any color.
5. In 2002 jacks were permitted to be made of wood, or "of a synthetic material bearing the manufacturer's trademark and having obtained the FIPJP's approval in line with the precise specification relating to the required standards." At the same time, the list of approved boules and manufacturers was modified so that a synthetic jack manufactured by the company VMS was licensed. The synthetic material in question is plastic, specifically a kind of hard epoxy resin similar to the material used to make billiard balls and bowling balls.
6. In 2008 the tolerance of the size requirement was tightened from 5mm to 1mm. A jack's diameter was required to be 30mm (\pm 1mm). (This put an end to big variations in the size of the jack.)
7. In 2008, the wording of the rule was changed to read – "Painted jacks are permitted, but must not be able to be picked up with a magnet."

The material of the jack

Before 2002, the rules always specified that the jack had to be made of wood. That changed in 2002, when for the first time jacks were permitted to be made of plastic.

The story of the change begins in 1996, with boules manufacturer VMS. VMS (now MS Petanque) is known for its distinctive designs. Its first design was the **VMS-Plot**, which had little round dimples that made it resemble the old wooden “nailed” boules (*boules cloutées*). (The VMS-Plot design was later replaced by the **Tortue** design, which had slab-shaped areas that rather resembled shingles, but were named after the sections of a tortoise's shell.)



In 1996 VMS introduced its line of VMS-Plot boules, and as a marketing gimmick it simultaneously brought out a line of colorful epoxy resin jacks. The design of the jacks reflected the design of the boules— they were bumpy.



Mike Pegg writes —

These resin jacks were produced back in 1996 for the launch of the new “VMS” boule which was about the same time as the World Champs in Essen, Germany. The company gave a free resin jack with each set they sold.

Soon the jacks became available for purchase, and in 2002 the FIPJP— without any real investigation— decided to approve them. (Later, in 2013, Obut brought out its own line of synthetic jacks, the infamous “black jacks”.)

As soon as people started using the synthetic jacks, they started having problems with them. First, the synthetic jacks are hard. In photographs, they look like they might be rubbery, or at least hard/rubbery like a golf ball. But the epoxy resin material is very hard, like a billiard ball or a bowling ball. Second, the resin jacks are heavy. Third, the resin jacks may be more elastic than wooden jacks, so that if a synthetic jack is hit by a boule, it will compress and rebound with more force than a wooden jack.

The heaviness is a feature that Obut actively promotes, saying that it gives a player better control when throwing a jack (which is probably true). But the hardness, weight, and elasticity mean that if a synthetic jack is hit by a boule, it is going to fly farther and faster than a wooden jack would — far enough to hit a player or a spectator. And if you get hit with a synthetic jack, it is going to hurt more than a wooden one would.

Almost immediately, citing safety concerns, many national organizations (including the FPUSA) banned the use of resin jacks in competitions and casual play. According to an FPUSA announcement —

Anyone who has been hit by a jack whizzing across the terrain after being struck by a shot boule knows how much it can hurt and there is anecdotal evidence that injuries to players are more severe and more painful from these plastic jacks than from the wooden ones.

Mike Pegg, then of the English Petanque Association, wrote —

The English Petanque Association and many other European nations have either banned them or restricted their use. The FIPJP allow only wooden jacks to be used at the World Champs.

The issue we and other nations have with the resin jack is two-fold.

They are far more dense (they don't even float) than a wooden jack, causing more injury if you get hit by one.

When they break (hit by a boule for example) they shatter into pieces which can be sharp.

There are a number of reported incidents where players have been hit on the arm causing a severe bruise. More worrying was a player hit in the face near his eye receiving a nasty cut. Our insurers advised us as we know these jacks can cause an injury we could negate our policy cover if we allowed them to be used.

On online petanque forums, players added other objections. The dimples on the VMS synthetic jack might make measuring a problem in very tight situations. A puddle is *terrain interdit* if it is deep enough to float a jack — but the VMS jack is too dense to float! And so on.

The bottom line is that at the level of the international rules, the FIPJP rules allow certain authorized lines of synthetic jacks to be used in competition play. But at the level of competition rules, essentially all competitions (including FIPJP competitions!) prohibit the use of synthetic jacks.

The magnetic properties of the jack

Before we begin discussing the magnetic properties of the jack, it will be useful to make two points.

1. There is a distinction between a material (or object) that is **magnetic** and one that is **paramagnetic**. A material is **magnetic** if it carries a persistent magnetic field. A material is **paramagnetic** if it does not carry a magnetic field itself, but is attracted by an externally applied magnetic field. Ordinary steel hardware, for example, is not magnetic but paramagnetic — nails and screws aren't magnets, but they can be picked up with magnets.
2. Since 2008, Article 3 has contained this sentence.
Painted jacks are allowed, but must not be capable of being picked up with a magnet.

In short, even though every steel boule is paramagnetic, since 2008 Article 3 has prohibited the use of paramagnetic jacks. Or at least, so it seemed...

The story of the controversy over the magnetic properties of the jack begins in January 2013, when Obut started offering a new product, *buts noirs ramassables par aimant* — black jacks that can be picked up by a magnet. Iron oxide particles are embedded in the jack's synthetic material. That means that the black jack is paramagnetic. It is not magnetic, but it can be picked up by a magnet. *Il n'est pas aimanté, il peut-être aimanté.*



**6 BUTS NOIRS RAMASSABLES
PAR AIMANT /
6 BLACK JACKS FOR LIFTING UP
BY MAGNET**

Nouveau but breveté, en composite noir,
ramassable par aimant, marqué OBUT, diamètre 30
mm, homologué compétition.

*New patented jack, in black composite material,
can be picked up by magnet, with OBUT mark,
diameter 30 mm, approved for use in competitions.*

15,00 €

Ref. 6BIACP

MADE BY OBUT
AT ST-BUNNET

At the same time that Obut introduced the new type of jack, the FIPJP list of approved boules and jacks was updated to include the new jack. This caused a lot of confusion among players and umpires. How, they asked, could there be a paramagnetic jack on the list of approved jacks when Article 3 states that "Painted jacks are permitted, but must not be able to be picked up with a magnet."?

The official FIPJP position was articulated by Claude Azéma, president of the FIPJP, on February 7, 2014, at a seminar for international umpires held in Toulouse. That position, as recorded in the minutes of the meeting, is that Article 3 states only that PAINTED jacks may not be paramagnetic. The Obut jack is not painted. (Its color comes from a dye added to the synthetic material.) Therefore, it is not prohibited under the terms of Article 3.

When the official FIPJP position became known, there was universal incredulity. A few people noted that paramagnetic jacks might be helpful for handicapped players who use magnetic boule lifters. A few commenters voiced the opinion that the approval was a disgraceful sellout by the FIPJP and showed that Obut, not FIPJP, really writes the rules. But everyone agreed that the FIPJP position was patently absurd. As Eli Nielsen wrote on "Ask the Umpire":

Do you really believe, that those who wrote the rules meant, that only painted jacks were not to be picked up with a magnet, but any other jack could legally be picked up with a magnet. What is the point?

In the hubbub, fundamental questions were mostly sidelined.

1. Is there any good reason why a jack should not be paramagnetic?
2. Historically speaking, what was the reason that, in 2008, the FIPJP changed the rules to forbid paramagnetic jacks?

One theory is that the prohibition on paramagnetic jacks was really designed to prohibit metal jacks. But that is silly. If the FIPJP wanted to, they could explicitly prohibit metal jacks, as they did in 1959. But that would be silly because metal jacks are already prohibited by the rule that jacks must be made of wood or plastic. And prohibiting paramagnetic jacks still allows a jack to be made of a metal such as brass or aluminum.

Another theory is that paramagnetic jacks were prohibited in 2008 because the Umpires Committee was afraid that if paramagnetic jacks ever were to be developed at some unspecified time in the future, they might stop telescoping magnetic boule lifters from being used as ad hoc measuring devices. This is of course absurd. The rules already require players and umpires to measure with real measuring devices such as tape measures. And the FIPJP umpires don't care in the least about the convenience of old duffers who use their telescoping boule lifters as *ad hoc* measuring devices.

Another theory is that if the jack were to be paramagnetic, then a player might be able to cheat by placing a magnet in his shoe and surreptitiously moving the jack with his foot. This is silly. A magnet in a shoe would make it harder, not easier, to move the jack with your foot.

In the end, one suspects that there never was a good reason to prohibit paramagnetic jacks. Instead, the reason (whatever it was) probably lay in a limited understanding on the part of the FIPJP umpires of the physics of magnetism, accompanied by some vague suspicion that a paramagnetic jack might somehow lead to problems. We may never know what it was that aroused that suspicion in 2008.

The bottom line, in my opinion, is this —

- Article 3 (despite the awkward way in which it is worded) was intended to prohibit paramagnetic jacks, regardless of the composition and coating of the jack.
- There is not now, nor was there ever, any good reason to prohibit paramagnetic jacks.
- The 2016 revision of the rules might remove the prohibition on paramagnetic jacks. ??

It will be interesting to see what happens. In any event, it is a silly debate about something that is of absolutely no importance whatsoever.

The weight of the jack

The rules (at least until recently) have always specified that the jack is to be made of wood. But they have never specified the kind of wood that the jack was to be made of, nor the jack's weight.

Before the size of the jack was restricted to a diameter of 30mm (± 1 mm), differences in size permitted a wide variation in the weight of the jack. So did differences in the kind of wood and the moisture content of the wood — from a light jack made of European beech (*hêtre*, *Fagus sylvatica*), around 9-10g, to a heavier jack made of boxwood (*buis*, *Buxus sempervirens*), around 14-15g. When Obut's black synthetic jack appeared in 2013, it weighed just under 18g. Many boxwood jacks are too heavy to float in water. The Obut black jack will not float.

At the umpire's meeting that we've already mentioned, in February 2014, a number of umpires drew attention to the danger of jacks that were too heavy. President Azéma noted problems with the behavior of jacks that were too light. (He implied that it was problems with very light plastic jacks that had led the FIPJP to require wooden jacks at the world championships.) As a result, Azéma said,

It will therefore be proposed to state in the regulations that jacks, whatever they are made of, must weigh between 10 and 18 grams, and that this restriction can be retroactive for synthetic jacks that have already been approved. That would be added to the rules of play and to the manufacturing specification.

In January 2015, International Umpire Mike Pegg reported that

At the World Congress [January 24-25, 2015, in Nice] it was announced that these [paramagnetic] jacks are permitted.... but a new weight limit is also being introduced for all jacks. By December 2017 the only jacks permitted will be those with a diameter of 30mm + or - 1mm and weigh between 10g and 18g.

So there you have it. Starting in 2018 jacks must weigh between 10g and 18g.

The 10g lower-bound will prohibit the use of very light, cheap plastic jacks during FIPJP-sanctioned competitions. It may also exclude some of the very lightest of the beech jacks. The 18g upper-bound should not affect any of the currently licensed synthetic jacks.

It is easy to "make your own" jacks. Just go to a wood shop or a hobby shop and buy a hardwood ball whose size is one-and-a-quarter (1.25) inches in diameter. Such a ball will be slightly less than 31mm in diameter and will weigh around 13g. Adding color with a bit of paint or magic marker is optional. It shouldn't be surprising that such a home-made jack is perfectly legal. The requirements for the jack are requirements for a wooden ball, and that is exactly what your "home-made" jack is.

Article 5 – The playing area

Petanque is played on all terrains

Article 5 opens with this rather mysterious sentence.

Petanque is played on all terrains.

What it means is—Petanque can be played on a marked or an unmarked terrain. In earlier versions of the rules, the two opening sentences of Article 5 were—

Petanque is played on all terrains. By decision of the Organizing Committee or the Umpire, the teams may be required to play on a marked terrain.

The 2010 revision of the rules inserted some text after the first sentence, thereby obscuring its meaning.

Guide lines and dead-ball lines

Article 5 says –

A playing area contains an indefinite number of terrains whose boundaries are marked by strings... These strings marking the boundaries of the different terrains are not dead-ball lines except for the lines at the bottom of lanes and the lines of the exterior lanes.

Traditionally, the lines separating the lanes are marked by strings tightly strung between nails driven into the ground.

- The lines at the bottom of the lanes and the lines around the edge of the playing area are dead-ball lines.
- The lines between the lanes are called “guide lines”. They are NOT dead-ball lines except during time-limited games.

In some competitions, the guide lines are laid out so that there are narrow walkways between some lanes. In those competitions it is up to the competition organizers to specify how the walkways should be treated, i.e. whether or not they are to be considered out-of-bounds.

Barriers and sideboards

The word “barriers” occurs only once, in Article 5.

When the terrains are enclosed by barriers, these must be located at a minimum distance of 1 meter from the exterior line of the game terrains.

In this sentence the word "barriers" refers to fences or crowd-control barriers (either temporary or permanent) whose purpose is to keep spectators off of the playing area. Such fences are often portable steel barriers installed temporarily at tournaments, although they may be permanent parts of the architecture of a boudrome. In games that are being televised these barriers are often colorful placards carrying advertisements for sponsors of the event. In all cases, these barriers must be at least a meter from the playing area in order to allow players to throw with a normal backswing without fear of hitting the barriers.

For many years before 2008, the word *barrières* in Article 5 was translated into English as “solid barriers”. This caused confusion among Anglophone petanque players because "solid barriers" suggests the low wooden sideboards or surrounds that are installed in many boudromes for the purpose of keeping boules from being shot out of the playing area. The word “solid” was dropped from English translations as part of a major revision and simplification of the rules in 2008.

Before 2008, the rules specified that *barrières* had to be at least 30cm outside the exterior dead-ball line. That distance was changed to one meter in 2008. But the distance of 30cm lives on in the FIPJP's unofficial recommendation that any wooden surrounds or sideboards (designed to keep boules inside the playing area) should be at least 30cm outside the exterior dead-ball line. That distance is enough to make it clear that a boule has completely crossed an out-of-bounds line before hitting a sideboard, and it minimizes the chances that a boule will hit a sideboard and bounce back in-bounds.



In this photograph the out-of-bounds lines (strings) are too small to be seen, but you can see the edge of the out-of-bounds area, which (for purely decorative reasons) is marked by a different color of gravel.

About 30 cm outside of the out-of-bounds lines are white wooden sideboards (with little flower boxes) to keep boules from leaving the playing area.

More than a meter outside the sideboards are the barriers mentioned in Article 5. They are steel crowd-control barriers or colorful placards decorated with advertisements.

We see a television crew between the sideboards and the barriers. The umpires (when they are not measuring, as in this photo) typically stand or sit in that area. The teams' coaches sometimes also sit in that area.

Articles 6 and 7 – The circle

The size of a drawn circle and redrawing the circle

Article 6 says –

One of the players of the team that won the draw chooses the starting point and draws or places a circle on the ground such that the feet of each of the players can fit entirely inside it. However, a drawn circle may not measure less than 35cm or more than 50cm in diameter.

A common question about this rule is –

I can't fit my feet inside the circle that was drawn by the opposing team. What should I do? Can I redraw the circle myself?

The answer is NO; you can't redraw the circle if it was drawn by the opposing team. The proper procedure is to point out that the circle is too small for your feet, and to ask the opposing team to redraw the circle.

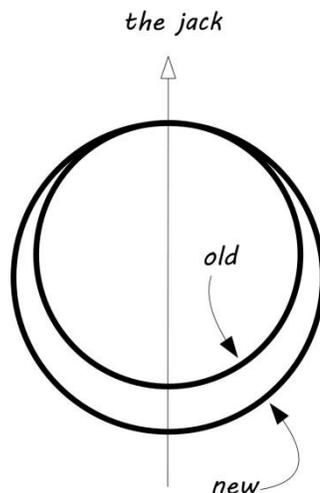
Don't be shy. 35 centimeters, the minimum legal size for a drawn circle, is about 14 inches. Unless you have unusually large feet, a circle that is too small to hold your feet was probably illegally small to begin with. If that is an issue, you can always take out your tape measure and measure it.

Remember... When deciding whether or not your feet fit inside the circle, you must be standing with your feet together, side by side.

NOTE that there is a proper procedure for redrawing the circle.

1. Do NOT extend the old circle outward in one direction, so that it becomes an oval rather than a circle. The new circle should be as close to a proper circular circle as you can make it.
2. Draw the new circle so that (if it was drawn precisely) it would share exactly one point with the old circle, the point that was closest to the jack.

When the circle is redrawn, note that it doesn't have to be redrawn so that it is a full 50cm in diameter. It only has to be big enough so that you can stand with feet together, side by side, and they fit entirely within the new circle.



What is a rigid circle?

Article 6 says – *Where a physical circle is used, it must be rigid.* The opposite of a "rigid" circle is not a folding plastic circle, like the ones currently available from OBUT and other manufacturers.



The opposite of a "rigid" circle is a soft, floppy plastic circle, something like a deflated bicycle inner tube. That was the kind of circle that was used when players were first testing the idea of plastic circles.

If you tossed one of these floppy circles onto the ground, it would just lie there in a heap. You had to tweak and tug it to get it to lie flat in a true circular shape. In the photograph below, you can see one of these circles hanging limply, like a piece of cooked spaghetti, from Claudy Weibel's hand.

People liked the idea of a plastic circle, but not the floppiness. As a result, today the rules mandate that where a physical circle is used, it must be RIGID.



Clearing the circle

Article 6 says –

The interior of the circle can be completely cleared at any time during the mene, but its state must be restored at its end [i.e. at the end of the mene].

At the 1996 World Championships in Essen, the gravel surface of the terrain was so deep that it was impossible to draw a circle in it. (Plastic circles had not yet been developed.) To deal with the situation, the FIPJP umpires allowed players to create circles by using their feet to push away enough stones to reach the hard flat surface below.



This worked, but it left huge circular craters in the terrain.

As a result of this experience, the Umpires Committee added this rule in 2002 and modified it in 2008. It says that, if necessary, players are permitted to form a throwing circle by pushing aside loose surface material to create a circular depression. If they do, the excavated circle must be filled in again at the end of the mene.

The circle is not out-of-bounds

Article 6 says –

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

What this rule says is clear enough. But WHY is it saying it?

Some players have speculated that the rule is meant to keep players from leaving or dropping their unplayed boules on the ground inside the circle, in the mistaken belief that the area inside the circle is out-of-bounds.

Others have speculated that the rule is meant to apply to situations where the jack is shot and flies backward toward the circle. That is closer to the truth. Older versions of the rules¹³ said that the jack was dead if it was hit and knocked back into the circle (*revenait dans le rond*). That rule was removed in 1984 and replaced by a new rule saying that the jack is dead if it bounces back and comes to rest within 3 meters of the circle. (See the discussion of Article 9.)

I suspect that after 1984 older players continued to play by the older rule (or at least to be confused by the change in rules) so in 2002 the FIPJP added the explicit specification to the rules— the circle is not out-of-bounds!

The fact that the circle is NOT out-of-bounds means –

- If the jack is hit, flies back toward the circle, crosses the circle and keeps going, the jack did NOT go out-of-bounds when it crossed the circle.
- If the jack is hit, flies back toward the circle, and hits the foot of the player standing in the circle, the player in the circle was standing IN-BOUNDS when he deflected or stopped the moving jack. Article 14 (a player interfering with a moving jack) should be applied.¹⁴

Does the jack have to be in the exact center of the circle?

Article 7 says—

At the following mene, the jack is thrown from a circle drawn or placed around the place where it was located in the previous mene...

Unless the jack was shot out-of-bounds in the last mene, when you place the circle for the next mene, you simply drop (or draw) it around the jack. A reasonable question is— "Do you have to position the circle so that the jack is in the exact center of the circle?" The answer is NO. The only requirement is that the jack be somewhere inside the circle. It doesn't matter where.

¹³ See the 1952 *Fédération Française Bouliste du «Jeu Provençal et Pétanque»* rules (Article 5c) and the 1980 FIPJP rules (Article 9).

¹⁴ When this happens, if the original location of the jack was not marked, the jack will be left where it is. Since at that point the jack will probably be no farther than 3 meters from the circle, Article 9 will be invoked and the jack will be declared dead.

Feet inside the circle

Article 6 says –

The player's feet must be entirely inside the circle. They must not overlap it, and they must not leave the circle or be completely lifted off the ground until the thrown boule has touched the ground.

This means that when a player is in the circle and throwing, absolutely no part of his feet or his shoes may be directly above any part of the throwing circle.

Generally this is interpreted as meaning that when a player is squat pointing, and his heels are lifted off of the ground, his heels cannot overlap or hang above the circle.

This player is clearly committing a foot fault with his front foot.
He may also be guilty of a foot fault with his left heel.



NOTE however that [IPNZ] has a slightly different interpretation. It says –

When crouching in the circle to play a boule/jack, the player's heel can encroach over the edge of the circle, provided it is not touching the circle at any point. However, if the player stands up and onto the circle before the boule/jack has touched the ground, she/he is deemed to have stood on the perimeter of the circle, and to not have had both feet entirely inside the circle as required. A warning will be given.

When the circle is picked up too soon

What should we do if a player mistakenly picks up the (plastic) throwing circle before all boules have been thrown? In 2011, Jean-Claude Dubois, President of the French National Umpires Committee ruled this way.¹⁵

WHEN A PLAYER, AFTER PLAYING HIS LAST BOULE, INADVERTENTLY PICKS UP THE THROWING CIRCLE BEFORE THE MENE IS COMPLETE.

This can happen in two different situations.

The circle was marked

- The circle is put back in its place, and the player (partner or opponent) who still has the unplayed boule plays it to finish the mene.

The circle was not marked

Here again, this can happen in two different situations.

- The unplayed boule belongs to one of the player's partners. In this case, the unplayed boule is dead.
- The unplayed boule belongs to one of the opponents. In this case, the opponent should put the throwing circle back in its place, even if this can be done only approximately, and the opponent plays his ball to finish the mene.

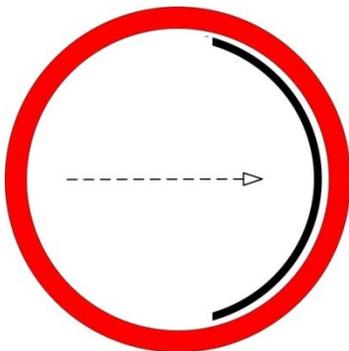
In all cases, the offending player receives a warning.
The same rules apply if there are still several balls left to play.

[FPUSA, Q3] and [IPNZ, Article 6] have slightly different rulings from the French federation. They rule that if the location of the circle was not marked, then regardless of which team prematurely picked up the circle, the circle should be put back in a location mutually agreed upon by the two teams.

Marking the circle

Both [FPUSA] and [IPNZ] recommend that the player who places the circle should mark its location. A recommendation to mark the circle is expected to be included in the 2016 version of the FIPJP rules. ?? [IPNZ] specifies that a player that does not mark the circle will be issued a warning.

The easiest way to mark the circle is to stand on the back of the circle and drag a stick or a finger around the inside of the front of the circle, creating an arc in the dirt.



¹⁵ Dubois's memo is dated March 30, 2011. It can be found (in the original French) at <http://www.ffpjp-cd17.com/uploads/Espace%20Arbitrage/Cas%20du%20cercle%20enleve.pdf>

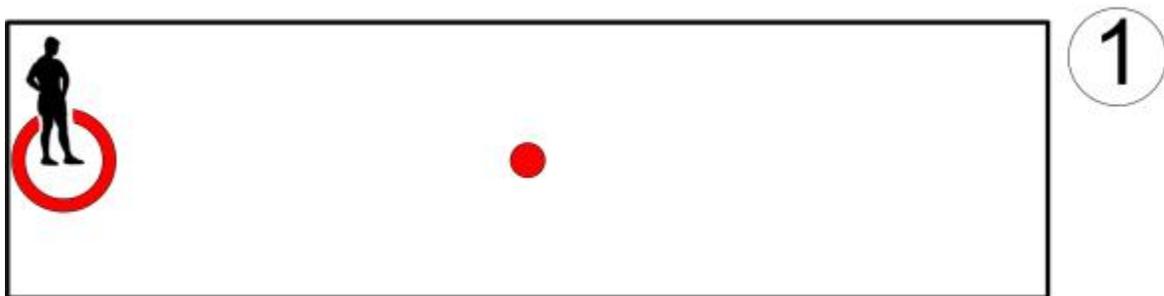
About “stepping back” to move the circle

There is a rule in Article 7 that we can call the Stepping Back Rule. In this section we look at the Stepping Back Rule and answer the most frequently-asked questions about it.

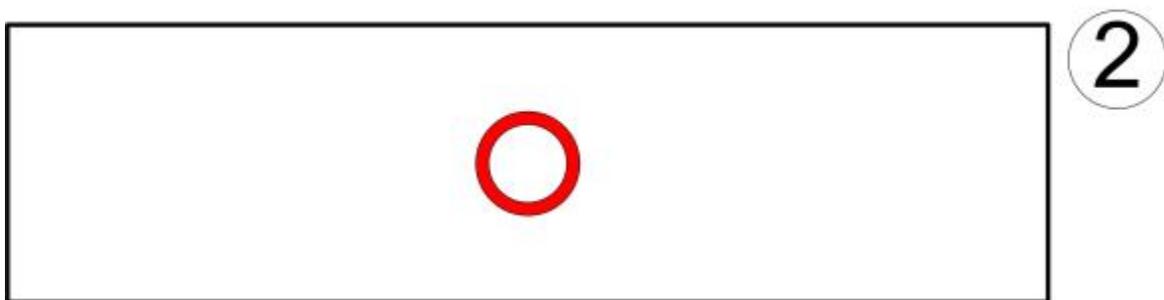
As we discuss the rule, it will be important to remember that the FIPJP rules are designed for use in a very specific context— FIPJP-sanctioned competitions— where games are normally played on rectangular marked lanes (*cadres*) 4 meters wide and 15 meters long. The size and shape of the standard lanes mean that...

- Games are played in a back-and-forth pattern, first in one direction and then in the other direction.
- It is common for players to find, after placing the circle around the former location of the jack, that they can't throw the jack to 10 meters (the maximum permitted distance) because the circle is too close to the lane's marked boundary lines.

Consider the following example. At the start of the first mene, the circle is placed close to the west end of the lane, and the jack is thrown to a distance of 7 meters, so it is exactly in the center of the lane (diagram 1).



Team A wins the first mene, so it starts the second mene by placing the circle around the former location of the jack. The jack was in the exact center of the lane, so now the circle is in the exact center of the lane (diagram 2).



The circle is half a meter in diameter, so the western edge of the circle is 7.25 meters from the western boundary of the lane, and the eastern edge of the circle is 7.25 meters from the eastern boundary of the lane. In this situation, team A might like to throw the jack to 10 meters, but they cannot. Both the western and eastern ends of the lane are too close.

This is where the Stepping Back Rule comes in.

The Stepping Back Rule

Article 7 says—

At the following mene, the jack is thrown from a circle drawn or placed around the point where it was located in the previous mene, except in the following cases: ...

2) The throwing of the jack could not be made to all legal distances.

... In the second case, the player may step back, in line with the previous mene's line of play, but without going beyond the maximum distance allowed for the throwing of the jack.

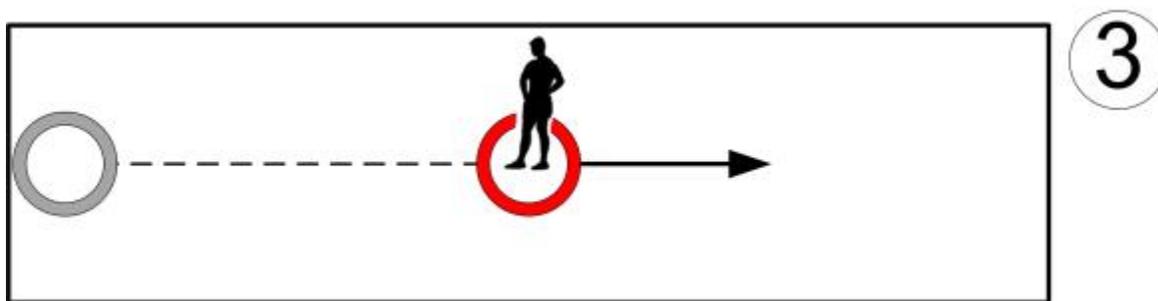
This option is available only if there is no direction in which the jack can be thrown to the maximum distance.

If, after three consecutive throws by the same team, the jack has not been thrown in compliance with the rules specified above, it is handed over to the opposing team which also may make three attempts and who may move the circle back as specified in the preceding paragraph. In this case, the circle may not be changed if this team does not succeed in its three throws.

The crucial question about the Stepping Back Rule is— what does “step back, in line with the previous mene’s line of play” mean?

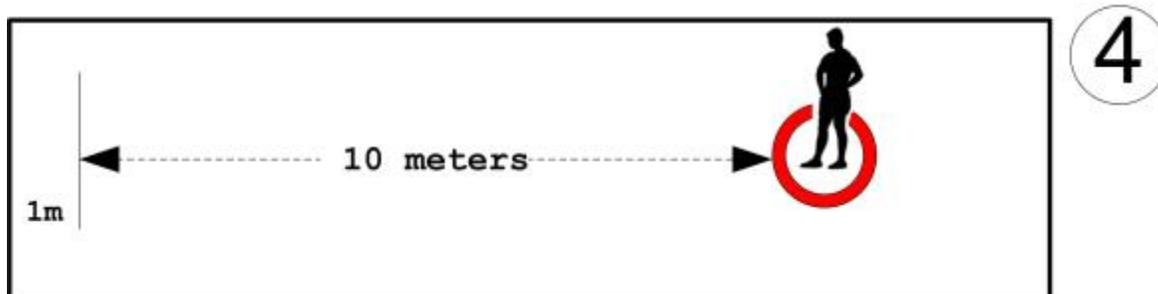
Intuitively, “the previous mene’s line of play” means a line drawn from the place where the circle was located in the previous mene to the jack's last location in the previous mene. (When the jack was shot out of the lane in the previous mene, “the previous mene’s line of play” means a line drawn from the place where the circle was located in the previous mene to the circle’s initial location in this, the current, mene.)

In diagram 3, the line of play is shown as a dotted line.



To understand what “stepping back” means, we must remember that the rules assume that alternating menes are played in alternating directions. The Stepping Back Rule assumes that the player is standing in the circle, looking toward the place where the circle was located in the previous mene. While looking in that direction, he steps backward (in the direction of the solid arrow in diagram 3).

He can step backward as far as he likes... EXCEPT – he cannot go farther than the first point where he is able to throw the jack to the maximum legal distance (10 meters). Note that that means that he can step back until the circle is ELEVEN meters from the western dead-ball line. A valid jack must be at least one meter from any dead-ball line. So in order for a player to be able to throw the jack to 10 meters AND keep the jack one meter from the dead-ball line, the circle must actually be eleven meters from the far dead-ball line (diagram 4).

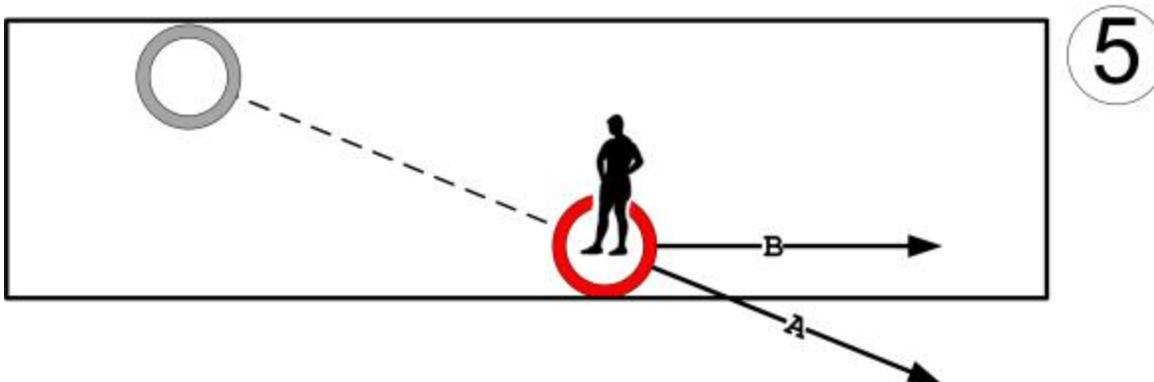


Questions about the Stepping Back Rule

The Stepping Back Rule generates a lot of questions. Here are some of them.

Q1: If “the previous mene’s line of play” crosses the lane at a steep angle, could a player stepping back along the line of play be forced across the lane’s side boundary?

NO. Obviously, you can't place the circle outside of the lane. When "stepping back", a player should back directly away from the circle's former location (along path A in diagram 5) as long as it is possible to do so without crossing the lane boundary. Then, in order to continue to back away, the player should back away along the inside of the lane boundary line (along path B).

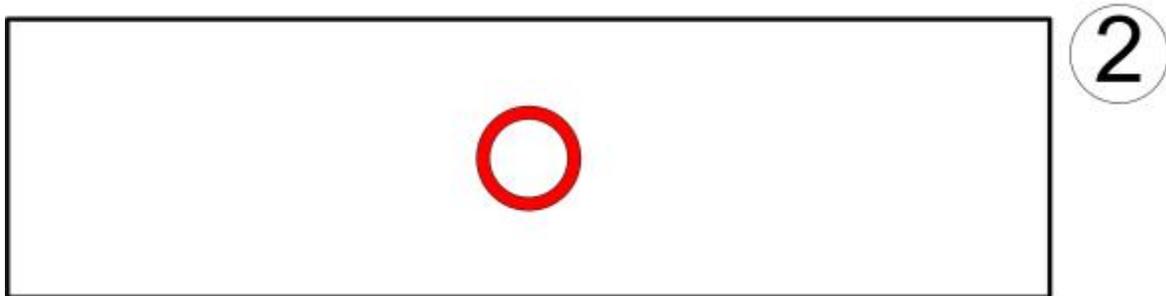


Remember that the direction in which the player backs away is determined by the circle's former location. But the maximum distance to which he can back away is determined by the lane boundaries and the farthest dead-ball line (in our diagram, the dead-ball line at the west end of the lane).

Q2: We're playing on a big playing area. There are one or two directions in which it is possible to throw the jack to 10 meters, but we don't like any of them. We'd prefer to play back in the direction we just came from. But in that direction there is not enough room to throw the jack to 10 meters. Can we play back in that direction, and invoke the Stepping Back Rule to move the circle back?

NO. The Stepping Back Rule can be used only if there is no direction in which it is possible to throw the jack to 10 meters. You may not like any of the available directions, but you have no choice. You've got to pick one of them.

In the following set of questions, team A is placing the circle at the start of the second mene. The initial location of the circle is in the center of the lane, as in diagram 2.



Q11: Can team A leave the circle where it is?

YES. The Stepping Back Rule does not REQUIRE a team to move the circle. It simply provides them the option of moving the circle if they wish.

Q12: In diagram 2, can team A leave the circle where it is, and continue to play in the same direction, toward the east?

YES. It is legal to continue playing in the same direction. But usually, for all practical purposes, there simply isn't enough room. In diagram 2, for example, the circle is 7.25 meters from the eastern boundary of the lane. To continue playing toward the east, team A must throw the jack to a distance no less than 6 meters and (in order to say at least a meter from the dead-ball line at the foot of the lane) no more than 6.25 meters (maybe a little more if they play toward a corner). That's practically impossible to do on this lane. But on a longer lane, or an open terrain, it would be possible to continue playing in the same direction.

Q13: Can team A move the circle away from the east dead-ball line, and then continue throwing the jack toward the east?

NO. That would not count as "backing away along the line of play". Remember— when moving the circle, you must be looking toward the circle's former location and backing away from it.

Q14: Team A moves the circle, and throws the jack. Its throw is not successful, so it gets to throw the jack again. Before it throws again, can team A move the circle again?

NO. A team may move the circle only once in each mene.

Q15: Team A does not move the circle. It throws the jack, but its throw is not successful. Can it move the circle back before making its second attempt to throw the jack?

YES, in the USA. [IFPUSA, Q15] says that

A team is allowed to move the circle back for their permitted throws per Article 7 either before their first toss of the jack or afterwards. The rules are not specific, nor prohibitive, therefore, it should be allowed, even after two failed attempts to set a valid jack, so as to expedite play by increasing the chance that a valid jack might be thrown on the third attempt.

NO, in France. On April 20, 2015 the French umpires' committee ruled that

The circle cannot be moved after the first throw [of the jack]. It stays in its place for the three consecutive throws that the team is allowed. It can only be moved by the opposing team, before their first throw [of the jack], within the limits specified in the rules.

But wait! There is a second, almost simultaneous, contradictory ruling by the French federation. According to this ruling, the answer is....

YES, in France. In February 2015 the FFPJP released rule changes (to go into effect on March 1, 2015) that said –

Each team can, in its turn, move back the circle according to the conditions specified in the preceding paragraph, if its first move [of the circle] didn't permit throwing [the jack] to all legal distances. (One [i.e. each team] can therefore move the circle back two times.)

So we appear to have three different answers to the question.

- The American position is that at the beginning of each mene, each team gets one “Move the Circle Back Free” coupon. The coupon never expires (until the jack is successfully thrown) and each team can choose to use its coupon whenever they like.
- The April 2015 French position is that each team gets one coupon at the beginning of the mene but (unlike an American coupon) the coupon expires with the team's first attempt to throw the jack.
- The February 2015 French position is that at the beginning of each mene, each team gets TWO coupons. One coupon (it doesn't matter which) expires after the team's first attempt to throw the jack. The second coupon, like the American coupon, never expires (until the jack is successfully thrown), so each team can choose to use its SECOND coupon whenever they like.

The French appear to be totally confused about what they want the rule to be. The simplest interpretation, of course, is simply to let each team move the circle back whenever they want, as many times as they want. In such a rule, the word "back" is significant. To see why, look at questions 21 and 22, below.

Q16: Team A makes three unsuccessful attempts to throw the jack. Then team B also makes three unsuccessful attempts to throw the jack. So now it is team A's turn, again, to try to throw the jack. Can team A move the circle back before making its fourth attempt to throw the jack?

In this unlikely scenario, I think the answers divide along the same party lines as with the previous question. I think an American umpire would say YES. I have no idea what a French umpire would say.

In the next two questions, team A moves the circle and then fails in its three attempts to throw the jack. It is now team B's turn to try to throw the jack and (optionally) to move the circle.

Q21: Can team B move the circle FARTHER AWAY from its initial location than team A did?

YES.

Q22: Can team B move the circle CLOSER to its initial location than team A did?

NO. That wouldn't be "stepping back".

There is also a practical consideration, noted in [IFPUSA]. Part of the purpose of the Stepping Back Rule is "to expedite play by increasing the chance that a valid jack might be thrown." Allowing a team to move the circle CLOSER to its original location would have exactly the opposite of the desired effect — it would decrease the chance that a valid jack is thrown.

Placing the circle after the jack has died or left the terrain

The basic rule about placing the circle is in Article 7 – the circle is drawn or placed (a) on the assigned terrain (b) around the place X on the assigned terrain where the jack was sitting at the end of the previous mene.

Traditionally, if the jack is sitting on the terrain in location X and then hit and knocked out of the terrain, at the beginning of the next mene the circle is placed around location X, even if X was not marked. Approximately is good enough. This rule is perfectly suited to playing in the traditional way, on an unmarked terrain. You can find the rule in Article 12.¹⁶

Umpires, as we've noted elsewhere, must rule that nothing can be placed, or put back, in a location that wasn't marked. They are also used to umpiring only games played on marked terrains, where it is relatively easy to see and remember the place where a hit jack crossed a boundary string. Umpires have therefore invented an alternate (unwritten) rule to replace the traditional practice. The rule is—

If during the previous mene the jack was knocked out of the assigned terrain, the circle is placed on the assigned terrain as close as possible to the last place that the jack was still alive.

This means that if the jack ended up dead because it went out-of-bounds, the circle is placed on the assigned terrain as close as possible to the place that the jack crossed the dead-ball line. If the jack ended up alive on a neighboring terrain, then the circle is placed on the assigned terrain as close as possible to the jack's final location on the neighboring terrain. In umpired play, this is how an umpire will rule.¹⁷

Note that there are ways that the jack can die without ever leaving the assigned terrain.

1. It can end up floating in a puddle of water.
2. It can be hidden from view by a feature of the terrain.
3. It can be hit to a location on the far side of a patch of dead ground.
4. It can be hit and come to rest more than 20 meters, or less than 3 meters, from the circle.¹⁸

In all of these cases, the jack hasn't left the assigned terrain, so Article 7 applies. The circle is "drawn or placed around the place where [the jack] was located in the previous mene". If, for example, the jack died because it was knocked back and came to rest 2 meters from the circle, then the circle is placed around the location where the jack came to rest—which, in this case, is only 2 meters from the circle's previous location.

Even if the jack was on the assigned terrain when it died, other rules still apply. You still have to place the circle a meter away from any throwing obstacle. If the jack died because it ended up floating in a puddle, you don't put the circle down in the puddle. The puddle is a throwing obstacle, so the circle is placed a meter away from the edge of the puddle. Similarly, if the jack ended up hidden under a pile of leaves, you don't put the circle down on the pile of leaves.

¹⁶ Article 12 says— "If, during a mene, the jack is displaced onto another game terrain ... At the following mene the teams continue on the terrain that was assigned to them and the jack is thrown again from the place it occupied when it was displaced..." Article 12 doesn't tell us what to do when a jack goes out-of-bounds because Article 12 was designed for play on unmarked terrains where there is no such thing as out-of-bounds.

¹⁷ There is an interesting Youtube video from 2012 where Pascal Milei shoots the jack out-of-bounds and you can see Marco Foyot placing the circle in the traditional way around location X. The umpire comes onto the terrain and corrects him. The umpire points Marco to the place at the foot of the lane where the jack went out-of-bounds, and shows him where to place the circle, close to the dead-ball line.

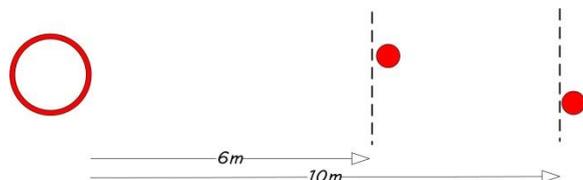
¹⁸ Note that knocking the jack farther than 20 meters from the circle is usually possible only on an unmarked terrain, but theoretically it could be possible on a marked terrain if the marked terrain was large enough.

Article 7 – Throwing the jack to 10 meters

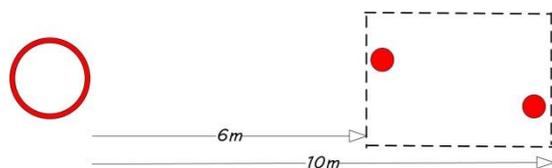
The wording of Article 7 (Regulation distances for the throw of the jack) is pretty clear.

*[T]he distance that separates [the jack] from the interior edge of the throwing circle must be:
- 6 meters minimum and 10 meters maximum for Juniors and Seniors.*

Many players, however, learn petanque from the kids in the street and have never actually read the rules. They know that the jack must be thrown to a distance of "six to ten meters." But they aren't clear about what "six to ten meters" means. Perhaps, they think, it means that the jack can be thrown to a maximum of 10 meters from the circle, like this—



Or perhaps it means that there is an imaginary area whose boundary lines are 6 and 10 meters from the circle, and the jack must be thrown somewhere INSIDE THAT IMAGINARY AREA, like this—



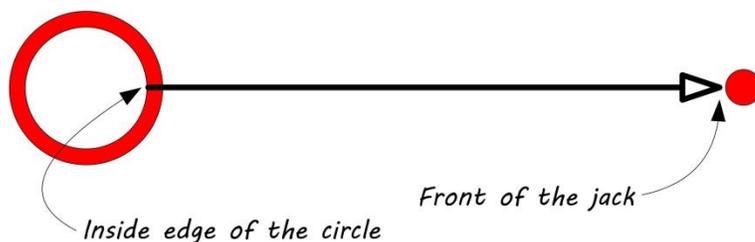
The wording of Article 7 makes it clear that the top diagram is the correct one. Basically Article 7 says –

The distance from the interior edge of the circle to the jack may be up to, but no more than, 10 meters.

Sometimes players put the same question this way –

Does "a maximum of 10 meters" mean a maximum of 10 meters as measured to the front of the jack or to its back?

When measuring between the circle and the jack, you always measure the shortest distance between the inside of the circle and the jack. So the correct answer is— "A maximum of 10 meters" means a maximum of 10 meters as measured to the FRONT of the jack.



Articles 7 & 9 & 11 – The jack must be visible from the circle

One of the basic principles of petanque is that a player standing in the throwing circle must be able to see the jack. It is articulated in a couple of rules. Article 7 says that if the jack has just been thrown, and a player standing in the circle can't see it, then the throw of the jack is not valid and the jack must be thrown again. Article 9 says that if the jack has been hit and displaced, and a player standing in the circle cannot see it, then the jack is dead.

For the jack thrown by a player to be valid, it is necessary... that the jack must be visible to a player whose feet are placed at the extreme limits of the interior of the circle and whose body is absolutely upright. In the case of a disagreement about this matter, the Umpire decides, without appeal, if the jack is visible. [Article 7]

The jack is dead in the following 7 cases: ... (2) When, located within the in-bounds area, the displaced jack is not visible from the circle, as specified in Article 7. [Article 9]

There are a number of reasons why a jack might be "invisible" (that is, not visible to a player standing in the circle). It might have been knocked behind a rock, a tree root, or a plant on the terrain. Some leaves or pieces of newspaper might have blown onto the terrain, landing between the jack and the circle and hiding the jack from view. The jack might have been hit into soft, sandy ground so that the jack is almost buried and hidden.

It seems to be a simple rule. Actually, however, it is not simple at all. There are questions...

Visible to whom?

One of the questions is "Visible to whom?" This question can arise when the jack is located behind some low object on the terrain (a root or a rock) so that a tall person can see the top of the jack over the object, but a shorter person (or a player in a wheelchair) cannot.

The problem here is that Articles 7 and 9 are written as if "being visible from the circle" is a property that the jack has (or doesn't have) regardless of which player is standing in the circle, ready to throw. But it really does matter. The rule is designed to insure that a player, standing in the circle and about to throw, can see his target. It is that particular player – not some other player or an umpire¹⁹ – who must be able to see the jack.

I think, then, that the best answer to the question "Visible to whom?" is this:

- In an umpired game, the umpire decides whether or not the jack is visible.
- In a social game, the two teams must decide on the visibility of the jack.

If the teams are making the decision, they should remember the purpose of the rule and ask—Can this particular player, the player now standing in the circle and about to throw, see the jack? He should be the one who decides whether or not he can see the jack. And of course there is nothing that says that other players can't crouch down to his eye level and see if they agree.

¹⁹ A question raised on [AUT] was whether, in a tournament staffed by a tall umpire and a short umpire, the players can choose which umpire will make the decision on the visibility of the jack. It's a funny question. It points out the absurdity of the idea that "being visible from the circle" is purely a property of the jack, when the outcome of the decision is actually determined by the height of the person making the decision. (The answer to the question, by the way, is NO. Players do not get to choose the umpire.)

Visible when? (part 1)

On the other hand, there are problems with the idea that "being visible from the circle" depends only on the ability of a particular player—the player who is now standing in the circle—to see the jack.

Consider the following situation. The context is a game between Team Tall and Team Short.

Alice throws a boule that hits and moves the jack. With the jack in its new location, Team Short has the point.

Ben on Team Tall steps into the circle. Ben is quite tall and can see the jack without difficulty. He throws his boule, which, as it happens, is his team's last boule.

Charles on Team Short steps into the circle. Charles is quite short and he can't see the jack (which hasn't moved since Alice threw her boule). All players agree that a person of Charles' height (standing upright in the circle with feet apart, as prescribed by Article 7) cannot see the jack. The jack is declared dead.

Team Tall is out of boules, but Team Short still has four unplayed boules. Team Short therefore scores four points.

Team Tall is unhappy. If the jack was not visible from the circle, and therefore dead, then that fact should have been established before Ben threw Team Tall's last boule. That way, the mene would have ended with neither team scoring any points, rather than Team Short scoring four points.

Both teams want to make a fair decision. But... what should it be?

On the one hand, we all feel that the jack's status should be unambiguous—at any given point in the game, it should be clear to both teams that the jack is either visible or not, alive or dead. On the other hand, the question of the jack's visibility never comes up until a particular player steps into the circle and realizes that he can't see the jack. So, in a sense, the jack becomes invisible only when that player steps into the circle.

To deal with such situations I propose an extension of Article 9. Call it the "Retroactive Invisibility Rule".

If a jack in a given location is deemed not to be visible from the circle, the jack is deemed to have been invisible and dead from the time that it was moved to that location.

This would mean that the jack's invisibility would be "back-dated" to the time that Alice threw the boule that moved the jack to its new location. At that time both teams still had unplayed boules, so the mene would end without either team scoring.

Visible when? (part 2)

Consider another situation. It is the same as the previous situation except that the jack was not moved by Alice's boule. It was never moved. When Charles stepped into the circle (and couldn't see the jack), the jack was still in the location to which it had first been thrown. When Charles couldn't see the jack, should the jack's invisibility be back-dated to the time it was thrown, so that in fact its throw had never been valid?

No. Article 9 applies only to a displaced jack, not to a thrown jack. The visibility of a thrown jack is covered in Article 7. If Team Short had any concerns about the visibility of the thrown jack, they should have raised them at the time the jack was thrown. As matters now stand, Team Short accepted the thrown jack (and its visibility) when they threw their first boule. (See the discussion of Article 8 and the Challenge Rule.) Team Short's failure

to challenge the thrown jack means that when Charles steps into the circle, even though he cannot see the jack, he cannot claim that the jack is invisible under Article 9. He must throw his boule. One of his teammates should stand in the head and point a toe to indicate the location of the jack. (See the discussion of Article 15.)

If the jack is not visible after the last boule is thrown

There are two rules in Article 9 that raise similar question. The rules are—

The jack is dead...

2) *When, located within the in-bounds area, the displaced jack is not visible from the circle...*

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

The questions are—

If the last boule played in the mene knocks the jack into a location where it is not visible from the circle (perhaps it is behind a tree), is the jack dead or alive?

If the last boule played in the mene knocks the jack into a location on the far side of an out-of-bounds area from the circle, is the jack dead or alive?

There are two schools of thought on these questions.

The "original intent of the law" interpretation is based on an understanding of the purpose of the two rules. That purpose is to provide certain minimal guarantees to a player about to throw a boule, namely (1) that the player is able to see the head from the circle, and (2) that the player's thrown boule won't pass over dead ground and die in flight as it travels from the circle to the head. After all boules have been played, there is no longer any reason to care about whether the jack is not visible from the circle, or whether there is dead ground between the jack and the circle. So the answer to both questions is—NO. The jack is not dead. Why should it be?

The "letter of the law" interpretation is based on ... well, the letter of the law. Article 9 says that the jack is dead if it can't be seen from the circle, or if it is on the far side of dead ground. Article 9 does NOT say "The jack is dead under the following conditions... *unless there are no more boules left to play.*" It is therefore irrelevant whether or not all boules have been played. The answer to both questions is—the jack is dead.

Personally I prefer the "original intent of the law" interpretation. I like the fact that it considers the reason and purpose of the rule. It is a sensible interpretation. It is what I personally would recommend that teams use in friendly play.

Having said that, I am honor-bound to report that the consensus of umpires is with the "letter of the law" interpretation. (What else would you expect of umpires?) The jack is dead.

One of the reasons why the "letter of the law" interpretation seems to me unsuited to social petanque is that it can leave the teams in a problematic situation. With no player left to throw, if the tallest player can see the jack from the circle and the shortest player cannot, is the jack visible from the circle?

If the jack is hidden by leaves

Article 11 says—

If, during a mene, the jack is suddenly hidden by a leaf of a tree or a piece of paper, these objects are removed.

Article 11 was written with a simple situation in mind— a leaf or an old newspaper is blown onto the terrain and hides the jack. Some players take Article 11 quite literally. They hold that Article 11 is about only leaves and pieces of paper, and they do not consider it applicable if (for example) a plastic bag blows onto the terrain and hides the jack. But that's wrong. Article 11 lists leaves and pieces of paper only as examples. It is clearly intended to apply to anything that might be blown or dropped or even rolled onto the terrain during a game— things such as a plastic bag, an empty water bottle, or a dropped handkerchief. If Article 11 was written properly, it would look something like this—

When something that doesn't belong in the game comes onto the terrain and hides the jack, that alien thing should be removed.

It doesn't matter what that alien thing is, or how many there are, or how it (or they) got there. It (or they) should be removed.

A few years ago there were reports of French umpires insisting that Article 11 applies if **one leaf** blows onto the terrain and hides the jack, but that if **two leaves** blow onto the terrain the jack is dead. The umpires were probably confused by an illustration in the French umpire's guide, the *Code d'Arbitrage*. That illustration was subsequently modified; in the 2015 edition it looked like this.

Article 11 :



On enlève la feuille : but bon



But nul

Si en cours de mène, le but est masqué inopinément par une feuille d'arbre ou un morceau de papier, enlever cet objet. Si le but est déplacé sous un tas de feuilles et devient invisible, il est nul.

The caption for the picture on the left is "Remove the leaf: the jack is good". For the picture on the right the caption is "Dead jack". The leaves in the picture on the right are labeled *Tas de feuilles*, "Pile of leaves". Beneath the pictures is a paraphrase of Article 11 and a sentence that reads "If the jack is knocked under a pile of leaves and becomes invisible, it is dead."

This brings us to **The Pile of Leaves Question** which appears regularly on petanque forums—

The jack is hit into a pile of leaves on the terrain and can't be seen. Is it dead? What should we do?

Players find this situation problematic because they aren't sure whether it is covered by Article 9 (because the jack is invisible) or by Article 11 (because the jack is hidden by leaves).

The answer to **The Pile of Leaves Question** is— Article 9 applies. The jack is dead.

Remember the kinds of situations that the two rules were designed to deal with.

- Article 9 is about situations in which the jack is invisible because it was displaced to a location where it is hidden. In situations covered by Article 9, the jack is moved but nothing on the terrain is moved.
- Article 11 is about situations in which the jack was not moved, but something alien came onto the terrain, hiding the jack. The alien object was easily blown onto the terrain. It can easily be picked up and removed, and doing so restores the terrain to its original condition.

A pile of leaves isn't something alien that has come onto the terrain. It has been sitting there motionless on the terrain since the game began. It is a part of the terrain, like a rock or a tree. So Article 9 applies and Article 11 does not. A jack that is hit into a pile of leaves and is no longer visible is dead. See also [IFPUSA, Q21].

If a boule pushes around some part of the terrain, hiding the jack

Trying to understand the implications of Articles 9 and 11, players have pondered situations in which it is not the case that something alien comes onto the terrain. Rather, these are situations in which a boule moves something that is already in or on the terrain, with the end result that the jack is hidden.²⁰

1. A player tries to shoot the jack, but his boule misses. The boule hits the ground in front of the jack and pops a large stone out of the terrain. The stone flips through the air and lands directly in front of the jack, hiding it. Is the jack dead? [Article 9] Or should the stone be removed? [Article 11]
2. The jack is half-buried in soft dirt. A player tries to shoot the jack, but his boule misses. The boule hits the ground in front of the jack and pushes up even more dirt in front of the jack, hiding it completely. Is the jack dead? [Article 9] Or should the pushed-up dirt be removed? [Article 11]
3. A player points a boule. As it rolls it encounters a leaf on the terrain. It pushes the leaf ahead of it as it rolls across the terrain. When the boule finally stops, the leaf is left in front of the jack, hiding it. Is the jack dead? [Article 9] Or should the leaf be picked up? [Article 11]

These situations are problematic because they aren't clearly covered by either Article 9 or by Article 11. The jack was not moved, so Article 9 doesn't apply. Nothing alien came on to the terrain, so Article 11 doesn't apply.

When these questions were discussed on "Ask the umpire" the consensus was that in all of these cases the jack is dead. Two commenters cited Article 9. One commenter was uncertain about the third case, and thought that the leaf should be removed.

In Article 11, the alien object is outside the terrain, but easily comes onto the terrain (by, for example, being blown in by the wind). The alien object can be picked up and removed from the terrain as easily as it came on to the terrain, and doing so restores the terrain to its previous condition. But that really doesn't seem to be a good description of these situations; and especially not of situations 1 and 2. Since Article 11 doesn't seem applicable, the only applicable rule is in Article 9. As per Article 9, the jack is not visible from the circle, so the jack is dead.

One might consider applying Article 9 to the third case, and removing the leaf if that could be done without disturbing any balls on the terrain— not because it is a leaf, but because it is something that can easily be removed, and removing it would restore the terrain very nearly to its original condition.

²⁰ See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/128791213885003/permalink/503041639793290>

Article 8 - Challenging the jack

Article 7 specifies a number of conditions that the thrown jack must meet in order to be valid – it must be visible from the circle; it must be 6 to 10 meters from the circle; and it must be at least a meter from the nearest throwing obstacle or out-of-bounds line. To "challenge the jack" is to request that the game be paused so that it can be verified that all of these conditions are being met.²¹ The most frequent reason for challenging the jack is to verify that the jack isn't more than 10 meters from the circle.

A frequently-asked question, and one that comes up in a variety of forms, is

Which team can challenge the jack, and when can it do it?

Article 8 says –

If after the throw of the jack, a first boule is played, the opponent still has the right to challenge the validity of the jack's location (le droit de contester sa position réglementaire). If the objection is recognized as valid, the jack is thrown again and the boule replayed. ...

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

Let's call this **the Challenge Rule**. A more straight-forward way to specify the Challenge Rule would be –

After the jack has been thrown, either team may challenge the validity of the jack at any time until it (the team) has thrown its first boule. After a team has thrown its first boule, it no longer has the right to challenge the jack.

There is a practical reason for the Challenge Rule. Some players like to play very fast— they like to throw the jack and then immediately throw the first boule. Sometimes team A throws the first boule so quickly that the opposing team has no time to evaluate the jack's location or to raise a challenge. So the Challenge Rule gives team B a chance to challenge the jack even when team A throws the first boule very quickly.

There are a number of questions that frequently come up about the Challenge Rule.

Can team B challenge the jack after verbally accepting it?

Team A throws the jack. The player says "Hmmm. What do you think? Too long?" Team B says "Looks good to me." Team A points the first boule. It is very good. Team B begins to think that the jack may be long after all. Can team B challenge the jack?

Answer: YES, team B still has the right to challenge the jack.

Currently the FIPJP rules do not recognize any way to verbally accept the thrown jack. So when the captain of team B says "It looks good to me," according to the FIPJP rules he is merely expressing his personal opinion; he is not waiving his team's right to challenge the jack. (See the discussion of Verbal Agreement.)

To verbally accept the jack and then turn around and challenge it strikes some players as gamesmanship at best and poor sportsmanship at worst. And in a friendly game that would be true. But in an organized competition (in petanque, as in all sports) a certain amount of gamesmanship is part of the game. Accept it. Don't let it distract you. Stay calm and carry on.

²¹ Sometimes players use the expression "team B challenges the jack" to mean "team B claims (or asserts) that the jack is not valid". That can cause a lot of confusion when discussing Article 8. We will NOT use the expression "challenge the jack" that way.

Can team A challenge the jack after throwing its first boule?

Team A throws the jack. Team A then points the first boule. Team A then begins to have doubts — perhaps the jack was thrown too long. Can team A challenge the jack?

Answer: NO. Remember what we said earlier. "After a team has thrown its first boule, it no longer has the right to challenge the jack." Team A has thrown its first boule. Its window of opportunity for challenging the jack has closed.

Can team B challenge a jack pushed by the first boule, if the jack's location was measured?

Team A throws the jack. They measure the distance. It is 9m80cm—valid. Team A then points the first boule. The boule hits the jack and pushes it. Now the jack is clearly more than 10 meters from the circle. Can team B challenge the jack?

Answer: NO. It is irrelevant how far the jack was pushed. The position of the thrown jack has already been measured, and it was determined at that time that the jack was thrown to a valid distance.

Players sometimes cite a mythical rule that "the second team has a right to play to a jack between 6 and 10 meters". They argue that team B should have the right to challenge the moved jack in this situation, and that the jack should then be rejected as invalid because it is more than 10 meters from the circle. But that is wrong. There is no such rule. In this situation, it has been established via measurement that the jack was thrown to a legal distance. It therefore cannot be challenged.

Can team B challenge a jack pushed by the first boule, if the jack's location was marked?

Team A throws the jack and marks it. Team A then points the first boule. The boule hits the jack and pushes it. Can team B challenge the jack?

Answer: YES. The thrown jack's validity is then determined by measuring the distance from the circle to the marks.

Can team B challenge a jack pushed by the first boule, if the jack's location was neither marked nor measured? (The Pushed Jack Question)

Team A throws the jack. Neither team challenges it or marks its location. Team A then points the first boule. The boule hits the jack and pushes it. Now the jack appears to be more than 10 meters from the circle. Can team B challenge the jack?

Answer: YES. Team B can challenge the jack. The appropriate action is then to measure the distance between the circle and the jack's current location. If the jack is farther than 10 meters from the circle, it is invalid.

Interestingly, in recent posts on "Ask the Umpire", Mike Pegg has repeatedly answered the Pushed Jack Question with NO. Mike's position is that the requirements for a valid throw of the jack apply only to a THROWN jack, not a MOVED jack. Since the jack's original location (before it was moved) was not marked, there is no way to tell if its original location was valid. Team B therefore has no grounds on which to base a challenge. In short, "If the jack wasn't marked, it can't be challenged."

While Mike is right— the requirements for a valid throw of the jack were meant to apply only to a THROWN jack— there are a number of reasons for disagreeing with his position on the Pushed Jack Question.

1. Mike's position relies on a distinction (between a thrown jack and a moved jack) that does not actually exist in Article 8. Article 8 says that team B can challenge the location of "the jack" (not, "the thrown jack").
2. The answer that we have given (and with which Mike now disagrees) was discussed and agreed upon by the FIPJP's Technical Committee during a meeting at the World Championships in Germany in 1996. (That was reported by Mike himself in 1999.²²) It is also endorsed by the FPUSA.²³

The position of the FIPJP Technical Committee and the FPUSA Umpires is that it is the throwing team's responsibility to mark the jack.²⁴ Since the jack's original location was not marked, team A has no basis for claiming that the jack's original location was valid, or even for claiming that its original location was different than its current location. So team B may challenge the jack.

3. A unilateral action on the part of team A (whether it is a decision to throw the first boule quickly, or a decision NOT mark the jack) cannot be grounds for depriving team B of its right to challenge the jack. This is simply a matter of basic fairness. Team A cannot unilaterally deprive team B of its right to challenge the jack.

Playing to avoid problems with Article 8

The kind of situations that we've been discussing could be avoided if teams always marked the location of the jack after it was thrown. At one time in the past teams may have done that, but today few if any players do it routinely. So, given the reality of the way we play today, here are some thoughts about how to play and avoid problems with Article 8.

1. When your team throws the jack, play in a courteous manner. After throwing the jack, pause. Ask the other team if it looks OK to them, and wait for their answer. This gives the other team a chance to challenge the jack if they want to.

²² See <http://petanque.org/news/rules/936310128.shtml>

<QUOTE>

1999.09.03 by Mike Pegg - International Umpire Mike-Pegg@msn.com
Q & A Rules – A valid Cochonnet

Q. Team A throws the cochonnet to about 9.5 metres. They then throw their first boule that knocks the cochonnet on to about 11 metres from the circle. Team B claim that the cochonnet is over 10 metres and therefore invalid. Are they correct?

A. Yes, because the umpire will measure the distance from the cochonnet to the nearest edge of the circle (article 7) and on this occasion the distance is over 10 metres.

However, there is a way to prevent this sort of disagreement. If team A had marked the position of the cochonnet before they threw their first boule the umpire would have been able to measure from the mark to the nearest edge of the circle confirming that it had been valid before being moved by the first thrown boule.

This ruling was discussed and agreed by members of the FIPJP's Technical Committee at the World Championships in Germany 1996.
</QUOTE>

²³ [IFPUSA] "Q1. If a thrown jack is not marked and is moved by the first boule played in a round, can the opponents contend that it is either too short or too long? Required ruling: Yes, the opponent can challenge the position of the jack. ... The umpire should measure from the nearest interior edge of the circle to where the jack rests after being moved."

²⁴ "If team A had marked the position of the cochonnet before they threw their first boule, the team that threw the jack cannot claim that the throw was valid if they failed to mark the jack." [IFPUSA, Q1.]

2. Some teams are in the habit of verbally accepting the jack, and then later challenging it. If you're playing against such a team, when your team throws the jack, you can choose always to mark or measure the jack's location. A better alternative, though, is simply to accept the fact that the other team plays the way it does, and that it is perfectly legal to do so. Be mellow; keep calm and carry on.
3. If you see that the opposing team is in the habit of throwing the jack and then quickly throwing their first boule, what can you do? If you're on friendly terms, you can talk to them and express your concern. They may not have been aware of what they were doing, and will change their behavior. If you're on less-friendly terms, you can talk to the opposing team, explain your concern, and request that the location of the thrown jack always be marked. You're certainly within your rights to do so— it is what all umpires tell us to do.

An unusual challenge to the jack

Normally, the team that throws the jack also throws the first boule. But that isn't always the case. On "Ask the Umpire" Raymond Ager reported an unusual situation, but one that illustrates the rules we've just explained.

Team A attempts three time, unsuccessfully, to throw the jack.

Team B throws the jack, apparently successfully.

Team A throws the first boule.²⁵

Team B then challenges the jack (the jack that it threw itself).

It is easy to imagine what happened. After team B threw the jack, it was probably in a hurry to get out of the circle and let team A throw the first boule. Team A, after its failures with the jack, was just as eager to get into the circle. It wasn't until team A had thrown its first boule that team B really had time to examine the location of the jack. When they did, they began to have doubts about its validity. Hence the challenge.

Note that team B hadn't yet accepted the jack by throwing its first boule, so its challenge was perfectly legal. As it happened, the jack was indeed over 10 meters. Team A picked up their boule, and team B threw the jack a second time. With the second attempt, team B did get the jack thrown to a valid distance. Team A threw the first boule (again) and the game carried on as normal.

²⁵ Remember, even if team A fails to throw the jack successfully, it still has the right (or duty) to throw the first boule.

Article 9 –

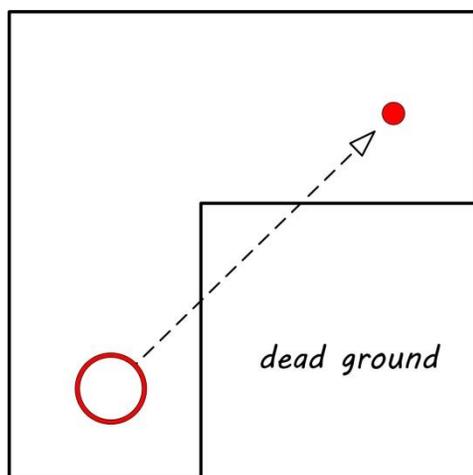
The Dead Ground Rule

The French expressions that I translate as "in-bounds" and "out-of-bounds" are *terrain autorisé* and *terrain interdit*, which mean roughly "authorized territory" and "forbidden territory".²⁶ *Terrain interdit* is sometimes translated as "dead ground"—a good expression when you want to emphasize what happens to balls when they go out-of-bounds.

The locations of boundaries are traditionally indicated by strings strung tightly between nails driven into the ground. The boundaries themselves are actually not very string-like. Rather, they are like invisible walls extending upward into the air from the strings. A ball is dead when it goes through one of those invisible walls. Hold that thought while we look at a sentence (in Article 9) that I will call **the Dead Ground Rule**.

The jack is dead [during a mene]... when an out-of-bounds area is situated between the jack and the throwing circle.

This rule is designed for playing areas and boulodromes with concave shapes. It is not unusual for an outdoor boulodrome in a park to have an irregular shape because its boundaries make detours around pre-existing trees. In this diagram (which shows the layout of an outdoor boulodrome in Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA) the area labeled "dead ground" is occupied by a tree.



In the situation shown in the diagram, the jack was first thrown into the bend of the "L" shape and then knocked into the position where we see it now.

And now we have a problem. In order to get anywhere near the jack, a boule must travel in a straight line from the circle to the jack. That straight line goes across dead ground. As soon as a thrown boule leaves the in-bounds area, as soon as it goes through one of those invisible walls, it dies. Instantly. In mid-air.

In short, when there is dead ground between the circle and the jack, it is geometrically impossible to get a live boule anywhere near the jack. Basically, it is impossible to continue playing. That's why, in such situations, we declare the jack to be dead.

²⁶ Older versions of the rules used the expression *terrain prohibée*, "prohibited territory".

The puddle rule and the floating jack

Article 9 contains a sentence— the Puddle Rule—which is interpreted differently by French umpires and American umpires.

The jack is dead [during a mene]... when the jack is displaced into an out-of-bounds area... A puddle of water (la flaque d'eau) in which the jack floats freely is considered to be out-of-bounds.

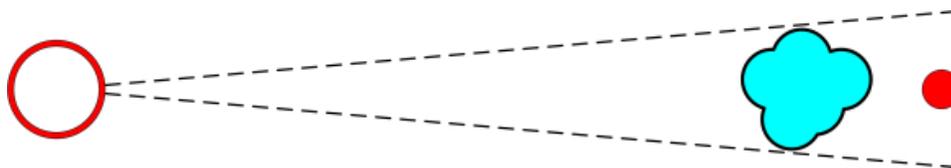
The Puddle Rule can be tricky to interpret when we remember the Dead Ground Rule—

The jack is dead when an out-of-bounds area is situated between the jack and the throwing circle.

The puddle rule – standard interpretation

Umpires of the French federation (and other national federations, following the French) use what might be called the “standard interpretation” of the Puddle Rule. In this interpretation, the primary purpose of the Puddle Rule is to act as the setup for the Dead Ground Rule. The Puddle Rule says that a deep puddle is to be considered “dead ground” (*terrain interdit*). Then the Dead Ground Rule comes along and delivers the payload by saying that the jack is dead if there is dead ground between it and the circle.

If you diagram the standard interpretation you see a puddle. It is dead ground. It also casts a sort of “shadow of death” that (although it is not dead ground itself, and so has no effect on boules) kills any jack that enters it. In this diagram, the jack is dead because it is in the shadow of death cast by the puddle.



The puddle rule – American (FPUSA) interpretation

In the American (FPUSA) rules, the sentence "A puddle of water in which the jack floats freely is considered to be out-of-bounds," is replaced by

A jack floating freely in water is dead.

Is it possible that this wording in the FPUSA rules comes closer (closer than the standard interpretation) to capturing the meaning and intent of the Puddle Rule?

The answer, I think, is YES. Here's why.

1. The argument from common sense

In the American interpretation of the Puddle Rule, the rule goes into effect only when the jack is actually floating in a body of water. The rule makes sense and is easy to apply. If you see the jack floating, you declare it dead. Simple.

In the standard interpretation, the Dead Ground Rule goes into effect when the jack enters the shadow of death. If the jack isn't actually in the puddle, someone must test the puddle with a spare wooden jack to determine whether or not it floats. Also: someone must determine the exact edge of the puddle (and distinguish it from the edges of other nearby puddles) because the exact edge of the puddle is what determines the edge of the shadow of death. In effect, you may be required to tell which part of the puddle is shallow and which part is deep enough to float the jack. And you may need to do it in the rain, with the size and depth of the puddle constantly changing. That's crazy.

The standard interpretation also means that if the jack is clearly alive but the closest boule is located in a puddle, the boule might actually be on dead ground and so dead. If the puddle is more than a few millimeters deep, someone must get out a spare jack, see if the jack floats next to the boule, etc., etc. That truly is crazy. The Puddle Rule is in Article 9, which is devoted exclusively to listing conditions under which the jack is dead. There is no reason to think that it is meant to apply to boules, and REALLY no reason to think it is meant to imply that a boule is dead if it goes into a puddle deep enough to float a jack.

2. The argument from consistency

The Puddle Rule was originally developed to handle puddles of water created on the terrain by rain. But as interpreted by French umpires, water on the terrain of any kind is considered a *flaque d'eau*, including things like gutters, streams, water fountains, bird baths, and fish ponds. This makes the rule very strange indeed. If a natural terrain contains a bird bath and a boulder, then, in the standard interpretation, the bird bath casts a shadow of death, while the boulder does not. That's weird.

3. The argument from original intent

The sentence "A puddle of water in which the jack floats freely is considered to be out-of-bounds" was added to the rules in 1970. The umpires wanted to add a rule to tell players what to do when it was raining and the puddles of rainwater on the terrain began to get deep enough to float the jack. (The problem with a freely floating jack is that it has no fixed location. That makes it impossible in any meaningful way to measure the distance between the jack and a boule.) At that time Article 9 already contained a specification that the jack is dead when it is knocked into *terrain interdit*. So they took the lazy way out. They simply added a sentence to Article 9 saying that a deep puddle should be considered *terrain interdit*.

Twenty-five years later, in 1995, the Dead Ground Rule was added to the rules. Pretty clearly, it was designed to deal with situations that can arise on concave-shaped terrains. The standard interpretation, however, requires us to believe that in 1995 the FIPJP Umpires Committee realized and intended that the addition of the Dead Ground Rule would change the meaning and implication of the words in the Puddle Rule. That's absurd. Even a casual reading of the FIPJP rules is sufficient to show that the rules are NOT carefully thought out and carefully worded.

The puddle rule – conclusion

Looking at the history of the evolution of the rules, the only reasonable conclusion is that

**The Puddle Rule was never meant to be interpreted as the setup for the Dead Ground Rule.
The FPUSA translation of Article 9 correctly captures the intent of the Puddle Rule.**

In retrospect one wishes that in 1970 the umpires had given the Puddle Rule its own numbered item in the list of conditions in Article 9, and simply said what they meant. A jack floating freely in water is dead.

Articles 9 & 18 – Boule or jack goes out-of-bounds

A boule or jack not dead until it completely crosses the dead-ball line

Article 9 says –

A jack straddling the boundary of the in-bounds area is alive. It is not dead until after having traveled completely beyond the boundary of the in-bounds area or the dead-ball line, that is to say, when it is situated entirely beyond the plumb of this boundary.

Except for the fact that it covers boules rather than the jack, Article 18 is almost identical to Article 9.

A boule straddling the boundary of the in-bounds area is alive. The boule is not dead until after having traveled completely beyond the boundary of the in-bounds area, that is to say, when it is situated entirely beyond the plumb of this boundary.

The French expression for "straddling" is *à cheval sur*—it suggests a rider on the back of a horse (*cheval*) with one leg on one side of the horse and the other leg on the other. The expression "plumb of the boundary" (*l'aplomb de cette limite*) refers to the practice of finding an exact vertical by use of a plumb bob.



The FIPJP's English translation says that a jack or boule is dead "when it is situated entirely beyond the boundary when viewed from directly above." This is not a literal translation. The choice of words may reflect the influence of English international umpire Mike Pegg, who writes [ATU] –

[T]o determine if the boule is dead you should stand with your feet on either side of the string line so that when you look down you are directly over the boule in question. If the boule masks the string (even just a little bit) then the boule is still live. However, if you can see the string then the boule is dead.



The boule is straddling the string and masking our view of the string, so it is still alive.

Theoretically, the correct way to determine whether a boule has completely crossed the boundary line would be to use a tool such as a plumb bob or a carpenter's square. We can see a good approximation of that method in this picture. An umpire is using his folding ruler to verify that a boule is entirely beyond a boundary line. If you look carefully, you can see that the first segment of the ruler is sitting exactly on top of the boundary string.



If a boule or jack "completely crosses" a neighboring lane

There are places in Articles 9 and 18 where the wording of the rules is wrong, or at least looks wrong.

Article 9 (Dead Jack during a mene) –

The jack is dead in the following 7 cases:

4) When on marked terrains, the jack crosses [traverse] more than one of the neighboring lanes or goes out at the bottom of the lane.

Article 18 (Dead boules) –

A boule straddling the boundary of the in-bounds area is alive. The boule is not dead until after having traveled completely beyond the boundary of the in-bounds area.... The same applies when, on marked terrains, the boule completely crosses [traverse entièrement] more than one of the neighboring lanes or when it goes out at the bottom of the lane.

Like the English verb "to traverse", the French verb "*traverser*" has the sense of "to extend or travel across, on, over, or above". In Articles 9 and 18, "crosses" is the best way to render the French word *traverse* in English.

What makes Articles 9 and 18 confusing is that they seem to say that a ball is dead if it completely crosses more than one neighboring lane. Which is to say: a ball is dead if it completely crosses two or more neighboring lanes. That is of course wrong. I think that what the wording of the rule is trying to say is something like this—

A boule is dead if it crosses more ground than (the width of) one of the neighboring lanes.

The string is not the boundary line

Article 5 ("Playing areas and regulation terrains") says –

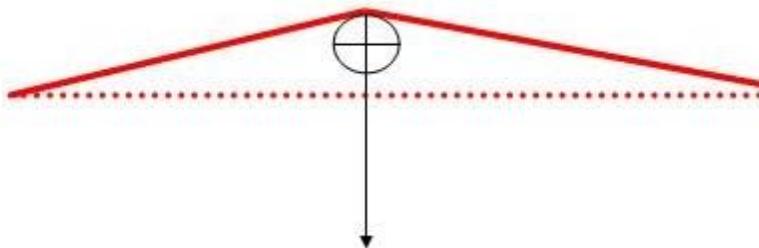
A playing area contains an indefinite number of terrains defined by strings...

Boundary lines are like invisible walls rising up from the ground, separating lanes from other lanes and from out-of-bounds areas. When the authorized officials lay out the lanes in the playing area, they are in a sense doing two things— installing the invisible walls, and installing strings to show players the locations of the walls.

A string shows the location of a boundary that was installed by the authorized officials. But the string itself, as a physical object, is not the boundary line, and moving it does not move the boundary line.

Recently a question was posed to international umpire Mike Pegg, on his "Ask the Umpire" Facebook group.

A boule moving rapidly toward the out-of-bounds line is caught by the boundary string. The string stretches and then, like a bowstring launching an arrow, pushes the boule back onto the terrain. Like this.



In the scenario depicted in the picture, did the ball cross the boundary line or not? Is the boule dead or alive?

Mike answered

[T]he boule would be considered live if it has not fully crossed the dead ball line. ... In the diagram the boule has not crossed the line.... so it is not dead.

In Mike's view, the string is the boundary line. It follows that if a boule moves a string, it moves the boundary line. I disagree. In my view—

1. The string is not the boundary line.
2. Anybody or anything can move the string. But the boundary moves only when the string is installed or moved by an authorized official.
3. In the diagram, the boule moved the string. But it did not, and could not, move the boundary line.
4. The boule completely crossed the boundary line. Therefore, it is dead.

In this connection it is interesting to look back to the 1984 version of the rules, which says (Article 9)—

[The jack or boule] is not dead until after having traveled completely beyond the boundary of the in-bounds area or the dead-ball line. If this line is indicated [matérialisée] by a string, the jack or the boule is dead as soon as the string is crossed.

The second sentence might be taken as supporting Mike's position that the boule wasn't dead because it hadn't crossed the string. But look carefully at what the text is saying. It clearly distinguishes between a boundary line and a string that indicates the location of a boundary line. It says that a boule is dead if it crosses the boundary line (not the string). Then it notes that if there is a string that indicates the boundary line, the boule that crosses the string is dead.

Crossing the string is not what matters. Crossing the boundary line is what matters. If the string indicates the boundary line, then crossing the string is also crossing the boundary line. If the string is moved, then the string no longer indicates the boundary line, and whether the boule crossed the string is irrelevant to the question of whether it crossed the boundary line.

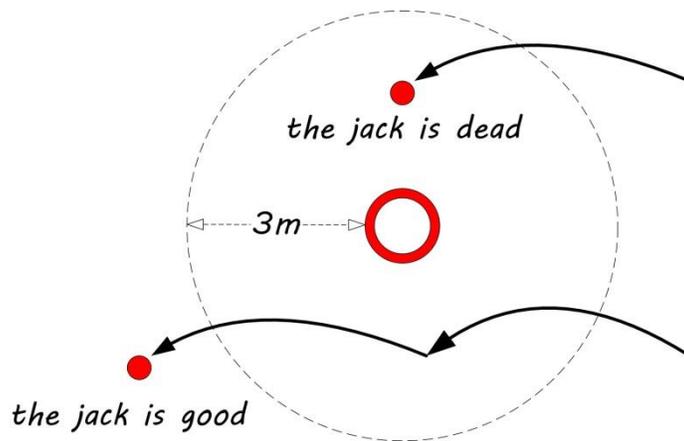
Jack within 3 meters of the circle

Article 9 says that the jack is dead in a number of circumstances, including —

3) *When the jack is displaced to more than 20 meters ... or less than 3 meters from the throwing circle.*

Sometimes the jack is hit and knocked backwards toward the circle. If that happens, and the jack comes to rest within 3 meters of the circle, it is dead.

Note that the area within 3 meters of the circle is not dead ground. A jack that is knocked back, comes within three meters of the circle without stopping, and ends up more than 3 meters from the jack is still alive.



Article 10 – When a boule or jack breaks

Article 10 says that a boule or jack cannot be replaced unless it is lost or broken. If it is broken –

In this case the biggest part is taken into consideration. If boules remain to be played, it [the broken boule or jack] is immediately replaced, after measuring if necessary, by a boule or a jack of identical or similar diameter. At the next mene the player concerned can take a complete new set [of boules].

The wording of the rule is rather awkward. What it says, basically, is that if a boule or jack breaks into pieces, the pieces should be picked up and removed, and a replacement boule or jack should be put down where the biggest of the broken pieces was located.



Boules and jacks do occasionally break into pieces. A wooden jack can split along the grain.



Boules can split along the seam where the two hemispheres are welded together. If the two pieces appear to be of exactly equal size, the teams can agree on the location for the replacement boule that seems fairest. Or they can simply flip a coin.

Article 14 – If a hit jack is stopped or deviated

See the discussion of Article 19

Article 15 –

When the terrain is empty

See the discussion of Article 28.

When the first boule played goes out-of-bounds

It doesn't happen often, but it CAN happen. Team A throws the jack, and it ends up close to an out-of-bounds line. Team A throws the first boule, but the boule rolls past the jack and goes out of bounds. The terrain is empty. Who plays next?

The answer is in Article 15 –

If the first boule played goes into out-of-bounds, it is for the opponent to play, then alternately as long as there are no boules in the in-bounds area.

It is easy to remember what to do in such a situation, because it is simply a special case of an undecided-point situation. The throw of the jack creates an undecided point by creating an empty-terrain situation. The rules for which team throws next (after the throw of the jack) are exactly the same as the rules for which team throws next after the throw of a boule that creates an empty-terrain situation. (See the discussion of Article 28.)

After the throw of the jack, the teams play alternately, starting with the team that threw the jack. They throw until one of the teams gains the point. Typically this happens when team A throws the first boule. Team A gains the point, resolving the undecided point.

But if that does NOT happen—if team A's first boule goes out-of-bounds, leaving the point still undecided—then alternate play continues, and team B throws next.

In the unlikely event that team B's first boule also goes out-of-bounds (that is, fails to decide the point) then team A throws next. Alternate play continues until one of the teams manages to decide the point by throwing a boule that stays in-bounds.

Can a player "help himself" in [this way]?

Article 15 says –

A player is not allowed to help himself by using any object, nor to draw a line on the ground to guide his boule or to mark his intended landing spot.

What this means is that a player may not make any physical change to the ground that could affect the path of a moving boule. He may not draw lines or marks on the ground, nor leave any object on the terrain. To put it crudely, a player isn't allowed to gouge a groove in the terrain leading toward the jack—see our discussion of how NOT to mark the location of a boule or jack.

Because of the very general way it is written, Article 15 generates a lot of questions about whether or not it is legal for a player to "help himself" in some particular way. To all of these questions, the answer is –

As long as it doesn't involve making a physical change to the terrain, or leaving a physical object on the terrain, then YES, it is perfectly legal.

Concerning this rule, one frequently-asked question is—

Can a teammate stand near the head and use a toe to point to a particular spot on the terrain?

The answer is—YES. He isn't making any physical change to the terrain. He isn't leaving any physical object on the terrain (he can quickly move his foot out of the way if he needs to). So pointing with a toe is perfectly legal.

When the first throw of the jack is long, and the umpire measures with his tape measure to verify it, you will often see a teammate pointing a toe toward the spot that the umpire said was 10 meters from the circle. That's an easy way for a teammate to help the player with his second throw of the jack.



Can a player wear gloves?

Players sometimes imagine that they remember Article 15 saying that a player is forbidden to "use any object that would give him an unfair advantage". They wonder – "Is a player allowed to wear gloves? Isn't a glove an object that might give him an unfair advantage? A better grip on the boule perhaps?" The answer to such questions is –

1. When article 15 talks about "any object" it is referring to any object left on the ground, not to things (like gloves) on players' hands. And the expression "unfair advantage" does not occur anywhere in Article 15.
2. Gloves might indeed help a player (e.g. to keep his hands warm on a cold day). But there is nothing unfair about that. All players may wear gloves if they wish. So – YES, a player may wear gloves.



Even if a player wears something on his hand to help get a better grip on the boule, that is legal. This question was posted on "Ask the umpire" –

A player has a medical condition that prevents him from putting his fingers together. Is he allowed to tape his fingers together while playing?

The answer is – YES, that is perfectly legal.

About marking boules and jack

A player, under the pretense of marking the jack, might try to gouge a long groove in the ground leading up to the jack hoping that it would guide his pointed boule close to the jack. This is the kind of thing that Article 15 is designed to prevent. [IPNZ] says this about marking –

Lines must be at a depth and length according to the relevant playing surface so they can be clearly seen but without affecting the run of the boule. No line must be facing the playing circle or the jack.

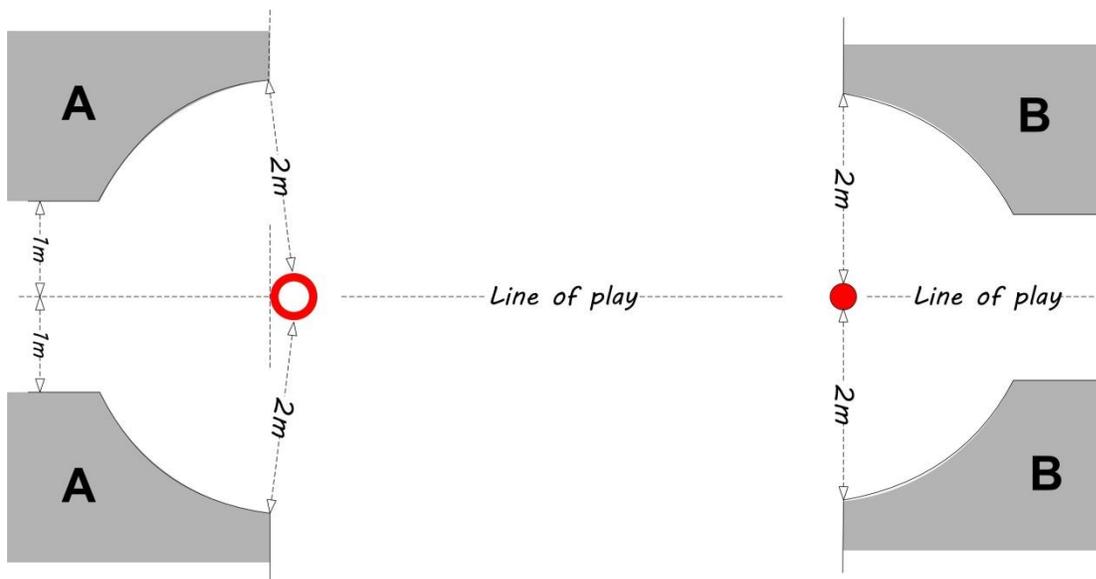
Article 16 – Where to stand

Players sometimes wonder where they should stand (or are permitted to stand) when a member of their own team is throwing, and when a member of the opposing team is throwing. The answer is in Article 16 ("Behavior of players and spectators during a game"). Article 16 stipulates three conditions. (In this quotation I label them a, b, and c.) While a player is preparing to throw his boule –

The opponents must stand (a) beyond the jack or behind the player and, (b) in both cases, to one side of the line of play and (c) at least 2 meters from one or the other [the jack or the player]. Only [the player's] teammates may stand between the jack and the throwing circle.

So when a member of your own team is throwing, you are allowed to stand anywhere. You may even, if you wish, stand in the head pointing to the *donnée* with your toe (see the discussion of Article 15).

The opponents, on the other hand, are much more restricted. The "line of play" [*sens du jeu*] is an imaginary line running through the circle and the jack. Article 16 says that the opponents are required to stay to one side or the other of the line of play. It doesn't specify how far from the line of play, but French and Dutch national federations agree that the distance should be at least one meter. The result is this diagram, in which the opponents must stand behind the circle (in the areas marked "A") or beyond the jack (in the areas marked "B"), at least two meters from the circle and the jack, and at least one meter to the side of the line of play.



In tournaments, the convention is for opponents always to stand in "B" areas. There are potential problems with this rule. A shot boule can easily (and rapidly) fly sideways and hit the foot of a player standing in one of the "B" areas. When a player is shooting, therefore, the other players are wise to stand well away from the head. They should (if possible) stand outside the dead-ball line. Then, if a boule is shot and suddenly flies sideways, it will have gone out-of-bounds and be dead before hitting a player's foot.



This picture from the 2016 *Masters de Petanque* illustrates how the rules say the players should stand. (I've doctored the photo to add the line just beyond the jack.) Henri Lacroix is in the circle. The other players are standing near the head, to the side of the line of play. The three members of the opposing team are standing beyond the jack, in the "B" area. Lacroix's two team-members are standing between the jack and the throwing circle.



A player from Team Courtois is about to point. The three opponents are standing near the head and off to the side, out of bounds. His two teammates are standing directly in the line of play, behind the jack.

The player is going to point, so there is no danger of a shot boule flying off in some random direction. If he was preparing to shoot, the other players would be standing farther from the line of play.

Article 18 – A dead boule rebounds onto the terrain

Let me introduce a useful technical term— "zombie boule". A zombie boule is a boule that is knocked out of bounds, hits something, and rebounds back onto the terrain. It is a boule that has died and then returned to walk among the living.

Here is what Article 18 says about zombie boules—

Any boule is dead from the moment that it enters an out-of-bounds area.

If the boule then comes back onto the game terrain ... it is immediately removed from the game and anything that it displaced after its trip through the out-of-bounds area is put back in its [original] place.

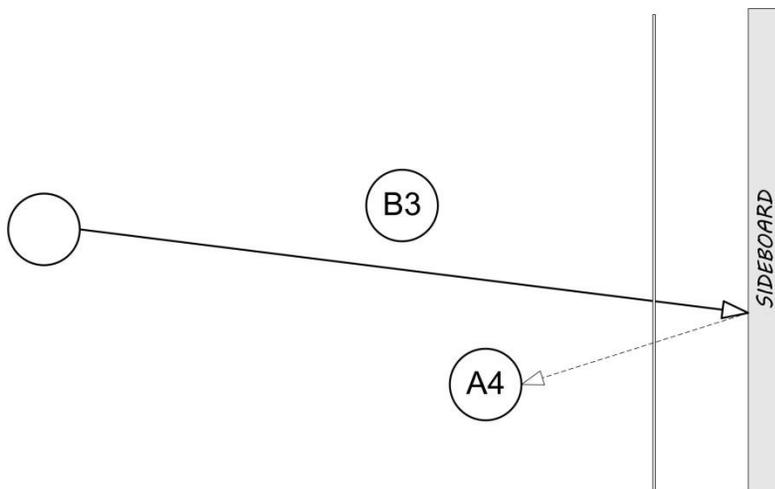
Any dead boule must immediately be removed from the game. By default it will be considered to be live the moment another boule is played by the opposing team.

Some terminology for discussing zombie boules

In order discuss zombie boules, it will be helpful to introduce a few technical terms.

- The "**zombie maker team**" is the team that threw the "**zombie maker boule**" that caused the creation of a zombie.
- The "**zombie owner team**" is the team who owns the zombie boule.

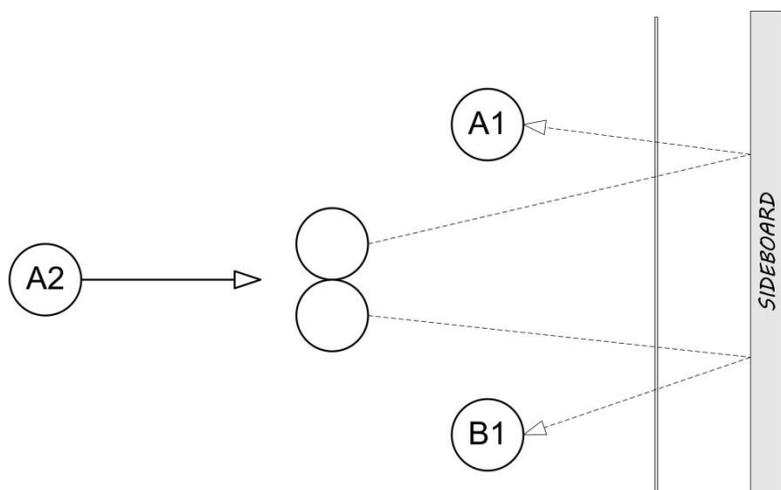
In the diagram below, suppose that team A throws boule A4, trying to shoot boule B3. The shot misses. Boule A4 goes out-of-bounds, hits a sideboard, and bounces back in-bounds. The first time it crossed the boundary line, it died. The second time it crossed the boundary line, and came back onto the terrain, it became a zombie.



In this example—

- Boule A4 is both the zombie boule and the zombie maker boule.
- Team A is both the zombie owner team and the zombie maker team.

There are more complex situations in which the zombie boule is NOT the zombie maker boule, and in which the zombie owner team is NOT the zombie maker team. In the diagram below, suppose that team A throws boule A2, which strikes boules A1 and B1. Both A1 and B1 are knocked out of bounds and then bounce back onto the terrain. In this situation, the zombie boules are A1 and B1. The zombie maker boule is A2. Team A is the zombie maker team (because they threw A2). The zombie owner of A1 is team A. The zombie owner of B1 is team B.



Now we are ready to handle some of the most frequently-asked questions about zombie boules.

When should a zombie boule be picked up?

Article 18 says—

Any boule is dead from the moment that it enters an out-of-bounds area. If the boule then comes back onto the game terrain ... it is immediately removed from the game...

The official answer to the question "When should a zombie boule be picked up?" is "Immediately." In this context, that means "Before any other boule is thrown." But the rules aren't really serious when they say "immediately", because Playing Consecutive Boules is NOT a violation of the rules. By **Playing Consecutive Boules** I mean a situation like this.

A player attempts to shoot a boule, and misses. His boule rockets past the intended target, goes out-of-bounds, hits the back sideboard at the far end of the lane, and bounces back in-bounds. The player figures that the zombie boule is out of harm's way, so he can safely ignore it for the moment. He quickly shoots again.

[IFPUSA, Q26] says—

[Do the rules] allow the playing team the option, without warning or penalty, of throwing one boule right after the other without pausing to remove dead boules? ... Yes. The playing team may choose to play consecutive boules without stopping to remove dead boules.

Which team should pick up a zombie boule?

The answer to the question "Which team should pick up the zombie boule(s)?" is "The zombie maker team." The umpire's guides for both FPUSA and Petanque New Zealand make this clear.

It is the responsibility of the team playing to remove any dead boule that has re-entered the playing area. [IFPUSA]

The boule must be removed by the person who threw [the zombie maker boule], or his/her team mates. [IPNZ]

In the example in our second diagram, this means that team A (as the zombie maker team) should pick up both zombie boules, A1 and B1.

Can the opposing team remove a zombie boule?

Playing Consecutive Boules bothers some players. They say "The rules say that the zombie boule should be picked up immediately. The shooter's team didn't pick it up. Can we do it?"

The answer is—YES, the opposing team can pick up the zombie boule. But if they do, they should do it VERY CAREFULLY.

First, removing a zombie boule while a player is standing in the throwing circle can be dangerous. If the player in the circle isn't aware of what you are about to do, he may go ahead and throw another boule at the same time that you are stepping onto the terrain to remove the dead boule. If that happens, you may literally be putting your life at risk.²⁷

Second, even if it is clear to you that the zombie boule went out-of-bounds, it may not be clear to the opposing team. So if you pick up one of the opposing team's boules without securing agreement that the boule really is a zombie, you may be opening yourself to a protest by the opposing team, or a warning by the umpire.

²⁷ The only known petanque-related fatality occurred in 2008, in southwest France, when Franck Hourcade died after he was struck in the head by a boule thrown by a teammate. At the time of the accident, he was bending over to examine the jack. [IPNZ] says "If another boule is thrown while a person is in the head it will be deemed to be dangerous play and the offending player will be given a warning."

If a zombie boule moves other balls on the terrain, can we put them back?

Article 18 says—

Anything that [the zombie boule] displaced after its trip through the out-of-bounds area is put back in its [original] place.

We discussed this kind of situation in the discussion of social and umpired play.

- In umpired petanque, umpires will rule that everything must be left where it is.
- In social petanque, the two teams decide between themselves what to do. If the teams can agree on an acceptable location, then they can relocate the illegally moved balls.

[IFPUSA] explains what to do if the zombie boule strikes other boules.

[T]he 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 [zombie] boule or boules set in motion by it. Regardless of the opponent's choice, the [zombie] boule remains dead and must be removed.

What happens to a zombie boule if it isn't picked up?

After saying "Any dead boule must immediately be removed from the game", Article 18 goes on to say—

By default it will be considered to be live the moment another boule is played by the opposing team.

The wording of this sentence is poor, but I think its meaning is clear.

If a boule becomes a zombie, but the opposing team accepts it, it comes back to life.

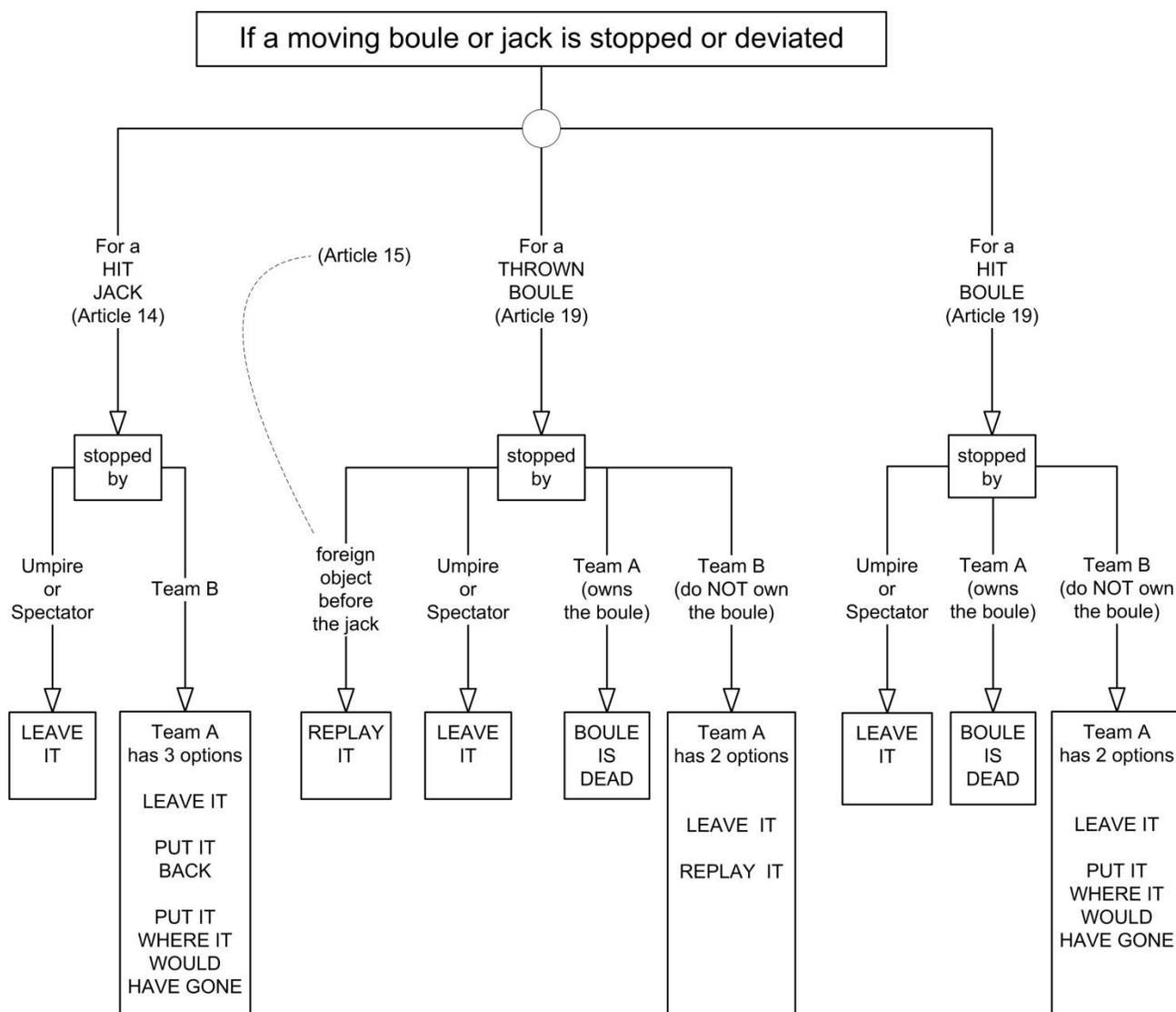
The opposing team— the team playing against the zombie owner team— indicates its acceptance of the zombie boule by playing its next boule without first making sure that the zombie boule has been removed.²⁸

²⁸ This is somewhat similar to the rule about challenging the thrown jack. A team indicates its acceptance of the thrown jack by throwing its first boule.

Articles 19 and 14 – If a jack or boule is stopped or deviated

Sometimes a boule will hit another boule on the terrain, or the jack, so that the hit ball will suddenly fly in a wild direction and hit the foot of a player. When that happens, what should be done?

The answer can be found in Article 14 (for the jack), in Article 19 (for a boule), and in Article 15 (for an object or an animal that comes onto the terrain and is hit by a thrown boule). The rules are complicated, so the best way to describe them is with a decision tree.

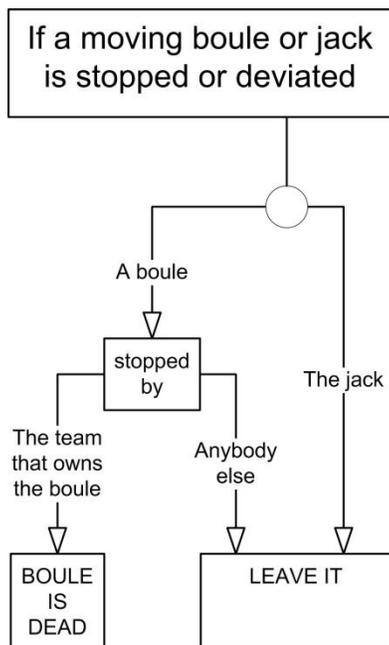


Note that the "put it back" and "put it back where it would have gone" actions come with the standard requirement—"only if its original location was marked."

Players and umpires usually ignore the option to replay a throw boule stopped by an opposing player. The rule seems fair in theory, but makes no sense in actual practice. The only way that a thrown boule is likely to hit the foot of any player is if it was thrown hard and fast, that is, if it was a shooting throw. If the thrown boule

succeeded in moving the jack or boules on the terrain, then it is not practical to put those balls back in their original locations so the player can replay his boule. On the other hand, if the thrown boule missed everything, rocketed past the head, and caught an opposing player by surprise, the fairest thing to do is to treat the boule as what it is, a shot boule that missed its mark. We should leave it where it is, not give the player another chance to shoot.

So let's ignore that option. Also, let's remember that in normal play nothing is marked. This gives us the decision tree that players and umpires ACTUALLY use.

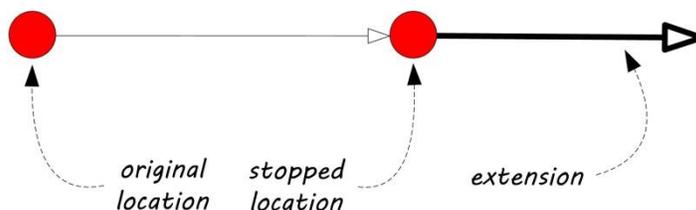


The extension of a line

In the big decision tree diagram, there is an action that I call "put it where it would have gone". That wording conveys the spirit and intention of the rules, but the language in the rules is more precise.

Place it on an extension of a line going from its original location to the place where it stopped, but only on condition that its original location had been marked.

When reading this rule it is important to pay attention to the word "extension". If we draw a line from point A to point B, and then keep drawing the line out beyond point B, the part of the line that extends beyond point B is the EXTENSION of the line from A to B.

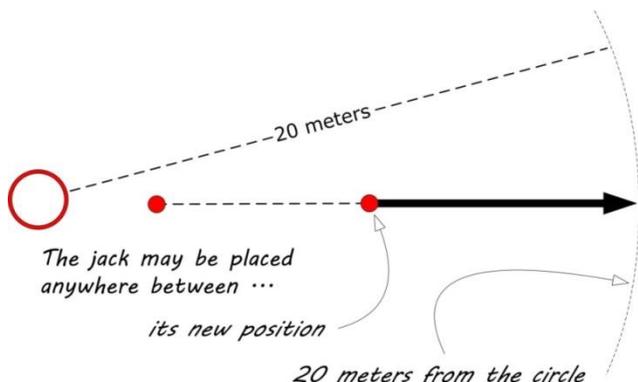


Place it on an EXTENSION of a line going from its original location to the place where it stopped...

Article 14— Place the jack on the extension of a line...

Article 14 says that if a player accidentally stops or deviates a jack that is moving because it was hit, and the original location of the jack was marked, then the opposing team (the team playing against the team whose player stopped the jack) may

(c) Place [the jack] on the extension of a line going from its original location to the place where it stopped, up to a maximum distance of 20 meters from the circle...



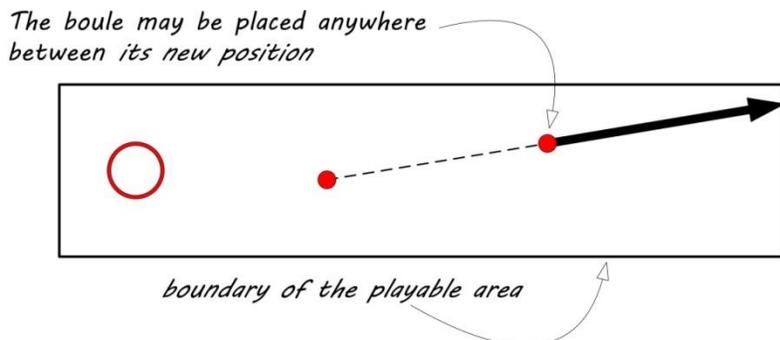
This rule was designed for play on an UNMARKED terrain. It allows the jack to be moved, but not moved so far (20 meters) that the move would kill the jack. Paradoxically, in games played on MARKED terrains, this rule can be invoked to move the jack to a location outside of the dead-ball line, deliberately killing it.

Article 19— Place the boule on the extension of a line...

Article 19 says that if a player accidentally stops or deviates a boule that is moving because it was hit, and the boule was stopped by the opposing team (the team that does NOT own the boule), and the original location of the boule was marked, then the team that owns the boule may

(2) Place [the boule] on the extension of a line going from its original location to the place where it stopped, but only on the playable area...

Here is a diagram.



This rule was designed for play on a MARKED terrain. This article is the only place where the rules use the expression *terrain jouable* (playable area). It refers to the in-bounds area of a game.

Articles 21 & 26 – Picking up an unmarked boule too soon

Sometimes a player picks up a boule too soon – before all the players have thrown all of their boules, or before the points have been agreed. When that happens, what should we do?

If the position of the PP boule (prematurely picked-up boule) had been marked, there is of course no question about what to do. The PP boule is simply replaced in its original marked location. But what should we do when a boule is picked up prematurely, and its original location was not marked?

Before all boules have been thrown (Article 21)

When the PP boule is picked up before all boules have been thrown, apply Article 21. The PP boule is considered to have been accidentally moved by the player. Article 21 tells us to put the boule back in its original place.

If a stationary boule is displaced by the wind or slope of the ground, it is put back in its place. The same applies to any boule accidentally displaced by a player...

That's OK in social petanque, but Article 21 also says—

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

In umpired petanque, the umpire will rule that the boule can't be relocated and it can't be left where it is (in the hand of the player who picked it up), so the PP boule is dead.

After all boules have been thrown (Article 26)

When the PP boule is picked up after all boules have been thrown (but before completion of the agreement of points) apply Article 26.

At the end of a mène, any boule picked up before the agreement of points is dead.²⁹

The bottom line is that in umpired petanque a PP boule is dead.

The problem with these rules and interpretations—which umpires are required to follow in umpired petanque—is that they makes no sense in a situation where a boule is prematurely picked up by a player on the team that does NOT own the boule. They essentially allow an opposing player to kill one of your team's boules at any time during the game. All he has to do is pick it up. Claiming (truthfully or not) that it was an accident is optional.

In friendly petanque, the two teams are not bound by the rules that constrain umpires. They are allowed to agree to do the fair and sensible thing. They can agree to put the PP boule back (approximately) in its original location and carry on with the game.

²⁹ Note the opening phrase "At the end of a mène." It tells us that Article 26 is dealing with a situation that occurs after, and not before, the last boule was thrown.

Article 22 – Playing somebody else’s boule

Usually, a boule played contrary to the rules is considered dead, and everything it moved is returned to its original place (Article 23). But there is one exception to this rule.

Article 22 – A player throwing a boule other than his own

The player who plays a boule other than his own receives a warning. The boule played is nevertheless valid but it must immediately be replaced...

The general idea behind this rule seems sensible. Unfortunately, like so many FIPJP rules, Article 22 can be difficult to apply in specific situations. Let’s look at some of them.

Situation A

Bob still has unplayed boules of his own. By mistake, Bob picks up and throws a boule that belongs to another player. (The boule may belong to another member of his own team or to a member of the opposing team).

This is the kind of situation that Article 22 was designed for. The resolution is clear. The boule that Bob played is picked up and replaced by one of Bob’s unplayed boules.

Situation B

Bob has no unplayed boules of his own, but other members of his team have unplayed boules. Bob mistakenly thinks that he still has one unplayed boule. He picks up and throws a boule that belongs to another player. (The boule may belong to another member of his own team or to a member of the opposing team).

If the wrongfully-played boule belongs to one of Bob’s teammates, it is left in place. If it belongs to the opposing team, it is replaced by one of Bob’s teammates’ boules. In umpired play, Bob receives a warning.

Situation C

Bob’s team has no unplayed boules. Bob mistakenly thinks that he still has one unplayed boule. He picks up a boule that belongs to a member of the opposing team and throws it.

Bob’s team has no unplayed boules, so the wrongfully-played boule can’t be replaced. If the disturbance to the game on the ground was minor or insignificant, we can ignore Bob’s mistake, pick up the boule, and carry on. But if the boule caused a significant change to the game on the ground, the fairest course of action is, I think, to let the opposing team apply some form of the Advantage Rule. In this case, I think the Advantage Rule options might be—

1. Leave everything where it is.
2. Leave everything where it is, except for the wrongfully-thrown boule. That boule is picked up and returned to its proper owner, who can then throw it in the normal way.
3. Declare the jack dead. The opposing team will then win the end, and score as many points as they have unplayed boules (including the wrongfully-thrown boule).

Article 23 – Boules thrown contrary to the rules

The title of Article 23 is “Boules thrown contrary to the rules”. It says –

Any boule thrown contrary to the rules is dead, and anything that it displaced in its travel is put back in place, if its original location was marked. However, the opponent [may] apply the advantage rule....

If nothing was marked, then this means basically that everything is left in place and the opposing team has the choice of whether or not to leave the offending boule on the terrain.

So what, exactly, is a “boule thrown contrary to the rules”?

The rule may originally have been designed to deal with cases where a player threw from the wrong circle. Before the introduction of plastic circles (around 2005) circles were drawn on the ground. As a game progressed the ground quickly became covered with circles left over from earlier menes. In these circumstances, it was easy for a player to make a mistake about which circle was the "active" circle and mistakenly to throw from one of the "inactive" circles. So it is understandable that the 2008 version of Article 23 gives an example of a boule thrown contrary to the rules— a boule thrown from a circle “other than the one from which the jack was thrown”. But plastic circles were being rapidly adopted; the example was obsolete even at the time that it was inserted into the rules. It was removed in the 2010 rules revision.

So: the rules as they now stand include no examples of a boule thrown contrary to the rules. But we can try to draw up our own list of examples. We will look at other rules that talk about how boules should (and should not) be thrown, imagine how each of those rules could be violated, and add that violation to our list.

1. Throwing two or more boules simultaneously.³⁰
2. Throwing more boules than you're allowed. This usually happens when a player throws a third boule in a triples game (where each player is allowed only two boules).
3. Committing a foot fault— throwing while a toe or heel overlaps the circle.
4. Lifting one foot off the ground before the thrown boule hits the ground.
5. Throwing while holding (in the non-throwing hand) a boule that you're not allowed to throw.
6. Throwing the boule from the wrong circle, or from outside the correct circle.
7. Throwing a boule that has been moistened, or that has something foreign (like mud) clinging to it.

Two cases that don't appear on this list are covered by their own separate rules in Article 22—

1. Throwing a boule that belongs to a teammate.
2. Throwing a boule that belongs to one of the opposing players.

There is some debate about whether a boule "thrown out of turn" should be considered "thrown contrary to the rules". See the discussion of that debate in the section on "Miscellaneous topics".

Note that there is no rule that forbids a player from throwing a boule before the opposing team has agreed that they hold the point, or have had time to judge the situation on the ground.

³⁰ If several boules are thrown simultaneously it is NOT true that one boule was thrown legally and the other boules were thrown illegally. All of the simultaneously thrown boules are considered to have been thrown illegally. The two boules should be considered to have been thrown "simultaneously" if there was a point in time when they were both in the air between the circle and the head.

Article 24 – Marking the location of a boule when you plan to remove it temporarily for measuring

Sometimes it is necessary to pick up the boule that is holding the point in order to be able to measure to determine which boule is second-best. When that happens, you must mark the location of the holding boule so that you can replace it after you've finished measuring. Article 24 (Temporary removal of boules) says—

In order to measure a point, it is permitted to temporarily remove, after marking their locations, the boules and obstacles situated between the jack and the boules to be measured. After the measurement [has been made], the boules and the obstacles which were picked up are put back in their place.

In this situation, the traditional way of marking the boule is to rotate it in place two or three times (as if you are gently screwing-in a light bulb). This creates a slight depression in the terrain. When the boule is replaced, the depression guides the boule back into its original location. Another technique for making a depression is gently to tap the top of the boule with another boule.³¹ These traditional techniques are easy and effective.

Umpires hate these traditional techniques. Richard Powell, Regional Umpire of the (English) Southern Counties Petanque Association, writes—

You should NOT try to push the boule downwards to make a little "cup" in the ground to help with its later replacement, because the "cup" might prevent the moved-and-replaced boule from moving if any subsequent boule were to disturb it, or may stop any other boule that is moving from going where it would otherwise have gone.

[IPNZ, Article 24] says –

Under no circumstances must boules be twisted and turned on the surface to leave an indentation for the boule to be replaced in, or for the top of the boule to be hit by another boule. To do so incurs a warning.

Umpires prefer to scratch two lines in the dirt, with the lines at a right angle to each other. Some umpires recommend that, after the boule has been picked up, extending the two lines until they intersect and cross. This makes a small square depression (like the taboo cup!) that guides the boule back into its original location.

Personally, I feel that the umpires' concerns about "the cup" are more theoretical than real. Petanque is not played on billiard-table surfaces. The size of the cup is quite small. It is probably smaller than the natural variation of the terrain surface. And it is probably smaller than the disturbance to the terrain caused by the umpires' scratches. More important— "the cup" is an effective way to get a boule back exactly into its original location.

Colin Stewart describes another technique in a post on petanque.org –

A good method which doesn't disturb the surface is to use an old shoe lace. Wind the lace around the base of the boule and pull both ends gently until it fits around the point where the ground and the boule meet — but don't pull so tight as to move the boule, just enough to create a ring that fits closely around the base of the boule. Lift the boule out carefully and then measure. Replace the boule into the ring of shoelace and then carefully unwind the lace from around the boule. The removed boule should be precisely where you left it and no need to scratch marks into the terrain.

³¹ See Petanque Federation Australia's *Player Training Manual* (2013, p. 22).

Article 25 – Who should measure?

Article 25 says –

The measurement of a point is the responsibility of the player who last played or one of his teammates. The opponents always have the right to measure after one of these players.

This rule is more than a mere convenience rule (like “In this country we drive on the right (or left) side of the road.”) Note the wording of the first sentence— “The measurement of a point is the **responsibility** of the player...” Measurement is something that a team does not want to do. That’s because it is risky. If, while measuring, a player accidentally moves a ball or the jack, that creates a problem situation... with penalties.

The point is lost by a team if one of its players, while making a measurement, moves [displaces] the jack or one of the contested boules.

Teams therefore try to avoid measuring. In an umpired game, they will often ask an umpire to measure. But in a game where no umpire is available, Article 25 **requires** the team that played last to make the measurement.

Three reasons for measuring— tactical, practical, scoring

There are three different reasons for measuring— tactical, practical, and scoring.

- **Scoring** measurement is measurement that is done during the agreement of points. It is done after all the boules have been thrown, and its purpose is to determine which team won the mène, and to determine how many points that team scored.
- **Practical** measurement is measurement that is done while both teams still have boules to play. Its purpose is not (as you might suppose) to determine which team has the point. Its purpose is to determine which team will throw next, which is not quite the same thing.
- **Tactical** measurement is measurement whose purpose is to help the team that is about to throw the next boule to decide what their tactics should be. In tactical measurement, the question to be answered may sometimes be "Which boule is closest?" but quite often it is "Which boule is the second-best or third-best?"

Frequently-asked questions about tactical measurement

It is clear that Article 25 should be invoked for **scoring** measurement and for **practical** measurement. It is its applicability to **tactical** measurement that raises questions. The questions usually look something like this.

Our team did this. Then the opposing team did that. So the situation on the ground was such-and-such. Who should measure?

Usually the question is posed by an unhappy (or puzzled) player after an opposing team has asked his team to perform tactical measurement for them. Here are two typical examples.

Question 1

There are boules on the ground. Team A throws and gains the point, so it is now Team B's turn to throw. Team A has the best boule, but it's hard to tell which team has the second-best boule. Team B wants to know if they have the second-best boule. If they do, then they will shoot; otherwise they will point. So Team B asks Team A to measure for second-best boule.

Team A, of course, doesn't want to measure. So Team A wants to know if Article 25 really requires them to measure — to put themselves at risk — in order to help Team B make a tactical decision.

Question 2

Team B points a beautiful first boule. Team A throws all six of their boules trying to beat it. After all of Team A's boules have been thrown, it is not clear whether or not Team A's last boule is holding the point. It is now Team B's turn to throw. Team B wants to know if Team A has the point so they can decide whether to point or to shoot. So Team B asks Team A to measure for the point.

Again, Team A wants to know if Article 25 requires them to measure in order to help Team B make a tactical decision.

In both of these cases, team B is probably remembering Article 25 and thinking that— since they didn't throw the last boule— they must (or at least, may) ask team A to do the measuring. The fact of the matter, however, is that Article 25 is meant to be used for scoring measurements or practical measurements. Article 25 does not apply to tactical measurement. Since both of these situations involve tactical measurement, the answers to the two questions are NO and NO. Team A is not required to make tactical measurement for team B.

No team is required to make tactical measurements for the opposing team.

Of course, team A is permitted to make tactical measurements for the opposing team. And if they are asked, they might be willing to do so out of friendship, courtesy, or sportsmanship. But it is probably better for all concerned if they refuse the request and remind the opposing team that Article 25 doesn't apply to tactical measurement. There is no reason in the rules why the opposing team should not make their own tactical measurements.

There is one last issue about tactical measurement that is worth noting.

Article 20 says—

Once the jack is thrown, each player has the maximum duration of one minute to play his boule. This short period of time starts from the moment that the previously played boule or jack stops or, if it is necessary to measure a point, from the moment the latter [the measurement] has been accomplished.

It is generally accepted that this rule applies to practical measurement but not to tactical measurement. That is, the one-minute clock stops ticking for a practical measurement, and restarts at zero after the practical measurement has been made and it is clear which team throws next.

But the one-minute clock does not stop while a team takes time to make a tactical measurement. Once it is clear which team throws next, that team has one minute to decide on its tactics and to throw its boule. If their decision-making process involves making tactical measurements, that's fine... but the one-minute clock doesn't stop while they do it.

Article 27 – A boule or jack moved during measurement

Article 27 says –

The point is lost by a team if one of its players, while making a measurement, displaces the jack or one of the contested boules.

The context for Article 27 is measuring to determine which team holds the point, not measuring during the agreement of points. The penalty is losing the point. If the team still has unplayed boules, that means that they must play the next boule. That might entail losing the “boule advantage”.

It is easy during measurement to nudge a boule with the tip of the tape measure, making it rock in place a bit without actually changing its location. [IPNZ, Article 27] contains a useful and sensible ruling³² –

The term “displaces” means that there is a difference between a later position of a thing and its original position. If a boule or jack is touched and remains in the same position, the boule or jack has not been displaced and the point is not lost. It is up to the players to watch the measurement being made.

Article 27 is perhaps the worst-written of all the FIPJP rules. It says nothing about how to fix the situation after a ball has been displaced during measurement. It says nothing about how to apply the rule during the agreement of points. The most reasonable thing to do would be to put the displaced ball back in its original location. This is supported by Articles 11 (for the jack) and 21 (for a boule).

If a stationary jack is displaced by the wind or slope of the ground, for example, or accidentally by the umpire, a player, a spectator, a boule or a jack coming from another game, an animal or any moving object, it is returned to its original location, provided that it [the original location] had been marked. [Article 11]

If a stationary boule is displaced by the wind or slope of the ground, for example, it is put back in its place. The same applies to any boule accidentally displaced by a player, an umpire, a spectator, an animal, or any moving object. [Article 21]

Umpires hate the idea of relocating a boule or jack if its original location was unmarked. They also don't like the idea of leaving everything where it is, which might allow a player to keep an advantage that he gained by illegally moving a ball. One solution to this dilemma is **the Sleeping Beauty Rule**.

In the fairy tale, a spell or enchantment is cast over Princess Aurora. The spell causes her to fall into a deep sleep. The only way for the spell to be broken, and for the sleeping princess to be awakened and returned to life, is through the kiss of a prince. In the petanque version of the story, the Sleeping Beauty is a boule belonging to the team that displaced a ball while measuring.

One day a player from team A was measuring two boules, A1 and B1, to determine which team had the point. While measuring, the player accidentally moved the jack, or maybe it was one of the boules.

As punishment, the umpire cast a magical spell over the terrain. The locations of all three balls (A1, B1, and the jack) were marked, and A1 fell into a deep sleep. In this enchanted sleep, A1 would always be considered to be farther than B1 from the jack, regardless of the actual distance. The spell could be broken, and A1 awakened and restored to full life, only if one of the three enchanted objects (A1, B1, and the jack) were to be moved from its marked location.

³² This ruling also appears in [IFPUSA, Q11].

Here is the version from [IFPUSA, Q11]—

If a player moves a jack or boule while measuring, he may replace it to its marked position (if it was marked), but he still loses the point.

The players should carefully mark each of the boules that were being contested, and the jack, in order to determine if they are subsequently moved during the round. If they remain unmoved at the end of the round, the opponents of the team who made the measuring error are declared to hold the point between the two boules that were being contested, even if their boule would no longer measure as closer. On the other hand, if either boule or the jack is subsequently moved during play, the declaration described above is rescinded, and each boule stands on its own merit via the normal measuring procedure.

It is easy to imagine situations where the Sleeping Beauty rule might be difficult to apply. There are no criteria for deciding which boules are the allegedly "contested" boules. There might be three or more "contested boules". All of the "contested boules" might belong to the same team. A player might move one of his own boules farther from the jack— if in its new location it is still the closest boule to the jack, then surely it should be considered to be holding the point. And so on.

Unfortunately, the Sleeping Beauty rule is the best that we've got. It is the current state of the art in the interpretation of Article 27.

Article 28 – An undecided point – Who plays next

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY –

The rules about who plays next when the point is undecided are simple and straight-forward.

- When one of the teams has the point, the other team plays.
- When neither team has the point, the teams take turns playing until one of them has the point, starting with the team that created the undecided point.

[#####]

In petanque, the basic rule is that the team that has the boule closest to the jack is said to “have the point”. The team that does not have the point throws next, and continues to throw until it either gains the point or exhausts its supply of boules.

There are, however, two situations in which neither of the two teams has the point. In French such a situation is called a *point nul*, which can be translated into English as an *undecided point*.

1. An **equidistant boules situation** occurs when the best boules of the two teams are equally distant from the jack. In actual play, it occurs most frequently when two boules are both touching the jack. You will occasionally see the opinion expressed that in an equidistant boules situation both boules have the point, but that is wrong. Neither boule has the point. The point is *nul*, undecided.
2. An **empty terrain situation** occurs when no boules are left on the terrain. It occurs when the terrain is empty because all of the boules have been shot or hit or simply rolled out-of-bounds.

In these situations, neither team has the point, so we need some additional rule or procedure to determine which team throws next. That procedure is described in Article 28.

The team that played the last boule plays again, then the opposing team, and so on alternately until the point belongs to one of them.

I find it helpful to think of the situation this way. When a team throws a boule that creates an undecided point, the game enters a kind of tie-breaker mode.

- In tie-breaker mode, the teams throw alternately until one of the teams gains the point and breaks the tie.
- In tie-breaker mode, the first boule is thrown by the team whose boule created the undecided point. That team gets a chance, as it were, to resolve the uncertainty that they created.

[#####]

There are three situations where players are often uncertain about how to apply this procedure. All three start in the same way, with an equidistant boules situation.

All of the equidistant boules are knocked out, leaving the terrain empty

Team A throws boule A1. Team B throws boule B1, which ends up exactly equidistant from the jack. Now A1 and B1 are equidistant. In throwing B1, team B created an undecided point situation, so team B starts the tie-breaker by throwing boule B2.

Team B throws boule B2, trying to shoot A1. But B2 knocks both A1 and B1 out of bounds and itself rolls out of bounds. The result is that there are no boules left on the terrain. Which team plays next?

When this question was posted on French petanque forum BOULISTENAUTE, one commentator opined that since the game had gone from an equidistant boules situation to an empty terrain situation, "it is a new undecided point" (*c'est un nouveau point nul*), so the team that created the new situation (team B) plays again.

But that is wrong. Team B did not create a "new" undecided point. The point is still undecided and alternate play continues. Since team B threw the last boule, team A throws next.

One of the equidistant boules is exactly replaced

Team A throws boule A1. Team B throws boule B1, which ends up exactly equidistant from the jack. Now A1 and B1 are equidistant. In throwing B1, team B created an undecided point, so team B starts the tie-breaker by throwing boule B2.

Team B throws boule B2, trying to shoot A1. But the shot misses and instead hits Team B's own boule, B1. The shot knocks B1 away and exactly replaces B1 with B2. Now, A1 and B2 are equidistant. Which team plays next?

As before, some players argue that team B should play next because "It is a new case." Umpire Mike Pegg says "It is a different boule." [ATU]

But that is wrong. As before, the point is still undecided and alternate play continues. Since team B threw the last boule, team A throws next.

[#####]

In both situations the incorrect answers are based on the observation that something has changed, and in some sense we now have "a new situation". The problem with these answers is that they confuse creation of a new situation (or really, a change in the situation) with resolving an undecided point. Yes, the situation has changed. But no, the point hasn't been decided. The point is still undecided. Therefore, alternate play continues.

[#####]

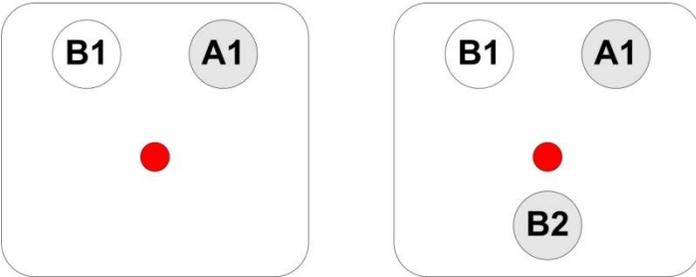
With that in mind, let's consider a third situation that players sometime find confusing. [IFPUSA, Q2]

Reverting to an earlier equidistant boules situation

Team A points boule A1. Team B points boule B1, which ends up exactly equidistant from the jack. (The situation on the ground is shown in the diagram below, on the left.) In throwing B1, team B created an undecided point, so team B starts the tie-breaker by throwing the next boule.

Team B points boule B2, beating both of the equidistant boules and gaining the point. This ends the undecided point. (The situation on the ground is shown in the diagram below, on the right.)

Team A throws boule A2, shooting B2 away. The situation on the ground is now exactly as it was earlier. (See the diagram on the left.) A1 and B2 are equidistant and the point is again undecided. Which team plays next?



The answer is that before team A threw boule A2, the point was not undecided — team B and boule B2 had the point. When team A threw A2 (and shot away B2) it created a situation in which the point is undecided. So team A starts the tie-breaker by throwing its next boule, A3.

The answer is straightforward. Still, players feel compelled to ask the question. The reason, I think, is that players take the bad reasoning that we discussed earlier ("It's a different boule") and flip it. If a change to the boules creates a "new situation", then... if the same two boules are involved (again), has the game returned to "the same situation" that it was in earlier? And if so, which team throws next?

[#####]

The purpose of the procedure described in Article 28 is to provide a mechanism for deciding which team throws next when neither team holds the point. The procedure is simple and obvious— when neither team has the point, the teams play alternately until one of them DOES have the point. When we talk about this procedure, we should watch out for expressions like "new case" and "different situation". They are like the proverbial canary in the coal mine. If we find ourselves saying such things as "it is a new case" or "it is a different boule", that is a warning sign that we are starting to get muddled in the way that we think about Article 28.

Article 31 - Consulting with the team coach

Article 31 says —

No player may absent himself from a game or leave the game terrains without the permission of the Umpire.

Players sometimes misunderstand this rule as saying that, during a game, they can't step outside the boundaries of the terrain in order to walk over and confer with their coach.

That is a mistake — that's not what Article 31 is about. Players are of course allowed to step outside the boundaries of the terrain. In fact, when a player isn't throwing, standing outside of the terrain boundary is the safest place to be if a boule or jack is hit and suddenly flies across the terrain.

As international umpire Mike Pegg says

The rule about leaving the terrain/lane is not designed to prevent a player stepping out of the lane to talk to his coach who is standing or sitting at the end of the lane. The rule is designed to deal with players that move away from the lane or the playing area to get a coffee, have a smoke, go to the toilet, etc.

The bottom line is that players definitely are allowed to walk over to the edge of the playing area and confer with their coach. While they are conversing, player and coach should remember that the player is allowed only one minute to throw his boule. That means that they must keep their consultation short and to the point.

Special rules for time-limited games

The FIPJP international rules contain only one special rule for time-limited games— all of the boundary lines of a lane are considered to be dead-ball lines. Other special rules for time-limited games are left to the tournament organizer. Here, for instance, are the rules for the European Petanque Confederation (CEP) European championship—the Eurocup.

Rules for Timed Games at the 2015 CEP European Championship

The CEP European Championship shall take place in accordance with the FIPJP Official Rules of the Game of Pétanque and the CEP Championship Rules.

The qualification rounds of the European Championship will be organised using the Swiss system, the games during these 5 rounds will be timed with the following specific rules.

1. The time limit for each game will be one and a quarter hours (1:15hrs) plus two ends. Teams will be notified when the one and a quarter hours has expired. Any game that is tied after these two extra ends will, subject to the Umpire's permission, be permitted to play one more end.
2. A new end will be considered as started as soon as the result of the previous end is known.
3. Throughout the Timed Games all lines marking the terrain are dead ball lines.
4. The team winning the toss or the previous end will have one attempt to throw a valid jack. If this jack is not valid the opponent may place the jack at a valid place on the designated terrain.
5. To be considered valid the jack must be a minimum of 6m to a max of 10m from the circle. It must also be a minimum of 50cm from the dead ball line. The maximum amount of time to accomplish this throwing or placing of the jack is one minute.
6. The jack or a boule is considered dead when it completely crosses the line of the designated lane.
7. At the time of the draw and the announcement of its result, the players must be present at the control table. 5 minutes after the announcement of these results, the team that is absent from the terrain will be penalised one point, which is awarded to their opponents. No player may absent himself from a game or leave the terrains of play without the authorisation of the Umpire. The player wanting to leave must have already played all his boules in the on-going end. If permission is not granted, the provisions of article 31 and 32 of the FIPJP Official Rules of the Game of Pétanque apply.

These rules are something of a model for other timed-limited competitions, so let's look at a couple of questions that players have about them.

QUESTION 1

The rule says "If this jack is not valid the opponent may place the jack at a valid place on the designated terrain." What does "place" mean? I assumed that it meant that the player walked to some appropriate area on the terrain, extended an arm, and dropped the jack onto the terrain. But I have seen players positioning the jack "by hand" — bending over and putting the jack in an exact spot on the ground. Is that allowed?

YES, it is allowed. It might even be recommended.

There is no rule about how the jack must be placed. It can be thrown, dropped, or placed directly on the ground by hand. Remember that the purpose of the rule is to enable the game to continue quickly. A jack that is thrown, or even dropped from an extended arm, might bounce and roll to an invalid location. Placing the jack by hand is the quickest and most reliable way to get it exactly to the place where the player wants it.

QUESTION 2

Suppose team A throws the jack, but it is invalid. Team B then throws the jack, but their attempt is also invalid. What happens next?

Note that the procedure specified in the CEP rules is NOT this— the teams alternate throwing the jack once, until the jack is thrown successfully.

If team A fails to throw a valid jack, Team B is required to place the jack on the terrain in a valid location. If team B's first attempt fails, Team B picks up the jack and does whatever it needs to do to get a valid jack onto the terrain, including placing the jack by hand (see the previous question).

Frequently-asked questions about the rules

How are points scored?

One of the most embarrassing defects of the FIPJP rules is that they never specify how points are scored! The closest they get is in Article 28, which specifies what to do if there is an equidistant boules situation. Just for the record, the procedure for scoring points is this.

After all boules have been thrown, the team that has the boule closest to the jack wins the mene. The winning team scores as many points as it has boules that are closer to the jack than the opposing team's closest boule.

If after all boules have been thrown, the point is undecided then neither team scores any points.

A mene in which neither team scores any points is called a "scoreless mene" (*une mène nulle* or *mène annulée*). A scoreless mene is a perfectly normal mene in which (as it happens) neither team scores any points. It is like a baseball inning in which neither team scores any runs.

Is there any rule about the order in which members of the same team play?

No, there is not. Members of a team can play in any order that they wish. The team member that plays is often determined by circumstance. If the team needs to point, then the team's best pointer will throw. If the team needs to shoot, then the team's best shooter will throw.

When does a mene start and end?

Players ask about when a mene starts or ends when they are in one of the following situations.

A late-arriving player joins the game

Knowing whether a mene has started is important when a player arrives late and is ready to join the game. If a mene is in progress, the player must wait until the start of the next mene before he can join the game. A mene starts with the successful throw of a live jack (see Article 32). Note— a successful throw of the jack. Suppose that a player throws the jack to begin mene #2, but his throw is not successful. At just that moment, a late-arriving player appears. Mene #2 is NOT considered to have begun because the jack has not yet been thrown successfully. So the late-arriving player can join his team in playing mene #2.

The time-limit signal is sounded in a time-limited game

Knowing whether a mene has started is important in time-limited games. When the time-limit is announced (by the sound of a whistle or bell) players may finish the current mene and then play one or two additional menes. Competition organizers usually specify one of the following rules about when a mene is considered to begin. After the first mene, menes begin—

1. when the jack has been successfully thrown.
2. when the first boule of the mene has been thrown.
3. after the last boule of the previous mene has been thrown.
4. after the points have been agreed at the end of the previous mene.

For time-limited games during the European (Eurocup) tournament, the CEP uses option #4.³³

A new end will be considered as started as soon as the result of the previous end is known.

The Petanque New Zealand umpire's guide [IPNZ] uses option #3.

When the time signal is sounded, players decide if all boules of the end have been played and have come to a stop. If so, that end has finished (regardless of measuring and deciding points). It is the most objective point at which to make a decision re the end of an end, as it does not allow players to 'play for time' through measuring, deciding points, calling the umpire etc. So when the time signal is sounded...

- *If the last boule of the end has been played and come to a stop, you have officially started the new end and are therefore able to play that end, plus the tournament's official ends.*
- *If the last boule of the end has NOT been played or NOT stopped, you finish the end and then play the tournament's official ends.*

The "one-minute rule" for throwing the jack

Players know that after the end of a mene, the winning team has one minute in which to throw the jack to start the next mene. The actual rule, in Article 20, is this –

Once the jack is thrown, each player has the maximum duration of one minute to play his boule. This short period of time starts from the moment that the previously played boule or jack stops or, if it is necessary to measure a point, from the moment the latter [the measurement] has been accomplished. ... The same requirements apply to the throwing of the jack, which is 1 minute for the 3 throws.

If I were to restate the rule in my own words, it would say –

After a ball (boule or jack) has been thrown and everything comes to rest, the next ball (boule or jack) must be thrown within one minute. If the players need to do measurement after the throw of the ball, then the next ball (boule or jack) must be thrown within one minute after the measurement has been completed.

This means that after the agreement of points is complete at the end of one mene, the winning team has one minute in which to successfully throw the jack to start the next mene.

³³ This is also the position of the IFPUSA. See Q9, "When does the next end begin?"

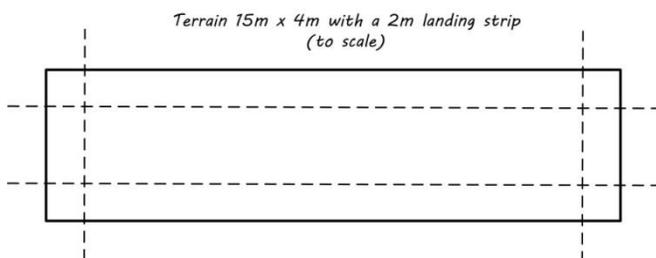
The “landing strip” for a thrown jack

Article 7 specifies that “the [thrown] jack must be a minimum of 1 meter from ... the nearest boundary of an out-of-bounds area.” This requirement can be a problem on narrow lanes.

We are playing on a marked terrain that is 3 meters wide. Does the one-meter rule in Article 7 mean that the area where we can legally throw the jack— the “landing strip” as it were— is only one meter wide running down the middle of the terrain?

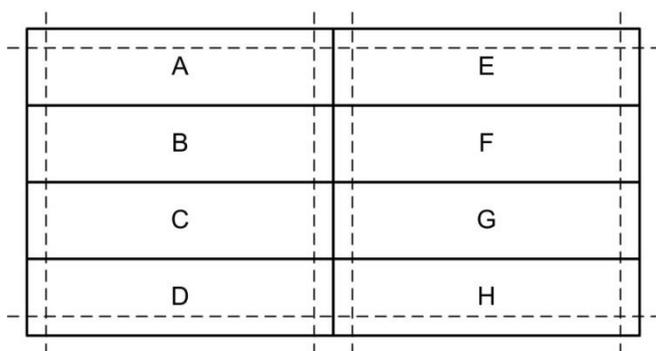
The answer is— “Yes, that's correct. But you can specify a competition-level rule to change that.”

Suppose that we have a playing area that contains only one lane, so that the boundary lines of all four sides are dead-ball lines. The lane is the minimum size for international competition – 15m long and 4m wide. If we measure one meter in from each of the four dead-ball lines, then we have a landing strip in the middle of the lane that is 13m long and only 2m wide.



The landing strip for lanes in a grid of lanes

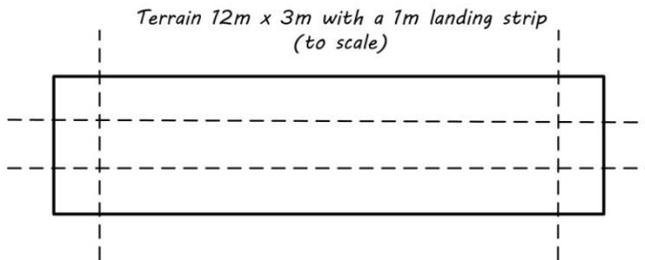
Things get more interesting when we create multiple lanes by dividing a large playing area into a grid of lanes. In this arrangement, the strings around the exterior of the grid are dead ball lines, and so are the strings across the short ends (the “feet”) of the lanes. If we diagram the landing strips for such a grid of lanes, the result looks like this.



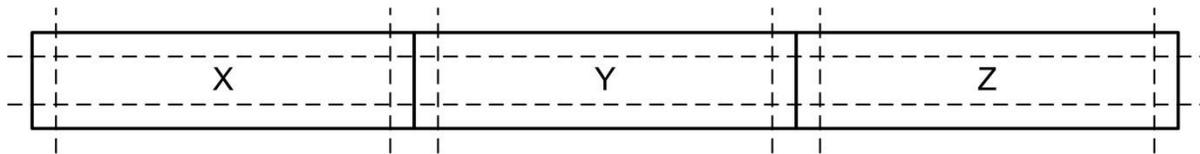
Note that the landing strips for the exterior lanes (A, D, E, and H) are lop-sided. On one side the landing strips stay a meter from the exterior dead-ball line; on the other side they go right up to a guide line. So if the lanes are 4m wide, then interior landing strips are 4m wide but landing strips for exterior lanes are only 3m wide, and off-center as well.

When the landing strip is too narrow

There are circumstances where the landing strip is only one meter wide. Under FIPJP rules, games below the national level may be played on a lane that is 12m long and 3m wide. And in time-limited games, all four boundaries of a lane are considered to be dead-ball lines. Since a landing strip must be a meter away from a dead-ball line, the landing strip for each lane will be only one meter wide.



The same problem can occur in non-time-limited games when the lanes are laid out end-to-end, like this.



This can occur in competitions where the lanes are laid out on long, narrow areas like the paths in a public park.



The 50-centimeter rule

To deal with narrow lanes, clubs and competitions often replace the one-meter rule with a half-meter rule.

A thrown jack must be a minimum of 50 centimeters from the nearest dead-ball line.

With this rule, even on a lane that is only 3m wide the landing strip will still be at least 2m wide.

What is an obstacle?

“What is an obstacle?” is probably the most-frequently-asked question about the rules. And “obstacle” is probably the most frequently misused term in discussions of the rules of petanque.

The word “obstacle” appears ten times in the FIPJP rules.

- Articles 6 and 7 discuss throwing obstacles
- Articles 10, 18, and 24 discuss other kinds of obstacles

Articles 6 and 7 – throwing obstacles

The subject of Articles 6 and 7 is the placement of the circle. In that context, “obstacle” refers to any physical object or feature of the terrain that, because it is close to the throwing circle, might interfere with a player’s normal throwing form. I will call such obstacles “throwing obstacles”.

The most common kind of throwing obstacles are objects that might interfere with a player’s backswing. Trees, telephone poles, trash receptacles, walls, and crowd-control barriers count as throwing obstacles if they are too close to the circle. So does the backswing of a player standing in the throwing circle of a nearby game of petanque. Even a low boulder on the terrain, or a wooden surround, can count as an obstacle if it might interfere with the backswing of a squatting pointer.

The category of “throwing obstacles” also includes features of the terrain that might interfere with a player’s footing. A fish pond, a big patch of slippery mud, a deep puddle of rainwater, a patch of ground that is too irregular for a player to stand with a solid footing— all of these count as throwing obstacles.

The purpose of Articles 6 and 7 is to move the circle away from throwing obstacles and especially from anything that might interfere with a player’s backswing. The rules assume that a player’s backswing won’t extend more than a meter outside the throwing circle. So these rules require the throwing circle to be at least one meter from any throwing obstacle.

In a proactive effort to avoid issues with the location of the circle in the next mene, the rules also require that the thrown jack in the current mene must be a meter from anything that might be a throwing obstacle in the next mene.

Articles 10, 18, 24 – obstacles as inconvenient objects

Except for the throwing obstacles of Articles 6 and 7, "obstacles" are simply objects (of any sort) that interfere with an activity or process that we would prefer NOT to be interfered with. As a result, outside of Articles 6 and 7, you can replace the word "obstacle" with a vague word like "something" or "anything" and not really change the meaning of the rule.

In Article 10 –

An "obstacle" is any feature of the terrain that might prevent a pointed boule from rolling in a straight line. Article 10 says that even though a player might want to pick up or push down such an "obstacle" (a stone, for example, or a hump in the ground) he is not allowed to do so. Such "obstacles" are natural features of the terrain, and may not be changed during a game.

It is strictly forbidden for players to press down, displace or crush any obstacle whatsoever that is located on the game terrain.

Just for the sake of comparison, here is an older version of the rule from 1952 (*Fédération Française Bouliste du «Jeu Provençal et Pétanque»*, Article 7) –

Once the jack is thrown, no obstacle, not even the smallest stone, can be picked up, moved, or crushed, between the circle and the jack.

Sometimes you will hear a player (presumably under the influence of Article 10) use the expression "an obstacle" out of context, in a way that makes it clear that what he really means is simply "a feature of the terrain".

In Article 18 –

An "obstacle" is anything that causes a boule to bounce back in-bounds after it has gone out-of-bounds.

[If a boule goes out-of-bounds and] then comes back onto the game terrain, either because of the slope of the ground, or because it rebounds off of an obstacle, moving or stationary, it is immediately removed from the game and anything that it displaced after its trip through the out-of-bounds area is put back in its original place.

In Article 24 –

An "obstacle" is something on the terrain (a big rock, a tree root) that gets in the way of taking a measurement.

In order to measure a point, it is allowed to temporarily remove, after marking their positions, the boules and obstacles situated between the jack and the boules to be measured. After the measurement [has been made], the boules and the obstacles which were picked up are put back in their place. If the obstacles cannot be removed, the measurement of the point is done with the aid of a set of calipers.

If a thrown boule or jack hits something ABOVE the terrain, is it dead?

The answer is NO.

Article 18 says that a boule is dead if it goes out-of-bounds, “rebounds off of an obstacle”, and then comes back on to the terrain.

Players often want to ask "If a thrown boule or jack hits something ABOVE the terrain, is it dead?" Often, the question comes out as— “Are objects above the terrain obstacles?” But the real question is not— “Are objects above the terrain **obstacles**?” It is— “Are objects above the terrain **out-of-bounds**?”

Objects directly above the terrain have the same status as natural features on the ground like stones and tree roots. As long as they are inside the imaginary invisible walls created by vertically projecting the dead-ball lines into the sky, they are in-bounds.

That means that there is no reason to declare a boule or a jack to be dead if it hits an overhanging tree branch, a low-hanging light fixture, or a bouldrome ceiling. From the standpoint of the rules, there is no difference between a boule that hits an overhanging tree branch and a boule that hits a tree root on the ground.

Note, however, that club rules or tournament rules may over-ride and adapt the rules to local conditions. Local rules might, for instance, specify that the ceiling of an indoor bouldrome is to be considered out-of-bounds.



An outdoor bouldrome in Seaside, Florida.
Note the low-hanging light fixtures. They are in-bounds features of that terrain.

The jack is dead – what do we do now?

There are a number of ways that a jack can go dead. On a marked terrain, the jack can be shot out-of-bounds. On an open terrain, the jack can be knocked behind a rock or tree so that it cannot be seen from the circle. And there are a few other ways, too.

When the jack goes dead, players face the question: “What do we do now?” This is actually three questions.

1. Which team scores?
2. Which team throws the jack at the beginning of the next mene?
3. Where should the circle be placed at the beginning of the next mene?

Q1. Which team scores?

The answer is —

- If one and only one of the teams has unplayed boules, that team scores as many points as it has unplayed boules.
- If both, or neither, of the teams has unplayed boules, then neither team scores any points.

A mene in which neither team scores any points is called a “scoreless mene” (*une mène nulle* or *mène annulée*). A scoreless mene is a perfectly normal mene in which (as it happens) neither team scores any points. It is like a baseball inning in which neither team scores any runs.

Q2. Which team throws the jack at the beginning of the next mene?

The rule in Article 15 applies whether or not the jack went dead.

The first boule of a mene is thrown by a player belonging to the team that won the toss or was the last to score.

That is—

- If (in the mene where the jack died) one of the two teams scored points, then that team won the mene and throws the jack at the start of the next mene.
- If, on the other hand, the mene was scoreless, then the team that last scored points in an earlier mene (in effect, the team that last moved its marker on the scoreboard) throws the jack.

There is a bad rule-of-thumb that confuses many players.

The team that threw the jack at the start of the scoreless mene throws the jack to start the next mene.

The problem with this rule is that it is ambiguous.

- Suppose that team A tried three times to throw the jack, unsuccessfully.
- Team B then successfully threw the jack.
- Then the mene ended without a score.

Which team “threw the jack at the start of the mene”? Team A or team B? This bad rule-of-thumb confuses a lot of players. Don't be one of them.

Q3. Where do we place the circle at the beginning of the next mene?

The short answer is that at the beginning of a mene, the circle is drawn or placed on the assigned lane, in the place that is closest to the last place on the playing area where the jack was still alive during the previous mene.

That means that –

- If at the end of the previous mene the jack was still alive and on the assigned terrain, then the circle is placed around its location on the assigned terrain.
- If at the end of the previous mene the jack was still alive but located on a neighboring terrain, then the circle is placed on the assigned terrain, as close as possible to the jack's location on the neighboring terrain.
- If at the end of the previous mene the jack had been knocked out-of-bounds, then the circle is placed on the assigned terrain, as close as possible to the place where the jack crossed the dead-ball line.

For a longer and more detailed answer, see the discussion of Article 12.

Never pick up another player's boule

One of the important unwritten rules of petanque is –

Never pick up another player's boule.

At the end of a mene, new players will often pick up boules belonging to other players and hand them to their owners. If you're a new player, I have some advice for you. Don't do it! The other players realize that you're trying to be helpful. But the truth is that you're not actually helping. For a brief moment, you're causing the other players (who are looking at the ground, trying to find their boules) not to be able to find them. At the same time you're neglecting your responsibility to pick up your own boules as quickly as possible. Instead—

- Wait until you're absolutely sure that the score has been agreed. If you are a new player, wait until you see other, more experienced players picking up their boules. Then start to pick up your own boules.
- Pick up your own boules as quickly as possible. If you're in a hurry, just kick them off of the terrain. You can pick them up later.
- Never pick up another player's boules. (Except—if during pickup you see another player's boule way out-of-bounds somewhere, gently kick it toward the head. That will save its owner the long trek to retrieve it.)

It is possible, even for an experienced player, mistakenly to believe that the mene is over and to start picking up boules prematurely. According to Article 26, any boule that is picked up prematurely is dead.

It is forbidden for players to pick up played boules before the end of the mene. At the end of a mene, any boule picked up before the agreement of points is dead.

If you pick up one of your own team's boules, the boule is dead and the only team you have harmed is your own. But if you pick up one of the other team's boules, there can be problems. In an umpired game, the umpire will probably follow Article 26 and declare that the opponents' boule (that you picked up!) is dead. That is clearly unfair, but the umpire will feel that he has no alternative to ruling that way. During social play, the two teams may agree to put the boule back in a mutually agreeable location. But the bottom line is that accidentally picking up an opposing team's boule always makes for a messy situation. So even for experienced players, a very good rule-of-thumb is— *Never pick up another player's boule.*

There are merits in an even stricter rule— *Never touch an opposing player's boule without his permission.* This is especially true when an opposing boule goes out-of-bounds and bounces back in-bounds (as a zombie boule) or barely crosses the dead-ball line. Don't touch it! Instead, check to be sure that the opposing team agrees that the boule went out-of-bounds. They may not agree that the boule went out-of-bounds, and you will need to resolve that issue before doing anything else.

In any event, be careful about picking up or removing a dead boule. There is a safety concern. This is how people can get hurt— the player in the throwing circle throws his next boule without realizing that you (!) are coming onto the terrain to inspect the head or to pick up a dead boule. So be careful. Never go to remove a dead boule unless you are sure that the player in the circle knows what you are up to.

Can I wear sandals while playing?

Players often know that there is some kind of rule against wearing sandals, but are unsure about the actual source or specifications of the rule.

On the international level the FIPJP rules require “proper dress” (*une tenue correcte*) for all players, but specific dress restrictions are left to national federations and competition organizers.

On the national level national federations have a “Player Code of Behavior” that typically prohibits smoking, drinking, cursing, pets, glass containers, mobile phones, e-cigarettes, and high heels.

On the competition level is usually where you find requirements for enclosed footwear.

- Both FPUSA and the English Petanque Association (EPA) require enclosed footwear for their competitions.
- The Code of Behavior of the Australian petanque federation has required enclosed footwear since 2006.
- The dress code of the French federation has required enclosed footwear since at least 2011.



Proposé par la C.N.A et approuvé par le Comité Directeur de novembre 2011

The requirement for enclosed footwear has nothing to do with the danger of dropping a boule on your foot—ordinary shoes don't provide much more protection than open-toe sandals. It is about tripping.

The boundaries of marked terrains are traditionally marked with strings strung tightly between nails driven into the ground. When installed properly, the strings lie very close to the ground and pose a negligible tripping hazard for anyone wearing enclosed footwear. But experience has shown that open-toe shoes significantly increase the risk of tripping on the strings, and of a serious fall. As Mike Pegg notes —

In England we do not allow open-toe or backless sandals/shoes because on a terrain with string lines (to make the lane) it is very easy to catch the string between your foot and the shoe and can do a lot of harm.



It is sometimes said that the FPUSA footwear requirement is a condition of the FPUSA's liability insurance policy. This, however, may be an urban myth. Ernesto Santos (of La Boule New Yorkaise) says

While the FPUSA has rules about not playing with open-toed shoes in FPUSA tournaments (unless you have a doctor's note) and some have claimed that it is due to liability insurance — nobody has ever actually shown where in the policy it says that. And in fact the previous president (Ed Porto) has said that it is perfectly fine to have local tournaments that allow open toed shoes.

The Bottom Line

There are rules by competition organizers, and there are rules of common-sense prudence.

1. In any organized competition, there will almost certainly be a requirement that players wear enclosed footwear.
2. When playing on a terrain marked with strings, as a matter of common-sense personal safety, NEVER go barefoot or wear open-toe or open-heel shoes or sandals.

But if you're playing a friendly game on a terrain without strings, feel free to relax in those sandals.

Why is it forbidden to smoke while playing?

The rules of most national federations and competitions forbid players from smoking during play, and that includes "vaping", i.e. using electronic cigarettes. There are three reasons usually given for this prohibition.

1. It is bad for the image of the sport.
2. It is undesirable to show young people role models who smoke.
3. The fumes can be irritating and distracting to other players. Some players, in fact, feel that the cloud of vapor given off by electronic cigarettes is worse than that of regular cigarettes.

Who has the point—the team or the boule?

Rules wonks like to think about pedantic questions such as—

What kind(s) of thing can be said to "have the point"? Boules? Teams? Both?

Players, of course, say both. The boule in front has the point. Team B has the point.

As a point of interest, however, note that the FIPJP rules always speak of a team as having the point. The rules never talk about a boule as having the point.

Boules thrown out of turn

Boules thrown out of turn

This kind of situation happens all the time, especially when playing with newer players.

Team A has the point. Team B throws boule B1. B1 gains the point but the players don't realize that.

Mistakenly believing that team A still has the point, team B throws boule B2.

The players then walk to the head and measure all of the boules. They discover that B1 had actually gained the point. That means that after B1 was thrown, team A, not team B, should have thrown the next boule. Boule B2 was "thrown out of turn".

What should be done?

Position 1 – It's a boule thrown "contrary to the rules"

Article 15 says that "it is the team that does not hold the point that plays." So it seems obvious that a boule played out-of-turn is a boule thrown contrary to the rules. That means that we should apply Article 23.

Any boule thrown contrary to the rules is dead, and anything that it displaced in its travel is put back in place, if its original location was marked. However, the opponent has the right to apply the advantage rule and to declare that it is valid. In this case, the boule pointed or shot, is still alive and anything it has displaced remains in its place.

In our example, nothing was marked, so everything is left in place and the opposing team (team A) has the choice of whether or not to leave the offending boule on the terrain. Then the game on the ground is evaluated, and the team not holding the point (which may be either of the teams) plays the next boule.

Position 2 – It's NOT a boule thrown "contrary to the rules"

In 2008, the national umpires for Petanque New Zealand issued a set of rules interpretations that held that a boule thrown out of turn is not a "boule thrown contrary to the rules", and Article 23 should not be applied.

Even if the boule was not holding, by agreeing that it was, the opponents in effect declared it to be valid under Rule 23. At the end of the mène, the boules can be measured, but not to determine whether the team had played out of turn, only to determine the current holding positions for points purposes.

Following this lead, in 2012 John Degueldre, Director of Umpiring for Petanque New Zealand, issued the following ruling.

Boules played out of turn are not considered as an infringement to the rules [as "boules thrown contrary to the rules"] but indeed as a mistake. Players making such a mistake penalise themselves by reducing or losing the 'boule advantage'. In conclusion, players do not incur any penalty, and boule(s) are valid and stay in place. But it is still the player or team not holding the point that must play the next boule.

The practical effect of this interpretation is that, after a boule is thrown out-of-turn, everything is left where it is, and the game just carries on. The game on the ground is evaluated, and the team not holding the point (which may be either of the teams) plays the next boule.

Position 3 – It depends on the circumstances

My opinion is that there are a variety of circumstances under which a player might throw a boule out of turn, and that fairness requires considering the circumstances when deciding what to do. Consider, for instance, the following two quite different cases.

The two teams walk to the head and visually inspect the situation. Team B says “Looks to me like you’ve got the point.” Team A says, “Yeah, I think so too.” They don’t measure. Team B goes back to the circle and throws.

After throwing boule B1, the player in the circle makes a snap judgment that he has failed to gain the point. Without asking team A whether or not they agree, and before team A has time to inspect the head or even shout “Wait a minute,” he throws boule B2.

In the first case both teams made an honest mistake and the game should just carry on.

In the second case, however, I would say that team B failed to do due diligence, failed to get what we might call team A’s “agreement on the point.” And for that reason, team B really did throw B2 contrary to rules.

The bottom line

If none of the locations of boules were marked (as is almost always the case) then there is actually very little difference among these interpretations. Under all of them, everything except the offending boule is left where it is. The only difference is whether or not the opposing team has the option (under Article 23) of declaring the offending boule to be dead.

If a “boule thrown out of turn” happens in an FIPJP-sanctioned tournament, the umpire would probably apply Article 23 and allow the opposition to choose whether to pick it up or leave it.

During social play, I recommend following the guide lines provided by Petanque New Zealand. Just leave everything where it is and carry on with the game. Or, if the thrown-out-of-turn boule didn’t move anything on the ground, then pick it up, return it to its owner, and carry on as if nothing ever happened.

Dealing with a forgotten boule

What do you do when one team forgets that it has an unplayed boule?

There are a lot of boules on the ground. Your team (team A) has the point, and unplayed boules.

You ask the opponents (team B) if they have any more boules to play. The captain looks around, don't see any, and says "No, we're out." So your team plays a boule. Then one of the opponents says "Oops! Bob still has one boule left!"

What do you do?

One line of thinking is that team A's boule was thrown "contrary to the rules" or was a "boule thrown out of turn" (as per Article 23). That is incorrect. Team A did nothing wrong. One of the many unwritten rules of petanque is this—

Whenever asked, a team must willingly, honestly, and correctly report the number of unplayed boules it has.

It was team B's responsibility to keep track of their own boules. Team B was at fault for failing to do that job properly. Perhaps team B simply made a mistake and genuinely forgot the boule. Perhaps they were trying to cheat. But in either case, by not correctly reporting their unplayed boule, team B forced team A to lose the boule advantage. And that's not fair.³⁴

Note that the situation would be different if team A had NOT asked their opponents if they still had any unplayed boules. Suppose team A just looked around, didn't notice any unplayed boules, didn't bother to ask the opposing team if they still had any unplayed boules, and proceeded to throw. Then team A, not team B, would have been at fault. In such a situation, it is the responsibility of the team about to throw to verify that the opposing team is out of boules. Team A didn't do that, so team A's boule truly would have been thrown contrary to the rules.

The concept here is basically that of due diligence. Asking the opposing team if they still have any unplayed boules should be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of due diligence. Conversely, failing to ask is a failure to perform due diligence.

Some commenters opine that a team is required always to count, or keep a mental count of, the opposing team's boules. That would be difficult, time-consuming, and error-prone. And it would make every team responsible for constantly keeping track of the opposing team's boules as well as their own. That makes no sense at all.

³⁴ Here we're thinking of the second of our general principles for applying the rules. "A team that breaks the rules (deliberately or accidentally) should not benefit from its illegal action."

The boule advantage and the forgotten boule

The boule advantage is an important concept in understanding how the game is played, and (in some cases) in understanding the implications of different interpretations of the rules. Intuitively, the idea of the boule advantage is this — at any point during a mene, the team with the most unplayed boules has “the boule advantage” or simply “the advantage”. A precise definition of “boule advantage” is —

At any given point in a mene, if both teams play perfectly³⁵ from that point forward, the team that will play the last boule in the mene has the boule advantage.

If, after team A has played all of its boules, team B still has one boule left to play, we say that team B has a boule advantage of +1. If team B has two boules left to play, it has a boule advantage of +2, and so on.

At the beginning of a mene, the team that throws the second boule has the boule advantage. You can often see the boule advantage at work in world-championship games. Team A points the first boule, and Team B shoots it with their own first boule. Team A points their next boule and Team B shoots it with their next boule. Point. Shoot. Point. Shoot. The teams alternate until Team A points their last boule and Team B shoots it with their last boule. Team B gains the point and wins the end.

At a level of play where teams play nearly perfectly, losing the boule advantage can often mean losing the mene. The real drama in a world-championship game is in the shot that just barely misses, and the pointing throw that doesn't quite gain the point. Such failures lose the boule advantage and turn it over to the opposing team.

So... Why are we discussing the boule advantage in connection with forgotten boules?

Consider this situation. There are a lot of boules on the ground. Your team has the point. You ask the opponents if they have any more boules to play. They look around and then say “No, we're out”. So you play your last boule. You're walking to the head to count the points when one of the opponents says “Oops! I made a mistake. I still have one boule left!”

“It was an honest mistake,” you think. Should you say “OK, go ahead. Play your last boule.” Why not? Really, what difference does it make?

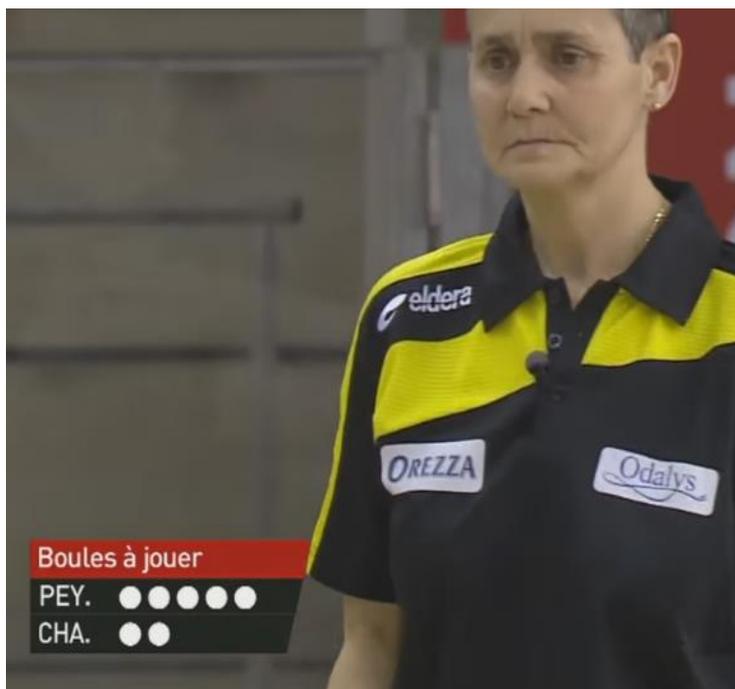
Here is the difference that it makes.

Your team had the boule advantage, the right to throw the last boule. The opposing player's mistake (even if it was an honest mistake and not an attempt to cheat) took the boule advantage away from your team and gave it to his own team. If he is allowed to play that last “forgotten” boule, he will be playing the last boule in the mene. And with that last boule, he can do all sorts of mischief. He can win the mene for his own team.

The bottom line, therefore, is that in a forgotten boule situation— even in friendly play— it is best to go by the book. A forgotten boule is dead.

³⁵ A team plays “perfectly” when it gains the point every time it throws—that is, it never requires more than one throw to gain the point. There are a variety of ways that it can do this. It can out-point the opponents, shoot away an opposition boule, or shoot the jack.

In the 2016 women's PPF finals we see *Boules à jouer* – "Boules left to play." Team Peyrot pointed a good opening boule. Team Chapus then threw four boules without gaining the point and is about to throw its next boule, which will leave it with one unplayed boule. Team Peyrot, with 5 unplayed boules, has a boule advantage of +4.



In the final rounds of **Le Mondial la Marseillaise à Pétanque**, Jean-Charles Dugeny, a pointer, has succeeded in retaking the point (*reprise de point*) with only 5 of 14 attempts. He lost the boule advantage for his team more than 60% of the time.



Tyson Molinas (below) is a young shooter with success rate at shooting (*réussite aux tirs*) of 54% so far in this game.



Is it OK to leave unplayed boules on the ground?

New players often ask—

What should I do with my unplayed boules? Is it OK for me to leave them on the ground? If so, where?

One of the unwritten rules of petanque is that you should NOT leave unplayed boules on the ground. When playing on a marked terrain, you should leave boules on the ground outside the dead-ball line. If you leave unplayed boules on the ground inside the dead-ball line, the umpire may give you a warning.³⁶

The best practice is to hold all of your unplayed boules in your hands. When it is your turn to throw, set any extra boules down on the ground beside the circle (like Marco Foyot, below). Step into the circle and throw. Then step out of the circle and immediately pick up your remaining boules.



If it is acceptable in your club to leave unplayed boules on the ground, then—

- Remember that boules on the ground are a safety hazard. Leave your boules to the SIDE of the circle (not BEHIND it).
- Leave your boules far enough from the circle that other players aren't likely to step on them while entering or leaving the circle.
- Pick up and hold your boules as soon as you conveniently can.

If you're holding boules and need to make a measurement, never set your boules on the ground near the head while you measure. It is too easy for someone (maybe you!) to get hurt by stepping on them, and it is too easy for you accidentally to pick up the wrong boules when you've finished measuring. Leave your boules well away from the head and wrap them in your boule cloth. That way there will be no question about what they're doing there.

Some clubs have a local custom in which everyone leaves their unplayed boules on the ground beside the circle. One team's boules are on one side of the circle, and the other team's boules are on the other side. If you find yourself playing with such a club, go with the flow. "When in Rome, do as the Romans."

³⁶ Actually, this unwritten rule is occasionally written down. See Petanque New Zealand's *Code of Conduct*— "players are expected not to leave unplayed boules on the playing area. They may be left behind the dead ball line at the playing end of the piste."

How many unplayed boules does the opposing team have?

The opposing team always has the right to know how many unplayed boules your team has. So always hold your unplayed boules in your hands, where they can easily be seen by the opposing team. Never tuck an unplayed boule somewhere out of sight, like in a pocket.

If the opposing team asks you how many unplayed boules your team has, it is your responsibility to answer willingly and accurately. One of the unwritten rules of petanque is—

*Whenever asked, a team must willingly, honestly, and correctly report
the number of unplayed boules that it has.*

This is a matter of attitude and sportsmanship, not of written rules.

Some players disagree with this principle. They feel that they should not be required to answer if the opposing team asks how many unplayed boules they still have. In their opinion, if the other team wants that information, tough luck! Let them count the boules on the ground!

That attitude, besides being hostile and unsportsmanlike, is just stupid. As a universally-practiced procedure it would be difficult, time-consuming, and error-prone. The bottom line is that teams should be responsible for keeping track of their own unplayed boules, and they should share that information willingly when asked for it.

How and when to mark locations of boules and jack

How to mark a boule when you plan to pick it up while measuring

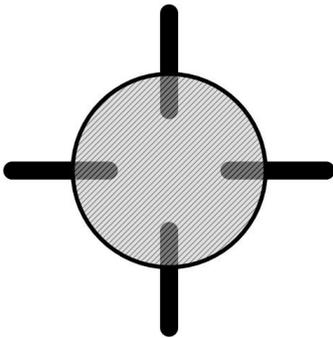
Sometimes we need to mark the location of a boule so we can temporarily remove it and make a measurement. For that kind of situation, see the discussion of Article 24 (Temporary removal of boules).

How to mark when you want simply to record a location

Sometimes we want to mark the location of the jack or a boule so that we can put it back in its original location if it is later illegally moved.

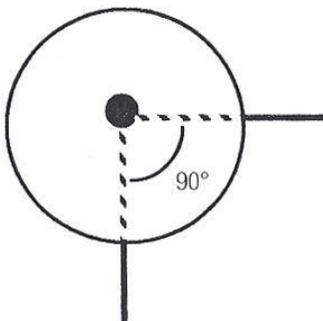
The way to mark the location of a boule (or jack) is by scratching two or more lines in the dirt with a stick or a finger. The lines should be drawn away from the center of the boule so that if they were extended toward each other under the boule, they would intersect at the exact spot where the boule is resting on the ground.

When you draw a line, start the line as close as possible to the point where the boule is touching the ground and then pull your finger straight away from the center of the boule. It is OK to reach a little way under the curve of the boule to start your line. Do this carefully!



Draw at least two lines. Draw them so that at least two lines are at a right angle to each other. Don't draw any line that points toward the throwing circle or the jack (see below).

Marquer une boule



How NOT to mark the location of a boule or jack

Marking is a sensitive subject. It involves making changes to the terrain, and one of the cardinal rules of petanque is that you DO NOT make any change to the terrain during the game. (Filling divots is also a sensitive subject, for the same reason.)

One concern is that a player might gouge a deep mark in the terrain, claiming that he is marking the location of the jack or a boule but in reality attempting to create a groove in the terrain that will guide his boule toward the jack. Article 15 implicitly forbids this sort of thing,³⁷ but [IPNZ] makes the prohibition explicit–

Lines must be at a depth and length according to the relevant playing surface so they can be clearly seen but without affecting the run of the boule. No line must be facing the playing circle or the jack.

Marking the location of the thrown jack

Traditionally, the team that throws the jack is responsible for marking its location. The primary reason for marking the thrown jack is to prevent problems with a "jack pushed by the first boule" situation.

In actual practice, it is very rare to see a team mark a thrown jack. Taking time to mark the locations of jack or boules slows down the game, so nowadays the location of the jack is normally marked only when there is a specific reason to fear that the jack might be moved illegally. One might be concerned, for example, that the jack might be moved by the wind on a windy day, by a boule coming onto the terrain from a close-by neighboring game, or perhaps that a soccer ball might come onto the terrain from a nearby soccer game.

If there is a game so close that you feel you should mark the jack, also make sure that you're playing with a jack of a different color than the jack in the neighboring game. That will help you sort things out if the jack from one game is shot and hit close to the jack in the other game.

Marking the location of a jack that has been knocked into a neighboring terrain

If your jack is shot or hit into a neighboring terrain and a neighboring game, here's what you should do. (See Article 12.)

- Mark the location of your jack and pick it up.
- Wait quietly while the players on the neighboring terrain continue playing and finish their mene.
- Put your jack back in its marked location.
- Finish your mene. (The players in the other game should wait quietly while you do this.)
- Return to your own terrain. Place the circle and throw the jack on that terrain.

³⁷ "A player is not allowed to help himself by using any object, nor to draw a line on the ground to guide his boule or to mark his intended landing spot."

Marking the location of everything, all the time

One of Mike Pegg's recurring themes on "Ask the Umpire" is that players are required to mark the locations of everything, all the time. This rather idiosyncratic position seems to be result of the way that Mike reads these two sentences in Article 21—

To avoid all disagreement, the players must mark [the locations of] the boules. No claim will be admissible for an unmarked boule, and the umpire will make his decision based only on the locations of the boules on the terrain.

Most players and umpires read the first sentence of Article 21 as something between a hypothetical imperative³⁸ and a recommendation. But Mike reads these sentences as saying something much stronger.³⁹

Eli Nielsen — Article 21 states that it is recommended to mark all boules. Not that you MUST.

Mike Pegg — Hi Eli. It is not a recommendation. Article 21 states - 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.

Mike believes that Article 21 demands that players mark the locations of everything on the terrain—boules and jack—all the time. He says "Coaches must educate players - MARK THE BOULES!"

One of the problems with this position is that it is wildly impractical. If we did it, the game would slow down dramatically. After a few menes there would be so many marks on the ground that we couldn't relocate a ball if we wanted to.⁴⁰ To avoid being overwhelmed by marks, we would need new rules stipulating that, and when, marks must be erased. Perhaps they would require the terrain to be swept before each mene. Probably the rules would require that, when a boule is displaced, players must both mark the boule's new location AND erase the marks at its previous location.⁴¹ And in actual play, in most games, the marks would never be used at all.

For an umpire the **Mark Everything Always Rule** has one significant benefit. It gives an umpire a defense when the rules force him to make an indefensible decision. If, for example, a player accidentally picks up an unmarked boule belonging to the opposing team, the umpire must rule that the boule is dead. If the players are unhappy with the ruling, the umpire can say—

You may not like my decision, but it is really your own fault. You know that I can base my decision only on the marks that I see on the ground. You could have avoided this whole mess if you had just done what you are supposed to do—always mark the locations of everything.

This is a powerful defense. It ignores the players' feelings of unfairness while accusing them of negligence.

Until the guidelines for umpires embedded in the FIPJP rules are changed, players have only one way to relocate an illegally-moved boule. Don't call the umpire. Put the boule back in a mutually agreeable location and carry on with the game. (See "Some thoughts about the rules".)

³⁸ Google "Immanuel Kant hypothetical imperative".

³⁹ See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/128791213885003/permalink/1008621659235283/>

⁴⁰ Marking is an effective practice only if it is done infrequently. If we make too many marks, we lose track of what goes with what. A good illustration is the problems that players had with circles drawn on the ground. Before the adoption of plastic circles, players drew circles on the ground. Circles accumulated; players lost track of the active circle and mistakenly threw from the wrong circle. That's why Article 6 includes the clause "The team that is going to throw the jack must erase all throwing circles near the one that it is going to use." At one time Article 23 (boules thrown contrary to the rules) specifically mentioned boules thrown from the wrong circle.

⁴¹ Mike's response to that suggestion was—"it is perfectly acceptable to remove the marks that identify the position of a boule, after the boule has been moved."

The Advantage Rule

"The Advantage Rule" is the general idea that if team B fouls team A, then team A gets to choose how the game will continue after the foul. Team A is given a set of options and can choose the option that is most to their advantage. Hence the name "the Advantage Rule".

What the general idea of "The Advantage Rule" actually cashes out to depends on the game being played and the nature of the foul. Different games have different ways to commit fouls, and different ways to address those fouls. So, naturally, different games have different advantage rules, each rule being appropriate for one of the kinds of fouls recognized in the game.

In some sports the various kinds of fouls, along with their associated advantage rules and lists of options, are specified in the written rules of the game. The rules of soccer are very good about this. No so much with petanque. In the FIPJP rules, "the Advantage Rule" is explicitly referred to only once, in Article 23. Arguably, advantage rules appear three times in the FIPJP rules.

1. Article 14 allows a team to choose where to place the jack after a hit jack has been stopped or deviated by a player on the opposing team.
2. Article 19 does much the same after a boule has been illegally stopped or deviated.
3. Article 23 allows a team fouled by a boule thrown "contrary to rules" to choose between declaring the illegally-thrown boule dead and leaving it where it is.

There are other kinds of fouls (illegal actions) in petanque that are good candidates for advantage rules. Suppose a player picks up the circle while one team still has an unplayed boule. Then an advantage rule for that particular kind of foul might specify that if the unplayed boule belongs to the opposing team, the opposing team can put the circle back in its (approximate) original place. In fact just such an advantage rule was specified by the French national umpires committee (CNA) in 2011. We can easily imagine similar rules for cases in which a boule or the jack is picked up prematurely. And so on.

The bottom line, however, is that for practical purposes there is no such thing as "The Advantage Rule"— there are only specific individual advantage rules. For the purposes of umpired or tournament play, specific advantage rules exist only insofar as they are spelled out in the official rules of the game.

When you can't tell which jack belongs to which game

All jacks look pretty much the same. It occasionally happens that a jack from game A gets hit onto the terrain of game B. Sometimes jack A actually hits and moves jack B. When something like that happens, it can be impossible to tell which jack belongs to which game.

When it is impossible to tell which jack belongs to which game, the jack from each game is considered to be lost. Both jacks are declared dead.

Colored penalty cards

National petanque federations (notably Australia and New Zealand) started using colored penalty cards around 2011. The FIPJP also started using them in the world championships. In 2014, a meeting of international umpires voted to include them in the FIPJP rules. They will probably ?? be included in the FIPJP rules in 2016.

If you watch petanque matches on YouTube, occasionally you will see an umpire flash a colored card. Usually it will be a yellow card, and it probably signals a warning to a player that he is taking too long to throw his boule.



The colored cards are called “penalty cards” or “signal cards” and in petanque they come in three colors.⁴²

- YELLOW indicates a warning
- ORANGE indicates disqualification of one or more boules
- RED indicates disqualification of one or more players

Article 34 – Penalties

- For non-observation of the rules of the game the players incur the following penalties

	1) Warning;
	2) Disqualification of the boule played or to be played;
	3) Disqualification of the boule played or to be played and the following one;
	4) Exclusion of the guilty player responsible for the game;
	5) Disqualification of the team responsible;
	6) Disqualification of the two teams in case of complicity.

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⁴² Graphic on this page courtesy of Mike Pegg [ATU]. Different colors have different meanings in different sports. The Wikipedia entry on penalty cards is a good source of information about the uses and meanings of colored penalty cards in a variety of sports. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Penalty_card.

The signal cards work sort of like traffic tickets.

Suppose you're out driving, going a bit over the speed limit, and you get pulled over by a police officer. Because it's your first offense, and because the offense isn't too serious, he gives you a stern talking-to and lets you go with a warning.

That's the **FIRST** time you get caught speeding. If you get caught a **SECOND** time, you don't get another warning — you get a ticket.

It's the same with umpires and penalty cards. If an umpire notices a player (or players) engaging in some sort of inappropriate behavior, and if it's their first offense and not too serious, he will probably warn them and show a yellow warning card. A yellow warning card doesn't carry any kind of penalty or punishment— it's just... well... a warning.

But repeated or more serious offenses can trigger penalties. An orange card signals that the umpire has disqualified one or more boules. A red card signals the disqualification of a player (or possibly even an entire team) from the remainder of the game (or possibly even from the entire competition). These warnings and penalties are described in Article 34.

Petanque penalties are similar to traffic citations in other ways, too.

- A first offense, if it is serious, can result in a penalty (indicated by an orange or red card).
- If a player has been warned once, a second offense will probably trigger a penalty.
- If a player does multiple Bad Things, he can be warned or penalized for multiple violations.
- If a player offends multiple times, he can be cited multiple times.

Colored penalty cards were invented in 1966 during the FIFA (soccer/football) World Cup. A quarter-final game was being played between an English-speaking team and a Spanish-speaking team, with a German-speaking referee. During the game the referee gave two English-speaking players warnings and expelled a Spanish-speaking player. The problem was that, because of language differences, many of the players and many of the spectators didn't understand what he was doing.

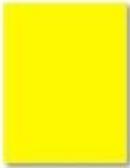
British referee Ken Aston was acting as head referee for the tournament, and after the game he began wondering if there might be a way for a referee to make his decisions clear regardless of language. Thinking about this problem as he was driving home, Aston was stopped by a traffic light. In a flash of inspiration he realized that language issues could be bypassed by using the colors of traffic lights. "As I drove down Kensington High Street, the traffic light turned red. I thought, 'Yellow, take it easy; red, stop, you're off'."

Colored cards (yellow for a warning, red for an expulsion) were introduced during the 1970 FIFA World Cup in Mexico. After that, they were quickly adopted by other sports. Other colors were added, and the meanings of the colors were adapted to each sport. Petanque added an orange card.

Umpiring Signal Cards

The FIPJP has introduced colour signal cards for use by umpires to indicate sanctions for players or teams during matches.

The Cards

Yellow	Orange	Red
		
Warning	Cancellation of 1 Boule, then Cancellation of 2 Boules	Exclusion of a player and/or a Team and/or both Teams

Application of the Cards

Yellow Card

Used when a warning is issued by the umpire.

The issuing of a second warning (second Yellow Card) constitutes an Orange Card, which will result in the removal of a boule.

Orange Card

When the umpire issues an Orange card, he/she will remove 1 boule from the offending player.

If the umpire issues a second Orange Card, he/she will remove 2 boules from the offending player or team.

Red Card

When the umpire issues a red card, the player and/or the team and/or both teams will be excluded from the game or the competition.

Note:

When the exclusion is not for the competition, Sanctions (Cards count) go back to Zero at end of each game.

Graphic courtesy of the Australian Petanque Federation

Mythical rules

About mythical rules

At least in the USA, most players have never read the written rules of petanque. They learned the game, and its rules, from their friends (aka "the kids in the street"). This level of knowledge is enough to play and have fun, but it can also present problems. A player may encounter a new situation in which he simply does not know what the rules are. Or he may incorrectly believe that since he has always seen something done in a certain way, the rules require it to be done that way.

It is the second kind of problem—mythical rules—that we will now address. Mythical rules are rules that petanque players sometimes think are rules of the game, but in fact are not.

There are multiple sources of mythical rules.

1. One source is the assumption that, since a player has always seen something done in a certain way, the rules require it to be done that way.
2. Another source is misunderstanding of a written rule. This is often forgivable because in many cases the rules are poorly written.
3. Rules of thumb that misstate actual rules can achieve the status of mythical rules.
4. Another source is obsolete rules. Over time, the rules have evolved. Some older players may remember older versions of the rules that were different from the current version of the rules.
5. Another source is competition-level rules. Proposed rule changes are sometimes given a trial run at the World Championships. Once, special rules were imposed to deal with a delay caused by rain. Players hear about these changes and wonder if they are changes to the FIPJP rules.
6. Players who learn petanque in clubs that have local rules may not realize that they are learning a mixture of international rules and local rules. When they start playing at another club, they may believe that one of the rules that they learned, a local rule, is an official rule of the game.

It is impossible, of course, to list every possible mythical rule. But here are some common ones.

You can't wear gloves while playing

This myth arises out of a common misinterpretation of Article 15. See our discussion of Article 15.

You are not allowed to throw underarm (underhand, palm up).

The rules say nothing about how a boule must be thrown, so it is legal to throw or roll a boule any way you want. The most effective way to throw a boule is to throw it with the palm down and a final upward flick of the wrist. But a palm-up throw can be effective (and legal) in a number of situations. One is when you need to roll a boule a long distance over smooth ground. Another is when a player has shoulder or arm issues that make it difficult to throw in the usual way.

All of a player's boules must be from the same set.

It is completely legal to play with "odd boules" – boules that don't all belong to the same set. It is completely legal to play with boules of differing sizes, weights and striation patterns. The only requirement is that each individual boule must be valid. That is, each individual boule must be from an FIPJP-certified manufacturer, the required manufacturer's markings must still be legible, etc.

Note that once a game has started, a player may not change the boules that he is using (unless one of the boules breaks and must be replaced).

Coloring of boules is prohibited

People sometimes believe that you cannot paint boules because this contravenes Article 2's clause forbidding "tampering" with boules. But the prohibition on tampering is primarily meant to prevent (a) re-tempering a boule to change its hardness, and (b) drilling a hole into the boule and filling it with something. Coloring a boule (especially putting paint in the striations) is not considered to be tampering. See our discussion of this topic in the section on Article 2.

You can't fix a divot with your hand.

The easiest way to fix a divot is to smooth over the spot with your foot. Some players have never seen a divot fixed any other way. That occasionally gives players the idea that there is (or might be) a rule that says that the ONLY permissible way to fix a divot is with one's foot. "You can't fix a divot with your hand."

This is a mythical rule. The rules do not specify how you must fill a hole. Using your hand is allowed.

A related question is

What are you allowed to do, when filling a hole? Just scrape a little dirt over it with your foot? Or are you allowed to tamp it down a bit?

As we said, there are no specific rules about what you can and cannot do when filling a hole. Anything that a human being can do using only his/her body is certainly allowed. After the hole is filled, a little extra tamping and stamping with the feet will make no significant difference in the terrain. But if it makes you feel better, go ahead and do it.

You can't fix a divot before throwing the first boule in a game.

Before 2008, Article 10 said that a player was allowed to fill only the hole made by the boule that had been "previously thrown". This wording suggested that the player who throws the first boule in a game might not be allowed to fill a divot, because no boule had been previously thrown in that game. Apparently the widespread confusion on this subject came to the attention of the FIPJP Umpires Committee, because in 2008 the wording of Article 10 was changed to remove that possible interpretation. The current wording of Article 10 is

[T]he player who is about to play, or one of his partners, may fill in a hole that was made by a boule played earlier.

The bottom line is that a player, before throwing, may fill one hole in the terrain that was created by the impact of a boule, regardless of whether that boule was thrown earlier in the same game or in an earlier game.

You can't fix a divot if you're going to shoot.

Players sometimes ask this question—

A player fixed a divot on the terrain, and then went back to the circle and shot!! Is he allowed to do that!?

This indignant question arises from the (true) thought that the purpose of fixing a divot is to keep the divot from interfering with a pointed boule. So... is a player allowed to fix a divot even if he doesn't intent to point?

The answer is YES— he is. There are many reasons why a player might smooth out a divot before throwing (it can be a habit, like blowing on your hands before you throw; or a philosophy—smooth out a divot whenever you're legally allowed to, so that you never find yourself regretting not having smoothed out that divot when you had the chance). But those reasons, and a player's plan to point or shoot (which might change as he is walking back to the circle), have no bearing on his right to fill a hole in the terrain.

In 2015, in some French competitions, umpires started enforcing a rule that "If you're going to shoot, you can't fill in a hole. If you fill a hole, you must point your next boule." Basically, the organizers of those competitions (and perhaps the French national petanque federation) decided to add that rule to the rules for those competitions. But that decision did not change the FIPJP rules.

You can groom the terrain during a game, if you do it between menes

Article 10 says —

It is strictly forbidden for players to press down, displace or crush any obstacle whatsoever that is located on the game terrain.

This rule is generally interpreted as a broad prohibition on altering the terrain in any way during a game, including raking or “grooming” the terrain. The prohibition is in effect from the time that the game officially begins with the first successful throw of the jack.

HOWEVER... Local rules may allow raking the terrain during a game. There is, for example, a form of petanque in which the players always throw from the end of the terrain, so that the center of the terrain gets used quite heavily. In this form of petanque the center of the terrain is often raked between menes.

You can't remove anything from the terrain, even man-made trash

Article 10 says —

It is strictly forbidden for players to press down, displace or crush any obstacle whatsoever that is located on the game terrain.

The FIPJP rules don't recognize a distinction between natural features of the terrain and man-made objects. It is, however, entirely reasonable to do so, especially for games played on natural terrains in places like public parks. We therefore completely agree with the ruling in [IFPUSA, Q20].

Umpires are to exercise judgment in removing or allowing removal of trash and/or objects from the terrain. Though not exactly addressed by the rules, it is reasonable to make a distinction between natural objects, such as a leaf or twig, and man-made objects, such as a lunch bag or plastic bottle. A reasonable umpire would allow the leaf or inconsequential twig that blows onto the court to stay where it lands or moves, while allowing the removal of man-made clutter that blows (or falls from someone's pocket) onto the terrain. Removal of larger branches or twigs that fall onto the terrain during play would be left to the umpire's discretion.

If you don't put your points on the scoreboard, you lose them.

The mythical rule is something like this.

A team loses the points it won in a mene if the points aren't recorded on the scoreboard before the start of the next mene.

This is a mythical rule. However, there are petanque leagues in Spain that have adopted this as a local rule. “Put your score on the scoreboard or lose it,” they say. British players sometimes learn to play while vacationing in Spain. When they return to the UK, they may come back with the mistaken impression that this is one of the standard rules of petanque. It's a simple mix-up.

The FIPJP rules say nothing about how scores are to be recorded. In fact, there is no requirement for the score to be physically recorded in any way whatsoever. It is perfectly legal for players to keep the score in their heads. The score is the score, whether or not it has been recorded on the scoreboard.

Of course, as a practical matter, it is wise to record the score in some way. Then the question comes up—

Who (which team) is responsible for updating the scoreboard?

There is no rule or even, I think, a generally accepted practice. Often the winning team updates the scoreboard— but that is because the winning team is the one with the most interest in seeing the score updated. Equally often, the player who updates the scoreboard is simply the one standing closest to the scoreboard when the points are decided. In practice, BOTH teams should consider it their responsibility to be sure that the scoreboard is updated correctly.

You can't throw a jack to less than 2 meters from another jack. You can't place a circle less than 2 meters from another circle.

The FIPJP rules contain several ONE-meter rules (about the circle and the thrown jack) designed to keep the circle away from obstacles. They also contain one TWO-meter rule, in Article 6.

The throwing circle ... must be drawn (or placed) more than a meter from any obstacle and, for competitions on open terrains, at least 2 meters from another throwing circle in use.

Note that the rule applies only to CIRCLES in games played on UNMARKED terrains.

- It does NOT apply to games played on marked terrains.
- It does NOT apply to the distance between two jacks.
- It does NOT apply to the distance between a jack and a circle.

Reasoning on analogy with the ONE-meter rule, players often (reasonably) think that there must be a TWO-meter rule forbidding placing or throwing a circle or jack less than two meters from another (active) circle or jack. That would be a good rule to have, because it would help prevent games from interfering with each other. But currently there is no such rule in the FIPJP rules.

That lack is partly corrected in the FPUSA's umpire's guide [IFPUSA, Q7], which specifies that playing circles are to be a minimum of two meters apart, even in games played on marked terrains.

Article 6 prescribes that circles must be two meters apart if playing on UNMARKED courts. This is intended to decrease the likelihood of playing from the wrong circle and, at the same time, to keep players in the nearby circles from being obstacles to one's throwing motion. Therefore, circles are not to be placed within two meters of each other even when playing on a MARKED court.

Mike Pegg has come up with a way to read a one-meter rule for jacks into Article 7.⁴³

As the jack from another game could be considered an obstacle it is acceptable to apply art 7(3)— the jack must be 1 meter from any obstacle

⁴³ See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/128791213885003/>

You can't place the circle right next to a dead-ball line.

This was true once, but it is not true now. The rules were given a major overhaul in 2006 and 2008. Those changes revised the rules for the placement of the dead-ball line, and eliminated the requirement that the circle had to be at least a meter from the dead-ball line.

A player can't throw more than two boules in a row.

The rule says that when playing doubles (where each player on a team has three boules) the same player cannot play more than two boules in a row before letting the other player on the team throw.

Some clubs have adopted this as a local rule. Players who learned to play in those clubs sometimes get the mistaken impression that this one of the FIPJP rules of petanque. But it isn't. It is a mythical rule.

Opponents have a right to play to a jack at 6 to 10 meters

This mythical rule is sometimes invoked to challenge the jack when the jack has been thrown to less than 10 meters, measured and declared valid, and then pushed to more than 10 meters by the first boule. It is true that the jack must be thrown to a distance of 6 to 10 meters. But if the distance of the thrown jack was measured and declared valid, that requirement is satisfied. If the jack is then pushed farther by the first boule, opponents have no grounds for a challenge. (See the discussion of Article 8.)

Notes on the English translation of the rules

About this English translation

The translation is into American English

This translation uses American English spelling rather than British English spelling. So (in contrast to the official FIPJP English translation, which uses British English) here you will see “offense” rather than “offence”, “license” rather than “licence”, “behavior” rather than “behaviour”, and so on.

We translate the French expressions *sa place* and *sa place primitive* as "its original location".⁴⁴ The official FIPJP English translation uses the word "position" rather than "location". We don't know whether this represents a difference in British and American English usage or a stylistic choice on the part of the translators.

Paragraph divisions

The FIPJP's French text of the rules is inconsistent in the way that it divides the text into paragraphs. To make matters worse, the FIPJP publishes the rules document in PDF format, rather than in a word-processing format. When the contents of the PDF file are extracted into a word processing format, the extraction process occasionally mangles the paragraph formatting. Consequently, you may see differences between the way the text is here divided into paragraphs, and the way that it appears in other copies of the rules.

Text in square brackets

[Text in square brackets] contains possible alternative translations of the French text.

[Italicized text in square brackets] contains notes and comments by the translator.

About the word "mene"

The basic subdivision of a game of petanque, corresponding to an "inning" in baseball or a "set" in tennis, is *une mène*. In the FIPJP English translation of the rules, the French word *mène* is translated as "end". Here, *mène* is treated as a petanque technical term (just as "inning" is a baseball technical term) and is left untranslated except for removal of the accent on the first "e" – "mene".

⁴⁴ Older versions of the rules used the expression *sa place initiale*.

Translating French to English terminology

Persons and groups mentioned in the rules

<i>the French expression</i>	is translated into English as
<i>les joueurs</i>	the players
<i>l'Arbitre</i>	the umpire
<i>les spectateurs</i>	the spectators Petanque is traditionally played in open spaces such as public parks, where there may be spectators actually standing on the terrain where the game is being played. That's why there are rules for things like spectators interfering with moving boules.
<i>le Jury</i>	The jury is a group of 3 to 5 people selected by the competition organizer for the purpose of dealing with situations that occur during the competition that are not covered in the rules. These are typically issues of behavior. Issues involving the interpretation and application of the rules are usually left in the hands of the umpires. (Several rules say explicitly that the umpire's decision is <i>sans appel</i> – may not be appealed to the jury.) The rules governing a competition often specify how and when the jury for the competition will be selected. For many competitions, a jury is selected only if and when the need for a jury arises.
<i>la table de marque</i>	the control table At a competition, the control table is the table where players and teams check in, report the results of games that they have finished, find out which team they will play against in the next round, and so on.
<i>fédérations nationales, membres de la F.I.P.J.P</i>	national federations, members of the FIPJP
<i>sa licence</i>	his membership card Only members of an FIPJP-affiliated national organization are allowed to participate in FIPJP-sanctioned tournaments.
<i>le Comité d'Organisation</i>	the Organizing Committee (of the competition)
<i>l'organisme fédéral</i> <i>l'instance fédérale</i>	the federal organization the federal organization The national federation under whose auspices a competition is taking place.
<i>le Comité Directeur</i>	the Committee Director The director of the Organizing Committee.

The playing area, boundary lines, out-of-bounds areas

<i>terrain</i>	terrain
<i>terrain de jeu</i>	game terrain In the context of the rules, “terrain” is a technical term referring to the patch of ground on which a game of petanque is being played. When a game is played in an open space like a park, the terrain has no specific location and no boundaries, and may move from place to place. In tournaments, games are usually played on “marked terrains” which have specific locations, and boundary lines marked on the ground. In some contexts, <i>terrain de jeu</i> specifically means <i>in-bounds</i> in a marked terrain.
<i>l’inclinaison du terrain</i>	the slope of the ground
<i>le sol</i>	the ground Example – “to draw a circle on the ground (<i>le sol</i>)”. In certain contexts, the French <i>le sol</i> has the sense of “the floor”.
<i>aire de jeu</i>	playing area An area that contains one or more terrains.
<i>délimiter</i>	to mark the boundaries of The English verb “to delimit” is derived from the French verb <i>délimiter</i> , and the two words have essentially the same meaning – to mark or define the limits or boundaries of something.
<i>terrain délimité</i>	marked terrain
<i>terrain limité</i>	marked terrain
<i>terrain tracé</i>	marked terrain
<i>terrain cadré</i>	marked terrain

A marked terrain is a terrain whose boundaries are indicated in some way – traditionally, by strings strung tightly between nails driven into the ground.

Here, for the sake of clarity, we translate several different French expressions as “marked terrain”. Note, however, that in the original French there is no single expression or technical term that corresponds to “marked terrain”. Rather, words such as *délimité* and *tracé* are merely descriptive – they are used simply to say that a terrain has marks that indicate its boundaries. Note that the rules never describe a terrain using any form of the verb *marquer*.

The opposite of a marked terrain is *un terrain libre*, an “open terrain”.

cadre

lane

When a playing area is marked off into a grid of rectangles, each rectangle is called a *cadre* ("lane"). The French word *cadre* means "frame". It has been translated into English in a variety of ways – "lane", "alley", "court", "pitch", "piste".

When a game is played inside one of these rectangles, we say that the game is being played on a "marked terrain". The text of the rules does not consistently distinguish the terms *terrain* and *cadre* and occasionally uses them interchangeably. For example, in some places the rules say that a *terrain*, and in other places a *cadre*, is delimited by strings or assigned to a game.

Article 5 combines the two words in an interesting expression – *un seul terrain cadré*, literally "one framed terrain". Article 5 says that time-limited competitions "must always be played on a terrain in a single lane (*sur un seul terrain cadré*)".

ficelle

string

Strings are used to mark the boundaries of lanes. Earlier versions of the rules used the word *corde* or *fil*. Most of these words carry the general sense of thread, string, twine, rope, or wire.

piste

lane

Older versions of the rules used the word *piste*, but *piste* does not appear in the current version of the rules. The current version uses the word *cadre*.

The word *piste* comes from the Old Italian word *pistare*, meaning "to trample down", and is used to refer to a trampled-down trail or track, or any long, narrow strip of ground. In fencing, for example, the "piste" is the long area (the fencing mat) where a fencing match takes place.

cadre affecté

assigned lane

terrain affecté
terrain imparté

assigned terrain
assigned terrain

The lane (or terrain) upon which the game is being played.

During a tournament, each game is based on a particular lane – that is the game's "assigned lane". Depending on circumstances, the tournament organizer may assign a match (*rencontre*, a game between two specific teams) to be played on a specific lane. That lane is then the "assigned lane" for that match. In other circumstances, the matched teams may toss a coin; the winner gets to choose the lane where the game will be played. Older versions of the rules used the expression *terrain de jeu désigné* – "designated terrain".

le fond de cadre

the bottom of the lane

Le fond de cadre is a short side (as opposed to a long side) of a rectangular *cadre*. The expression *fond de cadre* is the only place in the rules where the word *fond* occurs. In French, *fond* means "the bottom" (see English cognate "foundation"). Earlier versions of the rules used the word *bout*, "end".

une ligne de perte a dead-ball line
Ligne de perte means the “lost-ball line” and older versions of the rules (up through 1970) described dead balls interchangeably as *nul* or *perdu* (lost).

jeux contigus neighboring lanes (literally “contiguous games”)
jeux latéralement contigus neighboring lanes (literally “laterally contiguous games”)

When a game is played on a marked terrain, the neighboring lanes are the lanes (if any) that share a long side with the assigned lane. Depending on where a lane is located in the playing area, it may have zero, one, or two neighboring lanes.

traverse crosses

avoir dépassé entièrement has completely traveled beyond

The French verb *traverser*, like the English verb “to traverse”, means “to cross”. The verb *dépasser* means “to pass, travel, or go beyond; to exceed”. They are used only in articles 9 and 18, where a jack or boule straddling a boundary line is contrasted with one that *avoir dépassé entièrement* (has completely traveled beyond) the line. Translating *avoir dépassé* as “has crossed” fails to capture the difference between *traverser* (to cross) and *dépasser* (to go beyond).

terrain autorisé in-bounds area
terrain interdit out-of-bounds area
terrain prohibé out-of-bounds area (in older versions of the rules)

These terms apply only to a game being played on a marked terrain (a lane, *cadre*).

Terrain autorisé (literally “authorized ground”) is the area that is in-bounds for a game. *Terrain interdit* (literally “forbidden territory”, sometimes translated as “dead ground”) is the area that is out-of-bounds for a game. The 1959 French national rules, for instance, defined *terrain interdit* as *hors du terrain de jeu désigné* (“outside of the designated game terrain”).

terrain jouable playable area
This expression occurs only once, in Article 19.2. Presumably it is another way of referring to the in-bounds area, the *terrain autorisé*.

un cercle matérialisé a physical circle

un cercle matérialisé is a circle that exists not as a drawing on the ground, but as a physical object. In the official FIPJP translation it is “a prefabricated circle”.

The first prototypes of plastic circles appeared around 2004. They were flexible and floppy, like a deflated bicycle inner tube. This was cumbersome, and the floppy circles were quickly replaced by the rigid plastic circles that we know today. Article 6 specifies that physical circles must be rigid.

barrières barriers
See the discussion of Article 5

The game process

boule

boule

boules are the metal balls that players throw at the jack

le but

the jack

The jack is the small target ball usually called *cochonnet* or *bouchon*. Traditionally it is made of painted wood. Outside of petanque, *le but* is usually translated as "the goal".

le tirage au sort

the draw

A random selection process. The method of the selection process is not specified; the only requirement is that the process be random. *Le tirage* is "the draw" as in "to draw a card from the deck". *Sort* carries the sense of "fate" and what fate hands you, your lot or portion in life. So *le tirage au sort* is "the drawing of lots".

There are two types of draw mentioned in the rules.

Le tirage au sort des rencontres ("the draw for matches") occurs at the beginning of a tournament to determine which teams will play each other in the first round (*tour*) of the tournament. Article 31 specifies that all players must be present at the control table at the time of *le tirage au sort des rencontres*.

Everywhere else *le tirage au sort* refers to the draw, conducted before a game, to determine which team plays first. Here, *le tirage au sort* is sometimes translated as "the toss". The team that wins this draw gets to pick the assigned lane for the game (unless one has already been assigned by the tournament organizer), place the circle, and throw the jack and the first boule. Common methods for this draw include a coin toss and "pick the hand holding the jack". A traditional method is for the umpire to take the jack, along with one boule from each team, and throw them over his shoulder, like a bride tossing the bouquet at a wedding. The winner is the team whose boule ends up closest to the jack.

une mène

a mene

A *mène* is roughly the petanque equivalent of a *round* in boxing or an *inning* in baseball. A mene consists of three activities – (a) throwing out the jack, (b) throwing the boules, and (c) the agreement of points.

The official FIPJP rules do not define *mène*. This (from a 1971 Canadian Petanque Federation booklet) seems as good a definition as any – "When all of the players have played all of their boules, we say that they have played a *mène*. A game is composed of whatever number of *mènes* is necessary for one of the teams to score a winning number of points."

The French word *mène* is usually translated into English as "end". A better translation would be "direction" (as in "We played in one direction, then we turned around and played in the other direction.") But in the context of petanque, word *mène* is not an ordinary French word; it is a petanque technical term. So here we treat *mène* (without the accented "e") as an untranslatable technical term – "mene".

<i>la fin</i>	the end the finish, completion, or termination of some activity
<i>la fin de la mène</i>	the end of the mène
<i>le décompte des points</i>	the agreement of points Interestingly, the rules nowhere describe the agreement of points. The two teams (or team captains) examine the situation on the ground after all boules in the mène have been thrown. They may make measurements. Finally they reach an agreement about which team won the mène and how many points it scored.
<i>enlever</i> <i>ramasser</i>	to pick up OR to remove to pick up Both <i>enlever</i> and <i>ramasser</i> can be translated into English as “to pick up”. And the rules sometimes use the two words interchangeably. For example the first two sentences of Article 26 are “It is forbidden for players to pick up (<i>ramasser</i>) played boules before the end of the mène. At the end of a mène, any boule picked up (<i>enlevée</i>) before the agreement of points is dead.” Of the two words, <i>enlever</i> is more likely to carry the sense of “to remove”. Articles 15 and 29, for instance, say that a player must remove (<i>enlever</i>) any mud or foreign substance clinging to a boule before throwing it. For that reason, we sometimes translate <i>enlever</i> as “to remove” rather than “to pick up”. <i>Ramasser</i> , on the other hand, is more likely to carry the sense of “raise” or “lift”. The French term for a boule lifter is a <i>ramasse boule</i> . Article 3 prohibits the use of jacks that can be <i>ramassés avec un aimant</i> (“picked up with a magnet”). <i>Ramasser</i> occurs in the rules only two times, in articles 3 and 29. <i>Enlever</i> , on the other hand, occurs many times.
<i>marquer</i>	to mark the location of As in “to mark the location of a boule or the jack”.
<i>marquer</i>	to score
<i>marque de points</i>	scores points
<i>la mesure du point</i>	the measurement of the point Depending on the context, “measuring the point” or “the process of measuring the point” would be equally good translations.

a le point

hold the point

Avoir le point is literally "to have the point". Because "having the point" is slightly ambiguous between holding the point and scoring a point, in this translation we translate *a le point* as "hold the point".

Note that the rules always speak of a team as "holding (or losing) the point". They never speak of a boule as holding the point. When speaking of boules, the rules use the expression "the closest boule" (*la boule plus proche*).

ce délai

this period of time

"this period" or "this amount of time" would be equally good translations.

obstacle

obstacle

See the article on "What is an Obstacle?"

déplacé

displaced

le but est déplacé

the jack is displaced (i.e. moved to a different location)

donnée

the intended landing spot

The spot on the terrain where the thrower plans to make his boule hit the ground

Things dead, null, and invalid

nul
nulle

The French word *nul* (feminine, *nulle*) is an adjective. It has been translated into English variously as “dead”, “null”, and “void”. The word means different things in different contexts, so in this translation we translate *nul* differently depending on whether it is describing a jack, a boule, a point, or a mene. For compatibility with tradition, we translate *nul* as “dead” when it is used to describe a boule or a jack. We never translate *nul* as “null” or “void”.

le but est nul
la boule est nulle

the jack is dead
the boule is dead

When a boule or a jack dies, it is no longer part of the game, it is out of the game, it disappears from the game. A dead boule should be picked up and physically removed from the playing area. The death of the jack forces the end of a mene.

le but est bon
la boule est bonne

the jack is alive
the boule is alive

Bon and *bonne* mean “good”. When they are meant to convey the opposite of *nul* (“dead”) we translate them as “alive” or “still alive”.

valable

valid

“Valid” indicates that something is legal, acceptable, in accordance with the rules. There are, for example, several conditions that must be met in order for a thrown jack to be valid.

la mène est nulle

the mene is scoreless

It is possible for a mene to finish without either team scoring any points. This can happen, for example, when the jack is shot out-of-bounds while both teams still have unplayed boules. When that happens, *la mène est nulle* – the mene is scoreless.

point

[various]

The French word *point* has as many meanings as the English word “point”. It can refer to a topic of discussion (“disagreement on this point”), a position or location (“a point on the terrain”), a score (“We scored 2 points”), or the activity of “pointing” a boule. When *point* refers to a location on the ground, we translate it as “place”.

son point
d’immobilisation

the place where it [the boule or jack] stopped

point nul

undecided point

Un point nul is a situation in which neither team has the point. The expression *point nul* occurs only once, in Article 15. In the official FIPJP English translation, it is incorrectly translated as “dead end”.

An undecided point situation can occur when the opposing teams' best boules are both equidistant from the jack, or when the terrain is empty because all boules have been shot out-of-bounds. The throw of the next boule usually resolves the situation. When the point is still undecided at the end of a mene, the mene is scoreless.

Miscellaneous terminology

pétanque petanque

In this translation, we treat “petanque”, like “boule” as an untranslatable technical term, although in the English translation we remove the accent over the first “e”. The French word *pétanque* and the Spanish word *petanca* are derived from the words *pè tanca* or *pes tanca* in Occitan, the old language of Provence and Catalonia. The words mean “feet fixed” and the general sense is “feet planted firmly on the ground” (*pièds plantés au sol*) (not “feet together”, as is sometimes incorrectly reported).

est autorisé is allowed
“is permitted” would be an equally good translation.

l'autorisation de l'Arbitre the permission of the umpire

sens du jeu line of play
déroulement du jeu line of play

The “line of play” is an imaginary line running through the jack and the center of the throwing circle. *Sens du jeu* is used in Article 16 to specify where opposing players may stand. *Déroulement du jeu* is used in Article 7 to specify that the circle may be moved back along the previous mene's line of play.

homologation certification
labels homologués certified labels
On a boule, the label consists of a manufacturer's logo and a model name.

Both *agrée* and *homologué* can be translated as “approved”, but there is a slight difference between the two. *Homologuer* can mean to approve, ratify, or sanction. Here we translate it as “certify”. *Boules de compétition homologuées* are officially certified competition boules.

agrée approved

les fabricants agréés officially approved manufacturers

les parties en temps limité time-limited games

prévue specified
For example, *les sanctions prévues à l'article 34* – “the penalties specified in article 34”. In the FIPJP's official English translation, *prévue* and its cognates are rendered variously as “outlined”, “described”, “defined”, “provided for”, “set out”.

dispositions provisions
As in “... subject to the provisions of Article 9.”

contestation

disagreement

For example *Pour éviter toute contestation...* – “To avoid all disagreement...”

contestation can be translated in a variety of ways as: questioning, dispute, argument, contention, protest, disagreement.

In Article 8, we translate *le droit de contester* as “the right to challenge”. To challenge the validity of a thrown jack is to request that the game be paused and that a measurement be made to verify the validity of the thrown jack.

le jet

the throw

as in *le jet du but*, “the throw of the jack”.

From the French verb *jeter*, “to throw”.

respectant

comply with

Other translations say “respect” or “observe”.

Le joueur ne respectant pas... == Any player who does not comply with...

tâter une donnée

to test a landing spot

The word *tâter* has the sense of “to sound out” or “to get a feel for”.

précédemment

previously

précédemment carries the sense of previously, at an earlier time, before. In Article 10, we translate *une boule jouée précédemment* as “a boule played earlier”.

Juniors

Juniors

Seniors

Seniors

les plus jeunes

younger players

In tournaments where there are competitions for different age classifications, Junior tournaments are for players that turn 16 or 17 in the same year as the competition. Seniors are players that are older than Juniors. “Younger players” are players that are younger than Juniors. The FIPJP age classifications are:

Benjamin	under 9 years old within the year
Minim	10, 11, 12 years old within the year
Cadet	13, 14, 15 years old within the year
Junior	16, 17 years old within the year
Senior	18 and over within the year
Veteran	over 60 within the year

This is an American English translation prepared by Stephen R. Ferg. [Text in square brackets] contains notes by the translator.

REGLEMENT DE JEU OFFICIEL DE PETANQUE

OFFICIAL RULES OF THE GAME OF PÉTANQUE

Applicable sur l'ensemble des territoires des fédérations nationales, membres de la F.I.P.J.P

Applicable to all the territories of the national federations that are members of the FIPJP

N.B: Le présent règlement a été approuvé le 7 octobre 2010 par le Congrès International de la F.I.P.J.P. à IZMIR (Turquie)

Approved 7th October 2010 by the International Congress of the FIPJP in IZMIR (Turkey)

DISPOSITIONS GENERALES

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1 – Formation des équipes

La Pétanque est un sport qui oppose:

- 3 joueurs à 3 joueurs (triplettes).
- Elle peut aussi mettre face à face:
- 2 joueurs à 2 joueurs (doublettes);
- 1 joueur à 1 joueur (tête-à-tête).

En triplètes, chaque joueur dispose de 2 boules. En doublettes, et en tête-à-tête, chaque joueur dispose de 3 boules.

Toute autre formule est interdite.

Article 1 – Composition of teams

Pétanque is a sport that matches:

- 3 players against 3 players (triples).
- It can also match:
- 2 players against 2 players (doubles).
- 1 player against 1 player (head-to-head).

In triples, each player uses 2 boules. In doubles and singles [head-to-head], each player uses 3 boules.

Any other formula is forbidden.

Article 2 – Caractéristiques des boules agréées

La Pétanque se joue avec des boules agréées par la F.I.P.J.P. et répondant aux caractéristiques suivantes:

- 1) Etre en métal;
- 2) Avoir un diamètre compris entre 7,05 cm. (minimum) et 8 cm. (maximum);
- 3) Avoir un poids compris entre 650 grammes (minimum) et 800 grammes (maximum).

Les jeunes de 11 ans et moins, dans leurs compétitions spécifiques, ont la possibilité d'utiliser des boules de 600 grammes et de 65 mm de diamètre, à condition qu'elles soient fabriquées dans un des labels homologués.

- 4) N'être ni plombées, ni sablées.

De façon générale, elles ne doivent ni avoir été truquées ni avoir subi de transformation ou modification après usinage par les fabricants agréés. Il est notamment interdit de les recuire pour modifier la dureté donnée par le fabricant.

- 5) Le label (marque du fabricant) et le chiffre du poids doivent être gravés sur les boules et être toujours lisibles. Toutefois les nom et prénom du joueur (ou les initiales) peuvent y être gravés ainsi que divers logos et sigles, conformément au Cahier des Charges relatif à la fabrication des boules.

Article 2 – Characteristics of approved boules

Petanque is played with boules approved by the FIPJP and conforming to the following characteristics:

- 1) To be made of metal.
- 2) To have a diameter between 7.05cm (minimum) and 8 cm (maximum).
- 3) To weigh between 650 grams (minimum) and 800 grams (maximum).

§§§

Young people 11 years old or younger, in competitions specifically for young people, may use boules of 600 grams and of 65mm in diameter, on condition that they were manufactured under one of the certified labels.

- 4) They must not be filled with lead or sand.

As a general rule, they must not have been tampered with, nor have been subjected to transformation or modification after machining by the officially approved manufacturers. It is specifically forbidden to re-temper them in order to modify the hardness given [to them] by the manufacturer.

[In order to make this article clearer, I have inserted a new section number (5) here, and moved a sentence from the location marked §§§ to here.]

- 5) The label (makers-mark of the manufacturer) and the weight-mark must be engraved on the boules and must always be legible. Additionally, the name and forename of the player (or his initials) may be engraved on them, as well as various logos and symbols, conforming to the [official FIPJP] specifications governing the manufacture of boules.

Article 2 bis – Sanctions pour boules non-conformes

Tout joueur coupable d'une infraction aux dispositions de l'alinéa 4) de l'article précédent est immédiatement exclu de la compétition, ainsi que son ou ses partenaires.

Si une boule non truquée, mais usagée ou de fabrication défectueuse, ne subit pas avec succès les examens de contrôle ou ne répond pas aux normes figurant dans les alinéas 1), 2) et 3) de l'article précédent, le joueur doit la changer. Il peut aussi changer de jeu.

Les réclamations portant sur ces trois alinéas et formulées par des joueurs, ne sont recevables qu'avant le début de la partie. Ces derniers ont donc intérêt à s'assurer que leurs boules et celles de leurs adversaires répondent bien aux normes édictées.

Les réclamations fondées sur l'alinéa 4) sont recevables toute la partie, mais elles ne peuvent être formulées qu'entre deux mènes. Néanmoins à compter de la troisième mène, s'il s'avère qu'une réclamation à l'encontre des boules de l'adversaire est sans fondement, trois points seront ajoutés au score de ce dernier.

L'Arbitre ou le Jury peuvent, à tout moment, procéder au contrôle des boules d'un ou plusieurs joueurs.

Article 3– Buts agréés

Les buts sont en bois, ou en matière synthétique portant le label du fabricant et ayant fait l'objet d'une homologation de la F.I.P.J.P., en application du Cahier des Charges spécifique relatif aux normes requises.

Leur diamètre doit être de 30mm (tolérance: + 1mm - 1 mm).

Les buts peints sont autorisés, mais ne doivent pas pouvoir être ramassés avec un aimant.

Article 2a – Penalties for non-conforming boules

Any player guilty of an infraction of the provisions of paragraph 4 of the preceding article is immediately excluded from the competition, along with his partner or partners.

If a boule – a boule that has not been tampered with, but is 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) of the preceding article, the player must change it. He may also change the set [i.e. the entire set of boules].

Complaints relating to these three paragraphs and made by players, are admissible only before the start of a game. The latter [the players] have, therefore, an interest in assuring themselves that their boules and those of their opponents comply with the published rules.

Complaints based on paragraph (4) are admissible at any time during the game, but they can be made only between menes. However, from the third mène on, if it turns out that a complaint about the opponent's boules is unfounded three points will be added to the score of the latter.

The Umpire or the Jury may, at any time, carry out an inspection of the boules of one or more players.

Article 3 – Approved jacks

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

Their diameter must be 30mm (tolerance: ± 1 mm).

Painted jacks are allowed, but must not be capable of being picked up with a magnet.

Article 4 – Licences

Avant le début d'une compétition, chaque joueur doit présenter sa licence. Il doit aussi la présenter à toute demande de l'Arbitre ou de son adversaire, sauf si elle a été déposée à la table de marque.

JEU

Article 5 – Aires de jeu et terrains réglementaires

La Pétanque se pratique sur tous les terrains.

Une aire de jeu délimite un nombre indéterminé de terrains limités par des ficelles dont la grosseur ne doit pas influencer la bonne marche du jeu.

Ces ficelles délimitant les différents terrains ne sont pas des lignes de pertes à part les lignes de fond de cadre et des cadres extérieurs.

Par décision du Comité d'Organisation ou de l'Arbitre, les équipes peuvent être tenues de se rencontrer sur un terrain délimité. Dans cette éventualité, ce dernier doit avoir, pour les Championnats Nationaux et les Compétitions Internationales, les dimensions minimales suivantes: 4 m. de largeur et 15 m. de longueur.

Pour les autres concours, les Fédérations pourront permettre à leurs subdivisions d'accorder des dérogations relatives à ces minima, sans que les dimensions soient inférieures à 12 m. x 3m.

Article 4 – Membership cards

Before the start of a competition, each player must present his membership card. He must also present it upon any request by the Umpire or by an opponent, unless it was left at the Control Table.

PLAY

Article 5 – Playing areas and regulation terrains

Petanque is played on all terrains. [*Petanque can be played on a marked or an unmarked terrain.*]

A playing area contains an indefinite number of terrains defined by strings whose size must not affect the smooth running of the game.

These strings delimiting the different terrains are not dead-ball lines except for the lines at the bottom of lanes and the lines of the exterior lanes.

By decision of the Organizing Committee or the Umpire, the teams may be required to play on a marked terrain. In this case, the latter must have, for National Championships and International Competitions, the following minimum dimensions: 4m wide and 15m long.

For other competitions, federations may allow their subdivisions to grant exemptions from these minimum requirements, except for dimensions smaller than 12m x 3m. [*National federations may allow regional competitions to be played on marked terrains as small as 12m x 3m.*]

Lorsque les terrains sont clos par des barrières, celles-ci doivent se trouver à une distance minimale de 1m. de la ligne extérieure des terrains de jeu.

When the terrains are enclosed by barriers, these must be located at a minimum distance of 1 meter from the exterior line of the game terrains. [*"Barriers" are partitions or barricades for keeping spectators off of the playing area, not wooden sideboards for stopping boules.*]

Les parties se jouent en 13 points, avec possibilité de faire disputer celles des poules et de cadrage en 11 points.

Games are played to 13 points, with the possibility to play those of leagues and qualifying heats to 11 points.

Certaines compétitions peuvent être organisées en temps limité. Celles-ci doivent toujours être jouées sur un seul terrain cadré. Dans ce cas, toutes les lignes délimitant ce terrain sont des lignes de perte.

Some competitions can be organized within time limits. These must always be played on a terrain in a single lane. In such a situation, all of the lines marking the boundaries of that terrain are dead-ball lines.

Article 6 – Début du jeu; règlement concernant le cercle

Article 6 – Start of play – Rules concerning the circle

Les joueurs doivent procéder à un tirage au sort pour déterminer laquelle des deux équipes choisira le terrain et lancera la première le but.

The players must conduct a draw to determine which of the two teams will choose the terrain and first throw the jack.

En cas d'affectation d'un terrain par les organisateurs, le but doit être lancé sur le terrain imparti. Les équipes concernées ne peuvent se rendre sur un autre terrain sans l'autorisation de l'Arbitre.

In case of assignment of a terrain by the organizers, the jack must be thrown on the assigned terrain. The teams concerned may not go to any other terrain without the permission of the Umpire. [*The circle must be placed, and the thrown jack must come to rest, inside the boundaries of the assigned terrain.*]

N'importe lequel des joueurs de l'équipe ayant gagné le tirage au sort choisit le point de départ et trace ou pose sur le sol un cercle tel que les pieds de tous les joueurs puissent y être posés entièrement.

One of the players (it makes no difference which one) of the team that won the draw chooses the starting place and draws or places a circle on the ground such that the feet of each of the players can fit entirely inside it.

Toutefois, un cercle tracé ne peut mesurer moins de 35 cm. ni plus de 50 cm. de diamètre.

However, a drawn circle may not measure less than 35cm or more than 50cm in diameter.

En cas de cercle matérialisé, celui-ci doit être rigide et avoir un diamètre intérieur de 50 cm (tolérance: + 2mm – 2 mm).

Where a physical circle is used, it must be rigid and have an internal diameter of 50cms (tolerance: + or – 2mm).

Les cercles sont utilisables sur décision de l'organisateur qui doit les fournir.

Physical circles may be used, subject to the decision of the organizer, who must supply them.

Le cercle de lancement, valable pour les trois jets consécutifs auxquels a droit l'équipe, doit être tracé (ou posé) à plus d'un mètre de tout obstacle et dans les compétitions en terrain libre à au moins deux mètres d'un autre cercle de lancement utilisé.

L'équipe qui va lancer le but doit effacer tous les cercles de lancement situés à proximité de celui qu'elle va utiliser.

L'intérieur du cercle peut être nettoyé entièrement durant toute la mène mais devra être remis en état à la fin de celle-ci.

Le cercle n'est pas considéré comme terrain interdit.

Les pieds doivent être entièrement à l'intérieur du cercle, ne pas mordre sur celui-ci et ils ne doivent en sortir ou quitter entièrement le sol que lorsque la boule lancée a touché celui-ci. Aucune autre partie du corps ne doit toucher le sol à l'extérieur du cercle.

Par exception, les handicapés d'un membre inférieur sont autorisés à ne placer qu'un pied à l'intérieur du cercle. Pour ceux évoluant en fauteuil roulant, au moins une roue (celle du bras porteur) doit reposer à l'intérieur du cercle.

Le lancer du but par un joueur d'une équipe n'implique pas qu'il soit dans l'obligation de jouer le premier.

Article 7 – Distances réglementaires pour le lancer du but

Pour que le but lancé par un joueur soit valable, il faut:

The throwing circle, valid for the three consecutive throws to which the team has a right, must be drawn (or placed) more than a meter from any obstacle and, for competitions on open terrains, at least 2 meters from another throwing circle in use.

The team that is going to throw the jack must erase all throwing circles near the one that it is going to use.

The interior of the circle can be completely cleared at any time during the mène, but its state must be restored at its end [at the end of the mène].

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

The player's feet must be entirely inside the circle. They must not overlap it, and they must not leave the circle or be completely lifted off the ground until the thrown boule has touched the ground. No other part of the player's body may touch the ground outside the circle.

There is one exception. Players with a handicap of the lower limbs are not required to place more than one foot inside the circle. For players throwing 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 a player of a team does not imply that he is required to play first [to throw the first boule].

Article 7 – Regulation distances for the throw of the jack

For the jack thrown by a player to be valid, it is necessary:

[NOTE—The jack must be thrown on the assigned terrain (Article 6).]

1) Que la distance le séparant du bord intérieur du cercle de lancement soit de:
- 6 mètres minimum et 10 mètres maximum pour les Juniors et les Seniors.
- Dans les compétitions destinées aux plus jeunes des distances moindres peuvent être appliquées.

2) Que le cercle de lancement soit à un mètre minimum de tout obstacle.

3) Que le but soit à un mètre minimum de tout obstacle et de la limite la plus proche d'un terrain interdit.

4) Qu'il soit visible du joueur dont les pieds sont placés aux extrémités intérieures du cercle et dont le corps est absolument droit. En cas de contestation sur ce point, l'Arbitre décide sans appel si le but est visible.

A la mène suivante, le but est lancé à partir d'un cercle tracé ou posé autour du point où il se trouvait à la mène précédente, sauf dans les cas suivants:

1) Le cercle se situerait ainsi à moins d'un mètre d'un obstacle.

2) Le lancer du but ne pourrait se faire à toutes distances réglementaires.

Dans le premier cas, le joueur trace ou place le cercle à la limite réglementaire de l'obstacle.

Dans le deuxième cas, le joueur peut reculer, dans l'alignement du déroulement du jeu de la mène précédente, sans toutefois dépasser la distance maximale autorisée pour le lancer du but. Cette possibilité n'est offerte que si le but ne peut être lancé, dans une direction quelconque, à la distance maximale.

1) That the distance that separates it from the interior edge of the throwing circle must be:
- 6 meters minimum and 10 meters maximum for Juniors and Seniors.
- In competitions for younger players, shorter distances may be applied.

2) That the throwing circle must be a minimum of 1 meter from any obstacle.

3) That the jack must be a minimum of 1 meter from any obstacle and from the nearest edge of an out-of-bounds area.

4) That the jack must be visible to a player whose feet are placed at the extreme limits of the interior of the circle and whose body is absolutely upright. In the case of a disagreement about this matter, the Umpire decides, without appeal, if the jack is visible.

At the following mène, the jack is thrown from a circle drawn or placed around the place where it was located in the previous mène, except in the following cases:

1) The circle would be situated less than 1 meter from an obstacle.

2) The throwing of the jack could not be made to all legal 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 mène's line of play, but without going beyond the maximum distance allowed for the throwing of the jack. This option is available only if there is no direction in which the jack can be thrown to the maximum distance.

Si, après 3 jets consécutifs par la même équipe, le but n'a pas été lancé dans les conditions réglementaires ci-dessus définies, il est remis à l'équipe adverse qui dispose également de 3 essais et qui peut reculer le cercle dans les conditions prévues à l'alinéa précédent. Dans ce cas, le cercle ne peut plus être changé si cette équipe ne réussit pas ses 3 jets.

Le temps maximal pour effectuer ces 3 jets est d'une minute.

En tout état de cause, l'équipe qui a perdu le but après les 3 premiers jets, conserve la priorité pour lancer la première boule.

Article 8 – Validité du lancer du but

Si le but est arrêté par l'Arbitre, un joueur, un spectateur, un animal ou tout objet mobile, il n'est pas valable et doit être relancé sans que ce jet compte pour les trois auxquels l'équipe ou le joueur a droit.

Si, après le jet du but, une première boule est jouée, l'adversaire a encore le droit de contester sa position réglementaire. Si l'objection est reconnue valable, le but est relancé et la boule rejouée.

Pour que le but soit relancé, il faut que les deux équipes aient reconnu que le jet n'était pas valable ou que l'Arbitre en ait décidé ainsi. Si une équipe procède différemment, elle perd le bénéfice du lancement du but.

Si l'adversaire a également joué une boule, le but est définitivement considéré comme valable et aucune réclamation n'est admise.

If, after three consecutive throws by the same team, the jack has not been thrown in compliance with the rules specified above, it is handed over to the opposing team who also may make three attempts and who may move the circle back as specified in the preceding paragraph. In this case, the circle may not be changed if this team does not succeed in its three throws.

The maximum amount of time to accomplish these 3 throws is one minute.

In any case, a team that loses the jack after the first three throws retains the right to throw the first boule.

Article 8 – For the thrown jack to be still alive

If the jack is stopped by the Umpire, a player, a spectator, an animal or any moving object, it is not valid and must be thrown again without the throw being counted as one of the three [throws] to which the team or the player has the right.

If after the throw of the jack, a first boule is played, the opponent still has the right to challenge the validity of its [the jack's] location. If the objection is recognized as valid, the jack is thrown again and the boule replayed.

For the jack to be thrown again, both teams must have recognized that the throw was not valid or the Umpire must have decided it to be so. If any team proceeds differently, it loses the right to throw the jack. *[A team can't simply decide that it doesn't like the location of the thrown jack and throw the jack again.]*

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

Article 9 – Annulation du but en cours de mène

Le but est nul dans les 7 cas suivants:

1) Quand, le but est déplacé en terrain interdit même s'il revient en terrain autorisé.

Le but à cheval sur la limite d'un terrain autorisé est bon. Il n'est nul qu'après avoir dépassé entièrement la limite du terrain autorisé ou la ligne de perte, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'il se situe entièrement au-delà de l'aplomb de cette limite.

Est considérée comme terrain interdit, la flaqué d'eau sur laquelle le but flotte librement.

2) Quand, se trouvant en terrain autorisé, le but déplacé n'est pas visible du cercle, dans les conditions prévues à l'article 7. Toutefois, le but masqué par une boule n'est pas nul. L'Arbitre est autorisé à enlever momentanément une boule pour constater si le but est visible.

3) Quand le but est déplacé à plus de 20 mètres (pour les Juniors et les Seniors) ou 15 mètres (pour les plus jeunes) ou à moins de 3 mètres du cercle de lancement.

4) Quand, en terrains tracés, le but traverse plus d'un des jeux contigus au jeu utilisé ou sort en fond de cadre.

5) Quand le but déplacé est introuvable, le temps de recherche étant limité à 5 minutes.

6) Quand un terrain interdit se trouve entre le but et le cercle de lancement.

7) Quand, dans les parties se déroulant au temps limité, le but sort du cadre attribué.

Article 9 – Dead Jack during a mène

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 in-bounds.

A jack straddling the boundary of the in-bounds area is alive. It is not dead until after having traveled completely beyond the boundary of the in-bounds area or the dead-ball line, that is to say, when it is situated entirely beyond the plumb of this boundary. *[For boules see Article 18.]*

[FIPJP] A puddle of water in which the jack floats freely is considered to be out-of-bounds. *[FPUSA]* A jack floating freely in water is dead.

2) When, located within the in-bounds area, the displaced jack is not visible from the circle, as specified in Article 7. However, a jack masked by a boule is not dead. The Umpire is allowed temporarily to pick up a boule to declare whether the jack is visible.

3) When the jack is displaced to more than 20 meters (for Juniors and Seniors) or 15 meters (for the younger players) or less than 3 meters from the throwing circle.

4) When on marked terrains, the jack crosses more than one of the neighboring lanes or goes out at the bottom 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. *[This can happen on a concave terrain.]*

7) When, in time-limited games, the jack leaves the assigned lane. *[This duplicates a rule in Article 5.]*

Article 10 – Déplacement des obstacles

Il est formellement interdit aux joueurs de supprimer, déplacer ou écraser un obstacle quelconque se trouvant sur le terrain de jeu.

Toutefois, le joueur appelé à lancer le but est autorisé à tâter une donnée avec l'une de ses boules sans frapper plus de trois fois le sol.

En outre, celui qui s'apprête à jouer ou l'un de ses partenaires peut boucher un trou qui aurait été fait par une boule jouée précédemment.

Pour non-observation des règles ci-dessus, les joueurs encourent les sanctions prévues dans le chapitre «Discipline» article 34.

Article 10 bis - Changement de but ou de boule

Il est interdit aux joueurs de changer de but ou de boule en cours de partie, sauf dans les cas suivants:

Il ou elle est introuvable, le temps de recherche étant limité à cinq minutes.

Il ou elle se casse: en ce cas le plus gros morceau est pris en considération.

S'il reste des boules à jouer, il ou elle est immédiatement remplacé(e), après mesure éventuellement nécessaire, par une boule ou un but de diamètre identique ou avoisinant. A la mène suivante, le joueur concerné peut prendre un nouveau jeu complet.

Article 10 – Displacement of obstacles

It is strictly forbidden for players to press down, displace or crush any obstacle located on the game terrain.

However, the player called upon to throw the jack is allowed to test a landing spot with one of his boules without hitting the ground more than three times. *[A player may test the ground for hardness by tapping it with a boule up to three times. This may be done before throwing the jack, but not before throwing a boule.]*

Furthermore, the player who is about to play, or one of his partners, may fill in a hole that was made by a boule played earlier. *[A player may fill one (but only one) hole made by a boule played earlier in the same game or during an earlier game.]*

For non-observation of the above rules, players incur the penalties specified in Article 34 "Discipline".

Article 10a – Changing of jack or boule

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

It cannot be found, the search time being limited to 5 minutes.

It is broken. In this case the biggest part is taken into consideration.

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

BUT

Article 11 – But masqué ou déplacé

Si, au cours d'une mène, le but est inopinément masqué par une feuille d'arbre ou un morceau de papier, ces objets sont enlevés.

Si le but arrêté vient à se déplacer, en raison du vent ou de l'inclinaison du terrain, par exemple ou accidentellement par l'Arbitre, un joueur, un spectateur, une boule ou un but provenant d'un autre jeu, un animal ou tout objet mobile, il est remis à sa place primitive, à condition qu'il ait été marqué.

Pour éviter toute contestation, les joueurs doivent marquer le but. Il ne sera admise aucune réclamation impliquant des boules ou un but non marqués.

Si le but est déplacé par l'effet d'une boule jouée de cette partie, il est valable.

Article 12 – Déplacement du but dans un autre jeu

Si, au cours d'une mène, le but est déplacé sur un autre terrain de jeu, limité ou non, le but est bon, sous réserve des dispositions de l'article 9.

Les joueurs utilisant ce but attendront, s'il y a lieu, la fin de la mène commencée par les joueurs se trouvant sur l'autre terrain de jeu, pour finir la leur. Les joueurs concernés par l'application de cet article doivent faire preuve de patience et de courtoisie.

THE JACK

Article 11 – Jack masked or displaced

If, during a mène, the jack is suddenly hidden by a leaf of a tree or a piece of paper, these objects are removed. *[Players may remove any object blown onto the terrain by the wind if it blocks the thrower's view of the jack.]*

If a stationary jack is displaced by the wind or slope of the ground, for example, or accidentally by the umpire, a player, a spectator, a boule or a jack coming from another game, an animal or any moving object, it is returned to its original location, provided that it [the original location] had been marked. *[For boules see Article 21.]*

To avoid all disagreement, the players must mark the position of the jack. No claim will be accepted *[i.e. accepted by an umpire]* regarding unmarked boules or an unmarked jack.

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

Article 12 – Jack displaced into another game

If, during a mène, the jack is displaced onto another game terrain (marked or not), the jack is still alive, subject to the provisions of Article 9.

If this happens, the players using this jack will wait for the end of the mène that was started by the players on the other game terrain, before finishing their own mène. The players involved in the application of this rule should show patience and courtesy.

A la mène suivante, les équipes continuent sur le terrain qui leur a été affecté et le but est relancé du point où il se trouvait lorsqu'il a été déplacé, sous réserve des dispositions de l'article 7.

At the following mène the teams continue on the terrain that was assigned to them and the jack is thrown again from the place it occupied when it was displaced, subject to the provisions of Article 7.

Article 13 – Règles à appliquer si le but est nul

Si, au cours d'une mène, le but est nul, trois cas se présentent:

- 1) Il reste des boules à jouer à chaque équipe: la mène est nulle.
- 2) Il reste des boules à une seule équipe: cette équipe marque autant de points qu'elle détient de boules à jouer.
- 3) Les deux équipes n'ont plus de boules en main: la mène est nulle.

Article 13 – Rules to apply if the jack is dead

If, during a mène, the jack is dead, one of three cases can apply:

- 1) Both teams have boules to play – the mène is scoreless.
- 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 mène is scoreless.

Article 14 – Placement du but après arrêt

Si le but, frappé, est arrêté ou dévié par un spectateur ou par l'Arbitre, il conserve sa position.

Si le but, frappé, est arrêté ou dévié par un joueur situé en terrain de jeu autorisé, son adversaire a le choix entre:

- a) Laisser le but à sa nouvelle place;
- b) Remettre le but à sa place primitive;
- c) Placer le but dans le prolongement d'une ligne allant de sa place primitive à l'endroit où il se trouve, à la distance maximale de 20 mètres du cercle (15 mètres pour les plus jeunes) et de façon à ce qu'il soit visible.

Article 14 – Positioning the jack after being stopped

[The corresponding article for boules is Article 19.]

If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or deviated by a spectator or by the umpire, it stays where it is.

If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or deviated by a player located in-bounds of the game terrain, his opponent has the choice of:

- (a) Leave the jack in its new location;
- (b) Put it back in its original location;
- (c) Place it on the extension of a line going from its original location to the place where it stopped, up to a maximum distance of 20 meters from the circle (15 meters for the younger players) and such that it is visible.

Les alinéas b) et c) ne peuvent être appliqués que si le but a été préalablement marqué. Si tel n'est pas le cas, le but restera où il se trouve.

Si, après avoir été frappé, le but passe dans sa course en terrain interdit pour revenir finalement en terrain de jeu, il est considéré comme nul et il y a lieu d'appliquer les dispositions de l'article 13.

BOULES

Article 15 – Jet de la première boule et des suivantes

La première boule d'une mène est lancée par un joueur de l'équipe qui a gagné le tirage au sort ou qui a été la dernière à marquer. Par la suite, c'est à l'équipe qui n'a pas le point de jouer.

Le joueur ne doit s'aider d'aucun objet, ni tracer de trait sur le sol pour porter sa boule ou marquer sa donnée.

Lorsqu'il joue sa dernière boule, il lui est interdit de disposer d'une boule supplémentaire dans l'autre main.

Les boules doivent être jouées une par une.

Toute boule lancée ne peut être rejouée. Toutefois, doivent être rejouées les boules arrêtées, ou déviées involontairement dans leur course entre le cercle de lancement et le but, par une boule ou un but provenant d'un autre jeu, par un animal, par tout objet mobile (ballon, etc...) et dans le cas prévu à l'article 8, deuxième paragraphe.

Paragraphs (b) and (c) cannot be applied except if the location of the jack had been marked previously. If that was not the case, the jack remains where it is.

If, after having been hit, the jack travels into an out-of-bounds area before finally returning onto the game terrain, it is considered dead and the provisions of Article 13 are applied.

BOULES

Article 15 – Throw of the first and following boules

The first boule of a mène is thrown by a player belonging to the team that won the draw or was the last to score. After that, it is the team that does not hold the point that plays.

A player is not allowed to help himself by using any object, nor to draw a line on the ground to guide his boule or to mark his intended landing spot.

When he plays his last boule, he is forbidden to have an extra boule in his other hand.

The boules must be played one by one [one at a time].

Any boule thrown cannot be replayed. However, a boule should be replayed if it was stopped or accidentally deviated from its course between the throwing circle and the jack, by a boule or jack coming from another game, by an animal, or by any moving object (soccer ball, etc.) and in the case specified in Article 8, second paragraph.

Il est interdit de mouiller les boules ou le but.

It is forbidden to wet the boules or the jack. *[A player may not moisten a boule so that it picks up dirt and slows down as it rolls.]*

Avant de lancer sa boule, le joueur doit enlever de celle-ci toute trace de boue ou de dépôt quelconque, sous peine des sanctions prévues à l'article 34.

Before throwing his boule, the player must remove from it any trace of mud or deposit whatsoever, under threat of the penalties specified in Article 34.

Si la première boule jouée se trouve en terrain interdit, c'est à l'adversaire de jouer puis alternativement tant qu'il n'y aura pas de boules en terrain autorisé.

If the first boule played goes out-of-bounds, it is for the opponent to play, then alternately as long as there are no boules in the in-bounds area.

Si aucune boule ne se trouve plus en terrain autorisé à la suite d'un tir ou d'un appoint, il est fait application des dispositions de l'article 28 relatives au point nul.

If no boule is left in the in-bounds area after a shooting throw or a pointing throw, apply the provisions of Article 28 concerning an undecided point.

Article 16 – Attitude des joueurs et des spectateurs durant la partie

Article 16 – Behavior of players and spectators during a game

Pendant le temps réglementaire donné à un joueur pour lancer sa boule, les spectateurs et les joueurs doivent observer le plus grand silence.

During the regulation time given to a player to throw his boule the spectators and players must observe total silence.

Les adversaires ne doivent ni marcher, ni gesticuler, ni rien faire qui puisse déranger le joueur. Seuls ses partenaires peuvent se tenir entre le but et le cercle de lancement.

The opponents must not walk, nor gesticulate, nor do anything that could disturb the player. Only his teammates may stand between the jack and the throwing circle.

Les adversaires doivent se tenir au-delà du but ou en arrière du joueur et, dans les deux cas, de côté par rapport au sens du jeu et à au moins 2 mètres de l'un ou de l'autre.

The opponents must stand beyond the jack or behind the player and, in both cases, to one side of the line of play and at least 2 meters from one or the other.

Les joueurs qui n'observeraient pas ces prescriptions pourraient être exclus de la compétition, si, après avertissement de l'Arbitre, ils persistent dans leur manière de faire.

Players who do not observe these regulations may be excluded from the competition if, after a warning from the umpire, they persist in their behavior.

Article 17 – Lancer des boules et boules sorties du terrain

Nul ne peut, pour essai, lancer sa boule dans la partie. Les joueurs qui n’observeraient pas cette prescription pourraient être frappés des sanctions prévues dans le chapitre « Discipline » article 34.

En cours de mène, les boules sortant du cadre affecté sont bonnes (sauf application de l’article 18).

Article 18 – Boules nulles

Toute boule est nulle dès qu’elle passe en terrain interdit.

Une boule à cheval sur la limite d’un terrain autorisé est bonne. La boule n’est nulle qu’après avoir dépassé entièrement la limite du terrain autorisé, c’est-à-dire lorsqu’elle se situe entièrement au-delà de l’aplomb de cette limite.

Il en va de même, quand, en terrains tracés, la boule traverse entièrement plus d’un des jeux latéralement contigus au jeu utilisé ou sort en bout de cadre.

Dans les parties au temps se déroulant sur un seul terrain une boule est nulle dans les mêmes conditions dès qu’elle sort entièrement du cadre affecté.

Si la boule revient ensuite en terrain de jeu, soit par la pente du terrain, soit parce qu’elle est renvoyée par un obstacle, mobile ou immobile, elle est immédiatement enlevée du jeu, et tout ce qu’elle a pu déplacer, après son passage en terrain interdit, est remis à sa place.

Toute boule nulle doit être immédiatement retirée du jeu. A défaut, elle sera considérée comme bonne dès qu’une boule aura été jouée par l’équipe adverse.

Article 17 – Throwing of the boules and boules going outside the terrain

Absolutely no one may, as a test, throw his boule during the game. Players who do not observe this rule may be hit with the penalties specified in the section on “Discipline” in Article 34. *[A player may not throw a boule and then claim that “It was only a test throw.”]*

During the course of a mène, boules going outside the assigned lane are still alive (except as in the application of Article 18). *[A boule that goes into a neighboring lane is still alive, except in a time-limited game.]*

Article 18 – Dead boules

Any boule is dead from the moment that it enters an out-of-bounds area.

A boule straddling the boundary of the in-bounds area is alive. The boule is not dead until after having traveled completely beyond the boundary of the in-bounds area, that is to say, when it is situated entirely beyond the plumb of this boundary. *[For the jack see Article 9.]*

The same applies when, on marked terrains, the boule completely crosses more than one of the neighboring lanes or when it goes out at the bottom of the lane.

In time-limited games played on only one terrain, a boule is dead under the same conditions, when it completely leaves the assigned lane.

If the boule then comes back onto the game terrain, either because of the slope of the ground, or because it rebounds off of an obstacle, moving or stationary, it is immediately removed from the game and anything that it displaced after its trip through the out-of-bounds area is put back in its original location.

Any dead boule must immediately be removed from the game. By default it will be considered to be live the moment another boule is played by the opposing team.

Article 19 – Arrêt d'une boule

Toute boule jouée, arrêtée ou déviée par un spectateur ou par l'Arbitre, conserve sa position à son point d'immobilisation.

Toute boule jouée, arrêtée ou déviée involontairement par un joueur de l'équipe à laquelle elle appartient, est nulle.

Toute boule pointée, arrêtée ou déviée involontairement par un adversaire, peut, au gré du joueur, être rejouée ou laissée à son point d'immobilisation.

Quand une boule tirée ou frappée, est arrêtée ou déviée involontairement par un joueur, son adversaire peut:

- 1) La laisser à son point d'immobilisation;
- 2) La placer dans le prolongement d'une ligne, qui irait de sa place primitive à son point d'immobilisation, mais uniquement en terrain jouable et à condition qu'elle ait été marquée.

Le joueur arrêtant volontairement une boule en mouvement est immédiatement disqualifié, ainsi que son équipe, pour la partie en cours.

Article 19 – Stopped boules

[WHEN A THROWN BOULE IS STOPPED]

Any boule played, that is stopped or deviated by a spectator or the umpire, will remain at the place where it stopped.

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 in the place where it stopped.

[WHEN A HIT BOULE IS STOPPED]

[For a hit jack see Article 14.]

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

- (1) Leave it in the place where it stopped;
- (2) Place it on the extension of a line going from its original location to the place where it stopped, but only on the playable area and only on condition that its original location had been marked.

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

Article 20 – Temps autorisé pour jouer

Dès que le but est lancé, tout joueur dispose d'une durée maximale d'une minute pour lancer sa boule. Ce délai court dès l'arrêt du but ou de la boule jouée précédemment ou s'il a fallu effectuer la mesure d'un point, dès que cette dernière a été réalisée.

Ces mêmes prescriptions s'appliquent pour le lancer du but, c'est-à-dire 1 minute pour les 3 lancers.

Tout joueur ne respectant pas ce délai, encourt les pénalités prévues dans le chapitre « Discipline » article 34.

Article 21 – Boules déplacées

Si une boule arrêtée vient à se déplacer en raison du vent ou de l'inclinaison du terrain par exemple, elle est remise en place. Il en va de même pour toute boule déplacée accidentellement par un joueur, un Arbitre, un spectateur, un animal ou par tout objet mobile.

Pour éviter toute contestation, les joueurs doivent marquer les boules. Aucune réclamation ne sera admise pour une boule non marquée et l'Arbitre ne statuera qu'en fonction de l'emplacement des boules sur le terrain.

Par contre, si une boule est déplacée par l'effet d'une boule jouée de cette partie, elle est valable.

Article 20 – Time allowed to play

Once the jack is thrown, each player has the maximum duration of one minute to play his boule. This short period of time starts from the moment that the previously played boule or jack stops or, if it is necessary to measure a point, from the moment the latter [the measurement] has been accomplished.

The same requirements apply to the throwing of the jack, which is 1 minute for the 3 throws. *[The jack should be successfully thrown within one minute of the completion of the agreement of points. See Article 7.]*

Any player who does not comply with this period of time will incur the penalties specified in Article 34 "Discipline".

Article 21 – Displaced boules

If a stationary boule is displaced by the wind or slope of the ground, for example, it is put back [in its original location]. The same applies to any boule accidentally displaced by a player, an umpire, a spectator, an animal, or any moving object. *[For the jack see Article 11.]*

To avoid all disagreement, the players must mark [the locations of] the boules. No claim will be admissible for an unmarked boule, and the umpire will make his decision based only on the locations of the boules on the terrain.

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

Article 22 – Joueur lançant une autre boule que la sienne

Le joueur qui joue une boule autre que la sienne reçoit un avertissement. La boule jouée est néanmoins valable mais elle doit être immédiatement remplacée, éventuellement après mesure faite.

En cas de récidive au cours de la partie, la boule du joueur fautif est annulée et tout ce qu'elle a déplacé est remis en place.

Article 23 – Boule jouée contrairement aux règles

Toute boule jouée contrairement aux règles est nulle et tout ce qu'elle a déplacé dans son parcours est remis en place, si marqué.

Toutefois, l'adversaire a le droit de faire appliquer la règle de l'avantage et de déclarer qu'elle est valable. En ce cas, la boule pointée ou tirée est bonne et tout ce qu'elle a déplacé demeure en place.

Points et mesures

Article 24 – Enlèvement momentané des boules

Pour la mesure d'un point, il est autorisé de déplacer momentanément, après les avoir marqués, les boules et les obstacles situés entre le but et les boules à mesurer. Après mesure, les boules et les obstacles enlevés sont remis à leur place.

Si les obstacles ne peuvent être retirés, la mesure du point est faite à l'aide d'un compas.

Article 22 – A player throwing a boule other than his own

The player who plays a boule other than his own receives a warning. The boule played is nevertheless valid but it must immediately be replaced, possibly after measuring has been done.

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.

Article 23 – Boules thrown contrary to the rules

Any boule thrown contrary to the rules is dead, and anything that it displaced in its travel is put back in place, if its original location was marked.

However, the opponent has the right to apply the advantage rule and to declare that it is valid. In this case, the boule pointed or shot, is still alive and anything it has displaced remains in its place.

POINTS AND MEASURING

Article 24 – Temporary removal of boules

In order to measure a point, it is permitted to temporarily remove, after marking their locations, the boules and obstacles situated between the jack and the boules to be measured. After the measurement [has been made], the boules and the obstacles which were picked up are put back in their place.

If the obstacles cannot be removed, the measurement of the point is done with the aid of calipers.

Article 25 – Mesure de points

La mesure d'un point incombe au joueur qui a joué le dernier ou à l'un de ses coéquipiers. Les adversaires ont toujours le droit de mesurer après l'un de ces joueurs.

Quel que soit le rang des boules à mesurer, et le moment de la mène, l'Arbitre peut être consulté et sa décision est sans appel.

Les mesures doivent être effectuées avec des instruments appropriés, chaque équipe devant en posséder un. Il est notamment interdit d'effectuer des mesures avec les pieds. Le joueur ne respectant pas cette prescription encourt les pénalités prévues dans le chapitre « Discipline » article 34.

Article 26 – Boules enlevées

Il est interdit aux joueurs de ramasser les boules jouées avant la fin de la mène. A la fin d'une mène, toute boule enlevée avant le décompte des points est nulle. Aucune réclamation n'est admise à ce sujet.

Article 27 – Déplacement des boules ou du but

Le point est perdu par une équipe si l'un de ses joueurs, effectuant une mesure, déplace le but ou l'une des boules litigieuses. Si, lors de la mesure d'un point, l'Arbitre remue ou déplace le but ou une boule, il se prononce en toute équité.

Article 25 – Measuring of points

The measurement of a point is the responsibility of the player who last played or one of his teammates. The opponents always have the right to measure after one of these players.

Whatever the position of the boules to be measured, and the time in the mène, the umpire may be consulted and his decision may not be appealed.

Measurements must be made with the appropriate instruments – each team must possess one. Notably, it is forbidden to make measurements with the feet. Any player who does not comply with this rule will incur the penalties specified in Article 34 "Discipline".

Article 26 – Picked-up Boules

It is forbidden for players to pick up played boules before the end of the mène. At the end of a mène, any boule picked up before the agreement of points is dead. No claim is admissible on this subject.

Article 27 – Displacement of boules or jack

The point is lost by a team if one of its players, while making a measurement, displaces the jack or one of the contested boules. If, during the measurement of a point, the umpire disturbs or displaces the jack or a boule he will make a decision in an equitable way.

Article 28 – Boules à égales distances du but

Lorsque les deux boules les plus proches du but, appartenant chacune à une équipe, sont à égale distance, trois cas peuvent se présenter:

- 1) Si les deux équipes n'ont plus de boules, la mène est nulle et le but appartient à l'équipe qui l'a lancé précédemment.
- 2) Si une équipe est seule à disposer de boules, elle les joue et marque autant de points que de boules finalement plus proches du but que la boule de l'adversaire la plus proche.
- 3) Si les deux équipes disposent de boules, il appartient à celle qui a joué la dernière boule de rejouer, puis à l'équipe adverse, et ainsi de suite alternativement jusqu'à ce que le point appartienne à l'une d'elles. Quand une équipe reste seule à posséder des boules, les dispositions du paragraphe précédent s'appliquent.

Si, en fin de mène, aucune boule ne se trouve en terrain autorisé, la mène est nulle.

Article 29 – Corps étranger adhérent à la boule ou au but

Tout corps étranger qui adhère à la boule ou au but doit être enlevé avant la mesure du point.

DISCIPLINE

Article 28 – Boules equidistant from the jack

When the two boules closest to the jack belong to different teams and are at an equal distance from it, three situations may exist.

- 1) If the two teams have no more boules, the mene is scoreless and the jack belongs to the team that threw it previously. [*"The team that threw it previously" is the team that made the first attempt to throw the jack at the start of the scoreless mene.*]
- 2) If only one team has boules, it plays them and scores as many points as it has boules closer to the jack than the opponent's closest boule.
- 3) If both teams still have boules, the team that played the last boule plays again, then the opposing team, and so on alternately until the point belongs to one of them. When there is only one team left with boules to play, the provisions of the preceding paragraph apply.

If, at the end of the mene, no boules remain in the in-bounds area, the mene is scoreless.

Article 29 – Foreign bodies adhering to the boules or jack

Any foreign bodies that adhere to a boule or to the jack must be removed before the measurement of the point.

DISCIPLINE

Article 30 - Réclamations

Pour être admise, toute réclamation doit être faite à l'Arbitre. Dès que la partie est terminée, aucune réclamation ne peut être admise.

Chaque équipe est responsable de la surveillance de l'équipe adverse (licences, catégorie, terrain de jeu, boules, etc...).

Article 31 – Pénalités pour absence des équipes ou des joueurs

Au moment du tirage au sort des rencontres et de la proclamation des résultats de ce tirage, les joueurs doivent être présents à la table de contrôle. Un quart d'heure après la fin de la proclamation de ces résultats, l'équipe absente du terrain de jeu est pénalisée d'un point, qui est porté au crédit de l'équipe adverse. Ce délai est ramené à 5 min. dans les parties en temps limité. Passé ce délai, la pénalité s'accroît d'un point par cinq minutes de retard.

Ces mêmes pénalités s'appliquent en cours de compétition après chaque tirage au sort et en cas de reprise des parties à la suite d'une interruption pour un motif quelconque.

Est déclarée éliminée de la compétition, l'équipe qui ne s'est pas présentée sur le terrain de jeu dans l'heure qui suit le début ou la reprise des parties.

Une équipe incomplète a la faculté de commencer la partie sans attendre son joueur absent; toutefois elle ne dispose pas des boules de celui-ci.

Aucun joueur ne peut s'absenter d'une partie ou quitter les terrains de jeu sans l'autorisation de l'Arbitre.

Article 30 – Complaints

To be considered, any complaint must be made to the umpire. As soon as the game is finished, no complaint can be accepted.

Each team is responsible for monitoring the opposing team (licenses, category, game terrain, boules, etc.).
[A "category" is a tournament restriction, e.g. for juniors, seniors, masters, mens, womens, and mixed doubles.]

Article 31 – Penalties for absent teams or players

At the time of the draw for matches and the announcement of the results of the draw, the players must be present at the control table. A quarter of an hour after the end of the announcement of these results, any team that is absent from the game terrain will be penalized one point which is transferred to the credit of the opposing team. This period of time is reduced to 5 minutes in games that are time-limited. After this period of time, the penalty accrues by one point for each five minutes of the delay.

The same penalties apply throughout the competition after each draw and in the case of a re-start of games after an interruption for any reason whatsoever.

Any team that is not present on the game terrain within an hour 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; however it may not use the boules of that player.

No player may absent himself from a game or leave the game terrains without the permission of the umpire.

Pour les parties en temps limité, le joueur voulant s'absenter doit avoir préalablement joué ses boules dans la mène en cours. Si l'autorisation n'a pas été accordée, il est fait application des dispositions de cet article et du suivant.

For time-limited games, any player wanting to leave must have previously played all of his boules in the mène in progress. If permission is not granted, then one should apply the provisions of this article and the next.

Article 32 – Arrivée des joueurs retardataires

Si, après le début d'une mène, le joueur absent se présente, il ne participe pas à cette mène. Il est admis dans le jeu seulement à partir de la mène suivante.

Article 32 – Late arrival of players

If, after a mène has started, a missing player arrives, he does not take part in this mène. He is admitted into the game only at the start of the next mène.

Si le joueur absent se présente plus d'une heure après le début d'une partie, il perd tout droit de participer à celle-ci.

If a missing player arrives more than one hour after the start of a game, he loses all rights to participate in that game.

Si son ou ses coéquipiers gagnent cette partie, il pourra participer à celle qui suit, sous réserve que l'équipe soit nominativement inscrite.

If his teammate(s) win this game, he may participate in subsequent games provided that the team was registered with him as a member.

Si la compétition se déroule par poules, il pourra participer à la seconde partie quel que soit le résultat de la première.

If the competition is played in leagues, he may take part in the second game regardless of the result of the first.

Une mène est considérée comme commencée lorsque le but a été placé en terrain de jeu, de façon réglementaire.

A mène is considered to have started when the jack has been placed on the game terrain in accordance with the rules.

Article 33 – Remplacement d'un joueur

Le remplacement d'un joueur en Doublette, d'un ou deux joueurs en Triplette n'est autorisé que jusqu'à l'annonce officielle du début de la compétition (bombe, coup de sifflet, annonce, etc...) à condition que le ou les remplaçants n'aient pas été inscrits dans la compétition au titre d'une autre équipe.

Article 33 – Replacement of a player

The replacement of a player in doubles (or the replacement of a player or two players in triples) is allowed only before the official announcement of the beginning of the competition (gun, whistle, announcement, etc.) and only on condition that the replacement(s) have not been registered in the competition as belonging to some other team.

Article 34 - Sanctions

Pour non observation des règles de jeu, les joueurs encourrent les sanctions suivantes:

- 1) Avertissement;
- 2) Annulation de la boule jouée ou à jouer;
- 3) Annulation de la boule jouée ou à jouer et de la suivante;
- 4) Exclusion du joueur fautif pour la partie;
- 5) Disqualification de l'équipe fautive;
- 6) Disqualification des deux équipes en cas de connivence.

Article 35 – Intempéries

En cas de pluie, toute mène commencée doit être terminée, sauf décision contraire de l'Arbitre qui est seul habilité, avec le Jury, pour décider de son arrêt ou de son annulation pour cas de force majeure.

Article 36 – Nouvelle phase de Jeu

Si, après l'annonce du début d'une nouvelle phase de la compétition (2ème tour, 3ème tour, etc...), certaines parties ne sont pas terminées, l'Arbitre, après avis du Comité d'Organisation, peut prendre toutes dispositions ou décisions qu'il juge nécessaires pour la bonne marche du concours.

Article 34 – Penalties

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

- 1) Warning;
- 2) Disqualification of the boule played or to be played;
- 3) Disqualification of the boule played or to be played and the following one;
- 4) Exclusion of the responsible player for the game;
- 5) Disqualification of the team responsible;
- 6) Disqualification of the two teams in case of complicity.

Article 35 – Bad weather

In the case of rain, any mène that has started must be completed, unless a contrary decision is made by the umpire, who alone is qualified, with the Jury, to decide on its suspension or cancellation in case of force majeure.

Article 36 – New phase of play

If, after the announcement of the beginning of a new phase of the competition (2nd round, 3rd round, etc...) certain games have not ended, the umpire, after consulting with [reviewing the situation with] the Organizing Committee, may make any provisions or decisions that he judges necessary for the smooth running of the competition.

Article 37 – Manque de sportivité

Les équipes qui disputeront une partie en faisant preuve de manque de sportivité et de respect envers le public, dirigeants ou Arbitres, seront exclues de la compétition. Cette exclusion peut entraîner la non-homologation des résultats éventuellement obtenus, ainsi que l'application des sanctions, prévues à l'article 38.

Article 38 – Incorrection

Le joueur qui se rend coupable d'incorrection et, à plus forte raison, de violence envers un dirigeant, un Arbitre, un autre joueur ou un spectateur encourt l'une ou plusieurs des sanctions suivantes, selon la gravité de la faute:

- 1) Exclusion de la compétition;
- 2) Retrait de la licence;
- 3) Confiscation ou restitution des indemnités et récompenses.

La sanction prise à l'égard du joueur fautif peut être appliquée à ses coéquipiers.

La sanction 1 est appliquée par l'arbitre. La sanction 2 est appliquée par le jury.

La sanction 3 est appliquée par le Comité d'Organisation qui, sous 48 heures, fait parvenir, avec son rapport, les indemnités et récompenses retenues, à l'organisme fédéral qui décide de leur destination.

En tout état de cause, le Comité Directeur de l'instance fédérale concernée statue en dernier ressort.

Une tenue correcte est exigée de chaque joueur. Tout joueur qui n'observerait pas cette prescription, serait exclu de la compétition après avertissement de l'Arbitre.

Article 37 – Lack of Sportsmanship

Teams that argue during a game, who show lack of sportsmanship and respect towards the public, the organizers or the umpires, will be excluded from the competition. This exclusion may result in de-certification of the eventual results, as well as the application of penalties specified in Article 38.

Article 38 – Bad behavior

The player who is guilty of bad behavior, or even worse, 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 offense.

- 1) Exclusion from the competition.
- 2) Revocation of license.
- 3) Confiscation or restitution of expenses and prizes.

The penalty imposed on the guilty player may also be imposed on his 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, sends, with its report, the expenses and prizes retained, to the federal organization, which will decide their destination.

In all cases, the Committee Director of the federal organization will make the final ruling.

Proper attire is required of every player. Any player that does not observe this rule will be excluded from the competition after a warning from the umpire.

Article 39 - Devoirs des Arbitres

Les Arbitres désignés pour diriger les compétitions sont chargés de veiller à la stricte application des règlements de jeu et règlements administratifs qui les complètent. Ils ont autorité pour exclure de la compétition tout joueur ou toute équipe qui refuserait de se conformer à leur décision.

Les spectateurs licenciés ou suspendus qui, par leur comportement, seraient à l'origine d'incidents sur un terrain de jeu, feront l'objet d'un rapport de l'Arbitre à l'organisme fédéral. Celui-ci convoquera le ou les fautifs devant la Commission de Discipline compétente qui statuera sur les sanctions à prendre.

Article 40 – Composition et décisions du Jury

Tout cas non prévu par le règlement est soumis à l'Arbitre qui peut en référer au Jury du concours. Ce Jury comprend 3 membres au moins et 5 au plus. Les décisions prises en application du présent paragraphe par le Jury sont sans appel. En cas de partage des voix, celle du Président du Jury est prépondérante.

Article 39 – Duties of the Umpires

The umpires appointed to conduct the competitions are responsible for ensuring the strict application of the rules of play and the administrative rules that supplement them. They have the authority to exclude from the competition any player or any team that refuses to comply with their decisions.

Spectators with licenses, or with suspended licenses, who, by their behavior, are the origin of incidents on the game terrain, will be the subject of a report by the umpire to the federal organization. The latter will summon the guilty party or parties before a competent Disciplinary Committee which will decide on the penalties to apply.

Article 40 – Composition and decisions of the Jury

Any case not specified in [covered by] the rules is submitted to the umpire who may refer it to the competition's Jury. This Jury is made up of 3 members at least and 5 at most. 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 deciding vote.