OFFICIAL RULES FOR THE SPORT OF PÉTANQUE

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

GENERAL RULES

Article 1, Composition of teams

Pétanque is a sport in which:

- 3 players play against 3 players (triples).

It can also be played by:

- 2 players against 2 players (doubles).
- 1 player against 1 player (singles).

In triples, each player uses 2 boules.
In doubles and singles, each player uses 3 boules.

No other formula is allowed.

Article 2, Characteristics of approved boules

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

1) To be made of metal.
2) To have a diameter between 7.05 cm (minimum) and 8 cm (maximum).
3) To have a weight of between 650 grams (minimum) and 800 grams (maximum).

For competitions reserved for players who are aged 11 years or less in the year, they may use boules that weigh 600 grammes and are 65 mm in diameter provided that they are made under one of the approved labels.

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

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

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

Article 2a, Penalties for irregular boules

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

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

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

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

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

Article 3, Approved jacks
Jacks are made of wood, or of a synthetic material bearing the manufacturer's mark and having obtained the FIPJP's approval in line with the precise specification relating to the required standards.

Their diameter must be 30 mm (tolerance: + or –1 mm).

Their weight must be between 10 and 18 grams.

Painted jacks are authorised, but at no time must they, nor the jacks made of wood, be capable of being picked up with a magnet.

Article 4, Licences
To be registered in a competition each player must present their licence, or, in accordance with the rules of their federation, a document proving their identity, and that they are a member of that federation.

PLAY

Article 5, Area of play and terrain rules
Pétanque is played on any surface. However, by the decision of the organising committee or an umpire, the teams may be required to play on a marked and defined terrain. In this case, the terrain for National Championships and International Competitions, must have the following minimum dimensions: 15 metres long x 4 metres wide.

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

A playing area comprises of an indeterminate number of lanes defined by strings, the size of which must not interfere with the course of play. These strings marking separate lanes are not dead ball lines except for those marking the end of the lane and the exterior of the terrain.

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

When the terrains of play are enclosed by barriers, these must be a minimum distance of 1 metre from the exterior line of the playing area.

Games are played to 13 points, with the possibility of leagues and qualifying heats being played to 11 points.

Some competitions can be organised within time limits. These must always be played within marked lanes and all the lines marking these lanes are dead ball lines.

Article 6, Start of play and rules regarding the circle

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

If the lane has been designated by the organisers, the jack must be thrown on this lane. The teams concerned must not go to a different lane without the umpire's permission.

Any member of the team winning the draw chooses the starting point and places or traces a circle on the ground of a size that the feet of each player can fit entirely inside it. However, a drawn circle may not measure less than 35 cm or more than 50 cm in diameter.

Where a prefabricated circle is used, it must be rigid and have an internal diameter of 50 cm (tolerance: + or – 2 mm).

Folding circles are permitted but on condition they are of a model approved by the FIPJP with regard, in particular, to the rigidity.

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

They must also accept the regulation rigid circles or the FIPJP approved folding circles provided by their opponent. If both teams have one of these circles, the choice will be decided by the team that won the draw.

The circle must be drawn (or placed) more than 1 metre from any obstacle and at least 1.5 metres from another throwing circle or jack in use.

The interior of the circle can be completely cleared of grit/pebbles etc. during the end but must be put back in good order when the end is over.

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

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

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

The circle is not considered to be an out of bounds area.

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

The team that is going to throw the jack must erase all throwing circles near the one it is going to use.

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

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

The players must mark the position of the jack initially and after each time it is moved. No claims will be allowed for an unmarked jack and the umpire will rule only on the position of the jack on the terrain.

Article 7, Valid distances for the thrown jack
For the thrown jack to be valid, the following conditions apply:

1) That the distance separating it from the internal edge of the circle must be
   - 6 metres minimum and 10 metres maximum for Juniors and Seniors.
   - For competitions intended for younger players, shorter distances may be applied.
2) That the throwing circle must be a minimum of 1 metre from any obstacle and 1.5 metres from another circle or jack in use.
3) That the jack must be a minimum of 50 cm from any obstacle and from the end line of the lane, it must also be a minimum of 1.5 metres from another circle or jack in use. *(note: no minimum distance is required from the "side" line that separates the lanes or the dead ball lines at the side of the lanes).*
4) That the jack must be visible to the player whose feet are placed astride the extreme limits of the interior of the circle and whose body is absolutely upright. In case of dispute on this point, the umpire decides, without appeal, if the jack is visible.

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

- The circle would be less than 1 metre from an obstacle, 1.5 metres from another circle or jack in use.
- The throwing of the jack could not be made to all regulation distances.

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

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

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

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

The team that won the right to throw the jack have a maximum of one minute to do so. The team that won the right to place the jack after the unsuccessful throw of the opponent must do so immediately.

Article 8, For the thrown jack to be valid
If the thrown jack is stopped by an umpire, an opponent, a spectator, an animal or any moving object, it is not valid and must be thrown again.

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

If after the throwing of the jack, a first boule is played, the opponent still has the right to contest the validity of its position except in the case when the jack has been placed by a team member.

Before the jack is given to the opponent to place, both teams must have recognised that the throw was not valid, or an umpire must have decided it to be so.

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

Article 9, Dead Jack during an end
The jack is dead in the following 7 cases:

1) When the jack is displaced into an out of bounds area, even if it comes back on to the authorised playing area. A jack straddling the boundary of an authorised terrain is valid. It becomes dead only after having completely crossed the boundary of the authorised terrain or the dead ball line, that is to say, when it is entirely beyond the boundary when viewed from directly above. A puddle, on which a jack floats freely, is considered to be an out of bounds area.
2) When, still on the authorised terrain, the moved jack is not visible from the circle, as defined in article 7. However, a jack masked by a boule is not dead. The umpire is authorised to temporarily remove a boule to declare whether the jack is visible.
3) When the jack is displaced to more than 20 metres (for Juniors and Seniors) or 15 metres (for the younger players) or less than 3 metres from the throwing circle.
4) When on marked out playing areas, the jack crosses more than one lane immediately to the side of the lane in use and when it crosses the end line of the lane.
5) When the displaced jack cannot be found, the search time being limited to 5 minutes.
6) When an out of bounds area is situated between the jack and the throwing circle.
7) When, in time limited games, the jack leaves the designated playing area

Article 10, Displacement of obstacles
It is strictly forbidden for players to press down, displace or crush any obstacle whatever on the playing area. However, the player about to throw the jack is authorised to test the landing point with one of their boules by tapping the ground no more than three times. Furthermore, the player who is about to play, or one of their partners, may fill in a hole which would have been made by one boule played previously.

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

Article 11, Changing of jack or boule
Players are forbidden to change the jack or a boule during a game except in the following cases:

1) The one or the other cannot be found, the search time being limited to 5 minutes.
2) The one or the other is broken: in this case the largest part is taken into consideration. If boules remain to be played, it is immediately replaced, after measuring, if necessary, by a boule or a jack of identical or similar diameter. At the next end the player concerned can take a new complete set of boules.

JACK

Article 12, Jack masked or displaced
If, during an end, a leaf or a piece of paper accidentally masks the jack these objects are removed.

If the jack comes to be moved by the wind or the slope of the terrain, for example or by an umpire, a player or spectator accidentally treading on it, a boule or a jack coming from another game, an animal or any other mobile object, it is returned to its original position, provided this was marked.

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

Article 13, Jack moved into another game
If, during an end, the jack is displaced onto another terrain of play, marked out or not, the jack is valid subject to the conditions outlined in article 9.

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

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

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

Article 14, Rules to apply if the jack is dead
If, during an end, the jack is dead, one of three cases can apply:

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

Article 15, Positioning the jack after it has been stopped

1) If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or deviated by a spectator or by an umpire, it remains in this position.
2) If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or deviated by a player in the authorised playing area, their opponent has the choice of:
   a). leaving the jack in its new position;
   b). putting it back in its original position;
   c). placing it anywhere on the extension of a line going from its original position to the place that it is found, up to a maximum distance of 20 metres from the circle (15 metres for the younger players) and such that it is visible.

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

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

BOULES

Article 16, Throwing of the first and following boules
The first boule of an end is thrown by a player belonging to the team that has won the draw or has been the last to score. After that, it is the team that does not hold the point that plays.

The player must not use any object or draw a line on the ground to guide them in playing a boule or mark its landing point. Whilst playing their last boule, it is forbidden to carry a boule in the other hand.

The boules must be played one at a time.

Any boule thrown cannot be replayed. However, boules must be replayed if they have been stopped or deviated accidentally from their course between the throwing circle and the jack by a boule or jack coming from another game, or by an animal or any moving object (football, etc.) and in the case defined in article 8, third paragraph.

Before throwing their boule, the player must remove from it any trace of mud or whatever deposit, under threat of penalties outlined in article 35.

If the first boule played goes out-of-bounds, it is for the opponent to play first then alternately so long as there are no boules on the designated terrain.

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

Article 17, Behaviour of players and spectators during a game
During the regulation time allowed for a player to throw a boule the spectators and players must observe total silence.

The opponents must not walk, nor gesticulate nor do anything that could disturb the player about to play. Only their team-mate/s may remain between the throwing circle and the jack.

The opponents must remain beyond the jack or behind the player and, in both cases, to the side with regard to the direction of play and at a distance of at least 2 metres the one from the other.

The players who do not observe these regulations could be excluded from the competition if, after a warning from an umpire, they persist in their conduct.

Article 18, Throwing of the boules and boules going outside the terrain
Absolutely no-one, as a test, may throw their boules during a game including away from the lane where they are playing. Players who do not observe this rule could be penalised as set out in article 35.

During an end, boules going outside the marked terrain are valid except as in the application of article 19.

Article 19, Dead boules
Any boule is dead from the moment that it enters an out of bounds area. A boule straddling the boundary line of the authorised playing area is valid. The boule is dead only after having completely crossed the boundary of the allotted playing area, that is to say, when it is situated entirely beyond the boundary when viewed from directly above. The same applies when, on marked lanes, the boule completely crosses more than one of the lanes alongside the lane in use or when it crosses the end line of the lane.

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

If the boule comes back into the playing area, either because of the slope of the ground or by having rebounded from an obstacle, moving or stationary, it is immediately taken out of the game and anything that it has displaced after its passage into an out of bounds area is put back in place provided these objects have been marked.

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

Article 20, Stopped boules
Any boule played that is stopped or deviated by a spectator or an umpire, will remain where it comes to rest.

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

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

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

1) leave it where it stopped;
2) place it on the extension of a line which starts from the original position it occupied to its stopping point, but only on the playable area and only on condition that it had been marked.

The player purposely stopping a moving boule is immediately disqualified, along with their team, for the game in progress.

Article 21, Time allowed to play
Once the jack is thrown each player has the maximum duration of one minute to play their boule. This short period starts from the moment when the previous boule or jack stops or, if it is necessary to measure a point, from the moment the latter has been carried out.

The same requirements apply to the throwing of the jack.

All players not respecting this rule, incur the penalties outlined in article 35.

Article 22, Displaced boules
If a stationary boule is moved by the wind or slope of the ground, for example, it is put back in its place, provided it has been marked. The same applies to any boule accidentally displaced by a player, an umpire, a spectator, an animal or any moving object.

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

However, if a boule is moved by a boule played in the same game, it remains in its new position.

Article 23, A player throwing a boule other than their own
The player who plays a boule other than their own receives a warning. The boule played is nevertheless valid but must immediately be replaced, possibly after measuring has been done.

In the event of it occurring again during the game, the guilty player's boule is disqualified and anything it displaced is put back in place, if their positions were marked.

Article 24, Boules thrown contrary to the rules
Except for cases in which these rules provide specific and graduated penalties as outlined in article 35, any boule thrown contrary to the rules is dead and if marked, anything that it has displaced in its travel is put back in place.

However, the opponent has the right to apply the advantage rule and declare it to be valid. In this case, the boule pointed or shot, is valid and anything it has displaced remains in its place.

POINTS AND MEASURING

Article 25, Temporary removal of boules

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

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

Article 26, Measuring of points

The measuring of a point is the responsibility of the player who last played or by one of their team-mates. The opponents always have the right to measure after one of these players.

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

Notably, it is forbidden to effect measurements with the feet. The players who do not observe this rule will incur the penalties outlined in article 35.

Whatever positions the boules to be measured may hold, and at whatever stage the end may be, an umpire can be consulted and their decision is final. During the time that an umpire is measuring the players must be at least 2 metres away.

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

Article 27, Removed Boules

It is forbidden for players to pick up played boules before the completion of an end.

At the completion of an end, all boules picked up before the agreement of points are dead. No claim is admissible on this subject.

If a player picks up one of their boules from the playing area while their partners have boules remaining, they will not be allowed to play them.

Article 28, Displacement of the boules or the jack

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

If, during the measurement of a point, the umpire disturbs or displaces the jack or a boule, the umpire will make an impartial decision.

Article 29, Boules equidistant from the jack

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

1) If the two teams have no more boules to play the end is dead and the jack belongs to the team which had scored the points in the previous end, or who had won the draw.
2) If only one team has boules at its disposition, it plays them and scores as many points as it has boules closer to the jack than the nearest opponent’s boule.
3) If both teams have boules at their disposition, it is for the team which played the last boule to play again, then the opposing team, and so on alternately until the point belongs to one of them. When only one team possesses boules, the arrangements set out in the preceding paragraph apply.

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

Article 30, Foreign bodies adhering to the boules or jack
Any foreign bodies adhering to the boules or the jack must be removed before measuring a point.

Article 31, Complaints
To be considered, any complaint must be made to an umpire. As soon as the game is finished, no complaint can be accepted.

DISCIPLINE

Article 32, Penalties for absent teams or players
At the time of the draw and the announcement of its result, the players must be present at the control table. A quarter of an hour after the announcement of these results, the team which is absent from the terrain will be penalised one point which is awarded to their opponents. This time limit is reduced to 5 minutes in games that are timed.

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

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

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

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

An incomplete team has the right to start a game without waiting for its absent player; nevertheless, it does not use the boules of that player.

No player may be absent from a game or leave the playing area without the authorisation of an umpire. In any case this absence will not interrupt the course of the game, nor the obligation for the partners to play their boules in the specified minute. If the player has not returned by the time they are to play their boules, they are cancelled at the rate of one boule per minute.

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

In the case of an accident or medical problem officially recognised by a doctor, the player may be granted a maximum absence of fifteen minutes. If using this option should prove fraudulent, the player and their team will be immediately excluded from the competition.

Article 33, Late arrival of players
If, after an end has started, the missing player arrives, they do not take part in this end. The player is accepted into the game only as from the following end.

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

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

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

The first end of a game is considered as having started as soon as the jack has been thrown, regardless of the validity of the throw. The following ends are considered to have started as soon as the last boule from the previous end has stopped.

Article 34, Replacement of a player
The replacement of a player in Doubles, or of one or two players in Triples, is permitted before the official announcement of the commencement of the competition (gun, whistle, announcement, etc.), on condition that the substitute(s) was/were not previously registered in the competition as belonging to another team.

Article 35, Penalties
For non-observation of the rules during a game, the players incur the following penalties:

1) Warning, which is officially marked by an umpire presenting a yellow card to the player at fault.

   However, a yellow card for exceeding the time limit will be imposed on all the players of the offending team. If one of these players has already been given a yellow card, they will be penalised by disqualification of the boule played or to be played.

2) Disqualification of the boule played or to be played, which is officially marked by an umpire presenting an orange card to the player at fault.
3) Exclusion of the responsible player for the game, which is officially marked by an umpire presenting a red card to the player at fault.
4) Disqualification of the team responsible.
5) Disqualification of the two teams in case of complicity.

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

Article 36, Bad weather
In the event of inclement weather, such as heavy rain, any end started must be completed, unless a contrary decision is made by an umpire, who is the only person authorised, after consultation with the jury or organising committee, to make the decision to stop the games or, for the cancellation of the competition in the case of force majeure.

Article 37, New phase of play
If, after the announcement to start a new phase of the competition (2nd round, 3rd round, etc.), certain games of the previous phase have not been completed, an umpire may, noting that the smooth running of the competition can no longer be assured, ask the jury or the organising committee to stop all outstanding games in progress or even the competition.

Article 38, Lack of Sportsmanship
The teams that argue during a game, who show lack of sportsmanship and respect towards the public, the organisers or the umpires, will be excluded from the competition. This exclusion can incur non-acceptance of the results, as well as the application of penalties set out in article 39.

Article 39, Bad behaviour
The player who is guilty of bad behaviour, or worse, violence towards an official, an umpire, another player or a spectator incurs one or several of the following penalties, depending on the seriousness of the offence.

1) Exclusion from the competition.
2) Withdrawal of licence or of the official document.
3) Confiscation or restitution of expenses and prizes.

The penalty imposed on the guilty player can also be imposed on their team-mates.

Penalty 1 is imposed by an umpire.

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

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

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

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

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

Any player who does not observe these rules, will be excluded from the competition if they persist after a warning from an umpire.

Article 40, Duties of the Umpires

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

Subject to the seriousness of the offence, they have the authority to exclude for a game or disqualify from the competition, any player or any team who refuses to comply with their decision.

The spectators with valid or suspended licences, who, by their behaviour, are the origin of incidents on the terrain of play, will be the subject of an umpire's report to the Federal executive. The latter will summon the guilty party or parties before a competent Disciplinary Committee who will decide on the penalties to apply.

Article 41, Composition and decisions of the Jury

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

These rules have been approved by the Executive Committee of the FIPJP - December 2020