

# THE OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL RULES OF THE GAME OF PETANQUE

*As amended by The Fédération Internationale de Pétanque et Jeu Provençal at Dakar November 2008, and incorporating changes approved by FPUSA in 2009 to improve clarity and to take into account local conditions.*

## — GENERAL —

### ***Article 1 — Composition of Teams***

Pétanque is a sport in which

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

In triples, each player uses 2 boules.

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

No other version of the game is allowed.

### ***Article 2a — Characteristics of Approved Boules***

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

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

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

- 4) They must not be filled with any foreign material (e.g. sand or mercury). Boules must not be tampered with in any way, nor altered or modified after manufacture by an F.I.P.J.P.–approved maker. It is particularly forbidden to re-temper the boules in order to modify the hardness provided by the manufacturer.

However the player's name or initials may be engraved on them as well as various logos, initials and acronyms applied during manufacture.

### ***Article 2b — Penalties for Non-conforming Boules***

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Article 3 — Approved Jacks***

Jacks (Cochonnets) are made entirely of wood. \*

Their diameter must be 30 mm (within a tolerance of  $\pm 1$  mm).

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

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

### ***Article 4 — Licenses***

Before the start of a competition, each player must present his or her license (FPUSA membership card). He or she must also present it upon request by the Umpire or by an opponent unless it was retained at registration.

## **— PLAY —**

### ***Article 5 — Regulation Terrains***

The game of Petanque is played on any ground. However by a decision of the organizing committee or the Umpire teams may be asked to play on a marked court whose minimum dimensions must be as follows:

For National Championships and International Competitions: 15 meters long and 4 meters wide.

For other competitions Federations may allow variations down to 12 meters x 3 meters.

When marked courts are placed end to end, end lines common to both courts are considered dead ball lines.

If the playing area is surrounded by solid barriers it is recommended that they be a minimum of 1 meter outside the dead ball line.

Games are played up to 13 points. Pool and qualifying round games may be played to 11 points. *\*A 15-point final match may be played at the discretion of the organizer.*

Competitions can be organized with time-limited games.

### ***Article 6 — Starting the Game, Playing Circle***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

touch the ground outside the circle. A player with a lower-body disability may place only one foot in the circle as necessary.

For those playing from a wheelchair at least one wheel (that on the side of the throwing arm) must rest inside the circle.

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

### ***Article 7 — Jack Placement***

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

- 1) The distance from it to the internal edge of the circle must be between
  - 4 meters min. and 8 meters max. for Minors (Age 11 & under).
  - 5 meters min. and 9 meters max. for Cadets (Ages 12 to 14)
  - 6 meters min. and 10 meters max. for Juniors and Seniors.
- 2) The circle must be a minimum of 1 meter from any obstacle.
- 3) The jack must be a minimum of 1 meter from any obstacle or out-of-bounds area.
- 4) The jack must be visible to the player whose feet are entirely inside the circle and who is standing absolutely upright. In case of a dispute the Umpire will decide if the jack is visible and his or her decision is final.

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

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

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

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

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

A team has one minute in which to make their three throws of the jack.

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

### ***Article 8 — Validity of the Jack***

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

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

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

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

### ***Article 9 — Jack Out-of-Play***

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

- 1) When it is displaced into an out-of-bounds area even if it comes back onto the playing area. A jack on the line of the boundary is still in play. It only becomes dead after having completely crossed the boundary. A jack floating freely in water is dead.
- 2) When, though still on the playing area, the displaced jack is not visible from the circle as defined in Article 7. However a jack hidden by a boule is not dead. The Umpire may temporarily remove a boule to ascertain whether the jack is visible or not.
- 3) When the jack is displaced to more than 20 meters or less than 3 meters from the playing circle.
  - 4a) When on marked-out courts the jack crosses more than one court immediately to the side of the court in use or when it crosses the end line of the court.
  - 4b) When playing time-limited games on contiguous courts the jack crosses into another court.
- 5) When the displaced jack cannot be found after a 5 minute maximum search time.
- 6) When there is an out-of-bounds area between the jack and the playing circle.

### ***Article 10 — Removal of Obstacles***

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

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

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

### ***Article 10a — Changing, Breaking, Boule or Jack***

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

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

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

## — JACK —

### ***Article 11 — Jack Masked or Displaced***

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

If the wind or slope of the terrain moves the stationary jack, it is put back in its place providing its position had been marked.

The same applies if the jack is moved accidentally by the Umpire, a player, a spectator, a boule or jack from another game, an animal or any moving object.

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

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

### ***Article 12 — Jack Moved into Another Game***

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

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

The players concerned must show patience and courtesy.

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

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

If during a round the jack becomes dead, one of three cases can apply:

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

### ***Article 14 — Placement of Jack after Interference***

- 1) If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or diverted by a spectator or by the Umpire it remains where it stops.
- 2) If the jack, having been hit, is stopped or diverted by a player who is standing inside the dead boule line his 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 from its original position to the point where it is found, up to a maximum distance of 20 meters from the circle and so that it is visible.

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

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

## **— BOULES —**

### ***Article 15 — Playing First and Following Boules***

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

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

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

Boules must be played one at a time.

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

It is forbidden to wet the boules or the jack. *\*In dry conditions a player may not carry a moistened boule-cloth.*

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

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

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

### ***Article 16 — Players & Spectators - Game Conduct***

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

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

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

The players who do not observe these rules may be banned from the competition if, after a warning from the Umpire, they persist in their conduct.

### ***Article 17 — Practicing, Boules Leaving Court***

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

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

### ***Article 18 — Boules Out-of-Play***

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

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

If the boule subsequently comes back into the playing area, either because of the slope of the ground or by having rebounded from any object, moving or stationary, it is immediately taken out of the game.

Anything that it has displaced after reentering the playing area is put back in place.

Any dead boule must immediately be removed from the playing area. If it is not it will be deemed live once the next boule is played by the opposing team.

### ***Article 19 — Interference With Boules***

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

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

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

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

- 1) Leave it where it stopped, or
- 2) Place it on the extension of a line going from the original position where it was hit to where it is found, but only within the boundary of the playing area and only if its position was previously marked.

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

### ***Article 20 — Playing Time Allowed***

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

This rule also applies to the throwing of the jack after each round, that's to say 1 minute for all 3 throws. Infractions of this rule incur the penalties described in Article 34.

### ***Article 21 — Displacement of Boules***

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

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

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

### ***Article 22 — Playing Wrong Boules***

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

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

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

### ***Article 23 — Boules Played From Wrong Circle***

Any boule played from a circle other than that from which the jack was thrown is dead. Anything it has displaced is put back in place, on condition that its position was marked.

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

## **— POINTS AND MEASURING —**

### ***Article 24 — Moving Boules for Measuring***

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

### ***Article 25 — Measuring Points***

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

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

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

### ***Article 26 — Removing Boules***

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

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

### ***Article 27 — Displacement While Measuring***

If while measuring a player moves the jack or a boule being measured, his or her team loses the point. If during the measurement of a point the Umpire disturbs or moves the jack or a boule, he or she will make an equitable decision.

### ***Article 28 — Equidistant Boules, Round Void***

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

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

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

### ***Article 29 — Removal of Debris for Measuring***

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

### ***Article 30 — Complaints***

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

The Umpire or the Tournament Director is responsible for checking the opposing team for licenses (membership cards), player classification, court, boules, etc.

## **— DISCIPLINE —**

### ***Article 31 — Penalties for Absent Teams or Players***

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

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

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

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

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

No player may leave a game or the terrain while a game is in progress without the permission of the Umpire. If this has not been granted, the provisions of this article and of Article 32 apply.

*\* It is the FPUSA's policy to give the Organizing Committee discretion to eliminate the quarter-hour waiting period as it judges necessary for the smooth running of the competition. In this case the rules described above for time-limited games shall apply.*

### ***Article 32 — Arrival of Absent Players***

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Article 33 — Replacement of Players***

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

### ***Article 34 — Penalties***

Players who break the rules incur the following penalties:

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

### ***Article 35 — Bad Weather***

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

### ***Article 36 — Unfinished Games***

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

### ***Article 37 — Lack of Sportsmanship***

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

### ***Article 38 — Disruptive Behavior***

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

- 1) Exclusion from the competition.
- 2) Withdrawal of license (FPUSA membership card).
- 3) Confiscation or restitution of rewards and prizes.

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

Penalty 1 is imposed by the Umpire.

Penalty 2 is imposed by the Jury.

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

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

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

### ***Article 39 — Umpires' Duties, Spectators' Conduct***

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

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

### ***Article 40 — Composition and Duties of Jury***

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

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOR of the FPUSA**

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

At all FPUSA-affiliated events (i.e., all events that are hosted or co-hosted by FPUSA clubs and carry FPUSA insurance, as well as all FPUSA Title Tournaments), all participants are required to exhibit good sportsmanship toward their teammates, their opponents, tournament organizers, officials and spectators.

The following are violations of the Code of Behavior:

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