



Competition Hosting Guide: Bocce

Special Olympics
Alberta





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INTRODUCTION

This resource is intended to be used in conjunction with [Special Olympics Alberta's Competition Hosting Guide](#). It will focus on considerations specific to Bocce.

In its Long-Term Athlete Development model, it is identified that Special Olympics must ensure that all athletes of all abilities are challenged to be the best that they can be using a fair and meaningful system of competition.

Competition is an important part of the sport experience for all athletes. LTAD recognizes this and the importance of a competition schedule that reflects the needs and interests of athletes in different sports and stages. Generally, in the Active Start and FUNdamentals stages, participants are neither training nor competing formally, but are focusing on establishing basic skills and having fun. As athletes move to subsequent stages, training and competition become more formalized and there is a need to balance the ratio of training to competition; that is, number and level of competition.

The meaning of competition will vary by age, sport, and LTAD stage. It may serve different purposes for some athletes, especially those in FUNdamentals and Learning to Train where fun, fitness, basic sport skills, experience, and participation are the main goals of recreational competition. For others, such as those in Training to Compete and Training to Win, optimizing potential and achieving world-class standards may be the aim.

Special Olympics Alberta's athletes reside across the province. Some reside in rural communities, others in urban centres. Alberta's athletes range from Active Start to Training to Win, which means that there diversity in the need for competitions.

Every community in Alberta has the capacity to host a Bocce competition for Special Olympics. The **TYPE** and **LEVEL** of competition that can be hosted will vary across communities, but **EVERY** competition can be meaningful. As cited in the Long-Term Athlete Development model,

"Without competition, Special Olympics would lose the essence of what separates 'participation' from skill acquisition and success. While involvement in sport may be praiseworthy, competition pushes our athletes towards achieving bigger goals and greater confidence."

- Glenn MacDonell, President & CEO, Special Olympics Ontario



IDENTIFYING THE TYPE OF COMPETITION TO HOST

Special Olympics Alberta oversees the sanctioning of the following types of competitions:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Invitationals: | Competitions organized by Affiliates where the Affiliate is responsible for extending invitations directly to those it wishes to invite. |
| Opens: | Competitions organized by Affiliates where the competition is open to athletes from any Affiliate. |
| Provincial Qualifiers: | Competitions that serve to qualify athletes to compete at the Special Olympics Alberta Summer or Winter Games. |
| Unified: | Competitions that bring together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to train and compete on the same team. |

Consider... **What** levels of athlete do you want to participate in the event?

- Is the intention to invite Affiliates in close proximity for a morning, afternoon or evening event? If so, consider hosting an Invitational.
- Do you hope to have participation from different parts of the province? If so, consider hosting an Open.
- Are you hosting a competition for the purpose of qualifying athletes to participate in the next Provincial Games and are prepared to host all events in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Canada Rules for Bocce? If so, consider hosting a Provincial Qualifier.
- Are there fewer athletes in your area to participate or do you want to foster understanding of Special Olympics competition? Consider a [Unified Sports](#) competition!

Consider... **Where** will you be hosting your event?

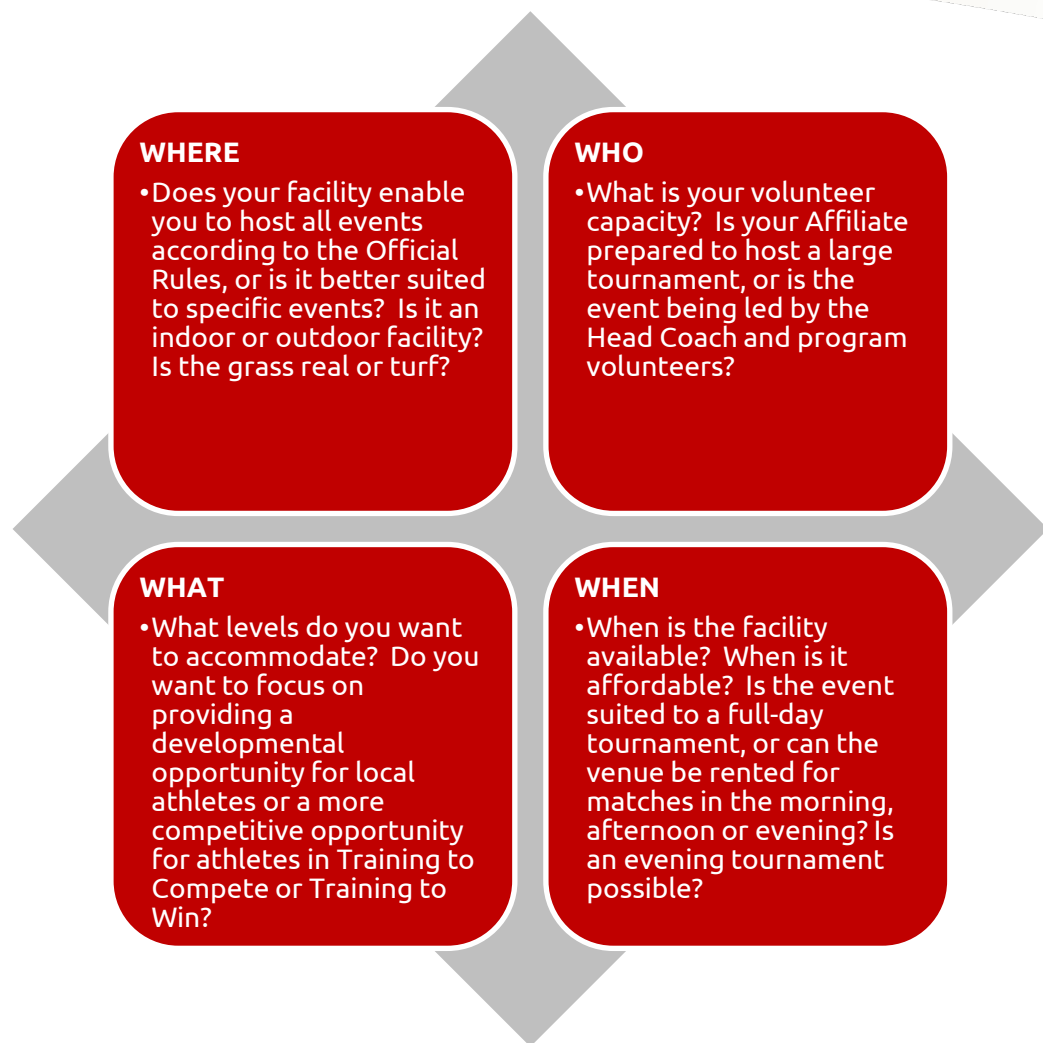
- Does your venue event the requirements in the Official Sport Rules for Bocce, or will modifications to the rules be needed to accommodate the facility?
- Will indoor or outdoor spaces be used?

Consider... **Who** are your volunteers and what is your volunteer capacity?

- Do you have the human capacity to operation a Bocce tournament open to any athlete?
- Do you have enough volunteers for a limited tournament inviting a few close Affiliates?
- Would an evening event be possible to organize by a coach and volunteers?

Consider... **When** are you able to organize a tournament?

- Can your volunteers organize a 2-hour friendly event with a limited number of athletes?
- Do your volunteers have the time to organize a full-day tournament?
- When is it most affordable to host?
- When are volunteers most likely to be available?



Customize the event you are hosting to the limitations of your venue and volunteer capacity, and consider targeting specific events levels of development in the hosting of events.

OFFICIAL EVENTS

- Singles (one player per team)
- Doubles (two players per team)
- Team Competition (four players per team)

Affiliates may choose to only offer some of the events as opposed to the full program for competitions that are not serving as Provincial Games qualifying competitions.

RULES



[Special Olympics Canada Official Sport Rules](#) must be followed for all Provincial Qualifiers, but may be adapted for other types of competition provided that safety is maintained.

REGISTRATION

Special Olympics Alberta has produced competition invitation and intent to participate forms, electronic registration forms and other resources for competition hosts, which can be accessed [here](#).

[Registration forms for Bocce](#) are available for download, customization and circulation. Please note that these forms are not intended to be printed, but rather used as a means of collecting information electronically and avoiding manual entry of registration information. None of the fields are locked or restricted, enabling the event organizer to modify the form as needed to align with the intentions of their competition.

DIVISIONING PROCESS

1. It is suggested that, before competition begins, the Tournament Director ensures that divisions are appropriate. Athletes may be divisioned based on previous experience or, in the case of larger competitions, modified games. The modified game procedure below will provide a score that will help place athletes in the most equitable divisions possible.
2. Each athlete should play three modified games, called a set. The athlete should alternate from each end of the court and play the following allotted balls. The athlete should not surpass the foul line when he/she plays the allotted balls:
 - a. The referee should place the pallina at the 30-foot line, and the player should play eight balls. The referee will measure the closest three balls and record their distance in centimeters.
 - b. The referee will then place the pallina at the 40-foot line, and the player should play eight balls. The referee will measure the closest three balls and record their distance in centimeters.
 - c. The referee will then place the pallina at the 50-foot line, and the player should play eight balls. The referee will measure the closest three balls and record their distance in centimeters.
 - d. During the divisioning process, if the pallina is moved from its spot at 30ft, 40ft or 50ft, it is to be replaced on the spot before the next ball is rolled and before any measurements are taken.
 - e. Measurements will be taken from the centre side of the Bocce ball to the centre side of the pallina, for a total of nine measurements.
 - f. These divisioning procedures comply with the Special Olympics maximum performance rule.



VENUE

The Bocce venue should be designed to keep non-competing athletes out of competitive areas. Experience has shown that keeping the field of play free of spectators and non-competing athletes will greatly aid the progress of the competition.

Alternate indoor facilities should be secured when possible reducing the effects of inclement weather.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The equipment needed will vary according to the events being held within the competition. The following list suggests equipment to consider having onsite:

- Computer and printer (if required for Provincial Qualifiers to print post-divisioning schedules)
- Printer paper
- Ribbons
- Markers, pens, pencils, clipboards for the scorekeepers
- Chairs/benches for teams and officials
- Tables for scorekeepers, registration desk etc.
- Scoresheets
- Bocce balls and pallinas
- Scoreboards
- Bristol board or other material to post results and divisions
- Copies of rules for scorekeepers and referees
- Arrange for first aiders to be in attendance
- First aid supplies
- Walkie talkies (to communicate between first aid station and courts, courts and tournament organizers etc.)
- Bocce Courts – should be 120' long by 12' wide
- Court markings (or flags) to show the 10' and 60' marks
- Coloured paddles to show the colour of ball to shoot
- Clipboards and marking pens for scoring- 1 per court
- Tape measures, marking sticks, string or other measuring device

COACHES EVENTING / SAMPLE AGENDA

- Review scratches and communicate to the Referee in Chief.
- Review schedule and venue layout.
- Distribute athlete numbers.
- Discuss marshaling, competition and awards procedures with the coaches, ensuring that each understand how the event is to be run.
- Answer questions.

SAMPLE DAY OF AGENDA



- 1. Pre Competition Preparation**
 - Final draft of tournament (or divisioning) schedule created
- 2. Committee Arrival for Set-Up** **7:30 a.m.**
 - 3 to set up volunteer room/statistics room
 - 3 to set up volunteer check in/registration: t-shirts, volunteer forms and name tags
 - 3 to set up gym area: arrange benches for each team, scoring table and spectator seating for each court.
- 3. Competition Volunteers Arrival** **8:00 a.m.**
 - Directed to volunteer room to drop off stuff, pick up t-shirts, name tags and fill out volunteer forms
 - Volunteer Orientation to be held immediately following arrival
- 4. Team Arrival & Registration** **8:15 a.m.**
 - Teams are directed to the change rooms, coaches to sign in at the registration table and pick up packages
 - As spectators arrive they are to be informed about the spectator seating
- 5. Team Warm-Ups Begin** **8:30 a.m.**
 - Teams can utilize their assigned courts to stretch and warm-up.
- 6. Registration Table Closes** **8:45 a.m.**
 - Volunteer to bring signed rosters and money box to statistics room
- 7. Coaches Meeting & Officials/Scorekeepers Meeting** **8:45 a.m.**
- 8. Warm Up Complete** **9:00 a.m.**
- 9. Opening Ceremonies** **9:02 a.m.**
 - Athletes to parade in by teams and lead onto court by volunteer
 - Choose athletes to perform Athletes Oath
- 10. First Competition to Begin** **9:15 a.m.**
- 11. Pick up Lunch (If applicable)** **11:00 a.m.**
 - Lunch picked up and organized into team boxes
- 12. Serve Lunch** **11:30 a.m.**
- 13. End of Competition** **3:00 p.m.**
 - Ribbons handed out
- 14. Tear Down** **3:05 p.m.**



SAMPLE EVENT FLOW

Bocce is a game of skill and finesse and usually ends when a certain amount of points are attained. However, when it comes to actual competitions, it is important to insert a curfew to ensure that games are played on time and that one team is not waiting on another player in another court. Failure to keep tournaments on time can cause unnecessary anxiety for players, coaches and spectators.

The following sample format may be used to ensure speedy play for most competitions:

1. Courts are generally 120' long by 12' wide.
2. Games start every 40 minutes.
3. A bell starts all games at the same time. At the 22-minute mark, the bell rings signifying that the end currently being played will be the last.
4. Singles or pairs – first team to reach 12 points wins. For team play, first teams to score 16 points wins.
5. Once the athlete steps into the court, there is no coaching. However, sometimes it is prudent for the coach to remind the athlete to deliver the ball.
6. An optional rule may be used when you want to expedite play (cannot be done for Provincial Qualifiers): “Pallina one toss rule” - the throwing team has one toss to get a ball in play. If the athlete is not successful, the referee will place the pallina in the middle between the 10' and 50' markers
7. No overtime except in playoff and medal games. The winner is decided by one player (as selected by his/her teammates) throwing one ball. The ball ending up closest to the pallina wins (first tossed ball remains in play).

SAMPLE DIVISION SCHEDULES

Sample schedules for divisions with two to seven teams are available [here](#). These are fully customizable. Enter the team names at the top of the schedule and the matches will be completed automatically. Manually adjust the start times as needed.



SAMPLE SCORESHEETS

Sample scoresheets are available. These are fully customizable. Click to access:

- [Pair/Team Scoresheets](#)
- [Individual Scoresheets](#)

JOB DESCRIPTIONS: OFFICIALS

Certification for Bocce officials does not yet exist; however, Referees should be qualified Bocce experts and fully knowledgeable of the Special Olympics Canada Bocce rules.

Community Bocce club members may be able to act as competition officials or can assist in arranging for Bocce experts to work as referees for the tournament. Knowledgeable volunteers can act as the scorekeepers.

It is recommended that there is always at least one Bocce referee per court. At Provincial Qualifiers, a full complement of officials will be present.

REFEREE IN CHIEF (1)

- The Referee in Chief has final authority over all matters pertaining to the competition.
- They approve and assign duties to various officials, ensures the rules are enforced, helps with decisions on divisioning, protests, etc., ensures that the competition remains on schedule.
- They will offer a written report on the tournament after the event, including any disciplinary actions or concerns about the event.

SCOREKEEPER (1 PER COURT)

- The scorekeeper will track the score, substitutions, ball delivery etc. during games.
- They will ensure that all players enter each game during the Divisioning rounds (for team play competitions).

REFEREE (1 PER COURT)

- Ensure that the SOC Bocce Rules are being enforced on the court.

SAFETY

The safety of the Special Olympics athlete must be the first priority in staging any competitive event. Set up the venue and design the flow of athletes to ensure safety.

Competition organizers are encouraged to consider the needs for having qualified medical personnel at the venue site. Having onsite medical personnel is encouraged for all competitions, particularly larger-scale events. This may include St John's Ambulance, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), Registered Nurses, Medical Doctors, Physiotherapists, Paramedics, etc.



Outdoor athletic events require shaded and protective areas for athletes, coaches and volunteers. Water should be readily accessible to all participants. Precautions must be taken to avoid heat exhaustion among participants.

AWARDS

All competitors may be awarded participation ribbons with the top-3 entries in each division receiving 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards accordingly.

Ribbons are provided by Special Olympics Alberta and can be requested with the submission of the sanction request.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q1 When can an athlete be coached?
A1 No coaching once the athlete steps onto the court. The coach can determine order. This may be relaxed as some coaches may be asked to step in as officials to help keep the game move along.
- Q2 What happens if any part of the ball or pallina is touching the border?
A2 The ball or pallina is in play.
- Q3 What if the pallina is knocked out of the court?
A3 If the referee can move the pallina to its last known position, then the referee should do so. If the referee cannot make this determination, the frame is dead, and a new frame started.
- Q4 Where is the foul line?
A4 The courts themselves are not marked but the border tape is. The thrower's foot cannot step on the line but not cross the line.
- Q5 How many balls can an athlete throw for teams of less than 4 players?
A5 One player can throw a second ball. The extra ball will be thrown by a different player before another can repeat the throw.
- Q6 A player throws a wrong colour ball? What do I do?
A6 Wait until the thrown ball comes to a complete stop and then switch the balls for the proper colour.
- Q7 What happens when the wrong team throws a ball (i.e. improper rotation). What do I do?
A7 If a team wrongly throws the pallina and the first ball, the referee will return the ball and ask the proper team to throw the pallina and first ball. If a team throws out of sequence during the frame, the referee should try and stop the ball. If the referee cannot stop the ball, the referee should replace the pallina and "balls in contention" to where they were before the out of rotation delivery took place.



- Q8 When can timeouts be called?
- A8 Due to time limitations, only 1 timeout can be called by a team. If the referee suspects that the timeout is being intentionally used to delay the game before curfew, the referee may deny the time out.
- Q9 What happens if there is an intentional delay of game (i.e. measurements or otherwise)?
- A9 If the referee is of the opinion that a call for a measurement is unreasonable and is being used to intentionally delay the game, the referee MUST give warning to the offending team. If there is a repeated infraction for intentional delay, the delaying team will forfeit the match.
- Q10 Can the referee call a timeout at their own discretion?
- A10 Yes. The referee has discretion to call a time out (i.e. medical, equipment or behavioural issue).
- Q11 What happens if the game is tied at curfew? Is there overtime?
- A11 The game remains tied. There is no overtime in regular play. However, in those matches where there are “medal rounds”, the match will go to an overtime where a single ball toss to the pallina (placed in the centre between the 30ft and 50ft. lines. The ball which ends up closest to the pallina will decide the game.
- Any person from the teams can be designated to toss the ball. The order of play will be the last team that scored will be the first team to throw the ball. That first ball remains in play and can be hit by the opposition ball.
- Q12 Are any mechanical aids allowed?
- A12 Some players have visual impairments. Referees have discretion to allow for reasonable accommodation. i.e. colourful sticks, cones, bells, etc.
- Q13 Where do the players stand?
- A13 During play, only one player should be in the court. At the end of the frame, the other players may come to the end of the court to prepare for the next frame.
- Q14 What is involved with scoring?
- A14 There are two parts to official scoring: (1) There is an official scorer on the side of the court. He/she will keep score. (2) The team captains will be in charge of posting the score on the scoreboard. The referee should confirm that the scoreboard tally is correct.