



Officiating Guide

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Who Can Play Boccia?

Boccia is a sport open to athletes who have movement difficulties in all four limbs. This may be as a result of a number of conditions such as: cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury or stroke, spinal cord damage, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and motor neurone disease. Most boccia athletes use a wheelchair for daily mobility, however some may walk, with some assistance and will use a standard chair to play boccia.

There are 4 classes in boccia: BC1 through to BC4.

BC1

Generally use a power wheelchair for daily use. They often require assistance to adjust their sitting position or to grasp a boccia ball. Players may use their hands or feet to propel the ball during play. BC1 players may utilise an assistant on the court to help with their grasp of the ball before their shot.

BC2

These athletes have better trunk control than a BC1 player. They may be able to grasp and throw a boccia ball, but will have difficulty with throwing a ball overhead, or generating lots of power or fast movements with their throws. Players are able to spread their fingers and thumb but not quickly. The player might be able to walk or stand with some assistance, however as they have much more functional ability than BC1 players they are not permitted to use an assistive device or an assistant.

BC3

Players in this class have the most significant movement difficulties of their limbs. These players are unable to grasp, throw or kick the ball into the playing area consistently and purposely beyond the V-line on the boccia court. They are allowed to use ramps and assistive devices to drive the ball into the playing zone. They may utilise an assistant to support the placement of the ball on the ramp.

BC4

Players in this class have significant movement difficulties in all four limbs that is a degenerative or other (non-cerebral) neurological disorder. Players have poor muscle strength and co-ordination difficulties combined with poor trunk control. They may be able to push a manual chair. Athletes often use their arms or a head thrust to bring themselves to an upright sitting position after a throw. BC4 players can grasp and throw a ball into the playing area. These players are not permitted to use an assistant or throwing chair.

What is Officiating?

Officiating is about enforcing the rules of the sport, ensuring the competition is conducted in a safe manner and making sport fun and fair. It is about demonstrating leadership, respect and integrity that will help athletes in all aspects of their lives.

Good officials are able concentrate and pay attention to detail. They know how to handle pressure when making decisions and are able to work cooperatively with other officials and volunteers to make a competition run smoothly. Good officials understand the environment they are working in and how this positively impacts on the athletes' physical, psychological and social development.

The role of the official

Officiating is not just about managing people and the risks involved with competition, nor is it solely about enforcing the rules of the sport. Being an official involves providing leadership, guidance and working with players and coaches to facilitate positive attitudes and values that can last a lifetime.

Why do people participate in boccia?

People are involved in boccia for a variety of reasons. As an official you should consider what you want to gain from officiating and why athletes participate. This will influence how you approach your officiating and the goals you set.

Some of the reasons people play boccia include:

- Improving fitness and skill levels
- Making new friends
- Being part of a team
- Having fun and enjoyment
- Achieving goals

Some of the reasons people officiate boccia include:

- Improving their knowledge and skills
- Giving something back to the sport
- Helping others achieve their goals
- Staying involved in a sport they love
- Being too old to play

What makes an effective official?

An effective official:

- Ensures the game is fair and safe for all players.
- Intelligently and quickly applies the spirit of the rules.
- Shows control and respectfully manages players, coaches and spectators.
- Is well organized, on time and plans ahead.
- Is a good communicator.
- Is able and willing to continually learn.
- Is motivated and enthusiastic.

Setup

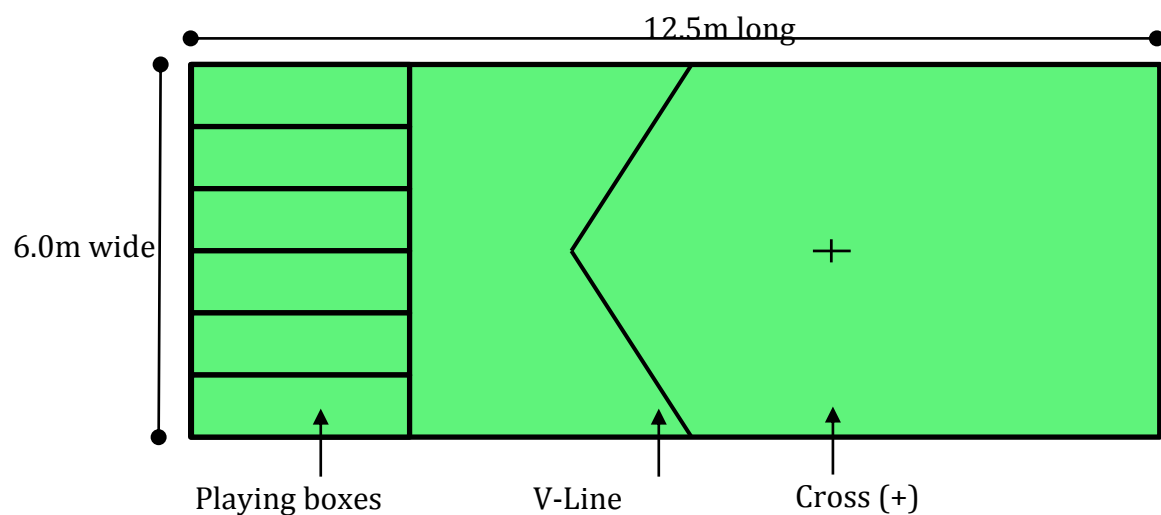
Boccia is played on a flat and smooth surface. The court dimensions are:

- 12.5m in length
- 6.0m in width

This includes 6 playing boxes, the v-line and the cross (+).

All court markings are to be:

- 2cm (narrow) for the internal box lines and cross.
- 4-5cm (wide) for the boundary; throwing; and v-line.



The v-line separates the court in two areas. The jack ball must cross over this in order to be considered in play.

If the jack is knocked out of court during the match or the game goes to a tie-break, the jack is placed on the cross (+).

Boccia is played with:

- A white 'jack' ball
- 6 red coloured balls
- 6 blue coloured balls

There are always two sides playing against each other.

- Individuals
- Pairs
- Teams (of three)

To win the game, a side must have the highest score at the end of play (four, five or six ends respectively).

Format

Boccia is an attack and defend game with two sides competing over a set number of ends. The aim of boccia is to get your coloured balls as close as possible to the white ball (called the jack).

Before the match

A coin toss is done with the winning side choosing to be red or blue.

First end

- The red side starts the first end by playing the jack (white ball) into court.
 - The jack ball must cross the 'v-line' to be in play.
- The red side then plays their first coloured ball.
- The blue side then plays their first coloured ball.
- The colour not closest to the jack must play until they either manage to get closer to the jack, or run out of coloured balls.
- The side with remaining coloured balls then plays out.
- The end is completed when all coloured balls from both sides have been played.
- The score is determined by awarding one point for every ball of the same colour closer to the jack than the nearest opposing coloured ball.

Second end

- The blue side starts the second by playing the jack (white ball) into court.
 - The jack ball must cross the 'v-line' to be in play.
- The blue side then plays their first coloured ball.
- The red side then plays their first coloured ball.
- The remainder of the end is repeated in similar fashion to the first end.

After both ends have been completed, the winning side will be the one with the higher accumulative score. If the scores are equal, a tie-break will be played.

Equipment

To assist in determining the shot and score, the referee can use a range of measuring equipment which are used for specific purposes.

Referee paddle

A red / blue indicating paddle is used by referees to signal what colour is to play next.



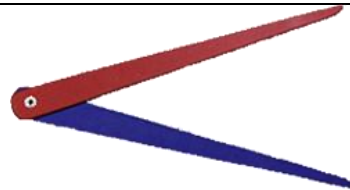
Tape measures

In order to determine which colour ball (red or blue) is the closest to the jack, an everyday tape measure can be used – especially for long distances.



Callipers

Another useful tool to determine which side is to play next – especially for smaller distances.



Feeler gauges

These are great for measuring very small distances.



Torches

Particularly useful for when it is difficult to see which colour is the closest to the jack.



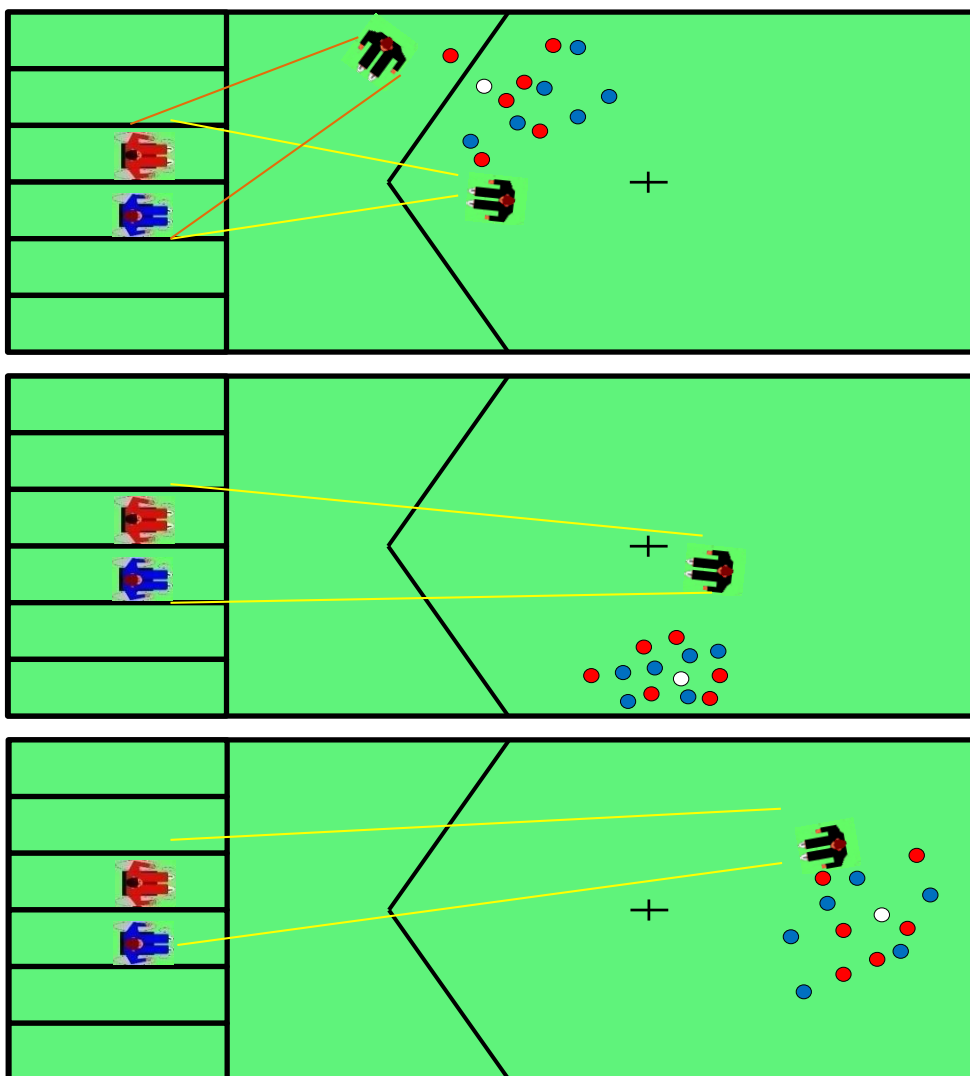
The majority of referees prefer to use their own equipment as they are often more familiar and comfortable with it.

Positioning and Movement

You should adopt a position on the court which you:

- Remain on the court. You should only take up a position outside of the playing area when the jack is very close to the boundary line.
- Do not obscure / interfere with the players' view of the jack ball by moving in front of or behind the jack ball (line of view to scoreboard and release of ball).
- Remain close enough to the jack ball to be able to see it and stop any illegally played shots from disturbing it.
- Remain close enough to the playing boxes to be able to see all players, their equipment and the court lines.
- Avoid remaining in one position throughout the entirety of the match. Be seen to be moving around the court to watch progress of play and be alert to what is happening in the playing boxes.
- Always maintain eye contact on your court.

Whatever position you take, it is important that you keep still and quiet while a player is preparing to play a shot. For example:



Communication

Throughout the course of a match be alert to the fact that players may ask questions about the score.

Avoid standing with hands in pockets or watching matches on other courts. Verbally communicate all decisions coupled with the appropriate gesture.

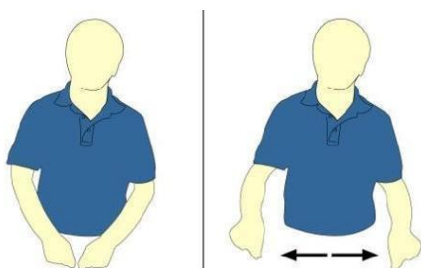
While communicating with the players:

- Be polite and ask the player to repeat any question that you fail to hear or understand.
- Be decisive and avoid making the player wait unduly for a reply.
- If in doubt, indicate to the player that a measure is required and ask them if they want you to do this.

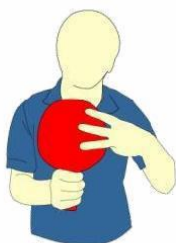
Common signals



Hold up paddle to indicate what colour is to play next.



Put hands together and move apart as if using a tape measure to indicate you are doing a measurement.



Put fingers over appropriate colour to indicate the score.

Conclusion

During play, the referee should:

- Be in position that all players can communicate with you.
- Make decisions promptly and confidently.
- Announce (project) your voice authoritatively.
- Maintain eye contact with players to confirm they have seen your signal.

Rules

Referee Cheat Sheet

Retraction: the removal of a ball from the court that was thrown when a violation was committed

Penalty: the awarding of two extra balls to the opposing side and will be thrown at the conclusion of the end.

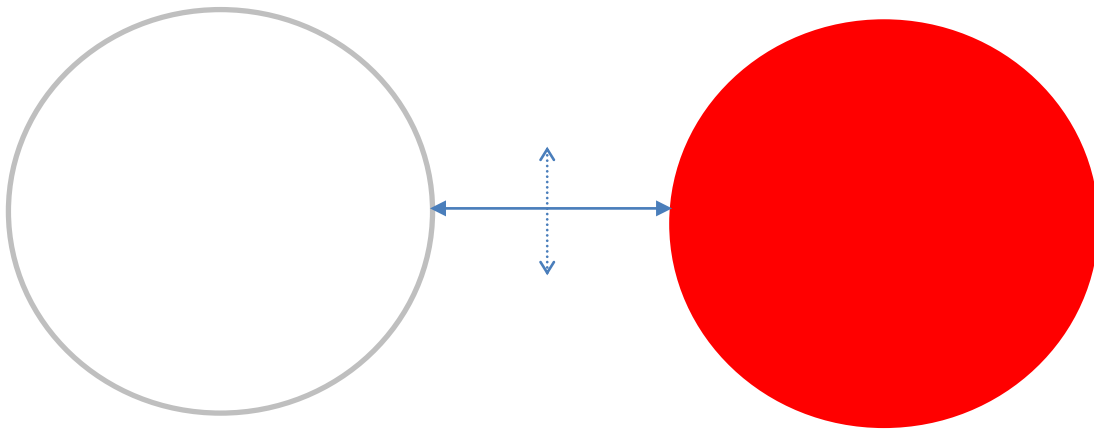
	Retraction	Penalty
Ramp assistant turns to look into court		✓
Inappropriate communication		✓
Preparing to play when not your turn		✓
Ramp assistant moves without instruction		✓
Player interference or disruption		✓
Player outside of box when releasing	✓	✓
Ramp assistant or equipment out of box when releasing	✓	✓
Player does not move ramp left and right	✓	✓
No buttock on chair when releasing	✓	✓
Ramp assistant turns into court when ball is released	✓	✓
Ramp overhanging front line when releasing	✓	✓
Ball thrown before referee indication	✓	
Ball played out of turn	✓	
Ball stops / assistant stops ball in ramp	✓	
Ramp player does not touch the ball last	✓	

Measuring

When it comes to measuring, the referee should measure (in a straight line) from the nearest points of the jack and each coloured ball. It is important, therefore, that the referee takes time and great care when measuring.

The referee should confirm that the nearest points on the balls have been identified by slowly moving the relevant measuring equipment 2-3 centimetres up and down between the two measured balls.

It is also important to ensure that all items of clothing and jewellery are tucked away to reduce the risk of moving either the jack or a coloured ball during the measure.



Physical position

When carrying out a measure, it is important that you take up a physical position which:

- You are comfortable (you may find kneeling on one or both knees is best).
- You are well balanced.
- Your head is directly above the balls being measured.
- You can see the nearest points on both balls being measured.



Measuring Process

The following procedures for starting and carrying out a measure, and for communicating your decision, are as follows:

Before starting

- Communicate with the players which balls are to be measured.
- Mention any balls that need to be moved for measuring and indicate if these are scoring shots or not.
- Ask the players to position themselves at a distance where they can see and allow you to measure.

Carrying out the measure

- Have a range of measuring equipment available and choose the piece equipment that is appropriate for the measure. The following table can be used as a guide.

Distance (gap)	Equipment
Larger than 2m	Large tape measure
25cm – 2m	Small tape measure
10cm – 25cm	Callipers
0 – 10mm	Feeler gauges
0mm	Torch

- Make sure that you move around the balls being measured (rather than through it) to reduce the risk of accidentally moving a ball.
- Always measure from jack to coloured ball.
- Go back to the first coloured ball to check the measures original setting.
- Communicate your decision to the players verbally (e.g. announce one point red) and with the appropriate gesture (e.g. one finger on the referee paddle showing red).
- Gain confirmation (e.g. nod or verbal) from players.

Measuring between two balls

- Measure from the jack ball to the closest red ball.
- Measure from the jack to the closest blue ball.
- Check the closest red ball again.

Measuring between three or more balls

- Determine which colour is the closest to the jack by measuring from the jack ball to the closest red ball and closest blue ball.
- Taking the measures setting for colour that is not the closest, count the number of balls of the opposite colour that are closer to the jack (e.g. if red is the closest, measure the gap between closest blue ball and count the number of red balls that are closer to the jack).
- Check the measures original setting.

Using an assistant

In the case of either a long measure (more than 1 metre) or a measure that involves many balls close together, the referee can obtain assistance from another person.

The referee should:

- Position the assistant at the start end of the measure (at the jack).
- Give clear instructions to the assistant.
- Ensure that all aspects of the measuring process are carried out properly (ensure that a straight line is between the two balls).
- Make the final decision.

Conclusion

During play, the referee should:

- Measure when not sure and allow players to see this - do this while facing towards the players.
- Be consistent about the way of measuring - always measure from the jack to the coloured balls and use the measuring equipment EXACTLY the same each time.
- Use another person if needed for longer distances.

Using the Equipment

Referee paddle

The main reason for using a referee paddle is to indicate which colour is to play next.

When using the referee paddle, this should be held up around chest height towards the players so they are able to see which colour is to play next. Hold for 2-3 seconds and then put referee paddle behind your hand out of sight of players.



The other reason for using the referee paddle is to indicate the score at the completion of each end and the match.

You should hold up the appropriate number of fingers on the colour that has scored the points. Hold for 2-3 seconds until all players have acknowledged this.



Tape measures

- Place the bottom of the tape measure flat on the ground.
- Unwind sufficient string to cover the distance between the jack and coloured balls. Move the tape measure to the nearest points of the jack and coloured ball to be measured.
- Position the tip of the tape measure so that it touches the jack ball.
- Hold the pointer steady and extend the adjustable end towards the coloured ball until it touches at its' nearest point.
- Slowly move the tape up and down 2-3 centimetres up and down to confirm and check that the measure forms a straight line between both points.
- If incorrect adjust accordingly and repeat.
- Lock the tape measure in place and redo the measure to check that the setting is correct.
- Move the locked tape measure around to compare the setting against other coloured balls.
- Go back to the first coloured ball to check the measures original setting.



If the pointer did not reach the second coloured ball, the first coloured ball is closer.

If the pointer reached the second coloured ball and extended past this, the second coloured ball is closer.

If the pointer reached the second coloured ball at exactly the same distance, both coloured balls are equidistant.

Callipers

- Hold one leg of the calliper in one hand and the other leg in your other hand.
- Anchor both hands on the floor that allows the tips of the callipers to form a straight line between the jack and first coloured ball.
- Adjust the calliper so that the distance between the tips of the calliper legs are less than the distance between the nearest points of the jack and first coloured ball.
- Slowly adjust the calliper legs to that both tips are touching the nearest points of the measured balls.
- Carefully move the calliper up and down 2-3 centimetres up and down to confirm.
- If incorrect adjust accordingly and repeat.
- Tilt the calliper on an angle to remove.
- Holding the calliper in both hands, move the calliper around to compare the setting against other coloured balls.
- Go back to the first coloured ball to check the measures original setting.



If the caliper leg did not reach the second coloured ball, the first coloured balls is closer.

If the caliper leg reached the second coloured ball and extended past this, the second coloured ball is closer.

If the caliper leg reached the second coloured ball at exactly the same distance, both coloured balls are equidistant.

Feeler gauges

- Choose a selection of feeler gauges that seems appropriate to the measure to be made.
- Steady both hands on the floor.
- Pass the gauges down between the first coloured ball to be measured and the jack.
- If the gauges do not pass between the jack and coloured ball, remove them, reduce their thickness and try again.
- If the gauges pass between the jack and coloured ball, remove them, increase their thickness and repeat until there is a minimum contact with the jack and coloured ball.
- Without altering the setting of the gauges, move the gauges around to compare the setting against other coloured balls.
- Go back to the first coloured ball to check the measures original setting.

Torches

- Shine the torch into the space between the jack and coloured balls that best enables the nearest points to be seen.
- Check whether the jack and coloured ball are touching or not.
- Repeat for other coloured balls.

Reminders

During the match

Do not prevent a jack or coloured ball from crossing the boundary lines. If a ball is going to go out of court, stop this at the earliest possible opportunity after it has crossed the line.

A ball that has gone out of court should be indicated and players be made aware of this. These should be placed in a separate area that can be seen.

Make sure that your concentration is not broken due to:

- Getting involved in other duties outside of your role
- Paying prolonged attention to what is happening on other courts
- Keep conversations with spectators and the use of mobile phones to a minimum

When announcing the score of an end, the referee should wait until both sides have acknowledged the result (i.e. the number of points scored and by whom).

Completion of end

Before collecting the balls for a subsequent end, announce to the players the result of the end which has just been completed and the total score for the match (e.g. three points to red, the current score is now 4 red and 1 blue after 3 ends).

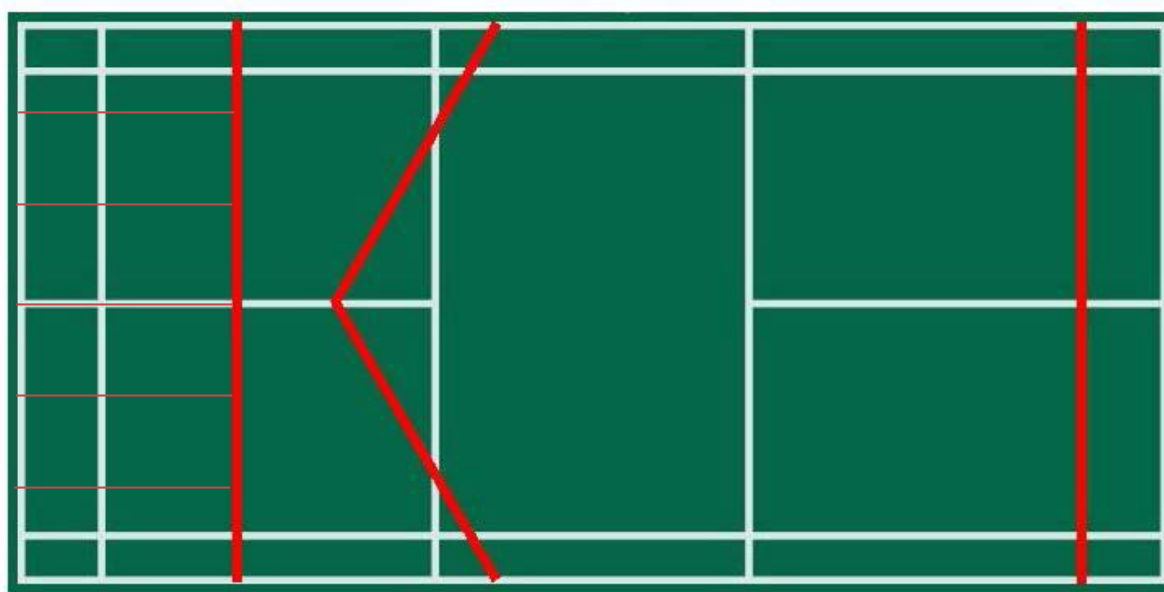
Update the score sheet as soon as practicable and check that details are correct:

- The names of the players and the colour they are using
- The points awarded in each end are equal to the total score on an accumulative basis
- The winner has been circled
- The score sheet has been signed by both sides

Court Marking

Most facilities will have basic court markings so always try and use existing lines where possible – to save on time and cost. A badminton court is ideal as you have to do is add in the missing lines (front line of playing box and dividing lines, the v-line and the back line).

To do this simply mark the [points on the floor](#) where the added tape needs to cross and simply join the dots.



However, if there are no usable lines, then the following is a good approach to marking out courts:

1. Place some wide masking tape on the floor to create a front line (can be extended to cover more than one court)
2. Place adjoining tape on the floor to create the sidelines of the court
3. Mark out points on tape where v-line, back line and box dividing lines will be
4. Place tape down as normal

Tip: When putting the tape down have two people (start and end points).

The person at the start point should hold the tape on the start point and the person at the end point should pull the tape tight and put it down in one go at the end point.

Once done check that the line is straight and then put pressure on tape to ensure it is down flat.

To see this in action please [click here](#).

Testing Equipment

For competition purposes, all boccia balls need to be tested to ensure they meet the legal requirements.

To do this, you need to pass the balls through a template with two holes (262mm and 278mm).

They should pass through the bigger hole but not the smaller one.

If they do not, roll for 10 seconds and try again. If they fail again, they are likely to be illegal.

The balls should also be weighed and should be within the range of 263g and 287g.

Also check that there are no deliberate cuts or glue on the balls. The balls should be in good condition.



Similarly, all other equipment needs to be checked:

- Wheelchairs (floor to seat should be no more than 66cm)
- Assistive devices (contact on body to end point should be no more than 50cm)
- Ramps (should be able to fit into a 1m x 2.5m body lying down on its' side when fully assembled)