

# BOCCIA

## Guide for Schools



# ABOUT MOVE UNITED

## Why Inclusion

Move United uses sports to push what's possible so everyone has equal access to sports and recreation in their community. Established in 1956, Move United is an Affiliate of the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

Move United provides adaptive sports to individuals with disabilities as a means to (1) improve health, (2) increase access to employment and economic stability, (3) strengthen social support and (4) advance social norms and attitudes about people with disabilities. Each of the four items are social determinants of health, according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2020.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education issued a Dear Colleague Letter in clarifying elementary, secondary, and postsecondary level schools' responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) to provide extracurricular athletic opportunities for students with disabilities. The guidance clarifies when and how schools should include students with disabilities in interscholastic athletic programs, defines what true equal treatment of student athletes with disabilities means, and urges schools to create adapted interscholastic athletic programs for students with disabilities. With nearly 1 in 4 Americans living with a disability, schools have the opportunity to change the disability narrative, creating access and opportunities for inclusion.

## What Move United Offers

- Introductory sport guidelines and best practices for adapted sports.
- Facilitation of training for your coaches and officials with adaptive sports experts. Access to hundreds of community based adaptive sports organizations, resources and tools for specific sports.
- Decades of experience in disability sport training, sport adaptations and adaptive equipment.

## Sports Are Important for Students with Disabilities

Benefits for students with disabilities who participate in sports are similar to students without disabilities:

- Supports daily living activities and independence.
- Reduces risk of health-related diseases (i.e. cancer, heart disease and diabetes).
- Improves mental health, reduces depression and anxiety.
- More likely to have better grades, school attendance and lower dropout rate.
- Builds camaraderie with peers, less likely to be bullied.
- Build discipline, self-esteem, confidence, and independence.
- Learn team work, skill development and goal setting.
- Can offer opportunities for successes in college, career and community.

Due to the resources available, it is possible to add adapted sports within school athletic programs without creating an undue administrative burden for State High School Associations or requiring the association to change existing rules for the athletes without disabilities.

Thank you to



for generously supporting this project.

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The content in this document is intended to provide guidelines and recommendations. Move United does not carry the authority to replace existing school or sport governing rules and regulations.



Boccia (pronounced bahchee or bahtcha) is played on a specially marked court, on a gymnasium floor or any smooth, hard surface. The sport is similar to bocce ball, but is played indoors and with a soft leather ball. The object of the game is to throw or roll game balls so that they land as close as possible to a target ball called the jack. Boccia is designed so individuals with different physical disabilities can participate in an integrated, adaptive, or modified/unified format. Students of all ages, with or without disabilities can play together or separately.

## Contributors

- USA Boccia
- Boccia United States

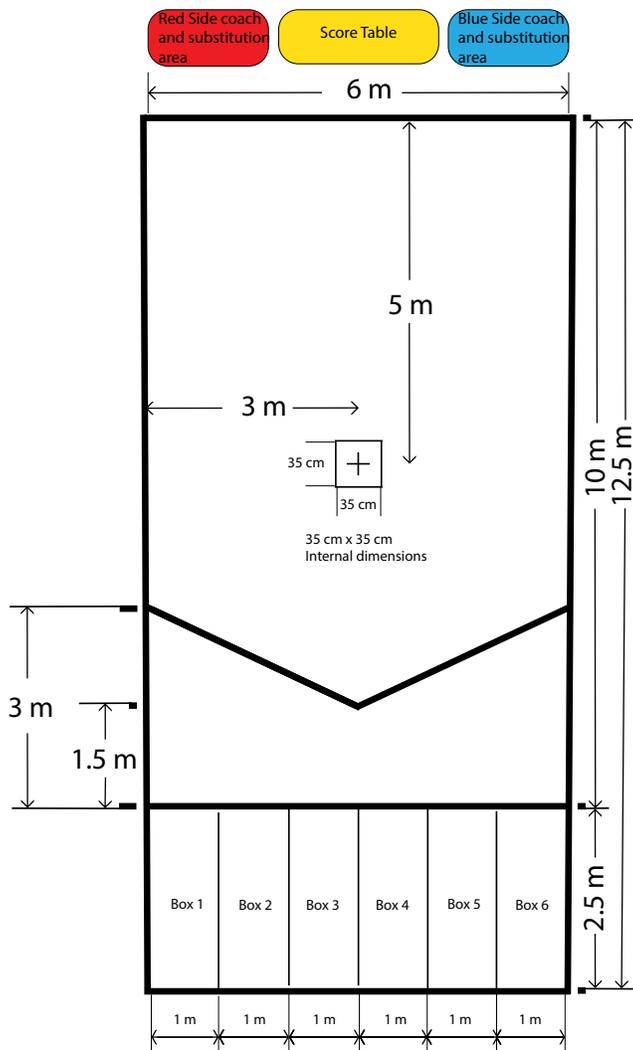
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# OVERVIEW

The object of the game is to throw or roll balls so they land as close as possible to a target ball called the jack.

## Boccia Court Layout



### Court Dimensions:

6m (19.6ft) X 12.5m (41ft) with playing boxes of 2.5m (8.2ft) X 1m (3.28ft) on one end

Guidelines: Use wide (approx 2 inch) tape for the exterior lines, throwing line and V line. Use narrow (approx 1 inch) for the throwing box dividers, the cross and the target box.

### Primary Equipment:

Boccia Balls-6 red, 6 blue, 1 white (jack)

### Athlete Eligibility:

Easiest way to classify is to split athletes into two groups – those who throw the ball independently and those who require additional assistance.

# EQUIPMENT & TRAINING

## Equipment

- Boccia Balls: 6 red, 6 blue, 1 white (jack)
- Measuring device
- Timing equipment
- Scoreboard
- Red/blue color indicator (similar to a table tennis paddle, so teams can see who is to play)
- Chutes (optional)/Ramps (optional)
- Assistive head stick (optional)
- Mouthstick or handstick aids (optional)

Assistive devices or ramps are used by student athletes who have limited throwing ability due to reduced upper extremity range of motion or limited hand function. There are several different types of assistive devices or ramps ranging from simple PVC pipe or wooden ramps to the more elaborate fiberglass.

**Figure A:** Ramp



**Figure B:** Assistive Head stick



**Figure C:** Boccia Balls



## Training Drills

### Practice throwing/rolling/propelling

For throwers it would be good to develop several shots: overhand, underhand, soft, hard, and lob. These drills will determine “how” each athlete best propels the ball into the court. Each athlete has a unique throwing motion. Their grasp, throwing motion and release will need to be examined.

Ramp players need to practice with a consistent sport assistant (ramp holder) so that they can develop the athlete’s commands to have the ramp positioned and the ball placed in the ramp. The slope of the ramp determines long or short shots. Moving it to the left or right determines direction. Keep the ramp centered on the body for increased accuracy.

Initially, work on accuracy with athlete’s natural placement on the court (their ‘sweet spot’). Next help them develop accuracy in shorter shots and then deep court. Drill to practice their serve of the Jack (white ball) with a one ball follow up shot.

Training for the sport of boccia can be as easy as just playing the game or as complex as having players practice specific game scenarios. Adapt to the skill set and endurance of each athlete.



# RULES

## Rules

- In boccia an “end” is when the white target ball and all the colored balls have been played.
- A game will consist of four “ends” for individual play and six “ends” for team play.
- In individual play, each player will have six balls. In pairs, each will have three balls, and in teams, each player will have two balls.
- The first player to throw, throws the white ball (jack) and then throws their first colored ball. Then the other team throws. From there, whoever is not closer throws until all balls have been thrown.
- After all balls are thrown, the end is scored.
- The player must remain in their playing box when throwing or rolling the ball.
- If the player using the ramp is playing with a sport assistant, the sport assistant may not look at the court.
- When a ball is released, the player must have at least one buttock in contact with the seat of the chair.
- If the jack ball is knocked out of the court, it is repositioned on the “Replaced Jack Cross”.
- The next end begins with blue serving Jack. The 3rd end is served by red and so forth.



## Scoring

- The referee will score the end after all balls have been thrown by both sides.
- The side with the ball closest to the jack will score one point for each ball closer to the jack than the opponent's closest ball.
- If two or more balls of different colors are equidistant from the jack and no other balls are closer, each side will receive one point per ball.
- At the completion of the ends, the points scored in each are added together and the side with the higher total score is the winner.
- In the event of a tie, one additional tie-breaker end is played.



## Strategy

- Serve the Jack on your side of the court; this makes the angle and distance more difficult for your opponent.
- Follow your serve in front of the Jack blocking your opponent and as close to the Jack as possible; it puts your opponent on the defense.
- “Play the Circle” -you do not always have to hit the Jack to win. Find out what is the closest opponent and throw inside that circle.
- “Use the Whole Box” - Adjusting your chair to different places in the box changes the angle and opens up shots that were not there before.



# GROUPINGS

The groupings presented here are suggested ways to create competition classes for athletes with disabilities. In order to not be confused with the national and international classification systems, we use the term groupings for school-based sport.

Boccia is a very inclusive sport for all abilities. Athletes with and without disabilities can play together. For competitive groupings it is important to combine athletes that are of somewhat equal abilities. For school events and competitions consider having pair play where an athlete is playing with an individual with a disability against a similarly matched pair. It is suggested that all individuals be seated during the competition (if not in a wheelchair, then a folding chair). The groupings below are suggested for competition. These are only suggestions and organizers should try to match individuals based on abilities.

## Groupings:

1. Non-ambulatory, limited use of upper arms (wheelchair users). Cannot throw a ball on court and require a ramp to propel the ball.
2. May or may not be ambulatory, limited use of upper arms (amputees, individuals with CP, arthrogryposis, and other limb differences).
3. Ambulatory, visual impairments or intellectual disabilities.

## Classification

Athletes with a disability have impairment(s) that may lead to competitive disadvantage in sport. Classification is the process by which athletes are assessed relative to the impact of impairment on their ability to compete in a specific sport. Within the classification system, criteria are put in place to ensure that winning is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus, the same factors that account for success in sport for athletes without a disability.

Classification is sport specific. Each sport has established groups, called sport classes, to group athletes for competition based on activity limitation for that sport. The international classification system for individual sports can be viewed online at: [Paralympic.org/classification](http://Paralympic.org/classification). Most IPC classification systems are not appropriate (too detailed) for a high school setting.



# SAFETY

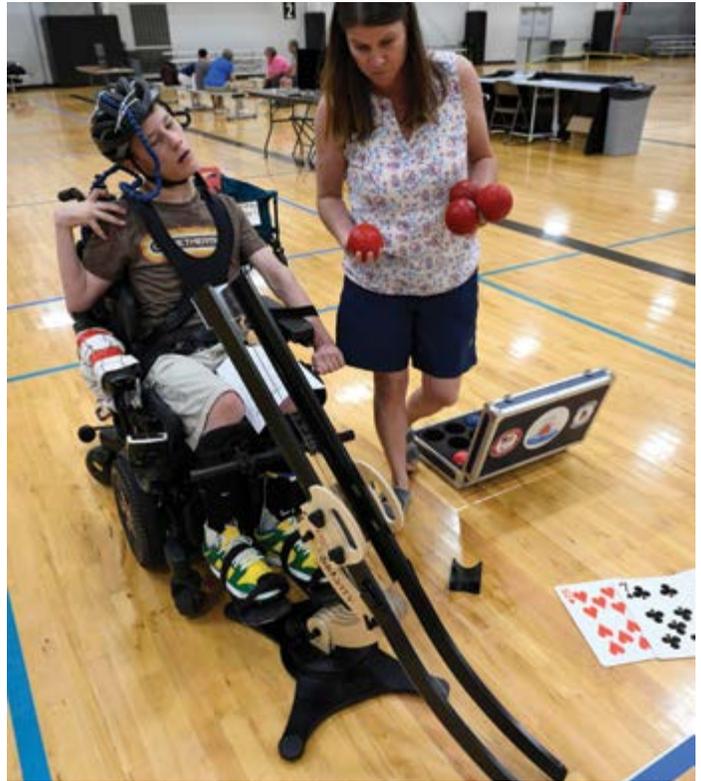
Student athletes with disabilities do not represent a higher level of liability risk or risk management concern than student athletes without disabilities. With proper planning and contingencies, student athletes with disabilities can seamlessly integrate into the dynamics of a high school team. Individualized assessments can help assess or identify any potential safety concerns.

## Safety Resources

Ensuring athlete safety is a priority. Through education, resources, and training, members of the sport community can recognize, reduce, and respond to misconduct in sport. Please refer to the following resources for more information.

### What is SafeSport?

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org>



# GLOSSARY

## **Assistive Device**

An aid used by athletes with more severe disabilities to play the game. Examples include a ramp or chute.

## **Ball**

One of the red or blue balls.

## **Court**

The playing area as enclosed by the boundary. This includes the throwing boxes.

## **End**

One section of a match when the jack and all the balls have been played by two sides.

## **Jack**

The white target ball.

## **Side**

In individual boccia, a side is defined as one (1) single competitor. In team and pairs boccia, a side is defined as three (3) and two (2) members, respectively, of the team as a single unit.

## **Match**

A competition between two sides when a specified number of ends are played.

## **Violation**

Any action assumed by an athlete, side, substitute, sport assistant, or coach which is against the rules of the game.



# FAQ'S

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Is there sport technical assistance if our school system is interested in starting a Boccia program?**

Yes organizations that have the technical skills in boccia are ready to assist you in setting up programs. Please email Boccia United States at [kathyb@bocciaunitedstates.org](mailto:kathyb@bocciaunitedstates.org) or USA Boccia at [usaboccia@gmail.com](mailto:usaboccia@gmail.com).

### **Do we have to follow the national/international classification system if we want to start a boccia program in our school?**

No, boccia is a great sport to offer to students with or without disabilities.

### **Are there competition opportunities outside of school programs?**

Yes, there are an increasing number of regional boccia competitions throughout the U.S. and an annual National Boccia Championship sanctioned by USA Boccia.

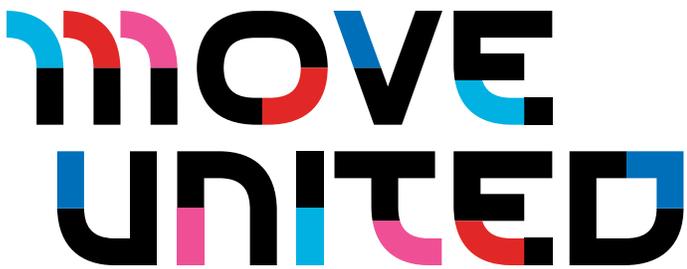




# RESOURCES

Boccia United States (Coaching Education, General Questions)	<a href="http://www.lakeshore.org/activity/boccia-united-states/">www.lakeshore.org/activity/boccia-united-states/</a>
USA Boccia (Ramp blue prints, coaching games)	<a href="http://usaboccia.org">usaboccia.org</a>
World Boccia (International federation-full version of rules and classification)	<a href="http://www.worldboccia.com">www.worldboccia.com</a>
International Paralympic Committee (Resources)	<a href="http://www.paralympic.org/boccia">www.paralympic.org/boccia</a>
Handilife (Supplier)	<a href="http://boccia-usa.com">boccia-usa.com</a>
Gopher Sport (Supplier)	<a href="http://gophersport.com">gophersport.com</a>
Gravity Boccia (Supplier)	<a href="http://www.gravityboccia.com/?v=32aec8db952d">www.gravityboccia.com/?v=32aec8db952d</a>





## MISSION

Move United uses the power of sport to push what's possible for people with disabilities, confronting ignorance, fueling conversation, and inciting action that leads us to a world where everyone's included.

## VISION

Move United's vision is that every person, regardless of ability, has an equal opportunity to participate in sports and recreation in their community. Our mission is to provide national leadership and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop independence, confidence, and fitness through participation in community sports, including competition, recreation and educational programs.

### Local Contact

Local adaptive sport organization  
may input contact info here.

**For more information,  
visit [moveunitedsport.org](https://moveunitedsport.org)**