

Bocce Ball

A Funny Name for a Fun Game

BY: DAVID SPRADLING



TODAY we're going to play the third most popular game in the world," I told my grandsons, aged 10 and 11. Their eyes lit up. Was it basketball or soccer?

It's bocce ball.

Bocce (pronounced "boch-ee") is not a new sport. Dating back to about 9000 BCE, the game was enjoyed throughout the Mediterranean, but it was the Romans who popularized it.

Italians came to the new world and brought Bocce with them. George Washington even played the game and built a bocce court at Mount Vernon in the 1780s. Nearly 25 million people in the US play Bocce ball, today.

You can play Bocce ball with two players sport or in teams of four, making it an excellent activity for friends and family.

To play Bocce, you'll need a playing surface and a set of bocce balls. Bocce is traditionally played on natural surfaces like grass or dirt, but constructed courts of varying surfaces do exist. The ball set includes one Pallino (target) ball that's about the size of a golf ball and eight larger bocce balls about

the sizes of grapefruit.

Usually there are four green bocce balls and four red bocce balls. You can use a tape measure to measure the distance of the balls from the Pallino when playing. Players must toss or roll their bocce balls toward the Pallino, and those who land the closest get the points. And the player or team that reaches 21 points first wins the game.



Everyone who gets hooked on Bocce agrees it's a fun game for all ages.

There are even health benefits! It helps relieve stress, and affords you time to socialize with friends and family over some light exercise. And it helps improve your hand-eye coordination.

There is more to playing Bocce than just throwing the ball. There are various factors to calculate while

playing, such as distance and velocity before throwing or rolling your ball. This process engages your brain and keeps it sharp.

Bocce is a low-impact game, but it does involve some physical activity. But it's light cardio, with stretching that improves flexibility. Who doesn't like that?

And Bocce is only as competitive as you want it to be. The young, the old, and anyone in between can enjoy this game of strategy and skill.

If you want to be part of the Bocce world, you can buy some bocce balls and play in your yard, at a recreation center, or on vacation.

No matter what, have fun, keep rolling, and stay happy!

David Spradling has owned a landscape design-build company for over 40 years. He now specializes in designing residential outdoor spaces. In 2007 he designed his first Bocce court and constructed it as part of a landscape design project in Boerne Texas. Since then his company, Bocce Pros of Texas has constructed courts all around Texas. He lives in San Antonio with his wife, Jeannie. They have three daughters and five grandchildren, who all love playing Bocce Ball.

