

## LETTER FROM LOUIS MITCHELL, HEAD REFEREE

### 2025 USA BOCCIA NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

Coaches, Athletes, SA's, RO's and team administrators;

This is Louis Mitchell, the head referee for the USA Boccia National Championships 2025. As with last year, we will not have a 'live' Team Leaders meeting. There will be a ZOOM meeting at 7 pm on Wednesday July 30<sup>th</sup>.

The link is on the tournament information page at [usaboccia.org](http://usaboccia.org)

You should go to USA Boccia's web page to access the New International Boccia Rules 2025 - 2028 v.1.1 Also, the New Rules and Protocols can be found on **World Boccia's** web page.

The National Tournament will be run in accordance with World Boccia/BISFed International Boccia Rules 2025 – 2028 v.1.1 **except where abridged by USA Boccia**. These rules include but are not limited to the following:

The time allotted for each side to play each End has been amended as follows.

BC1: 4:30 min per Athlete per End

BC2: 3:30 min per Athlete per End

BC3: 6:00 min per Athlete per End

BC4, BC5, BC6: 3:30 min per Athlete per End

Teams: 5:00 min per Team per End

Pair BC3: 7:00 min per Pair per End

Pair BC4 BC5, BC6: 4:00 min per Pair per End

For all divisions, all athletes must be registered between thirty-five (35) and twenty (20) minutes before the scheduled start time of a match in which they are scheduled to participate.

To enter the Call Room, all Coaches and SA must show their accreditation. And, all Athletes and RO's must wear bibs with corresponding numbers on them. All RO's bibs must be clearly visible on their back.

**DROPPED BALL 10.14:** There are two types of dropped Balls. First, if a ball is dropped during the "act" of playing the ball. That ball can be returned to the athlete as long as it does NOT go onto the FOP. Second, if a ball is dropped prior to the "act" of playing. That ball can be returned to the athlete, even if it lands on the FOP. The court Referee is the sole arbiter of what constitutes a "dropped Ball". **A ball that is stuck in the athlete's ramp can be returned to the athlete.**

**Rule 16.8.2:** Inappropriate communication between athlete/s and their RO, SA, Coaches will be a 1 ball penalty and a Yellow Card.

**There will still be separate warm up times for each side in team and pairs competitions. Individual competition will have shared warm up times.**

And the "Out of the way" rule now says "An athlete now only needs to go backward to a position in the box which gives the opponent space to play; there is no requirement to be behind the throwing box." They still can go behind their own box if they choose to do so. **For BC3 sides, equipment has to be moved out of the way and the RO can be at the back of the box, behind the box or in an empty box.** An Athlete does not need to move if they and their equipment is already "out of the way", as determined by the court Referee.

Also, referees now no longer need to wait until the athlete who is to throw is in their box before starting the time. **The procedure now is: After showing the color to the sides, once the side that is throwing starts moving/preparing, and the other side is moving to be out of the way, start the time.**

BC1 and Foot players are allowed a SA: Rule 9.2.2 says that a SA cannot have direct contact with the player when he/she is "playing" the shot. If the BC1 athlete has ball in hand or Foot players has ball on floor in front of foot and then the player asks the SA to move them, that is a penalty if the SA moves the athlete/wheelchair. **To avoid the penalty, before the athlete can be moved/repositioned from original the "playing" position, the ball must be moved from BC1 athlete's hand or from floor in front of Foot player's foot.**

Please read the following points of interest and send me [loumitchell@live.com](mailto:loumitchell@live.com) or Cathy Drobny your comments and questions. Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation. And, good luck to everyone!

- 1) General equipment check will be held at the competition facility.
- 2) Ball Check in the Call Room, before each match. There is also a post-match ball check. At the end of the match the referee will inspect each of the seven (7) balls a side has used during the match. This is a cursory inspection to see if the balls have been tampered with during the match.
- 3) Remember Bib numbers ARE required for all Athletes and Ramp Operators.**
- 4) Athletes are allowed to back out of their box. Equipment does not have to leave the throwing box, but must be out of the way of the opponent's play.
- 5) Athletes will be asked to verify the final score. We will be using the World Boccia system for scoring. The athletes/captains will approach the scoring table and approve the score.
- 6) There will be an unofficial ball check system available to athletes/team, in the arena.
- 7) Smart watches and tablets must be in airplane mode on court. Only Communication devices that are used on court must be presented at equipment check and receive a game sticker. Splints, gloves and w/c supports must have written approval from the classifiers. Any adaptation that could be seen to assist in the direction of the ball (such as something that could guide the hand/foot) is considered illegal.
- 8) Ramp check clarification: The base with all extensions fully extended must fit completely inside the 2.5m X 1m box. This includes any device that holds the ball in place beyond the extent of the ramp.
- 9) Notes on exceptions to the rules for USA Boccia Nationals:  
Warm up courts can be used at any time. Be sure to share with your fellow athletes  
Balls do not need the World Boccia seal, but they must pass the ball check in the call room  
Men and Women play together in the Individual events. There are no gender quotas for Team and Pair