

For any age

Pointing Challenge

Place a jack 7m from a throwing circle.

Place a strip of wood sideways 10cm behind the jack.

Draw a line across 50cm in front of the jack and 50cm long.

The challenge is to point a boule to finish in front of the jack but over the 50cm line.

Throw a series of ten boules. Each should be removed (perhaps by a partner) before the next boule is thrown. Encourage the player to fill in the hole made by the previous boule.

Any boule which touches the wood behind the jack doesn't score. Any boule which stops wider than the end of the 50cm line doesn't count.

One point is scored for each boule which stops beyond the line and before reaching the wood. Keep a count of the score. To be consistent with the Rules of Pétanque, any boule which cuts the line counts.

Variations

This challenge can be made harder or easier by changing the distance of the line from the jack. If you wish, you can draw two lines across, one at 50cm from the jack and the other at 30cm. This should be 30cm long. One point for beating the 50cm line and three for beating the 30cm line.

The distance of the jack from the throwing circle can also be varied to suit the skill level of the player or the difficulty of the playing surface.

Four Metre Game

This is an exercise which can be used to focus on tactical choices. It's also good fun.

Draw a 4m x 4m square as the boundaries of the piste and mark a throwing point on each of two opposite sides. The jack is legal between 1m and 4m from the throwing point. All other rules remain constant. Normally, don't tell the players why you are doing it until you have finished.

The tendency is for players to be more adventurous and more attacking. Shooting rates go up, as do attempts to move the jack or promote boules.

This should be followed by asking the players what difference it made to the way in which they played. Someone usually spots that the tactics are more positive and you should then encourage them to transfer that approach to the normal game, though you need to add the caveat that the skills need to be practised at the longer distances to give the confidence to attempt them.