

## PETANQUE

Petanque (pronounced pe'tonk) is a French game played throughout the world. It is similar in many ways to lawn bowls (English) and bocce (Italian).

Petanque is normally played on a fairly level gravel surface, a piste, that imparts a degree of randomness to the play that means people of all ages and all levels of experience can compete and enjoy it.

The word petanque is often used to reflect the more formal nature of the sport; boules the more social form. Indeed, the hollow steel balls used in petanque are called boules, and the small coloured ball, the 'jack', is correctly referred to as the cochonette (French for 'small pig'). The modern game of petanque derives from the south of France and is well over 100 years old.

In Australia there are currently about 1700 licensed petanque players; and around 900 of them reside in Victoria in 25 clubs affiliated with Petanque Federation Australia (PFA): ([www.petanquefederationaustralia.com](http://www.petanquefederationaustralia.com)).

## PETANQUE IN VICTORIA

The 25 petanque clubs in Victoria have formed a State League referred to as Victoria Petanque Clubs Inc. ([www.petanquevictoria.com.au](http://www.petanquevictoria.com.au)). These clubs are grouped into 3 Regions; Metropolitan, North-West and South-East (Mornington Peninsula).

Players meet regularly for social games and the occasional club and inter-club tournaments.

Generally the game of petanque is played as Triples with 3 players per team and each player using just 2 boules, or Doubles with 2 players per team and each player using 3 boules.

## THE GAME OF BOULES

Competition boules are hollow metal spheres with a mass between 650 - 800 gram and a diameter in the range 70.5 - 80.0 mm, and come with various patterns of external markings. A player in any game uses boules with exactly the same markings.

A petanque game commences with a circle placed or marked on the ground. The team winning the toss starts the game by throwing the jack 6 to 10 m from the circle. A team member then throws their first boule. An opposition team player then throws their first boule. From then on the team with their boule not closest to the jack throws next. When it is their turn to throw a boule a player stands stationary inside this circle.

Once all 12 boules are thrown the team with the boule closest to the jack scores 1 point, plus an additional points for every other boule closer to the jack than the opposing team. The winning team then places or marks a new circle on the ground and throws the jack and first boule for the next end.

Social games are usually played to 11 or 13 points and can last from about 20 to 45 minutes. Tournament games are normally always played to 13 points and can be over just as quickly or can extend well beyond an hour.


Two basic throws are used, and usually the throw is 'back-handed'. The 'point' is a throw that aims to land the boule close to the jack, while the 'shoot' aims to strike an opponent's boule and remove it from its position close to the jack.

A perfect shoot is called a 'carreau' where the thrown boule hits a stationary boule and replaces it precisely, while removing the original boule well away from the jack.


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VICTORIA  
PÉTANQUE  
CLUBS INC.



**Pétanque**  
a great game  
with a funny name!



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