

Josh Vander Vies (After London 2012) Rule Change Feedback

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Sections 5.2.1 and 5.3.1: Pairs and Team Divisions

BISFed Proposed change:

5.2.1 Substitutes who bring their own balls into the Call Room must use their own balls when they are on court.

5.3.1 Substitutes who bring their own balls into the Call Room must use their own balls when they are on court.

My proposed change:

5.2.1 Athletes who bring their own balls into the Call Room must use their own identified balls on court. Balls must be identified to the referee and the opponent as belonging to a respective player.

5.3.1 Athletes who bring their own balls into the Call Room must use their own identified balls on court. Balls must be identified to the referee and the opponent as belonging to a respective player.

Justification:

The consequence for attempting to use an illegal ball should be high. At the 2005 Americas Cup, in a pairs match (Canada vs. Brazil) a Brazilian non-substitute (starting) player was found to have two illegal balls. After they were removed, he simply used the balls of the substitute. Competition balls should have been assigned to that player.

The second part of my proposed change above also helps with awarding violations for failed equipment check.

It is a common convention to identify your balls to the opposing side while checking the equipment in the call room. Some countries do not do this however, as no rule requires it. It is reasonable for everyone to identify the balls they will individually be using to the opponent and referee.

Section 6.10.2: Completion of End

BISFed Proposed change:

6.10.2 On the following cases, after all balls have been thrown, including any penalty balls awarded to either side, the referee will tell the person not to do it again, gives a friendly warning and does not award a violation:

Inappropriate communication;
Enters into the court without referee permission;
BC3 Sport Assistant turns into court without referee permission.

If any of these situations happen, and then that side asks the Referee for a measure, the Referee will not measure. If that side repeats the situation, the referee will give a warning according to rule 11.5.2.

My proposed change:

[My first choice is to entirely remove the clause. Otherwise, I propose the following.]

6.10.2 If after all balls have been thrown, including any penalty balls awarded to either side, and a side commits one of the following infractions:

Inappropriate communication;
Enters into the court without referee permission;
BC3 Sport Assistant turns into court without referee permission.

The appropriate violation or penalty will be awarded.

Justification:

The proposed change should either be removed, or the above should replace it. My proposed change cleans up the grammar, but also makes an important change to the substance of the proposed rule change. It is preferred that the new clause be removed completely.

A “friendly warning” does not belong in official rules. Something is either forbidden, or not.

I believe a penalty should be awarded for leaving the box when it is not a player’s turn, inappropriate communication and BC3 sport assistants turning too early – even if it is once all balls have been played (which is during the official measurement). I am open to these not being penalties at all though. What I am firmly against is friendly warnings.

Section 9.1 and 11.1: Movement on Court

BISFed Proposed change:

9.1 With the exception of overstepping the throwing box lines to manoeuvre the wheelchair in preparation for the next shot, the permission of the Referee must always be sought before moving from the playing box to enter the court.

My proposed change:

9.1 A side may cross the throwing line and enter the court once the Referee has indicated it is its turn to throw.

And

11.1 The following actions will lead to the award of penalty balls (ref. 10.2):

11.1.1 [should be changed to] Being wholly or partially outside the throwing box when it is not a side's turn to throw. [(ref. removed)]

Justification:

Asking permission to leave the throwing box is unnecessary and complicates the flow of the game. It becomes especially difficult when athletes are non-verbal or speak a different language than the Referee. Going onto the court to observe the placement of balls is natural and common for boccia players. Sides are not required to ask permission before throwing each ball; permission to enter the court on one's own time should not be required either. This proposal will drastically speed up the game.

The concern that a "wild player" could go onto the court and disrupt balls, unless the referee is in control of granting entrance permission, is dealt with in:

11.3 The following actions will lead to the award of penalty balls and a warning – yellow card (ref. 10.2 / 10.4):

...

11.3.2 deliberately causing a disrupted end.

Control of the court continues to remain with the Referee in this proposal, who must be vigilant for players who enter the court at the wrong time – just as he or she currently must be vigilant for balls thrown at the wrong time.

This proposed amendment would still require athletes to ask permission to leave the throwing box between ends and when it is not the time of either side, including when both sides wish to closely observe the official measurement.

Section 9.5: Movement on Court

BISFed Proposed change:

9.5 In pairs or team competition if an athlete throws a ball and his team mate is still returning to his box the referee will ask that athlete to throw the ball only after his teammate is in his own box (the thrown ball is considered played). It's a friendly warning. If that side repeats that situation, the referee will give a warning.

My proposed change:

9.5 Penalty balls will be awarded to a side in team or pairs, if an athlete throws while their teammate is outside, or on the line, of his or her throwing box.

Justification:

A friendly warning should be given first. The penalty should be penalty balls.

A "friendly warning" does not belong in official rules. Something is either forbidden, or not.

Section 18.1: The Captain's Responsibility

BISFed Proposed change:

18.1 In Team and Pairs Division, each side is led by a Captain for each match. The Captain must be clearly identified to the Referee **and is required to wear a captain arm band on their left or right arm, provided by each captain, club or Country**. The Captain will act as the executive of the team and assume the following responsibilities:

My proposed change:

[Remove the armband requirement.]

Justification:

Armbands are not at all feasible for boccia athletes, who have different levels of arm disabilities. This will severely interfere with play. Identifying the Captain has not been an issue in any of the many BC4 pairs games that I have played at all levels.

If identification is genuinely needed, perhaps in BC1/BC2 team, then an attachment should be made to the Captain's number or wheelchair. Better yet, a red or blue removable floor sticker should be placed in front of (or, behind) the respective Captain's box.

Section 19.2: Warm up Procedures

BISFed Proposed change:

No proposed change.

My proposed change:

Athletes may be accompanied into the warm-up area by a maximum number of people as follows:

- BC1 1 coach, 1 assistant
- BC2 1 coach, **1 assistant**
- BC3 1 coach, 1 assistant
- BC4 1 coach, **1 assistant**
- Pairs BC3 1 coach, 1 assistant per athlete
- Pairs BC4 1 coach, **1 assistant**
- Team (BC1/2) 1 coach, 1 assistant

Justification:

This rule should be used to ensure that warm-up areas do not become too crowded.

The proposal respects this goal by increasing the number of people eligible to accompany players in a very minimal way, while recognising the importance of Sport Assistants to BC2 and BC4 players. While these classifications of players are not eligible for the assistance of a Sport Assistant during a match, they largely require individualised performance support during warm-up and training.

The number of people eligible to accompany a player into the call room should not change from the current number.

Section 24: Protest Guidelines

BISFed Proposed change:

No substantive changes proposed.

My proposed change:

[The clause not accepting video and photo evidence must be removed.]

Justification:

More evidence is generally fairer than less evidence. Many nations routinely take photo and video recordings of matches, and this should be valid evidence in a protest. The number of nations who do not have access to video equipment is now very low.

In many sports – elite and professional – video evidence is now allowed, not only in protests, but also in challenging on-court/field referee decisions. Video can often be the perfect witness. It is neutral, and replays the event exactly as it happened. Human witnesses always have some form and degree of bias.