

# Bocce

By: Allison Jones

Bocce is a well-known sport that most people in America play at family gatherings. The game of Bocce has been around since as early as 5000 B.C. The Egyptians first came up with the concept of Bocce by throwing a polished rock. The Egyptians laid out the basic rules for the game. The game later traveled its way to Greece around 800 B.C, but soon the Romans picked up the game. They came up with the name bocce, which derives from the Vulgate Latin *bottia*, meaning boss. The Romans would use coconuts brought back from Africa and later used hard olive wood to carve out bocce balls in order to play the game. The Republic of Venice publicly condemned the sport, punishing those who played with fines and imprisonment. And perhaps most grave was the condemnation by the Catholic Church which deterred the laity and officially prohibited clergyman from playing the game by proclaiming bocce a means of gambling. There were many different ways to play the game, but the Italians version of the game was brought to the United States by the Italians. It is believed that George Washington had a bocce court out in at Mount Vernon. The first bocce club was created in Italy. Due to the many Italian immigrants at the turn of the century, bocce has come to flourish in the United State. The game of bocce really hasn't changed that much. They used throw the ball not on stone dust, like you do in America, but on close

cropped grass. There are different ways to play bocce, but the game has evolved over the years to what it is today.

The rules of bocce are pretty simple. There are two people on a team. First toss of the pallino. A player may toss the pallino any distance so long as the pallino passes the center line of the court. If a player fails to toss the pallino after one attempt, the opposing team will have a chance to toss it and put it in play. The team, who tosses the pallino, throws the first bocce ball. The team whose bocce balls are closest to the pallino is called "inside" and the opposing team "outside." Whenever a team gets inside, it steps aside and lets the outside team roll. The team outside throws until it beats the opposing ball. This continues until both teams have used all their bocce balls. The team, who scored last, throws the pallino to begin the next frame. They then exchange ends and start again. If a player rolls the wrong colored ball, simply replace it with the correct color when the ball comes to rest. If a ball is moved before all 8 balls are played, the opposing team replaces the ball to the approximate original position. This is to be done in the spirit of good sportsmanship. Should a player's bocce ball make contact with the back board the bocce ball is considered a dead ball on impact and is removed from play until the end of the frame. Player's movements are limited to the foul line. The player may step on, but should not step over the foul line before releasing the pallino. The teams playing will referee their own game. For people to play the game it's different. If you're playing this game for fun then either male or female can play and can be as

young as 6. But if you're playing in a club or league, you must have someone over the age of 18 in the game. The rules change if you are playing the game for fun. If it's just for a recreation, then the rules are simple. Playing bocce can be very fun for some and other they may take it serious. But in the end bocce has come a long way, and is the game it is today because of that. It's a game for the whole family.