



The Hitting/Spocking Shot

The hitting or spocking shot is played more as a powerful shot. It is rolled/thrown with great force to displace the ball/s to either gain the point by displacing the opponent's ball/s or reduce the number of points the opponent is holding. This is in contrast to trying to get your ball closer through a slow gentle roll-up.

Athlete Readiness

- Athlete is able to use smooth arm action throughout delivery of the bocce ball.
- Athlete understands concept and strategy of playing a faster released shot.

Teaching the Event

Standing position

Stance

- ◆ The athlete spreads feet slightly apart, the width of the shoulders.
- ◆ Take one step forward on the opposite leg to the arm with which he/she rolls, i.e. a right-handed athlete steps with left foot forward.
- ◆ Ensure your feet are pointing toward the target. And remember to always focus your eyes on the target.

Delivery

- ◆ Push the ball forward to approximately eye level followed by a downward swing.
- ◆ Bring your arm straight back, close to your body.
- ◆ Keep your elbow straight and take your weight mainly on the back foot.
- ◆ As you smoothly bring your arm straight forward, transfer your weight to your front foot.
- ◆ As your arm passes close to your leg, your weight should be balanced between both feet.

Release

- ◆ Release ball onto the court surface just in front of you.
- ◆ Continue moving hand forward and upward in a natural follow-through motion.
- ◆ Keep front foot behind the foul line and shoulders square to the target.

This shot can also be played with a tossing motion.

Stand behind the player

- ◆ While the ball is waist high, put the player's hands underneath the ball and push it up and out to eye level.
- ◆ With the player's right hand underneath the ball, take the player's right hand with the ball in it, and make a downward swing.
- ◆ At the same time, extend the player's left arm outward for balance.
- ◆ Stand behind the player while he/she is standing in the back swing position with arm extended.
- ◆ With the right hand, support the ball from underneath and start forward motion of the ball.

Stand beside the player

- ◆ Have the player swing the ball forward, and ensure the ball is being released in a smooth motion. If not, with your right hand, force the ball loose from the grip so that it goes forward.

Special Olympics Bocce Coaches Quick Start Guide



Stand behind the player

- ◆ After release of the ball, place right hand on the player's right hand and wrist.
- ◆ Move his/her arm upward so that his/her arm is parallel to the ground.
- ◆ At the same time, with your leg, slide the player's left leg forward so that it stops before the foul line. Adjust player's shoulders square to the target.

Coaching Tips

- Here the emphasis is to deliver the bocce ball with greater force than for a "Pointing" delivery. For the player to establish good speed through the final stage of delivery, he/she needs to start with the ball high in the back swing to gain force behind the ball.
- You may have to help the athlete not only with the initial forward swing, but with actually bringing the bocce ball forward following the completion at the top of the subsequent back swing.

The Hitting/Spocking Shot – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Ball is traveling in an upward direction rather than an outward one.	Have athlete release ball earlier, or closer to the ground.	Have athlete practice quick smooth releases to very short distance targets.
Ball is not traveling at speed.	Hold athlete's arm at top of back swing and have him/her pull against your force.	Have athlete practice counting out loud to their movements, increasing the speed of action each time.
Arm is not passing close to the body.	Place a towel under athlete's armpit throughout movement.	Arm Wall Swings will assist muscle memory and let the athlete feel how the arm should flow and the path it should take.
Wrist is turning at release.	Have athlete practice with a piece of paper in hand and try and obtain wrist flicks.	Have athlete practice Wrist Flicks drill and also pitch a softball underhand back and forth with a friend.



Coaches' Tips: The Hitting/Spocking Shot – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. When holding the ball at side, have athlete count his/her movements. This will help prepare the athlete for learning the flow and speed of the delivery.
 - ◆ If the athlete has too much back swing, a handkerchief placed under the armpit of the bowling arm may help correct the problem. On a proper back swing, the handkerchief remains in place and does not fall out
 - ◆ “One” - ball swings forward
 - ◆ “Two” - ball swings back
 - ◆ “Three” - forward swing with speed
 - ◆ “Four” - and released ball up the court
2. Tell the athlete, “Do not apply too much muscle power to the swing; just let the weight of the ball carry it back but then bring the arm straight forward at speed.”
3. Talk the athlete through the delivery.
4. Once the athlete begins to use the proper movement from a standing position, if he/she wants to progress to a running shot, have the athlete get into an approach rhythm and count steps. Count “1” for 1st step and ball moves forward, “2” for 2nd step and ball moves back, “3” for 3rd step and ball comes forward, “4” for 4th step and “release the ball.” Do this without a ball a few times, increasing the speed of action each time. Repeat after a few times using a ball.
5. Stand behind the athlete, counting the steps while the athlete performs the steps. After a few times, let the athlete practice on his/her own. Remember, have him/her count the steps out loud.
6. To get the athlete to release the ball before stepping over the foul line, place a towel or small piece of rope from one side of the court to the other over the foul line, and tell the athlete to throw the ball out over the towel/rope.
7. Position of arm and hand on the follow-through can be demonstrated by taking a towel and putting a knot in it. Give the towel to the athlete and then back away. Have the athlete do a one-step delivery, throwing the towel to you and using your stomach as the target. Watch the follow-through; the athlete should have his/her right arm extended with the right hand pointing at your stomach and the wrist pointing up. Explain that this is the same motion to use when rolling a bocce ball.
8. A home training method is to have athlete and a friend practice pitching a softball underhand back and forth to each other. The same motion is used to deliver the bocce ball. After the pitch, look at the position of the arm, hand and thumb.
9. Correct athlete if rolling hand finishes across and in front of the body.
10. Hand, arm and shoulder follow through in a straight line with target. After the ball has left the athlete’s hand, have him/her follow through so that the elbow passes to the position directly above the head.