

Boccia Fundamentals Test: The National 15 Ball Measuring Tool



Prepared by:

Dr Ross Pinder

Skill Acquisition Specialist

Australian Paralympic Committee

Endorsed by:



Skill testing in Boccia

Skill testing allows us to objectively measure improvements in performance across a range of skills and provides evidence for the effectiveness of interventions and training activities. Skill tests place accountability on athletes' skills and put them under artificial 'pressure', which can be useful for tracking development. With the National squad, we place a large emphasis on in-game statistics to provide us with the best indication of development and performance potential (e.g., First phase percentage in international games is preferred to First ball rates in skills tests), but this does require a significant investment in time (e.g., collection and summarising game statistics).

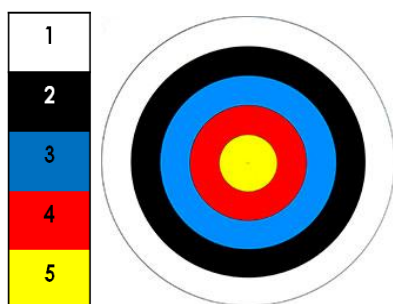
Skill tests, however, are a great way for state players to assess and track their fundamental skills. Coaches should look to monitor athletes' skills to identify opportunities for development, and design tests which suit the current level of your players and the skills you have been focussed on. Tests should:

- replicate competition timings and demands (e.g., game rules)
- reflect the importance of different phases of play
- allow athlete to repeat at regular intervals (e.g., provide some level of control)

While we advocate an individualised approach to skill development and assessment, there is no doubt that a consistent national test for some of the fundamental Boccia skills would be highly beneficial. A National test allows coaches and players to demonstrate improvements, benchmark performances against other players around the country, and provide results to the national head coach for tracking of developing athletes. To allow for consistency, the test is limited to singles play (boxes 3 and 4).

The National 15 Ball Measuring Tool

The 15 Ball measuring tool is designed to assess the very fundamental Boccia skills consistent across all classifications, and track the development of beginner players to state representatives. Players achieving scores in the "Advanced Performer" range (see below) are ready for a more technical assessment. This can be provided by the 1-60 National team challenge (an expanded version of the 15 Ball measurement tool). ***Athletes who demonstrate the capacity to consistently achieve scores of an 'Advanced Performer' may be asked to complete the "1-60 National challenge" at a state or national competition with the National Head Coach.*** More details on this test will be available soon.



The tool uses standard archery-style targets (see Figure 1). Test 4 ($\approx 8\text{m}$) uses a target at A1 size. All other targets are A2 size. The easiest method to produce these is to print a target onto A4¹, and enlarge and laminate the required sizes. Points for each of the 15 balls are awarded based on the final resting position of the ball as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Target design and points

The tool consists of five tests; each consisting of three attempts (balls), and allows for variability (e.g., approximate locations, individual jack preferences). Descriptions of the five tests are provided here, and a score template is provided below for you to print and complete.

1. Jack and first ball

Player plays from Box 3, and plays a jack to their preferred length to left-hand side of court (e.g., target 1). The target is placed under the jack position (jack at the centre), and the player has three attempts to get their first ball “on”. Players can use the same first ball if they wish. First balls are removed and jack is reset on the target before second and third attempts. Points are awarded for the final resting position of each coloured ball (i.e. maximum of 5 points per ball).

2. Across-court jack

Player remains in Box 3. A jack is placed at the centre of a target across court (in front of Boxes 5 to 6). This situation replicates

when an opponent has gone first, and left the jack open. The player now attempts to secure the jack. Player can select and use any three balls (i.e. a different ball per attempt). Previous balls are removed and the test reset before second and third attempts. Points are awarded for the final resting position of each coloured ball (i.e. maximum of 5 points per ball).

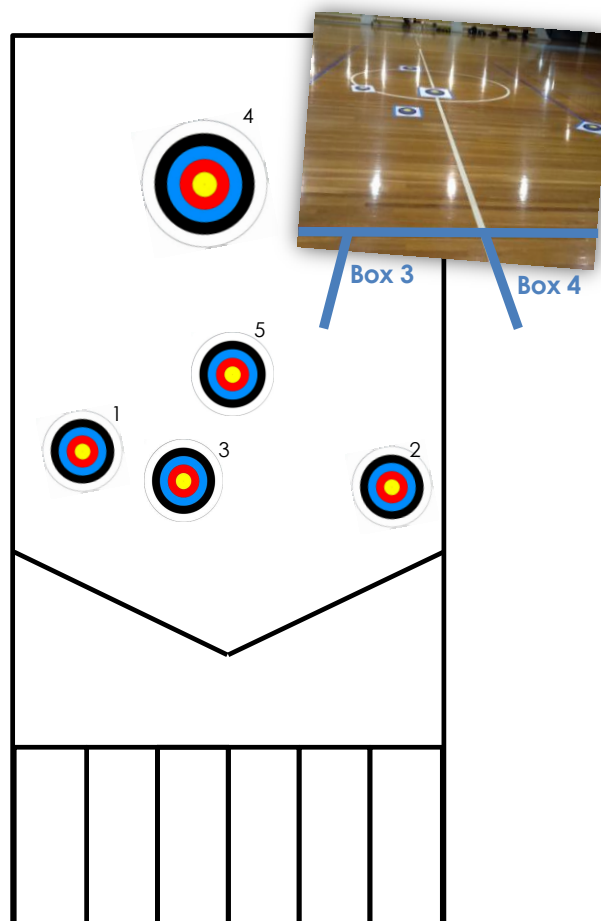


Figure 2. Example testing and target layout

¹ See: <http://www.koniaris.com/archery/targets/18mA2.pdf>

3. Push-up ball

Player remains in Box 3. A target is placed directly in front of Box 3 at approximately 4m. Any selected ball from the players set is placed in line with the athlete and target centre, just off the front edge of the target (i.e. edge of white ring). Player attempts to push this ball up onto the target. The delivered ball is removed after each attempt and the push-up ball is reset before second and third attempts. Points are awarded for the final resting position of the pushed-up ball for each attempt (i.e. maximum of 5 points per ball).

4. Long draw

Player moves to Box 4. A target is placed at approximately 8m (see Figure 2), with a jack at its centre. The player attempts to draw on to the jack. The player can select and use any three balls (i.e. a different ball per attempt). The delivered ball is removed and the test is reset before second and third attempts. Points are awarded for the final resting position of each coloured ball (i.e. maximum of 5 points per ball).

5. Drawing to the cross

Player can now use either Box 3 or Box 4. A target is placed directly over the cross with a jack at its centre (5m). The player attempts to draw on to the jack. Players can select and use any three balls (i.e. a different ball per attempt). The delivered ball is removed and the test is reset before second and third attempts. Points are awarded for the final resting position of each coloured ball (i.e. maximum of 5 points per ball).

Scoring

The scoring is based on the target colours, with a maximum test score of 75 (15 x 5 points). Based on the initial trialling of the test, expected scoring levels have been provided below.

	BC1	BC2	BC3	BC4
Beginner level	0-10	0-20	0-30	0- 30
Standard Performer	10+	20+	30+	30+
Advanced Performer	20+	30+	40+	45+

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Peter King and Susan Olsen for the test concept, design, and comments in preparing this resource.

The National 15 Ball Measuring Tool

Statistics Record for:

Date:

Scoring Key: Yellow = 5pts, Red = 4pts, Blue = 3pts, Black = 2pts and White = 1pt

	Skills Test	Details	Score(s)	Total
1	Jack and 1st ball: With 3 balls to the players selected jack length (player in box 3)	Can use any 3 red or blue balls, and remove after each shot		
		First ball = Second ball = Third ball =		
		Comments:		
2	Draw to cross court jack at approx 4m length: With 3 balls (player in box 3 playing to right side of court)	Remove each ball before next is played. Use any 3 balls		
		First ball = Second ball = Third ball =		
		Comments:		
3	Push Up the front ball to a jack placed at 4m (Target in front of box 3)	Remove each of the Push Up balls before next ball is played. Can use up to a max of 3 balls		
		First ball = Second ball = Third ball =		
		Comments:		
4	Drawing to a jack placed 8m from the middle of box 4: with 3 balls (note: player moves to box 4)	Remove each ball before next ball is played. Use any 3 balls		
		First ball = Second ball = Third ball =		
		Comments:		
5	Drawing to a jack placed on the Cross at 5m (Player can be in either box 3 or 4)	Remove each ball before next ball is played. Use any 3 balls		
		First ball = Second ball = Third ball =		
		Comments:		