



Official FPUSA Newsletter

Winter 2025

Welcome to the Winter 2025 Edition of Petanque Pulse: Our Biggest Yet!

Six editions in, and we're still at it, committed to serving the community we're proud to be part of.

This year-end edition celebrates what matters most: **you**. The volunteers who serve on boards and run tournaments. The behind-the-scenes organizers who make everything work. The players who show up week after week. The innovators putting grants to work. The storytellers sharing their journeys.

You'll find inspiring personal stories, club achievements from coast to coast, tournament highlights, strategic initiatives strengthening our sport, and a tribute to members we've lost who helped build this community.

Big thanks to our 2025 contributors who shared stories, photos, and passion, especially Don McPherson for his fourth excellent feature.

Every edition of *Petanque Pulse* is crafted with care to showcase the energy driving FPUSA forward. We're here to celebrate your wins, share your stories, and connect our community.

Got a story idea? Club news worth sharing? Member spotlight we should feature? Let's talk. This newsletter thrives on your contributions.

With warm regards and gratitude,
Michelle Dang & Heidi Davison
Newsletter Editors, Communications
Committee

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Message from Kirk Edwards, FPUSA President

Greetings.

As we approach the end of another year, I want to take a moment to reflect on all we've accomplished together and to extend our heartfelt thanks for your continued support of Federation of Petangue USA.



This year has been one of growth, resilience, and remarkable impact, and we couldn't have done it without you. Whether you've volunteered your time or spread the word about our mission, your involvement has helped us reach new heights. Some of our proudest moments this year include:

- Partnering with CIEP for a nationwide coaching program.
- Expanding our umpire training and increasing our umpire base.
- Continued revision of the bylaws and tournament regulations.
- Successful international tournaments including the World Championships in Rome Italy and Douai France as well as the Pan-American tournament in Chile.

I would like to welcome **John Harris** as the incoming president. With John's experience and expertise, we're more committed than ever to our mission of promoting pétanque and fostering it as an amateur sport in the USA. We know that the coming year holds even greater potential for us to make a difference, and we hope you'll continue to be part of this journey with us.

I would also like to personally thank the board as well and the sport committee, umpire group, communications committee, and the many other subcommittees for working diligently to make so much meaningful progress for our organization. It is amazing to see so many dedicated people volunteer their time and work together to make a difference for pétanque. You have my sincerest gratitude and respect.

On behalf of the entire team at FPUSA, we want to express our sincere gratitude. We wish you a joyful and peaceful holiday season, and we look forward to continuing this important work with you in 2026.

With warmest regards, **Kirk Edwards** FPUSA President



(L to R) Mitzi Gimenez, Neil Bastian, Michelle Dang, John Harris, Janice Bissonnette, Rebecca Runze, Jerry Miller

2025: A Year of Bold Moves and Big Wins

What happens when a dedicated board meets monthly (and then some), burns the midnight oil across time zones, and refuses to settle for status quo? You get a transformative year that reshaped FPUSA.

We built a coaching pipeline. Through our partnership with CIEP (Centre International d'Enseignement Pétanque), FPUSA members now have access to FIPJP-certified instruction and a clear pathway to becoming certified coaches themselves. This isn't just training—it's investing in the next generation of players and leaders.

We elevated our game officials. Working with international umpire Patrick Grignon, we launched specialized umpire training that's creating a professional pipeline of qualified national umpires. No more scrambling to find qualified officials—we're building credibility and capacity from the ground up.

We put our money where our mission is. Over \$5,000 in grants went directly to clubs in 2025 through our new Club Matching Grant and Junior Support Programs. Courts got upgraded. Equipment got purchased. Kids got boules. Communities got stronger.

We kept you connected. From timely emails and social media updates to our newsletters and a new <u>podcast</u>, we worked to ensure you never missed a beat. The <u>JustGo</u> platform now includes coach and member lookup tools—direct responses to what YOU told us you needed (see page 111). (An umpire lookup tool is in the works.) Check the Documents tile for board meeting minutes, because transparency matters.

We answered the call. Literally. Your emails get responses within 24 hours, seven days a week, because your questions and concerns aren't just important—they're our priority.

Behind these accomplishments? Board and committee members who contributed hundreds of volunteer hours—organizing, planning, writing, coordinating, training, communicating, meeting—all while serving their own local clubs. And regional counselors who served as vital bridges, consulting with local clubs and ensuring every voice reached the board table.

The momentum is real. The foundation is solid. And 2026? We're just getting started.

Celebrating Service: Outgoing Board Members

Four leaders conclude their board service this year, leaving FPUSA stronger and better positioned for growth.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to **Kirk Edwards** (President), **Shannon Hodge** (Mid-America Regional Counselor), **Ben Bull** (Southwest Regional Counselor), and **Richard Bell** (NorCal Regional Counselor) for their outstanding leadership, dedicated service, and steadfast commitment to FPUSA's mission.

Special recognition to Ben Bull, who will continue serving on FPUSA's Communications Committee with Michelle Dang and Heidi Davison.

We have no doubt these leaders will continue contributing to pétanque in meaningful ways. Thank you for everything you've given to our community.

We welcome three new board members: **Neil McGovern** (Lamorinda), **Heidi Ratanavanich** (Philadelphia), and **Mark Rankin** (Les Boulefrogs). We look forward to their energy!

2026 Board Members

Executive Board

President: John Harris, Oakhurst Pétanque Club

Vice President: Vacant

Secretary: Michelle Dang, Sactown Pétanque **Treasurer:** Guy Diebold, Thibodaux Pétanque Club

National Sport Director: Janice Bissonnette, Fresno Pétanque Club

Regional Counselors

Northeast: Joseph Hassoune, La Boule New Yorkaise; Heidi Ratanavanich, Philadelphia PC

Mid-America: Shirley Jones, Carolina Pétanque; Mark Rankin, Les Boulefrogs PC

Central: Marion Bermondy, Nelson Ranch PC

Southeast: Mitzi Gimenez, SFPC; Heidi Davison, Classic City; Jerry Miller, Amelia Island PC

Southwest: Rebecca Runze, Los Angeles Pétanque Club

NorCal: Bleys Rose, Petaluma Valley PC; Neil McGovern, Lamorinda PC **Northwest**: Ryan Raber, Walla Walla PC; Neil Bastian, Eugene International

2026 Nationals and Qualifiers Schedule



2026 Calendar

(updated 12-3-25)

Check <u>usapetanque.org</u> for updated calendars. For **2025 FPUSA Tournament results**, go to <u>usapetanque.org</u> > Competition > Tournament 2025 > Tournament Results.



CIEP Trainees in Asheville, NC

Building Coaches Who Build Players: FPUSA's Game-Changing Partnership with CIEP

By Heidi Davison, Classic City Pétanque Club, and Mitzi Gimenez, South Florida Pétanque Club

Want to grow pétanque in the US? Start by training the trainers.

That's exactly what FPUSA did this year, partnering with the **Centre International d'Enseignement Pétanque (CIEP)**, the FIPJP-recognized international training center for coaches, to launch a professional coaching program. Thirty-nine participants from clubs across the country spent three intensive days learning not just *what* to teach, but *how* to teach it effectively.

Two clinics kicked off the program: first in Fresno, CA, then in Asheville, NC. CIEP founder **Claude Raluy** and Sport Director **Georges Dalbigot** flew in from Sergines, France to teach us their proven method for presenting pétanque to new players and introducing boules games to youngsters.

This wasn't a casual workshop. This was professional coach certification.

From Athens to Asheville: How the Partnership Began

The collaboration started taking shape following CIEP's player training clinic in Athens, Georgia this past May, hosted by Classic City Pétanque. After many conversations between the two organizations about what US pétanque needed most, the answer became clear: a structured, credible coaching pipeline. The FPUSA/CIEP Coaching Program was born.

CIEP has been training coaches since 1998, and their reputation for excellence is well-earned. What sets them apart from random YouTube videos and informal instruction? The CIEP Method: a simple, biomechanically-sound demonstration that teaches new players the fundamentals of the throw while giving experienced players fresh insights into their technique.



The Coaching Track Begins

Both clinics followed the same effective format: three hours of classroom instruction each morning, followed by hands-on court sessions every afternoon. Participants quickly discovered there's a lot to learn if you want to be an effective coach.

The first afternoon introduced us to what makes CIEP special. Claude and Georges broke down the biomechanics of pointing and shooting, explaining how accurate pointing and powerful shooting can be accomplished with the same throw, just with acceleration of the forward swing to shoot "plein fer" (full iron).

But teaching technique is only part of coaching. The afternoon sessions included clever workshops designed to make learning pétanque fun. We learned to use our imaginations to create games, exercises, and competitions for various skill levels and age groups. Props became essential tools. Safe standing zones and passageways to avoid flying boules

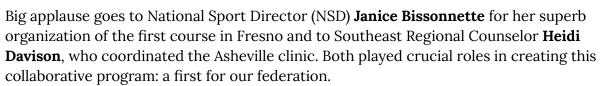
required careful planning. Every detail mattered.

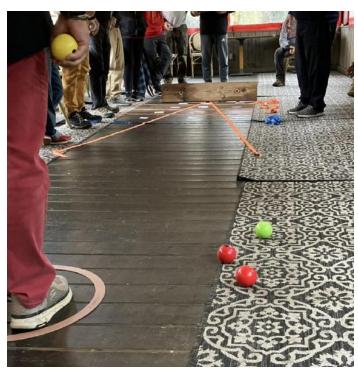
The Exam Everyone Worried About

Then came the three-hour written exam; and yes, it was a big deal. Paying attention during those classroom sessions definitely paid off. While exam results weren't available at the time of writing, we all hoped to pass and become certified CIEP-FPUSA coaches. Those who fell short would serve as Assistant Coaches until they retake the Level 1 exam.

The stakes felt real because the certification means something.

Making It Happen







CIEP Trainees in Fresno, CA

What's Next

The FPUSA/CIEP Coaching Program continues in 2026 with clinics for both Level 1 and Level 2 coaching licenses. Approximately thirty members are already on the waiting list.

Long-term plans call for CIEP to provide one additional coaching session after 2026, then transition to our trained coaches leading future clinics independently.

Interested in becoming a certified coach? Contact **Janice Bissonnette**, NSD, at nsd@usapetanque.org.

Special Thanks

FPUSA extends its gratitude to members who helped make these clinics a success: **Bob Boro** (Fresno Pétanque), **Al Davison** (Classic City Pétanque), **Michel Baudouin** (Carolina Pétanque & owner of Rendezvous Restaurant) and his Pétanque America partners **Marc Quilici** and **Kathy Cline** (also Carolina Pétanque members). Special recognition to **Ben Bull** (Fresno Pétanque) for designing our partnership logo.

From France to Fresno to Asheville, we're building the foundation for professional coaching in the U.S., one certified coach at a time.





Claude Raluy, CIEP President, signs official contract for the coaching program with Heidi Davison.



Congratulations to FPUSA members who completed the CIEP Coaching Clinic!

Fresno Cohort

Neil Bastian, Eugene International Pétanque Lynn Bell, Pétanque La Rose Richard Bell, Pétanque La Rose Janice Bissonnette, Fresno Pétanque Club Jeff Brann, Seattle Pétanque Club Juanita Celix, Seattle Pétanque Club Christine Cragg, La Pétanque Marinière Philippe Geraud, Port Townsend Pétanque Alliance

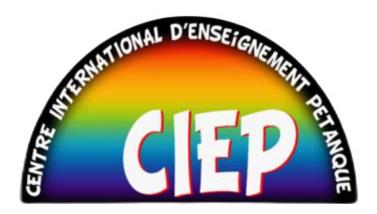
Alain Gimenez, South Florida Pétanque Club Mitzi Gimenez, South Florida Pétanque Club John Harris, Oakhurst Pétanque Club Valerie Hodson-Pujol, Pétanque Club of Las Vegas

Chrissy Lion, Los Angeles Pétanque Club Jerry Miller, Amelia Island Pétanque Club Byron Nelson, Los Angeles Pétanque Club Rebecca Runze, Los Angeles Pétanque Club May (Ubol) Singthayom, Los Angeles Pétanque Club

Pascal Tisseur, Portland Pétanque Club Peter Wiant, Port Townsend Pétanque Alliance

Asheville Cohort

Michel Baudouin, Carolina Pétanque Dominique Carlier, National Capital Club de Pétanque Kathy Cline, Carolina Pétanque Bill Cooke, Carolina Pétanque Al Davison, Classic City Pétangue Club Heidi Davison, Classic City Pétanque Club Catherine Diebold, Thibodaux Pétanque Club Guy Diebold, Thibodaux Pétanque Club Juan Garcia, Tampa Pétanque Club Juan Hernandez, Carolina Pétanque Shannon Hodge, Zanesfield Pétanque Club Jesse Israel, Carolina Pétanque Justin Bo Johns, Zanesfield Pétanque Club Songmi Keating, Amelia Island Pétanque Club Daniel Koach, Les Boulefrogs Pétanque Club of Virginia Argentina (Tina) Lamas, Atlanta Pétanque League Etienne Melloni, Les Boulefrogs Pétanque Club of Virginia Marc Quilici, Carolina Pétanque





Five Days, Eighteen Trainees, One Legendary Umpire

By Michelle Dang, Sactown Pétanque

"Transformative." "Amazing." "Worth every rainy minute."

That's how participants described their week of training with international umpire **Patrick Grignon** in Las Vegas, and yes, they said Las Vegas *and* rainy in the same sentence.

Eighteen trainees from all seven FPUSA regions converged on an unusually cold, wet Vegas to spend five intensive days learning from a man whose umpiring experience spans four decades and whose energy rivals that of players half his age. From fourteen different clubs across the Northeast, Mid-America, Central, Southeast, Southwest, NorCal, and Northwest, they came ready to learn. Patrick Grignon made sure they did.



More Than Just Rules: The Patrick Grignon Experience

From the moment we met him, Patrick's warmth, humor, and enthusiasm set the tone. His kind demeanor and easy smiles immediately put everyone at ease, yet when he stepped into teaching mode, his confidence and depth of knowledge commanded respect. There seemed to be no question he couldn't answer, and we asked plenty.

Wednesday: The Wake-Up Call

The course began in an Airbnb living room with Patrick greeting us with a warm-up quiz that made one thing crystal clear: we had a lot to learn. His Socratic approach kept everyone engaged: he posed questions, encouraged debate, and challenged our assumptions. Even our very first lesson about the legal size and weight of boules sparked lively exchanges:



How can you tell if a boule has been tampered with? Who pays for the X-ray of the boule? Patrick had answers for everything.

Thanks to our French-speaking members **Valérie Hodson-Pujol** (Las Vegas) and **Shannon Hodge** (Zanesfield), along with **Mark Rankin** (Les Boulefrogs), who stepped in to help with translation, we dove eagerly into Patrick's lessons, absorbing rules like sponges. After classroom sessions, we moved to the courts (our lab component) where Patrick guided us through practical demonstrations and scenarios that brought the rulebook to life.

Thursday: Theory Meets Practice

Day two mixed more classroom learning with hands-on court time. The real test came Friday.

Friday: Exams and a Masterclass in Precision

Morning brought the inevitable: exams. Regional and national candidates tackled essay and case study questions while club-level candidates completed multiple-choice tests. Once pencils were down, Patrick explained the rules of the **precision shooting competition**, then sent us back to the courts, this time as officials.

We set up, scored, and officiated an actual contest featuring high-level shooters, our team of umpires working in seamless coordination. We managed each station with precision, rotating through different tasks to become proficient with every aspect of the role. The shooting contest final between **Kham Chounlamany** (Fresno) and world champion **Damien Hureau** rivaled any international competition. We weren't just watching—we were running it.

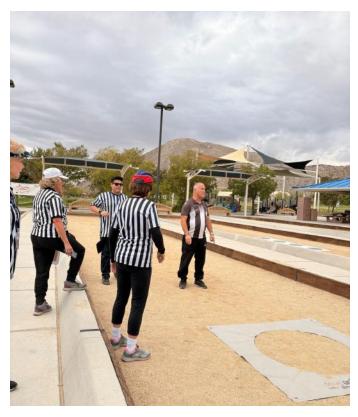
Saturday: Trial by Rain at Viva Las Vegas Open

Saturday morning arrived early. By 7:30 a.m., we were on the courts at **The Meadows School** for the **Viva Las Vegas Open**, monitoring matches among 40 teams. Despite heavy rain after game one (a rare sight in Las Vegas), players and umpires persevered. Yellow and orange cards were shown, measurements taken, and black-and-white striped jerseys were everywhere—almost every match had a dedicated umpire.

Even in the downpour, spirits stayed positive. Players were respectful and, in some cases, proudly posed for photos with their first-ever yellow card. Real-world umpiring in real-world conditions, perfect training.

Sunday: From Training to Triumph

By Sunday, rain had stopped but moderate winds swept through. We continued rotating between courts, applying what we'd learned as Patrick roamed, observing, guiding, and encouraging.





That evening, we gathered in the same living room where training had begun—this time with smiles, wine, cheese, and an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. As **Janice Bissonnette**, NSD, handed out certificates, pride filled the room.

First of Many

This first-ever U.S. umpire training led by an international umpire was truly a milestone. Special recognition goes to **Janice Bissonnette**, **Heidi Davison**, and **Manu Le Bihan** for making this training happen with FPUSA's support. Manu is credited with initiating the conversation and building the relationship with Patrick Grignon. As Heidi Davison, Leader of the FPUSA Umpire Group, collects feedback for future trainings, one thing is certain: the connections we built and the insights we gained will stay with us for a lifetime.

We came as students. We left as umpires.



Club Umpires:

Jason Alicea, Local 718 Pétanque Juanita Celix, Seattle Pétanque Club Heidi Davison, Classic City Pétanque Club Valerie Hodson-Pujol, Pétanque Club of Las Vegas

Pascal Tisseur, Portland Pétanque Club

National Umpires:

Bill Cooke, Carolina Pétanque
Al Davison, Classic City Pétanque Club
Catherine Diebold, Thibodaux Pétanque Club
Guy Diebold, Thibodaux Pétanque Club
Manu Le Bihan, Fresno Pétanque Club
Jo Ella Manalan, South Florida Pétanque Club
Bill Norris, Amelia Island Pétanque Club
Kaye Norris, Amelia Island Pétanque Club
Bleys Rose, Petaluma Valley Pétanque Club

Regional Umpires:

Janice Bissonnette, Fresno Pétanque Club Michelle Dang, Sactown Pétanque Shannon Hodge, Zanesfield Pétanque Club Mark Rankin, Les Boulefrogs Pétanque Club of Virginia

> Umpire Directory (click on Umpire tab)





Teachable Moments: The Circle and the Game

By Al Davison, National Umpire, Classic City Pétanque Club

The ring, as we usually call it—or the circle, or the player's circle—has about as many names as we have for the jack. It's rarely featured in pétanque discussions, and most of the time, not much thought is given to it until something comes up.

We use manufactured plastic rings, although these are a relatively new accessory in pétanque. It was only about 30 years ago that these rings were introduced. Traditionally, players had to draw the rings on the playing surface. There were rules about this that I won't get into because we generally don't do that much anymore. (If you do find yourself needing to draw it on the piste, remember to keep it as close to **50 centimeters** in diameter as you can.)

Since the invention and wide acceptance of the plastic throwing circle, they have been standardized and homologated (they have to come from an approved manufacturer like Obut). The size of the inner part of the circle is always 50 cm in diameter. There is no standard for the outside diameter for a simple but important reason—the part outside the inner circle does not count for anything at all in the rules. Only the inner part is used and regulated.

How Is It Used?

One of the best-known rules in pétanque is that both feet must remain fully inside the circle until the thrown boule (or jack) lands on the piste. You are not allowed to have any part of your feet on the circle, because that puts them outside the ring. In strictly controlled matches, that means exactly what it says—it's not OK to have even a little bit of the edge of your shoe, your toe, your heel, etc., touching the plastic part of the circle.



"it's not OK to have even a little bit of the edge of your shoe, your toe, your heel, etc., touching the plastic part of the circle."

Some of you more experienced tournament players are probably aware that umpires in the US and a few other countries have long ruled that it's OK if your heel touches the back of the circle or if part of your foot hovers over the edge as long as it's not touching. Umpires have recently been advised that this is no longer allowed because it violates the rule requiring "both feet entirely within the circle." This rule will be strictly enforced in future competitions.

Perhaps it's best to think of the inside of the circle as a cylinder that extends up to about your knees, whether standing or crouching. (In case you're wondering, nobody cares whether you agree with this ruling or not—umpires don't make the rules that players must follow—our responsibility is to enforce them. My intention here is simply to inform you.)

The purpose of the circle and the rules about using it is nothing more than to prevent players from gaining an unfair advantage, and in my opinion, it does that very well with such a simple device.

Placing the Circle - Where Should You Put It?

This can be a huge part of the game for players who think strategically, but there are also rules about it that must be followed.

Here are some rules, tips, tricks, and "myth-busters":

The rules are very clear that a circle must be placed so that a jack can be thrown to a valid distance between **6 meters** and **10 meters**. You also have to follow the rule that says the jack must be at least **50 cm** from the end boundary of the court.

The circle does not have to be placed to allow for the maximum distance (10 meters plus the half meter to the end). This is a very common myth among players who believe that the circle must be placed to allow the full **10.5 meters**. This is simply not true! Of course, you can't throw a valid jack if you have less than **6.5 meters** from the circle to the end line.

Strategically, at the very start of a game, the team that won the coin toss, domino flip, or guess-which-hand-has-the-jack can place the circle anywhere on the court that allows for at least the minimum distance. Remember that! There is no rule that says it needs to be near one end line or the other, nor that it needs to be in the middle of the width of the court. If you want to rattle your opponent at the beginning of the game, try placing the circle right against the side string about halfway down the court and throw a 6-meter jack—it's a fun way to start.

After the start of the game, the circle must always be placed where the jack was when the last boule of the previous end stopped. (That's a different rule for

another day, but you should understand that a new end begins as soon as the last boule from the previous end has stopped moving.) This is one of the very good reasons the jack should always be marked and should not be picked up until the circle has been placed. It's worth reminding again about the importance of following the rule regarding marking the circle.

"When the jack is hit out of bounds, many players don't know this rule: the circle goes where the jack had been (marked, of course) before it was knocked out of bounds."

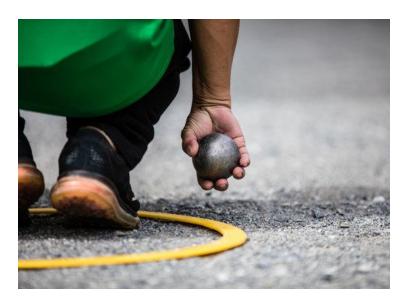
When the jack is hit out of bounds, many players don't know this rule: the circle goes where the jack had been (marked, of course) before it was knocked out of bounds. When the jack has been near the edge of a boundary (string line), the circle should still be placed right there. Do not move it away from the boundary line—that's actually against the rules. As long as the circle (the inside part, remember) is within your court, that's where it must stay.

Moving the Circle Back

This is a subject of much confusion and many "mythological rules." The rules are quite simple and explicit: when your team has control of the jack throw, you are allowed (not required) to move the ring back in the line of play from the previous end to a distance that will allow you to play up to—but not exceed—the maximum distance of 10.5 meters. You are not allowed to move the circle back any farther than that.

Umpires will be watching for this at tournaments. There's no real penalty for moving the ring back too far—you just have to move it to the correct position before a valid jack can be thrown.

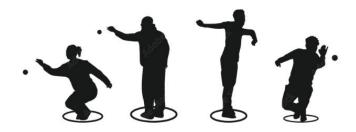
Another little-known rule about moving back the circle allows the team that has been given the jack to be placed following an invalid jack throw to move back the ring (within all the rules regarding this action) before they place the jack. Of course, the usual rules apply about marking the ring and the jack in this case. Don't forget that the rules specify the jack must be placed "immediately"—practically impossible, but the meaning is that it must be done without team discussion or significant delay. (I agree—the wording in the rules is a bit strange.)



Under no circumstances are you ever allowed to move the ring forward! Another myth buster—there is no minimum distance required for the circle to be away from the end boundary, either. (Of course, if there is a "player obstacle"—something outside the boundary, like a post or a fence, within a meter—then the circle must be moved away to allow for the 1-meter clearance.) It's perfectly valid for a circle to be right up against a court boundary line—end line or sideline.

Strategic Considerations

Why step the circle back? You should only do so when there's a clear strategic reason. Otherwise, it doesn't make strategic sense. Let's say your team is clearly better at playing a "short jack" (6–7 meters). You would almost never want to move the circle back. Those "long jack lovers" will probably throw



their boules out of bounds if you give them the chance—I recommend providing them that opportunity.

Another consideration is the condition of the court. On many terrains, the middle portion of the courts is generally a mess (people don't always fill in their divots). Also, since most players play right down the middle every time, the terrain often develops a "ditch shape." Maybe if folks didn't always move the circle back for no good reason, the wear patterns wouldn't be so prominent. Anyway, the point is this: maybe your team would have an advantage if you didn't step back the circle and instead played on one of the less chewed-up portions of the court. Think about this—pétanque is a strategy game, so use some strategy for fun and profit!

Other rules to consider include the rule that a circle must be at least **1.5 meters** away from a jack or a circle in use in another game in an adjacent court at the start of an end. (It's not

a rules issue if a jack gets moved by a boule so that it's too close—that's just how it goes sometimes.) If you must move your circle before you throw the jack to achieve the 1.5 meters, it should be stepped straight back when possible— never forward. It is permissible to move the circle laterally to the minimum 1.5 meter distance only when there is no other movement possible that would comply with the rule. All the other rules about stepping back the ring will apply.

"...a circle must be at least 1.5 meters away from a jack or a circle in use in another game in an adjacent court at the start of an end."

OK, that's more than enough. I'll be shocked if many of you even read this far, although I fervently hope everyone does. Remember why I wrote all this—the games go a lot more smoothly, and they're a lot more fun when everyone knows the rules and plays by them without much thought.

Also, remember what I said about "myth-busting." Lots of players will tell you about "rules" that just don't exist. I hear it all the time! For example, I was in a friendly game in Asheville with a partner who explained that it was a "rule" that you had to move the circle by flipping it back two times, the equivalent of one meter. She was happy when I explained the actual rules.



Al Davison at the Umpire Training in Las Vegas (November, 2025)



Jerry Miller (coach), Ziggy Kessouagni, Christian Cazenave, Hassan Lakhdar, and Franck Brousse

Team USA Wins Pan-Am World Qualifier

By Jerry Miller, Team USA Coach, Amelia Island Pétangue Club

The US Men's Triples Team captured first place at the Pan-American World Championship Qualifier—a historic first for our federation.

A huge shout-out to the **Amelia Island Pétanque Club** for their tremendous support. This victory means next stop: **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia,** September 17, 2026, for the Pétanque World Championship.

The Opening Ceremonies were full of fun and local color. Teams entered the courts in a lively parade, each following a young flag bearer—ours was a ten-year-old girl proudly holding the **Estados Unidos** sign. After several speeches (including a long one from the **Mayor of Iquique**), **Chile's** aspiring Olympic athletes performed alongside other local entertainers, adding to the festive atmosphere.

You can watch highlights from the pétanque matches and the awards ceremony on <u>YouTube</u>. Skip toward the end to see the final plays and presentations.



In this section, you'll discover inspiring stories, personal reflections, and unique insights that highlight what makes pétanque special and how this game connects us all.

Finding Strength Through Pétanque: Two Journeys, One Love for the Game

By Michelle Dang, Sactown Pétanque

Pétanque can be more than a hobby; for some, it's a lifeline. Both **Roland Rakotondramanana** and **PJ Mallette** discovered the game in childhood under circumstances that demanded resilience and self-reliance. One grew up across the globe in **Madagascar**, the other just blocks from the pétanque courts in **Sonoma**, **California**. Worlds apart, yet united by a simple truth: pétanque offered them a way forward when life was anything but easy.

For Roland, the game was tied to survival after the loss of his parents; for PJ, it became a refuge from a difficult home environment. Each carried that early love for pétanque into adulthood, where skill, discipline, and determination turned them into accomplished players.

I had the opportunity to interview Roland and PJ for this piece. These are their stories. Two players whose lives were transformed by pétanque.

From Malagasy Streets to American Courts: Roland's Journey

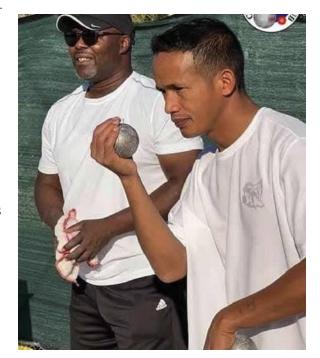
Many of us in the American pétanque community know Roland Rakotondramanana as a formidable competitor in tournaments. We've seen his stance: knees slightly bent, eyes laser-focused on the target, and we recognize his remarkable accuracy. But what we see is only part of a life story that began with stones on the dusty streets of Madagascar. Behind every precise shot lies a profound journey of resilience, dedication, and deep love for the sport that has carried him across continents. This article shares Roland's personal story, from his childhood on the streets of Madagascar to his disciplined training and aspirations on American courts.

The Early Years in Madagascar

In Madagascar, pétanque is more than a game—it's a cultural cornerstone.

Madagascar was a French colony from 1896 to 1960, which helps explain why pétanque is a sport that nearly everyone learns from a young age, with games unfolding in almost every neighborhood. It's no surprise to those of us who have watched recent world championships to see teams from Madagascar often reaching the finals, a reflection of how deeply the game is woven into the country's everyday life and of the remarkable number of

talented players it produces. For Roland, this was the world that shaped him. He began playing at



"I personally started playing at the age of seven, and in almost every neighborhood, you can easily find a spot where people gather to play pétanque."



Rocks serving as boules in Madagascar

just seven years old, but in a community where boules were a luxury and resourcefulness was key. Like many children in Madagascar, he first learned the game using rocks as substitutes. Later, he and his cousin began playing with homemade round balls crafted from melted plastic. This connection to the sport's heartland runs deep in his family; most

recently, his family members played on a court in **Antsirabe**, a city renowned as the home of many professional pétanque players featured on YouTube.

For Roland, pétanque quickly transformed from a childhood pastime into a lifeline -

"During my teenage years, before entering high school, I would rent out my brother-in-law's boules, which attracted players who often gambled on the games. Sadly, I lost my parents at a young age, and playing pétanque became a way for me to earn money and survive."

Each match carried a weight most of us will never know; winning didn't just mean pride, it meant eating that day. That kind of pressure forged a resilience and self-reliance that would define his character for years to come. What began as survival became instinct, the kind of mental toughness that now serves him every time he steps into the circle. His natural talent was undeniable; he was often ranked among the top young players in his town and could easily defeat childhood friends who would later become professional players.

However, Roland faced a difficult choice between pétanque and his future. Instead of continuing to play and becoming one of the best players in his country, Roland paused his commitment to the sport and focused on his education, a path that eventually led him to the United States and a bachelor's degree in Theology. This period devoted to his studies

marked a temporary departure from the game, but it laid the foundation for the next chapter of his life of playing in the U.S.

A New Life in America

Roland's arrival in the U.S. marked the beginning of a new pétanque journey, one filled with unexpected discoveries. As he was earning his degree in 2021, Roland entered his first formal competition at the largest tournament in the U.S., the Amelia Island Open, alongside his mentor and partner, **Ziggy Kessouagni**. Against all expectations, the pair won first place, defeating several world-renowned champions, including a 13-10 victory over Marco Foyot and Bernard Martin in the final. But that victory at Amelia was more than a debut; it was the public result of a private discipline he had been honing for years. Roland and Ziggy won the Amelia Island Open again in 2024.





Playing in Madagascar, where pétanque is part of everyday life.

When asked about his perception of pétanque in the U.S., Roland was immediately struck by two things that differed greatly from his experiences back home. First was the overall level of play. He had assumed that a country as large as the U.S. would have a deep roster of high-level players, whom he defines as those who can perform at around 80–95% accuracy in tournaments. Yet, he humbly notes, "I am not yet a great player." Second was the culture around the rules. Roland was surprised by the strict enforcement of regulations in American tournaments, a stark contrast to the casual, pick-up games he was accustomed to playing with friends in Madagascar.

Training and Mental Discipline

The same tenacity that helped him survive on the streets of Madagascar now fuels his relentless pursuit of excellence on the American courts. Roland's tournament victories are no accident; they are the direct result of a rigorous training regimen born from the understanding that, in high-level competitions, achieving 80% accuracy on easier courts is not sufficient to consistently beat professional players. When asked about his most memorable tournament moment, he points to the semi-final of the Amelia Open 2024. In that match against **Marco Foyot**, Roland felt he was performing at his absolute peak, achieving a remarkable shooting accuracy of approximately 95%.

Roland's training is straightforward but demanding, grounded in consistency and self-accountability. He practices at least five days a week for one to two and a half hours at a time, often repeating the same drills with quiet precision. His core exercise involves shooting from six to ten and a half meters in half-meter increments, aiming either at the jack itself or at a boule smaller than his own, with a goal of hitting the jack at least half the

time. If his accuracy drops below 80 percent, he imposes his own penalty: three laps around the park, roughly a mile and a half. Beyond shooting, he plays solo games to sharpen his pointing and keeps a steady gym routine four days a week to maintain strength and endurance.

This same drive that shapes his training also shows in how he responds to competition. He sets a high bar for his own performance, and when he falls short of it, his disappointment is palpable. This self-imposed standard mirrors the discipline that defines his approach to training and competition.

When it comes to tournaments, Roland doesn't always play with the same partner. He sees an advantage in learning to build good chemistry with different players. However, it also presents a psychological challenge. "At times, I worry about their performance, which can affect my own game," he admits, revealing a vulnerability that makes his focus on the court all the more important.



Looking ahead, Roland's goals are both ambitious and grounded in steady realism. In the short term, he aims to reach a consistent **95% accuracy** in both shooting and pointing, while maintaining the delicate balance between his

training, work, and family life. His longer vision extends further: to represent the United States at the world championships and, one day, to compete in the prestigious La Mondial Marseille tournament, a stage that would bring his journey full circle.

Family remains at the center of Roland's life. His four children, he says, "are really interested in pétanque, but need a lot of motivation from me." He hopes to one day live closer to a club, where he can nurture their enthusiasm and share the game more easily. For Roland, that wish carries the same spirit that has guided his own journey, from the streets of Madagascar to the courts of America, a journey that reflects not only personal perseverance but the discipline and devotion it takes to master the game.







Game On with PJ

The journey of many dedicated pétanque players often begins casually, but few find themselves on the world stage by their mid-teens. **PJ Mallette**, a longtime member of the pétanque community and now also a teacher and mentor, shares his remarkable story and offers candid, insightful observations on how the sport can evolve in the United States.

PJ grew up just two blocks away from the courts in Sonoma. His

introduction to the sport came while playing a Little League baseball game nearby when he noticed people playing pétanque. At around ten years old, he began playing, mainly with the older players who made up the Sonoma membership. His father was a casual player, while his mother, **Toni Mallette**, played socially as well and even qualified for the World Championship Triples when the qualifier was held in Sonoma, later competing in the Canary Islands.

The Game that Changed Everything

For PJ, pétanque became more than a game: "pétanque was an escape for me, growing up in a rough household as an only child with an alcoholic father." PJ found solace and connection on the courts near his home. The local pétanque community became an extended family, a circle of support and acceptance that steadied him through the uncertainties of childhood.

He remembered being the only child player at the club, a presence that puzzled the adult members enough that they once held a vote to decide whether he could continue playing. Surrounded by older players, he learned to adapt and earned their respect, eventually finding mentors from seasoned players such as **Peter Mathis** and **Bill Carter**. Through pétanque, PJ discovered not only a lifelong network of friendships but also a sense of belonging that reached far beyond Sonoma. The



game would take him across the world to tournaments, new cultures, and enduring connections, all bound by a shared love of the sport.



World Championship, Madagascar (2015), Team USA (L to R): Juan Garcia, PJ Mallette, Walt Elder, Pascal Corchia, and Marco Foyot (coach)

On the World Stage

After starting out in local games, PJ soon began traveling to Bay Area tournaments with his mentors, and his competitive path accelerated quickly. He played in events across Los Angeles and New York before advancing to national qualifiers. At just fourteen, he traveled to Thailand in 1999 for the World Championships, joining a team selected from the East Coast as its fourth player. The experience was both unexpected and unforgettable. Only a day before the tournament, PJ found himself teaching a teammate proper technique after noticing the player lifting his leg on every throw. The U.S. team lost every match, but for PJ, the trip was transformative. They stayed in a five-star hotel, practiced in the hotel hallways at midnight, and found themselves interviewed by local media excited to see an American team among thirty or so international competitors. Even the Princess of Thailand attended the event. By sixteen, PJ had already played in two World Championships and spent three weeks in France, competing in major tournaments and studying some of the world's best players up close.

Helping Players Grow

About ten years ago, PJ began coaching players in his club because, as he puts it, he was "seeing people at the same level all the time and not improving." His goal is to help players (not to make money) and charges only a nominal fee for lessons. Recently, he has worked with about twenty players, ranging from complete beginners to long-time competitors. PJ's philosophy centers on customization and strong fundamentals. He begins by asking students about their goals, whether it's becoming a top player or simply mastering the

basics, and always checks for any pre-existing injuries, such as shoulder limitations, acknowledging that everyone is unique. He emphasizes key fundamentals such as stance, grip, and follow-through, and once students have a solid grasp of the basics, he helps them develop a full range of techniques, including rolling, the demi, the full plombé, and doing ground shots or shooting the jack or the ball. He wants his students to have a variety of tools in their toolbox and believes his experience coaching other sports, such as baseball, tennis, and volleyball, translates naturally to pétanque.

PJ reports seeing improvement in every player he has worked with. He also stresses the importance of mental focus and staying relaxed under pressure. He attributes being a good player to constant repetition and practice, cautioning against taking advice from too many sources, which can disrupt one's rhythm. While he learned by observing top players, PJ feels he has developed his own style built on solid fundamentals. His competitive philosophy highlights the importance of consistency and strategy; anyone can win a single game, he says, but consistency is what makes a great player.



Redefining Intensity

On the court, PJ is known for his confident demeanor (sometimes mistaken for cockiness), but he's quick to point out that he loses as often as he wins. As one of the younger players in the U.S. pétanque scene, he embraces showing excitement after a big play, a reaction he believes is natural in any sport. Celebrating, he explains, serves as a confidence boost, especially since pétanque lacks the crowd energy of larger sports (it's just you in the circle). PJ also emphasizes that team chemistry is just as important as skill, and he values teammates who help lift each other up.

I recently teamed up with PJ for the first time and witnessed his brilliant strategies and executions. There were instances when it appeared impossible for us to score a point, yet PJ turned those situations around with his last boule—giving us points with an incredible carreau or with precise pointing that gently replaced the opponent's boules.

Each time he altered our situation for the better, he celebrated with a burst of excitement that is typical of PJ, shouting "Let's *go*!" and walking over to give his teammates a strong high-five. We didn't win that tournament, but I walked away with a new perspective. As a spectator, I may have mistaken his intensity for arrogance, but as his teammate, PJ taught me that his intensity comes from a deep love of the game, a strong competitive spirit, and a

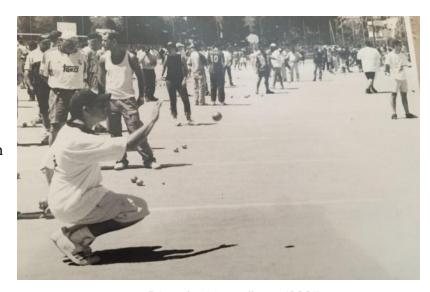
respect for his teammates, not temper or ego. It was a great reminder that passion, when grounded in positivity, can elevate everyone on the court. His energy definitely brought excitement to our matches.

The Future of FPUSA

As a long time FPUSA member and high-level player, I wanted to gain his perspective on how we can grow as a federation. PJ offered some valuable insights. He notes that the sport has remained relatively stagnant in terms of play and membership in the U.S. for decades; he also expresses concern about the lack of junior players. He believes the main challenge is the wide array of other popular sports available to American youth (baseball, basketball, soccer, and more) that compete for their attention. Unlike those professional sports, winning \$1,000 in a pétanque tournament in the U.S. doesn't make headlines or earn ESPN coverage. PJ feels that until pétanque is promoted more effectively, efforts to recruit young players will remain limited.

Still, PJ sees potential for growth. He points to organizations like the American Cornhole Association as proof that even niche sports can thrive with professional planning, strong leadership, and creative promotion. He believes FPUSA could benefit from developing a clear business plan, engaging leaders experienced in scaling small organizations, and hosting exhibitions featuring top international players to generate excitement and visibility. PJ is confident that pétanque has a bright future in the U.S. if the federation embraces innovation, invests in smart growth strategies, and channels its collective passion toward expanding awareness of the sport.

For PJ, pétanque has evolved from a childhood escape into a lifelong pursuit that connects purpose with community. After decades of playing and mentoring, he now feels a responsibility to give back. From the courts of Sonoma to international tournaments, he continues to play, teach, and inspire, showing that the true beauty of pétanque lies in the community and life-changing experiences it builds along the way.



PJ at the Marseillaise (2001)



Meet Eli: Young Talent, Big Game

By Michelle Dang, Sactown Petanque

At just twelve years old, **Eli Fleitas** of Miami, Florida, is showing a level of precision, composure, and passion that's capturing attention well beyond his local club in **Miami**. Introduced to pétanque by his father, **Leo Fleitas**, Eli started playing at eight, balancing the sport alongside his other love, football, where he plays quarterback.

"Pétanque is super fun and unique," Eli said, "One of my favorite parts about pétanque is the people—the community."

Growing Up Pétanque

That community spirit and his easy confidence are matched by an intense focus rare for his age. Eli trains with his father nearly every day, blending discipline with joy. Their sessions include drills like ball-behind-ball for shooting, aiming for a higher arc and clean impact, and landing drills for pointing, to refine precision and hand-eye coordination. "He practices

daily," Leo said, adding that even a missed warm-up can throw off his rhythm.

Eli admits he's still working on consistency: "I struggle a little with pointing ... and sometimes hitting the ball right in the middle instead of in front." But his growth has been steady. Leo sees it as a process built on patience and mindset. "The mental game is the most difficult thing," he said. "I tell him to go in relaxed and treat practice like a tournament. He has to breathe, stay calm, and keep focused."

Eli's first big breakthrough came at a triples tournament in Brooklyn, where he played alongside his father and their teammate **Emile Boujeke**.



Leo, Eli, & Emile

"It was a super close game," he remembered. Down 11–12 in the final; it came down to a decisive shot that secured their first medal together. It was a moment that sealed his confidence and deepened his commitment.

Pétanque Dreams

He now identifies as a shooter, drawn to the satisfaction of precision. "Knocking out the ball feels incredible," he said, though he and his dad are quick to switch roles mid-game if strategy demands it. That adaptability, paired with Leo's patient coaching, has accelerated his development.

Still, what stands out most about the Fleitas family is their philosophy of play. "Either I win or lose, I always enjoy playing with him," Leo said. "It's not just about the game—we travel, we eat together, we see new places, and meet people. It's the memories."



Their travels have taken them from New York (Eli's favorite spot for its "people, courts, atmosphere, and food") to tournaments like the US Open, the Florida Cup, and possibly Santo Domingo. Each stop brings new experiences and new lessons.

Asked about his ultimate goal, Eli didn't hesitate: "To represent our country in this sport, not as a kid, but as a man."

Leo's wish mirrors that ambition. "My goal is for my kid to be much better than me," he said. "I want him to beat me every single time, even in practice. When that day comes, I'll know he's really grown."

Beyond his personal dreams, Eli is already thinking about the sport's future. "Probably more clinics to teach kids how to play," he suggested when asked how to bring more youth into pétanque. He even proposed "a nationals just for kids," an annual event to help young players connect and grow together.

For Eli Fleitas, pétanque isn't just a sport; it's a family tradition and a way of growing up. With guidance from his father and a heart for the game, he's showing what passion and dedication can build. The next generation of pétanque for FPUSA is already taking shape, one boule at a time.



Rethinking Competitions: How to Keep Everyone in the Game

By Sal Taormina, Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club

After about ten years away from the game, I recently decided to step back onto the pétanque court at the **Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club** in Sonoma. It was a bit of a homecoming, and also a reminder of why I had walked away for so long.

The truth is, I grew frustrated in the past because the same people always seemed to win the tournaments. For newer or less-experienced players, that can feel discouraging. When outcomes start to feel predictable, the fun and energy of competition fade, and the very spirit of the game—the camaraderie, the joy, the sense of discovery—gets lost.

But that's exactly why I believe it's worth revisiting how we structure some of our events. Imagine if we mixed things up—maybe different pairings, new formats, or even occasional "leveling" adjustments—so that more players feel like they have a shot. It doesn't take away from the skill of our top players; in fact, it showcases their generosity and leadership when they help others grow.

Think about how pickleball has exploded in popularity. One reason is that it's so accessible: players of different skill levels can compete together and still have a great time. That spirit has drawn in thousands of new people, creating a community that's thriving because it's both competitive and welcoming.

Pétanque has that same potential. We already know how fun, social, and engaging it is. If we make small adjustments to how we play together, we can keep the game exciting for everyone—longtime players and newcomers alike.

At the end of the day, it's not just about who wins. It's about building community, encouraging each other, and making sure that when people walk away from the court, they're already looking forward to the next game.

In this unique feature, **Don McPherson** (VOMPC) dives into the fascinating overlap between craft beer and pétanque. You'll discover how brewers around the world are capturing the spirit of the game in a glass, even in Asheville, NC!

(Note: FPUSA reminds players to enjoy responsibly and avoid alcohol during play. Stay safe and have fun! \bigcirc)

Brews for Boules: (It's Not Just Pastis and Rosé anymore . . .)

By Don McPherson, Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club

Pétanque: the sharp *claque* of boules, the breezy warmth of summer, the speckled shade of plane trees, the hearty laughter and friendly trash talk, the soul-deep, quiet Zen of the circle – and nearby a convivial glass of pastis or wine for before, between, and after games. These traditional beverage choices sprang from the roots of the game – Provence. But it's not just the cloudy white/yellow of Ricard or



Pernod or the pale pink of a Bandol rosé anymore. A newer, self-aware subculture libation is courting *le rond*: Pétanque beer.

These brews include beers explicitly labeled **Pétanque** or named using obvious related terms (e.g. La Fanny, Bière de Boules, Le Bière du Bouliste). Most are small batch craft beers from independent local microbreweries that are brewed intentionally to evoke the ambience of play: low to medium in alcohol, bright, refreshing, crisp, flavorful. In fact, the nature of "craft" beers seems perfectly suited to the essence of pétanque: individual and

innovative in style, strategically complex, executed with depth and passion, and – like pétanque in many regions – seasonal.

Craft beers frequently are not intended for continuous production. Sometimes they are brewed exclusively for a specific restaurant, bistro, or bar. Other times they are brewed on a broad rotating schedule. Often they are distributed in cans or bottles – nationally and internationally to tap rooms and specialty bottle shops – but frequently they are not distributed at all beyond the brewery. A craft beer that is not in production today might be back in production in the next season or, perhaps, the next year, or the next. Notwithstanding the challenge of finding these brews,



increasingly in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Scandinavia, France, and Belgium, pétancoeurs can mull "pointer ou tirer?" with a pétanque beer or pétanque-style brew nearby.

Brewing with Pétanque in Mind

A survey of Pétanque beers reveals that craft brewers disregard full body lagers, stouts, and porters and gravitate to these families of beer when they set out to capture "pétanque in a glass:"

Belgian Witbiers - pale, refreshing wheat beer with low to moderate alcohol content (ABV); citrus and spice flavor bursts; high carbonation; dry finish

Light Ales, Blonde Ales - light; crisp; sometimes fruity with low to moderate alcohol content; low to medium carbonation; long, smooth, dry to slightly sweet finish

Pilsners - light to medium light body; crisp bitterness with floral or spicy notes; moderate to high carbonation; dry and refreshing finish

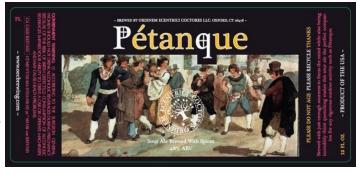
Wild Ales, Sour Ales - light to medium body; high carbonation; notes of citrus, apple, berries, or herbs; distinctive tart to sour mouthfeel; dry finish

French/Belgian "Farmhouse" Ales, "Table Beers," Saisons - light to medium body; low to moderately high alcohol content; complex dry, tart, spicy notes; high carbonation; dry finish

United States

Oxford, Connecticut (and distributed nationally)

The first of two American Pétangue beer brewers is **Ordinem Ecentrici Coctores** (OEC) (loosely, The Order of Eccentric **Boiler**s, or Brewers) in **Oxford**, Connecticut. A unique, highly regarded and obsessively innovative craft brewery, **OEC** opened in 2014 "to create ales & concoctions of fantastic aromas & flavors" focusing especially on wild and sour ales. In 2018, OEC introduced Pétanque, (4.8% ABV) described as a "blend of oak barrel-aged white ale (coriander & peel) with a barrel-aged saison, brewed with just enough sourness to focus the mind while also being incredibly thirst quenching" and thus "the perfect companion for any rigorous outdoor activities such as pétanque." OEC also





brews **Rosé de Pétanque** (5.3% ABV), a version of Pétanque with added coriander, orange peel, and blueberry juice.

OEC's inspiration for brewing a beer named **Pétanque** is not what you'd immediately guess. According to founder/owner/brewer **Ben Neidhart**, at its beginning OEC built a bocce court at the brewery only to discover that the court was too short. So instead of bocce, they learned and enjoyed playing pétanque since it requires a much shorter court. From that entirely accidental experience came the inspiration for the brew crew to concoct a beer named after the game. The label art for both OEC **Pétanque** beers is lush and evocative – a vaguely Belgian/French/Dutch Renaissance full color line drawing of men in tall hats and high stockings playing boules with engaged villagers looking on.

Neither beer is continuously brewed or currently available, but both have been repeated 3-4 times on the brewery's schedule since their 2018 introduction on tap at **OEC's** custom-built German brewhouse and tap room and in 12 oz. cans. OEC plans to brew both **Pétanque** beers again in Spring 2026 and to distribute them nationally via family-owned international craft alcohol distributor **B. United International Inc.** Once brewing resumes, **Pétanque** will be available on tap at OEC and nationally in 16 oz can four-packs at tap rooms and bottle shops in major U.S. metro areas.

Asheville, North Carolina

The other American Pétanque beer emerged more recently in Asheville, North Carolina from <u>Asheville Brewing Company</u>. Its connection to playing pétanque and to the pétanque community is as intentional and direct as OEC's connection was serendipitously accidental. Its story begins with long-time Asheville restaurateur <u>Michel Baudouin</u>, who operated a highly regarded French bistro, **Bouchon**, in downtown **Asheville** from



2005 until he sold it in 2025. In 2019, **Baudouin** also converted a former church in **East Asheville** into **RendezVous**, a farmhouse-style French restaurant with both indoor and expansive outdoor seating and, reflecting his personal passion, eight regulation-size pétanque courts.

Immediately after he bought the property, **Baudouin** constructed two courts intended for use by his six or seven local pétanque friends. But bigger plans soon emerged, including hosting the **Asheville Pétanque** branch of **Carolina Pétanque**. When he learned that to host a FPUSA tournament he needed a minimum of eight courts, he built six more on a large, outdoor terrain with custom signage and scoreboards bordered by the restaurant building, evoking the minds-eye vision of a French village café or bistro with pétanque courts directly outside or in the adjacent village square.

Once the facility was in place, the local popularity of pétanque increased markedly. After the devastation Asheville suffered from Hurricane Helene in 2024, the *RendezVous* terrain also became, effectively, an all-boules-sports boulodrome hosting not only the regular club

play of Asheville Pétanque but also scheduled play by local bocce and lawn bowls clubs whose facilities were flooded out.

Asheville Brewing Company president **Mike Rangel** knew **Baudouin** as a fellow Asheville businessperson. He had been a regular customer and big fan of Bouchon and became a regular customer and equally big fan of RendezVous. Succumbing to **Baudouin's** insistent, friendly urgings, **Rangel** played pétanque there "to see what all the fuss was about." He immediately fell in love with the game and its ambience. "It's really nice just getting out there. It has nice noises when the boules crack and a dedicated group of folks with a real passion for it," **Rangel** reflected. "It's not flashy, it's just cool – I told my wife I'd found what I'm going to do after retirement!"

In the summer of 2024, **Baudouin** told **Rangel** that he'd always wanted to have an interesting but light European style pétanque beer to feature at RendezVous. "Michel is a charismatic, genuine, big-hearted guy whose restaurant is terrific, and you just can't help but love him and support him in anything he's into," **Rangel** explained. He took up the challenge

of crafting a "different kind of palate-pleaser than just the usual IPAs and porters." He asked his head brewer and brew crew to come up with a suitable complex but light and refreshing pétanque beer. To **Rangel** as a brewer, the essence of highly individual craft brew is perfectly in sync with the experience of playing pétanque, especially its requirement of total focus and its marriage of performance and strategy.

The resulting brew, that **Baudouin** loved and the brewery crew thought was "a hit out of the park," is **Asheville Brewing's Pétanque**, a **Belgian Wit** (5.3% ABV), which it promotes with evident pride and enthusiasm:



Indulge in the lively spirit of the countryside with pétanque, a refreshing Belgian Wit that pays homage to the classic game of Pétanque. This unfiltered wheat beer pours a hazy golden hue, reminiscent of the sunlit fields where players gather for a spirited match.

The aroma dances with a symphony of citrus and spice, as hints of orange peel and coriander mingle with the delicate fragrance of Belgian yeast. As you take your first sip, the effervescent bubbles tickle your palate, delivering a crisp and light body.

Pétanque's flavor profile unfolds with a harmonious blend of sweet wheat malt, zesty orange, and a subtle peppery undertone, creating a refreshing and quenching experience. The finish is clean and slightly dry, inviting you to savor the moment and contemplate your next toss on the pétanque court.

Several years ago, **Baudouin** had asked a colleague in **Carolina Pétanque**, **Preston Myers** from the **Winston-Salem** branch, to craft some signs for *RendezVous* with his laser engraver/cutter. **Myers** made several signs, including a prominent one for "The 14th Point,"

the outside bar servicing the pétanque courts area. After securing Pétanque beer for RendezVous, **Boudouin** asked **Myers** to craft a custom tap handle for the beer. He sent **Myers** the materials, including the tap handle extension and some **Obut** boxwood cochonnets, and **Myers** produced the very distinctive tap handle in use today at RendezVous.

Most recently, **Baudouin**, an indefatigable promoter of pétanque and, since 2023, the operator and part-owner of **Pétanque America**, the primary U.S. boules and pétanque supplies firm, has collaborated with **Rangel** to secure beer glassware with **Asheville Brewing's Pétanque** beer logo. The glassware will be available for sale from RendezVous restaurant and from **Pétanque America**.

Canada

Rounding out the North American availability of beers with explicit Pétanque names are brews from two **Quebec** microbreweries. **Le Réservoir**, a craft microbrewery and neighborhood bistro pub in **Montreal's Plateau Mont-Royal district** for 23 years, brews and serves on tap **Saison De La Pétanque**, a **Farmhouse Ale-Saison** (5.5% ABV).



According to manager **Antoine Michel**, the saison has been seasonally brewed three times in the summer in a small batch for serving on tap in the pub. **Michel** describes it as "a mixed fermentation beer brewed with fennel seeds that recall the taste of anise since pastis is often associated with pétanque." The beer is very popular when available.

In **Quebec City**, **La Souche Artisan Microbrasserie** produces two pétanque beers for serving on tap at its **Limoilou pub** in **Quebec City** and its **Stoneham pub** in nearby **Stoneham-et-Tewkesbury**. Both are hearty Farmhouse Ale-Saisons, **La pétanque** (6.3% ABV) and **Pétanque Framboise** (5.8% ABV).

United Kingdom



Pressure Drop microbrewery in **Tottenham Hale, North London** brews its **Pétanque** (3.5% ABV) that is available sporadically via can drops and online order stock lists as well as at *Pressure Drop*'s taproom. The "table beer" is described as a light, thirst quenching pale ale with cryo mosaic hops and notes of mango, strawberry, and pine.

<u>Hand Brew Co</u>. with a craft brewery in **Worthing** on the South Coast and a brew pub in **Brighton** has brewed its **Pétanque Pilsner** at least once.

Scandinavia



HEKK Brewing, a non-commercial brewery in **Norway**, brews a Bohemian **Pétanque Pils** (5.7% ABV).

In **Denmark**, **Bang & Harbo** has brewed **pétanque ØL** (4.8% ABV), a pale ale, for the wine bar **Vin et Pétanque** in **Aarhus**. According to owner **Martin Bruun**, the beer is not currently in production.



Bang & Harbo also brews Biere De
Boules, a pale ale (4.8% ABV), for
Boulebar in Copenhagen. The beer is
not currently on the Boulebar
Copenhagen menu and not currently in
production.

Belgium

Belgo Sapiens Brewers, a microbrewery in Nivelles, Belgium, produces La Fanny, (5.0% ABV), the brand name of a blonde Belgian ale brewed using three hops and three malts. La Fanny, "la bière preferee des boulistes!," is widely available across Belgium and France on tap in bars and bistros and in bottles from retail outlets and specialty bottle shops. Given its wide distribution, La Fanny is probably the best known Pétanque beer in the world.

La Fanny is described in tasting reviews as sweet with a lingering fruitiness, a light bitterness, and smooth finish. Its back label conveys in French the full Fanny legend (English translation):

Kissing Fanny, or kissing Fanny, is not a reward (well, it always depends on Fanny!). It means losing a game without scoring a single point! This tradition is said to have originated in... Savoy! The original Fanny was a waitress at the Grand-Lemps café, just before the First World War. Legend has it that, out of kindness, she would let herself be kissed by customers who had just lost at boules without scoring a single point. The kiss was then given on the cheek. Until the day, according to legend, the village mayor lost in turn and came to beg for his "reward." Did Fanny have a grievance against him and want to humiliate him in public? No one knows. What is certain is that she climbed onto a chair, lifted her skirts, and offered him... her buttocks!



France

There are several Pétanque beers available throughout France and Belgium with concentrations especially in the South of France.

Craft brewery <u>Brasserie La Cig</u> in La Seyne-sur-Mer, Provence, brews La Bière du Bouliste (4.8% ABV), an organic blonde pilsner infused with the distinctive lemon flavor of Citron de Menton. According to Rodolphe Apparu, director of the Brasserie, La Bière du Bouliste is produced year-round as one of their best-selling beers, with kegs for tap service and 12,000 bottles per year distributed throughout France and Belgium. The idea for the beer came from the proprietor of the



bar <u>O'Boulodrome</u> in **Toulon** who asked **Brasserie La Cig** to craft a light, refreshing beer with a pétanque theme to complement the bar's three indoor pétanque courts.

<u>Brasserie du Castellet</u> in Signes, Provence, brews Fanny de Provence – Blanche (5.0% ABV), a **Witbier** described in reviews as being a summer-friendly, easy-drinking, Belgian wheat beer, moderately effervescent with hints of coriander, a gentle orange peel zest, and a bright, soft, smooth texture.

Brasserie Artisanale Cérévisia in Les Mées, Provence, brews Fanny, a four-cereal blonde ale.

On Your Own

If you are yearning for a boules-centric brew when nothing with the *pétanque* moniker is available on the menu, simply follow the inspirations of the pétanque beer brewers. Look for 3-5.5% ABV; a style descriptor such as witbier, table beer, farmhouse ale, saison, pilsner; and tasting notes such as light, crisp, zesty, lemon or orange peel, citrus, coriander, spiced, refreshing.

Reflecting on the experience and success of **Asheville Brewing's Pétanque beer**, company president **Mike Rangel** muses that given the large number of local microbreweries and brewpubs in the U.S., interested pétanque clubs in other regions might be able to persuade a local craft brewer to create a Pétanque beer, at least seasonally, or perhaps in association with a local French restaurant as a regular client.

Finding Home Through Pétanque

By Dawan Sangasri. La Boule New Yorkaise

When I first discovered pétanque, I wasn't expecting it to become such an important part of my life. Today, it's my passion, my community, and the place I always go to recharge and connect.

Although I had known about pétanque growing up in **Thailand**, I never played back then. It wasn't until I moved to the United States—feeling homesick and searching for connection—that I came across a sign in **Bryant Park**, Manhattan, advertising free pétanque lessons. On a whim, I joined the **Friday Night Tournament** there. From that very first game, I was hooked. The atmosphere was welcoming, the players were kind, and the game itself was both fun and surprisingly challenging. I kept coming back, and before

As I continued playing, I not only improved my skills but also built friendships with people from all over the world. Through pétanque, I've learned about different cultures, perspectives, and stories. Those connections have been just as meaningful as the game itself.

long, pétanque became a big part of my

daily life.

What draws me most to pétanque is the perfect mix of strategy, skill, and focus. I love thinking through my shots, planning my moves, and finding ways to execute them with precision. Competing against stronger, more experienced players motivates me to push myself. Instead of feeling pressured, I see those matches as opportunities to learn—from their accuracy, their calm under pressure, and





their tactical thinking. Every game, win or lose, helps me grow as a player.

Good teammates also make all the difference. When your teammates share ideas, support each other, and play with joy, it feels like you've already won half the battle. Even when we lose, I still feel proud knowing we gave everything we had and played as a true team.

Attracting More Young Players

I believe visibility and accessibility are key to growing pétanque, especially among younger players. Many people simply don't know the game exists. Creating short, fun videos that show gameplay, tips, and techniques can make a big impact. I've seen it firsthand—when my club, **La Boule New Yorkaise**, started posting videos, more young people began showing up to play. Social media is where the next generation already spends time, so meeting them there just makes sense.

It's also important to show that pétanque is easy to learn, welcoming, and fun for everyone, no matter their age or experience. Highlighting the social side of the sport—the laughter, the teamwork, the friendships—can help people see that it's more than just a game; it's a community.

The biggest barrier for young adults, I think, is simply awareness. In the U.S., very few people know what pétanque is, and finding a place to play can be tough—especially in cities like New York. There's also a perception that pétanque is mostly for older players, which can make younger people hesitant to join.

One great way to change that would be to introduce pétanque in schools. If kids learn early that it's a fun, inclusive, and skill-based game, they'll be more likely to keep playing as they grow up. I'd also love to see more indoor courts with high



ceilings so people can play year-round. That would make pétanque more accessible and allow players of all ages and genders to enjoy it no matter the weather.

Pétanque has brought me so much joy. It's challenged me to improve, helped me find community, and connected me with amazing people from around the world.

Hope to see you on the pétanque courts soon!



CDMX Open 2025: A Celebration of Pétanque and Culture

By Rebecca Runze, Los Angeles Pétanque Club

This year, I attended the second Mexico City Open, which took place on the first weekend of November. The timing also coincided with Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), one of Mexico's most iconic holidays.

A total of **56 teams** participated in the tournament. The U.S. was well represented, with 20 teams traveling from Atlanta Pétanque

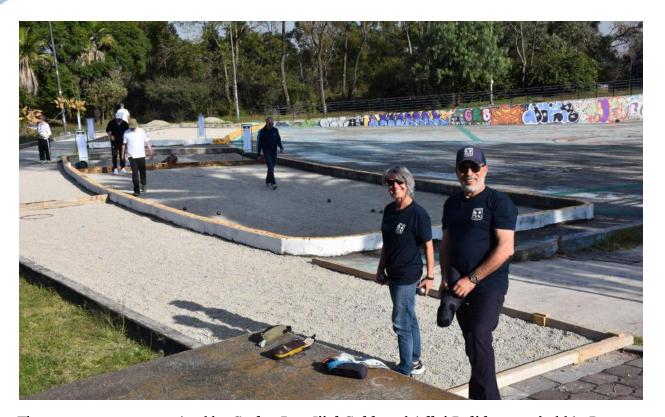
League, Local 718 Pétanque, Carreau Club, Dallas Pétanque Club, La Boule New Yorkaise, Los Angeles Pétanque Club, La Pétanque Marinière, Miami Pétanque Club, and Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club.

My brother, **Andreas Runze**, even came from Europe (**Boule Club Kreuzberg, Berlin**) to participate with me.

A few years ago, **Petanca Pública Chapultepec** became the first Pétanque Academy on the North American continent. It is taught by **CIEP** (Centre International d'Enseignement Pétanque) and already features Level 2 and 3 coaches.







The tournament—organized by **Carlos Pez, Ijiel Gold,** and **Adlai Pulido**—was held in **Parque Chapultepec**, which years ago had been a water amusement park. After being abandoned for some time, Carlos approached the city with the idea of transforming the space by building pétanque courts. With the support of **Centro Cultural Los Pinos**, he succeeded, creating an incredible venue with 20 courts where the first CDMX Open took place last year.

This year, Carlos added eight more courts, and together with Ijiel and Adlai, was able to host 56 teams at this wonderful event. The new courts sit just a few steps away from the originals, down by the old water basin of the former park.



The organization of the CDMX Open 2025 was impeccable, with delicious lunches and a warm, welcoming atmosphere throughout. Most importantly, all the participating players had a fantastic time within Mexico City's pétanque community. The competition was high-level, yet camaraderie and kindness prevailed between teams. Even as everyone played with focus and determination, the emphasis remained on the joy and fun of the game—a truly exceptional and beautiful experience.

After five qualifying games using the Swiss system, the tournament was divided into A–AA, B–BB, and C–CC categories for the top 48 participants, and a D category for the final eight teams. When I spoke with Adlai—since I had assumed only 48 teams would advance—he explained that, with so many participants traveling long distances, they wanted to ensure everyone had the chance to play on the second day.



The event was live-streamed by **Petanca Pública Chapultepec**. The broadcast was top-quality—professionally filmed, edited, and even included a live commentator.

Congratulations to all the winners—hope to see you all next year!

Category A:

1st - Olivier Hidalgo & Valentin Detry 2nd - Nôel Magny & Diego Gutierrez 3rd - Wolfgang Kurz & Emile Boujeke

Category AA:

1st - Thomas Canestraro & Aaron Weeks 2nd - Aurea Moreno & Luis Guerrero Perez 3rd - Ingrid Morales & Julia Dacosta



If You Had Told Me Two Years Ago...

By Elissa Szymanczyk, Portland Pétanque Club

If you had told me two years ago that I would be writing about pétanque, I'd have said, "What's pétanque?" Needless to say, it's been an eventful couple of years.

As a kid I loved competition — cards with friends, back alley basketball, volleyball, even a brief stint as a 6ft tall cheerleader if you can imagine it! I grew up in **Salem, OR**, where my parents still live (you may have seen them at a tournament or two.) Neither of them played team sports growing up, but they were always encouraging of any I wanted to try, and for that I'm so grateful.

Later, I rowed crew at the University of Oregon, where I met my husband, **Isaac**. We jumped into the parenthood club early, with baby **Lily** arriving in 1998, and **Maeve** in 2001. Through my 20s and 30s I engaged in different activities; yoga, hiking, lots of home renovations, running, tennis, paddling, you name it, but somehow my body would always find a way to break down and put the kibosh on continuing. Was this just "getting old?" Maybe, but from head to toes, I was having problems.

Around 2018, I started to notice subtle tremor and muscle misfires were happening. No biggie. Or was it? I chose to ignore it and keep going. "This, too, shall pass." By 2020, I was

worried, but the pandemic derailed efforts to get to the bottom of it. July 2022, my low back gave out hard. Tests, injections, PT, but nothing helped. Then came a chance nudge toward the courts by my neighbor, Frank, who told me, "If you like corn hole, you'd love pétangue." I PROMPTLY put it on my calendar, where it remained for a year before I finally showed up at the pétangue courts in October 2023. Hey, I had to use a magnet to pick up my boules and nothing was pain-free, but I was playing games again! Elissa was BACK. I studied every aspect of the game like it was my job. I watched YouTube games, other Portland players, read about strategy and tried to figure out which players had a style that would be manageable for me. New friendships and plentiful potato chips in the clubhouse gave me a reason to keep showing up. I even got my friend Crissy to come try the game with me, and as luck would have it, we both became absolutely obsessed.



"Pétanque became a life-preserver: a game simple enough to manage physically, but FUN enough to lure me to play often, even when I didn't feel up to it."

One day, my friend **Pascal** said "you should go play the Vegas tournament." I don't know why I said yes, but I did. He found me a partner (thanks for playing with such a rookie, **Hilda!**) and I got myself down there, not knowing anything about tournament play. That began what was a phenomenal summer of playing and falling HARD in love with this sport. If you're reading this, I don't need to explain further. IYKYK. A few months later, **Barbara Kongsbak** invited me to join her at the Women's Doubles WQ in Sonoma. I probably had no business being there



after 6-7 months of playing, but we went, and I learned SO MUCH. She was such a lovely guide/mentor, and I came home and told my family "I'm gonna play until I win a National Championship." That seemed like a nutty goal, but I like nuts.

Just as I was finding some success on the courts, I began to physically struggle more. I often couldn't get up from a squat. My mind was fuzzy. I was losing weight and feeling weak. Last September, I finally landed in the office of a rheumatologist at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). He called the next day after my labs came back - "You have an ultra rare genetic bone disease called HPP, or hypophosphatasia." That wasn't on my BINGO card! Genetic testing proved his diagnosis, and I began the journey of learning how to live with this disorder. I learned to open up more with family and friends about what I was experiencing, which became easier now that I had a name for it. The timing couldn't have been more perfect for a diagnosis to come, because by October 2024, I had hit my threshold for what my mind and body could endure. After a long pause from playing pétangue, and a winter of paperwork, and learning, I began Strensig enzyme replacement therapy, the only treatment for HPP. Seven months into treatment, I'm beginning to see improvements from the current therapies, so I'm grateful and hopeful! I'm learning to adapt my play as needed—lately I've been playing left-handed to rest my right arm—and I've spent the bulk of my 2025 training time focused on how to play with the LEAST amount of strain. Easy does it, girl!

"This is a game for all. A game that comes with a built-in family. A game you can literally play anywhere."

One thing that has made me so proud to play this game is the fact that it's such an inclusive sport. I see players with their own challenges out on the courts, playing brilliantly, and I feel proud to be playing alongside them, just doing my best and having fun. Finding ways to

stay active is so important, especially when faced with health challenges. In the future I'd love to introduce the game to others who could benefit from some movement, friendship, and competition. This is a game for all. A game that comes with a built-in family. A game you can literally play anywhere.

My second year of playing has been such a hoot. Teammates **Barbara Kongsbak, Crissy Shaffer,** and I won **National Women's Triples Gold** in Sonoma, and at my first National singles in Fresno I was lucky enough to



land a bronze. I have to pinch myself sometimes to believe that I really get to play with all you incredible players in these tournaments, and I don't take a moment of it for granted. I look forward to another year of great games in 2026, and again to the entire FPUSA community, you all are the best! See you on the courts next year!

Conditioning and Strength Training:

Solutions for maintaining and increasing muscle function, flexibility, and performance in aging pétanque players

By Philippe Geraud, CIEP-Certified Coach (Level 1), Port Townsend Pétanque Alliance

Disclosure: I am neither an academic nor a sports medicine professional. Most of the information contained in this article was gathered from sports medicine publications and academic papers (authors were Masters or Phd prepared), research papers found on Google Scholar. In the writing of the section on nutrition, I have consulted with my wife, Lisa C. Geraud, MS, RD, MA, LMFT. I would like to thank Jack McHenry, President of the Edmonds Pétanque Club, for his thoughtful recommendations.

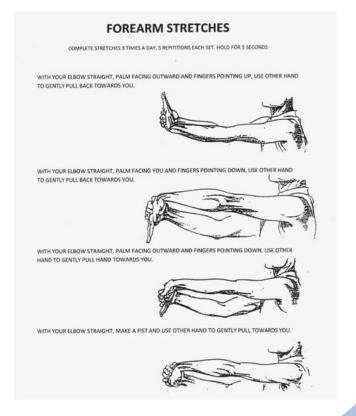


"The greatest challenge to the masters athlete is to maintain a high level of training that will promote high performance while preventing fatigue that leads to injury." (Source: Masters athletes: factors affecting performance. Journal of Sports Medicine, October 1999)

Pétanque practitioners may not think of themselves as high-level athletes, but if you are

seriously involved in competition at the regional, national, and international levels, you are no doubt spending several hours per day or per week practicing throwing techniques which, if not done properly and with the correct form, may result in later physical complications such as tendonitis, rotator cuff injuries, or back issues.

While the majority of these musculoskeletal issues can be avoided through correct posture while standing in the circle, proper boule holding, and developing a correct pendulum swing for throwing, most beginning players, unfortunately, only learn to play with rudimentary guidance in proper form without follow-up instruction. Although this may seem unimportant at first especially for leisure players, as we age, improper form coupled with the natural tendency of the aging body to break down can lead to debilitating issues compromising a player's performance.



"The masters athlete is more likely to experience sports-related injuries because the very tissues which make up the tendons, ligaments, cartilage, and muscle of their bodies break down more easily and heal with greater difficulty, if at all." (Source: Masters Athletes, Journal of Sports Medicine, October 1999)

Pétanque players can sometimes make the incorrect assumption that because, at first sight, pétanque appears to be a low-impact sport, practitioners are immune to practice and performance injuries, but this simply isn't the case: various studies show that mature adults beyond their $40^{\rm th}$ year of life, begin to experience losses in muscle mass and function ranging between 16.6% and 40.9%.

It is important to note that while there are many benefits of the practice of the sport of pétanque for the older adults, for instance helping to promote balance, developing spatial awareness, and providing social interactions which can prevent isolation, these are mainly cognitive in nature, and it would be incorrect to assume that playing pétanque alone would fulfill the requirements for conditioning and strength-building necessary to promote muscle development, flexibility, and endurance necessary for sustained medium to high-level competition. For this, resistance training and aerobic physical activities are necessary for retaining muscle mass and function.

Resistance training, done under the supervision of qualified instructors comes in many forms:

- * free weight training consisting of dumbbells, barbells and kettlebells
- * machine-based training: weight machines and cable machines
- * isometric training: holding a position against resistance (wall sit, plank)
- * resistance band training: elastic bands that provide variable resistance
- * weighted vest training
- * calisthenics: bodyweight exercises that focus on agility, coordination and strength.
- * stretching: when done properly ahead of resistance training, can help reduce injuries.



(Source: AI compilation of the definition of resistance training on Google.)

For all of the above, it is important to consult with a healthcare professional or certified trainer at any age before starting any resistance program to ensure safety and effectiveness.

Interestingly, adherence to a regular regimen of resistance training by aging adults can help offset the deleterious effects of hormone loss in aging adults and delay gradual muscle loss and function.

"benefits of exercise training in both sexes stretch beyond steroidogenesis (which plays a crucial role in metabolism, immune response, and reproductive functions), and include effects such as muscle mass regeneration, weight loss, disability prevention, and prevention of sarcopenia."

(Source: Effects of exercise training on anabolic and catabolic hormones with advanced age: A systematic review. *Journal of Sports Medicine*, 2022)

In addition, we cannot stress enough the importance of proper nutrition as a crucial factor in muscle preservation and integrity.

Nutritionists advocate that an adequate amount of energy (calories), proteins, and other essential nutrients is necessary for maintaining muscle function and bone density. With aging, both energy needs and therefore food intake decreases which, in turn, decreases intake of essential nutrients. A low dose daily multi-vitamin taken under medical guidance can be useful in ensuring nutrient needs are met so that aging players may endure the strenuous demands of protracted competitive events.

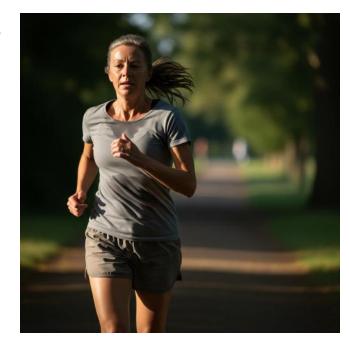




Between aerobic exercise or resistance training, which is more conducive to the maintenance or even increase of muscle mass and function later in life? The research remains inconclusive.

"For example, one systematic review proved that resistance training had positive effects on body fat mass, handgrip strength, knee extension strength, gait speed, and the timed up and go (TUG) test, whereas another review reported that aerobic exercise was most effective to improve muscle strength and physical performance." (Source: Exercise for sarcopenia in older people: A systematic review and network meta-analysis. Journal of Cachexia, Sarcopenia and Muscle, 2023)

Bodies differ with regards to genetics and composition, and to date, no research has been produced offering conclusive proof regarding which type of exercise, aerobic, or resistance training is better than the other. Certainly low-impact exercise is desirable once the age of 50 has been reached. Athletic endeavors one has participated in during one's youth, according to one body of research, may give older athletes some physiological advantages, while, on the other hand, injuries sustained during one's early athletic activities healed at the time, can cause physical issues later in life.



In conclusion: As we age, we often attribute our declining energy levels,

flexibility, and decreasing ability to perform physical (sports) activities to the natural, and inevitable, aging process. Although there is some unavoidable lean body mass decline, muscle mass and strength may be preserved significantly through consistent and varied physical activity, hydration, optimum nutrition, and adequate sleep.



News from NorCal

Coming Home to Pétanque La Rose

By Richard Bell, President, Pétanque La Rose

It's good to be home, even if it's temporary. After forming our club two years ago, we now have courts of our own where we can grow and flourish. It is the first major step in our journey toward having a permanent space in a park in our city of **Santa Rosa**.

We began talking to the city about getting room for a terrain four years ago, and we are still waiting for the chance to build courts in our park of choice. Glacial is too fast a term to describe the pace at which this city government moves. A few months ago, we approached the local **YMCA** about using

an abandoned lot they own — and they said yes! It's **10,000 square feet** of ground formerly used for t-ball. Under the two feet of weeds we cleared, we found hard-packed, flat ground that works really well for our game. It's not perfect — there's no shade or water, and we have to check out the key to use the area — but we have a place!

The site has been good to us. The Y management is happy with how we cleaned up their eyesore and has helped promote our club. The area has good visibility, with lots of foot and vehicle traffic going by. The result is that our club's growth has sped up — our little club that started with eight members now has over thirty. All are welcome to join us. We have plenty of room!









Brendan Cohen (President, CFDS) and Christophe Sarafian (President, Samictown Pétanque)

Sactown Shines: A Season to Remember

From new equipment funded by an FPUSA grant to history-making performances at the World Championship, Sactown Pétanque members showed up big in 2025.

Grant Puts Resources to Work

Sactown Pétanque and Club Français de Sacramento joined forces to secure an **FPUSA Matching Grant**, purchasing new circles and a first-aid kit that arrived just in time for October's **NorCal Regional Select Singles** tournament. The tournament showcased exceptional pétanque, with **Wolfgang Kurz** (VOMPC) claiming gold while Sactown members **Poe Lee** and **K Lee** earned second and third



place respectively. We're obsessed with pétanque and love every chance to compete and connect!

A Summer and Fall of Victories

This season was packed with incredible achievements from members competing both locally and away.

K Lee repeated his win at the Annual Six-Ball Tournament hosted by Club Français de Sacramento.

Tom Lee and Roland Rakotondramanana dominated the prestigious **Rose City Open** in Portland, taking first place against top players from around the nation.

Chan Xiong and partner **Ye Xiong** (Fresno) earned third place in Concours A at RCO, while **Krystal Pulsipher** and **Gregg Hodge** (Portland) captured second in Concours B.

The Year of Suzie

If Sactown had an MVP, **Suzie Lee** would be the unanimous choice. Her 2025 season was nothing short of remarkable:

- Won the annual Lamorinda Cup with partner **Kham Chounlamany** (Fresno)
- Silver medal at National Singles
- Bronze at National Women's Triples with Michelle Dang and Stacey Linh (Tampa)
- Gold at NorCal Regional Women's Triples with Michelle Dang and Hideko Matsunaga (LPM)
- Rare triple crown at an Open Sauvie Island Open: Women's Singles gold, Women's
 Doubles gold with Alexandra Tisseur (Portland), and Select Doubles gold in Concours B
 with Brendan Cohen (CFDS)

More Honors Across the Board

Christophe Sarafian earned bronze in National Men's Triples alongside PJ Mallette (VOMPC) and Kham Chounlamany (Fresno). Michelle Dang and Bekah Howe (Port Townsend) claimed silver in Women's Doubles at the Sauvie Island Open—then made history at the Doubles World Championship in Rome. Their 12th place finish among 50 teams marked the highest-ever ranking for a U.S. women's team in international competition – a milestone for US pétanque.

We can't wait for another exciting year and the chance to see our pétanque friends—near and far—on the courts again.



Petaluma Highlighted in Stroll Magazine

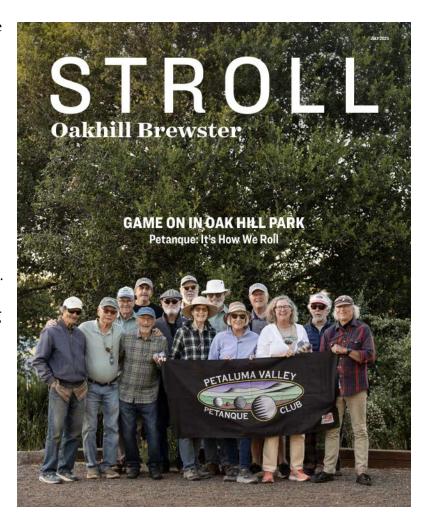
This article has been reprinted with permission from Stroll OakHill Brewster, July 2025 issue.

What a fantastic way to showcase pétanque — great job, Petaluma!

Let's Get the Ball Rolling!

Discover the neighborhood's hidden gem: A vibrant pétanque club in Oak Hill Park where tradition, strategy, and neighborly spirit roll together.

Longtime resident **Ed Porto** and the **Petaluma Valley Pétanque Club** keep tradition and community alive in Oak Hill Park. If you've ever wandered through Oak Hill Park on a sunny morning and spotted a group gathered around a gravel court, tossing shiny metal balls and sharing a few laughs, you've likely encountered the Petaluma Valley Pétanque Club (PVPC). With its friendly competition, relaxed pace, and easy camaraderie, the club is a hidden gem and a testament to how neighborhood traditions take root and flourish.



Ed Porto, a Kent Street resident for the past 16 years, has been a driving force behind the club since its founding in 2007. A longtime fan of pétanque, a French game similar to bocce, Ed helped lead the charge to build the dedicated court that now stands in Oak Hill Park. He and other founding members presented a proposal to the **Petaluma Parks, Recreation and Music Committee** in 2006. By the following year, the court was installed, funded entirely by private donations, fundraising efforts, and a modest annual dues structure. "pétanque is played in over 150 countries, but it's still under the radar in a lot of the U.S.," Ed explains. "We wanted to create a space where people could discover the game and play at their own pace."

Unlike bocce, which uses larger wooden balls and requires long, groomed lanes, pétanque uses baseball-sized steel balls and can be played on open gravel or dirt, making it easier to set up and more adaptable. The goal is simple: toss your ball as close as possible to a small

target ball called the cochonnet while outmaneuvering your opponents. But the appeal runs deeper. "It's a game that's easy to learn, but hard to master," Ed says. "That makes it perfect for all ages and skill levels."

PVPC currently has around 35 members. They meet three times a week: Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday for regular games. From May through mid-October, you'll find them out in the mornings. In the cooler months, they shift to afternoon play. "Some of us play in tournaments around the Bay Area and even nationally, but for most of us, it's about fun, exercise, and camaraderie," Ed says.

"Some of us play in tournaments around the Bay Area and even nationally, but for most of us, it's about fun, exercise, and camaraderie." — Ed Porto

They'd love to see some fresh blood on the courts. Membership is open to all ages and backgrounds.

The group also hosts social events throughout the year, potlucks, informal contests, and free lessons for newcomers. They've welcomed local high school French students for a cultural exchange, using the game as a bridge between communities. It's this welcoming, open spirit that keeps players coming back and makes the club such a great fit for the neighborhood.

They'd love to see some fresh blood on the courts. Membership is open to all ages and backgrounds. The annual dues are just \$40, which cover court maintenance and support club activities. But your first few games? Totally free. All it takes is showing up during a play session, introducing yourself, and letting



Let's Get the Ball *Rolling!*





the balls fly. "pétanque is one of those rare things that combines skill, strategy, and social connection," Ed says. "And once you try it, you're hooked."

Petaluma Puts FPUSA Grant to Good Use!

The Petaluma Valley Pétanque Club recently completed improvements at **Oak Hill Park** with help from the **FPUSA Matching Grant Program**. Thanks to the grant, members were able to replace several worn boundary boards around the terrain, purchase a new first aid kit, and add official playing circles to enhance safety and play quality.

Resourcefulness paid off — by purchasing lumber from a local wholesaler, the club spent less than expected, allowing the savings to go toward additional court repairs. These upgrades not only improve the playing experience but also ensure the club continues to be a welcoming community hub for pétanque enthusiasts of all ages.







Updates from Sonoma

Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club (VOMPC) wrapped up a lively and successful 2025 season with plenty to celebrate. This year's Sonoma Cup brought out spirited competition and excellent play from all teams.

Congratulations to **Kevin Evoy**, **PJ Mallette**, and **Barry Serota** (right), who emerged as champions after a series of impressive matches. The Annual Club Competition was won by Associate Members **Mark Shirkey**, **Tom Lee**, and **Suzie Lee**.



The club also had representation abroad this year, with members competing in the Mexico City Open. Congratulations to **Wolfgang (Wolfie) Kurz** (right), who, playing with **Emile Boujeke** (LBNY), earned a third place finish in the A division. What a great showing for VOMPC on the international stage! At home, **Wolfie** won gold with **Peter Mathis** in the NorCal Regional Select Doubles.

As we look ahead, the club welcomes a new leadership team for 2026. **Loel McPhee** will serve as President, with **PJ Mallette** stepping in as Vice President. **Barry Serota** will take on the role of



Treasurer, and **Colin Kennedy** joins the board as Secretary. Rounding out the group are general board members **Erin Menefee**, **Mike Menefee**, and **Ed Clay**. The club extends appreciation to everyone who has volunteered their time and energy to help guide us into another successful year.

Plans are already underway for the **2026 Wine Country Open**, which will be held **April 25–26**. The event will be limited to **64 teams** and promises a minimum **first-place prize of \$2,000**, with a total prize purse of at least \$10,000. It's sure to be one of the highlights of the pétanque season, drawing players from near and far to enjoy great play, good company, and the beautiful setting of wine country.

Membership continues to grow, with the club finishing **2025 at 120 members**. **The goal for 2026 is to reach 150 members**, reflecting the enthusiasm and sense of community that continue to define VOMPC. Here's to another year of camaraderie, competition, and pétanque in the heart of Sonoma

National Men's & Women's Triples Winners



Players traveled from as far as Florida and Texas to compete in what proved to be a spirited and competitive event in Sonoma, hosted by Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club. The Portland women's team emerged victorious—living up to the bold declaration on their shirts: "Oregon is above California." Fun weekend was had by all!





National Women's Triples

Gold: Barbara Kongsbak, Elissa Szymanczyk, & Crissy **Shafffer (Portland)**

Silver: Erin McTaggart (VOMPC), Michelle Healy (San Antonio), & May Singthayom (LAPC)

Bronze: Michelle Dang (Sactown), Stacey Linh (Tampa), & Suzie Lee (Sactown)

National Men's Triples

Gold: Peter Mathis (VOMPC), Mone Lee (Sactown), & **Damien Monnet (VOMPC)**

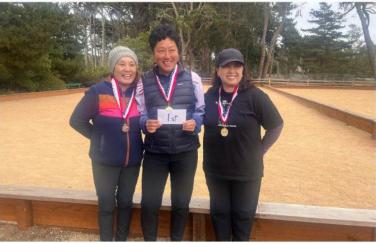
Silver: Adair Hastings, Bill Miller, & Fred Fang (VOMPC) **Bronze:** Kham Chounlamany (Fresno), PJ Mallette (VOMPC),& Christophe Sarafian (Sactown

Players Enjoy New Courts at SF's La Boule d'Or

Playing on brand-new courts in **Golden Gate Park (San Francisco)**—what could be better? Thank you La Boule d'Or! Congratulations to all the medalists in the **NorCal Regional Mixed Triples 60 over/under** (July 2025) and **Women's Triples** (August 2025). Looks like Hideko and these courts are a winning match!









NorCal Regional Mixed Triples 60 over/under (R top photo)

Gold: Giuseppe Gadeleta, Joe Danielson, Hideko Matsunaga (La Pétanque Mariniere)
Silver: Marie Vongsvath, Christine Cragg, Mark Toepfer (La Pétanque Mariniere)
Bronze: Kevin Evoy, Holly Sammons, Nick Bunand (VOMPC)

NorCal Regional Women's Triples (L bottom photo)

Gold: Michelle Dang (Sactown), Hideko Matsunaga (LPM), Suzie Lee (Sactown)

Silver: Erin McTaggart, Holly Sammons, Ashlee Dencklau (VOMPC)

Bronze: Ann Krilanovich (La Boule d'Or), Sandra Shirkey (LPM), Debra Varner (La Boule d'Or)

News from Southwest



San Diego Wins the 2025 West Coast Cup

By Pierre Constantin, President, Los Angeles Pétanque Club

This year's West Coast Cup was hosted by last year's winner, the **Los Angeles Pétanque** Club, on the first weekend in

the Northern clubs were able to make it, but we were excited to be joined by two Ensenada clubs, +Petanca and Lunes de Petank. It was a beautiful weekend filled with fierce and fun competition. San **Diego** (team photo above), leading by only one point over **Fresno** (right photo), took the gold and the 2025 West Coast Cup trophy, while +Petanca came in third (top photo next page). We congratulate all the winners and look forward to competing in San Diego next year.







Joyful moment for Club de Pétanque San Diego - West Coast Cup Champion

San Diego Shines with FPUSA Grant Support

Club de Pétanque San Diego recently received an **FPUSA Matching Grant** to install **new lighting** at their courts — and the results are dazzling! The club now has a beautifully lit terrain after sunset, which allows members to play safely and comfortably into the evening. Congratulations to San Diego for enhancing accessibility and community play under the lights!





Octoberfiesta at Oakhurst Pétanque Club

Bu Sharon Lewis. Oakhurst Pétanque Club

The Oakhurst Pétanque Club recently revived their annual fall festival, this year dubbed **Octoberfiesta**. The day began with an obstacle contest designed by member **George Lewis**. The cochonnet was placed behind a series of obstacles and players were challenged with getting closest to it.

As can be imagined, there were lots of crazy points and matching laughter. **Tish Harris** made the closest throw with a bank shot. This was followed by a traditional game of pétanque. Next up was a potluck Mexican-style lunch. Following lunch, **John Harris** set up OPC's traditional and popular money toss. Several players managed to land a boule on a bill. The day ended with another round of traditional pétanque, full stomachs, and the joy of spending time outdoors with friends and laughter – playing a game we all love.



National Singles & Mixed Triples Winners

Hosted by **Fresno Pétanque Club**. Congratulations to all the medalists! All smiles for Janice with two golds.

Men's Singles Winners

Gold: Kham Chounlamany (Fresno)

Silver: Tom Nguyen (Walla Walla) **Bronze:** Ziggy Kessouagni (Miami)

Women's Singles Winners

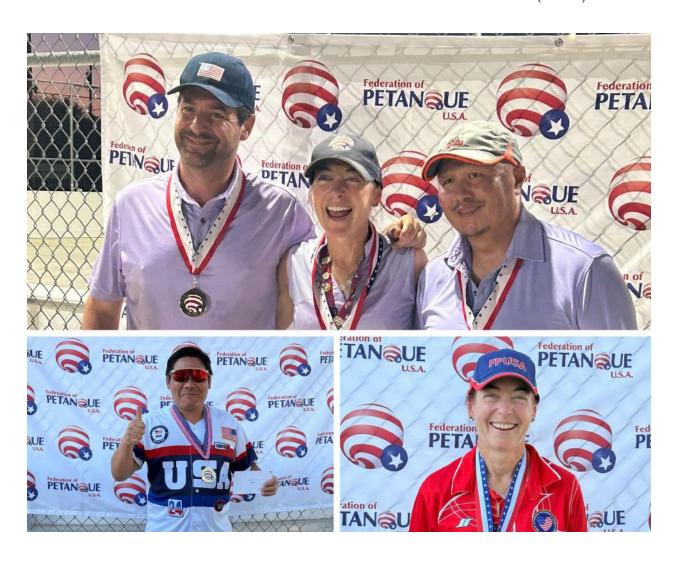
Gold: Janice Bissonnette (Fresno PC)

Silver: Suzie Lee (Sactown) Bronze: Elissa Szymanczyk (Portland)

Mixed Triples Winners

Gold: Damien Monnet (VOMPC), Janice Bissonnette (Fresno), & By Vang (Fresno)

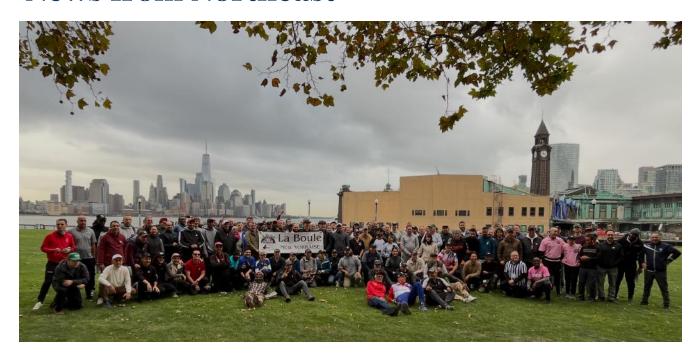
Silver: Wolfgang Kurz (VOMPC), Gerda Jorgenson (Portland), & Manu Le Bihan (Fresno) Bronze: Sean Khamneungthai (Fresno), May Singthayom (LAPC), & Kham Chounlamany (Fresno)





https://www.fresnopetanque.com/tournaments.html

News from Northeast



Highlights from La Boule New Yorkaise

By Kate Brideau, La Boule New Yorkaise

Although La Boule New Yorkaise's members are still traveling and playing tournaments around the U.S. and Mexico, our 2025 season concluded in mid-October, with the **US Open**. Held in **Hoboken** in less than ideal weather, this was still the largest U.S. Open we've held, with **72 teams** from around the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Europe. Run masterfully by **Steve Ginsberg** and **Erich "Woody" Wood** (Local 718), in the end, **Dylan Rocher** and **Jean-Pierre Subrenat** (formerly of NYPC) won a fifth Open title, and will have another plaque added to our trophy, newly redesigned by our member, **Malcolm Hunt**.

In August, at our second-largest tournament of the season, generously sponsored by our African members, the **African Open** saw teams competing to beat out our two top medalists: **Kasia Sliz** and **Patrick Hayes** (gold), and **Mohammed Sebbagh** and **Omar Chaqour** (silver). LBNY players made strong showings in regional



tournaments, as well, with our members Joseph Hassoune and Noureddine Didouh (gold) (right photo), and Damien Fagla and Rafik Boukirat (silver) medaling in the NE Regional doubles in Philadelphia (photo previous page); and Dawan Sangasri placing second in the Mid-America Regional doubles with Olivier Hidalgo (Local 718), and third in the SE Regional Women's Doubles with her partner Heather Chron-Bernard (LAPC).

On the world stage, our member **Kasia Sliz** proudly represented the US with her team at the Women's World Championship in October (bottom photo).

And October also saw the conclusion of this year's free pétanque lessons in the parks—run by our members in both **Bryant Park** and **Washington Square Park**. As our games move inside, thanks to the continuing schedule of our neighbors at **Local**

718, LBNY is already preparing for next year's season of tournaments and lessons.



Team USA (L to R): Alexandra Tisseur, Bekah Howe, Juanita Celix, Kasia Sliz, and Shannon Hodge (coach)

News from Southeast



Tampa Pétanque Club: Inspiring Young Players

By Alex Canesse, President, Tampa Pétanque Club (Alex at left in photo above)

The Tampa Pétanque Club recently had the pleasure of collaborating with the **Gustave Eiffel Academy** in **St. Petersburg, Florida**, to introduce the sport of pétanque to a new generation of players. Fourteen enthusiastic students took part in a special workshop designed to teach them the fundamentals of the game while highlighting the culture and strategy that make pétanque so unique.

The session began with a tailored PowerPoint presentation covering the rules, equipment, court layout, and basic tactics. Students learned not only *how* to play, but *why* certain strategies—such as pointing versus shooting—shape every round of pétanque.

Following the classroom portion, the group headed outside for hands-on instruction. Tampa Pétanque Club volunteers guided students through proper throwing technique, situational decision-making, and etiquette on the terrain. The students quickly gained confidence, and their competitive spirit emerged during a friendly mini-tournament that capped off the day.

By the end of the workshop, the new players demonstrated impressive improvement and genuine excitement for the sport. Tampa Pétanque Club looks forward to continuing this partnership and helping pétanque grow within local schools and youth programs across the region.

Miami Pétanque Club's Youth Outreach

David Fournier (at right in photo), President of Miami Pétanque Club, is actively introducing pétanque to juniors through local schools,



particularly those with French programs. Partnering with **Margina Muñoz**, he developed a plan for students to research the sport beforehand—learning about boules, throwing techniques, rules, history, and watching match videos. The preparation sparked excitement, and by the visit day, students were eager to play. Here's what Ms. Muñoz shared about their experience.

Experiencing Pétanque with Monsieur Fournier

By Margina E. Muñoz, Lamar Louise Curry Middle School

On November 6, 2025, my French Beginning and French 1 students gained a unique experience that we will always cherish. In celebration of National French Week at **Lamar Louise Curry Middle School**, one of the events planned was to engage my students in a game of pétanque. To prepare my students for **Monsieur Fournier's** (Miami Pétanque Club) visit, they listened to a



couple of videos describing facts and rules of the game. In addition to listening to a couple of videos, I asked my students to collaborate on a shared PowerPoint on which they answered a question related to pétanque. The preparation for the visit built up excitement in the classroom. As a first year French teacher it is important for me to help students learn the language by finding ways to engage them with the culture.

My students' feedback on the experience was very positive! My students enjoyed learning to play pétanque because they found it enjoyable to play a competitive yet fun and relaxing game with their friends, they liked learning about the different throwing techniques, and they appreciated Monsieur Fournier's sense of humor and the way he explained the game. The game of pétanque and the milestones possible with the sport impressed my students and are open to playing the game again!

FPUSA Grant Gives a Bright Boost to SFPC



South Florida Pétanque Club received an **FPUSA Matching Grant** to purchase **portable lights** and **loaner boules** to help introduce new players to the sport. The new lighting setup extends playing hours into the evening, while the loaner boules make it easier for curious newcomers to give pétanque a try. The club looks forward to welcoming more players and keeping the courts lively well after sunset!







Classic City Pétanque in the Spotlight!

Classic City Pétanque Club and club members Heidi Davison, Cori Jakubiak, Chris Martin and Rob Cowan were recently featured in **BOOM Athens** magazine, highlighting pétanque — alongside bocce — as one of the area's most sociable and accessible sports (you can access the full article using the BOOM link above). The article captured the welcoming spirit of the Athens community and the fun, low-barrier appeal of the game. Classic City Pétanque was also listed in BOOM's Senior **Resource Directory**, helping even more locals discover where to play and connect. Bravo to the team for spreading the word and growing the game in Georgia's Classic City!

A Clever Solution for Clubs Without a Clubhouse

After drawing inspiration from **Richard Bell's (Pétanque La Rose)** ringbox, **Classic City Pétanque's** members **Steve Stone** and **Rob Cowan** created an enhanced version for our club. We have no club house! As you can see, our box contains rings, scoreboard clips, terrain maintenance supplies, extra boules for guest players and a little more. We hope our iteration spurred by Richard's creativity will inspire other clubs who also lack space for their everyday supplies.





Miami Wins the 2025 Florida Cup

By Mitzi Gimenez, South Florida Pétanque Club

The 2025 Florida Cup tournament was a resounding success! **Miami Pétanque Club** claimed the trophy with a score of 73 out of 100 points!

South Florida Pétanque Club hosted this inter-club tournament on November 15-16 at their courts in **John Prince Park**. Absolutely perfect weather over the weekend showcased their 20-court complex and pavilion, nestled inside this beautiful 726-acre park.

The six Florida clubs competing came from **Miami**, **Amelia Island**, **St. Augustine**, **Gainesville**, **Tampa**, **and Lake Worth**.

An exciting tournament format created the team pairings and court assignments in advance. These were set on Friday evening with the team draw. The team captains could study the spreadsheet of 10 games to develop their strategies for competing against each club's strong players. See the complete spreadsheet and results on the SFPC's website. Team rankings were posted after every game, allowing verification of all scores.

Strategy was key! Specifically, the captains had to submit their lineup of 6 players just a few minutes before the start of each game. They knew which team they were playing and on which court, but not which players! They learned to check out the players warming up on their assigned courts, and later figured out some were decoys there to mislead the opposing team! The players only had to reveal themselves when the whistle blew to start the game.

Amazingly, from the Saturday morning group photo shoot at 8:00 a.m. until the Trophy Award Ceremony at 2:45 p.m. on Sunday, everything ran like clockwork. The schedule allowed plenty of time for socializing and strategizing between games, and the upbeat

music made everyone want to dance a little as they walked to their assigned courts. It was fun, lighthearted, and intense all at the same time.

The Florida Cup highlight was called **Saturday Night Fever** – a party with good food, drink, dance music, and comradery! It began as the last game finished about 4:30 p.m. and lasted until after dark. The pavilion was lit by two De Walt work lights that were purchased with a matching grant from FPUSA! These will work well if the club ever has to illuminate courts during an FPUSA tournament.

The six clubs vied for a beautiful trophy and medals. Each of the six clubs received 8 custom Florida Cup caps for each team member – a nice souvenir. Miami is already looking forward to defending their Florida Cup trophy next year!



"The competition crackled with energy as each team pushed themselves to their limits, determination shining in every move. Rivalries ran deep, yet they were laced with mutual respect and laughter between rounds. Every victory was hard-earned, every defeat met with a handshake and a grin. It wasn't about tearing others down but about lifting everyone higher through challenge and sport. By the end, the air was thick with both exhaustion and pride—proof that the fiercest battles can still be fought in friendship. The rest of the country should be on guard as they consider competing with any of the Florida teams, as all the players were top notch. The weather was superb, the terrain challenging, the event coordination spot on. The format was unique and new to most, adding to the pride, joy and enthusiasm. Bravo!"

- Florida Cup Participant



Amelia Island's Memorial Tournament

The Amelia Island Pétanque Club held its 13th Annual Memorial Tournament on October 12, a tradition dating back to 2012. When the club was formed in 2010, members decided to host two annual club tournaments, one in the spring and one in fall. In mid-2012, member **Roger Lundborg** passed away and the fall tournament was held in his honor. From then on, the Memorial Tournament has become an annual event. This year we remembered three of our long-time members who passed away in 2025: **Jack Mulligan, Nick Krawiecki,** and **Pearl Lundborg**. The tournament featured 17 select doubles teams and was won by **Jimmy Weinsier** and **Jeff Malone** with **Marty and Aggie Swails** finishing in second place.



Southeast Regional Women's Doubles Winners

Thank you to **Classic City Pétanque Club** for hosting!





Gold: Jessica Lehman and Honor Woodard (Classic City Pétanque) (center)

Silver: Kathy Cline and Tracie Jeffries (Carolina Pétanque) (left)

Bronze: Heather Chron-Bernard (LAPC) and Dawan Sangasri (LBNY) (right)

PPUSA NATIONALS





Saturday, March 7, 2026

Men's and Women's Doubles

&

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Mixed Doubles



John Prince Park

Lake Worth Beach, FL

SouthFloridaPetanqueClub.com







https://southfloridapetanqueclub.com/

News from Mid-America



Boule-Toting Vagabonds

In September, Les Boulefrogs Pétanque
Club of Virginia welcomed Michel Pujol and
Valerie Hodson-Pujol (right top photo) with
pick-up games as they made their way back
home to Las Vegas after playing in
tournaments in Montreal and Philadelphia.
Richard Bell and Lynn Bell of Pétanque La
Rose also came to play while visiting; and the
Crondall Pétanque Club in England
welcomed our own Mark and Karen Rankin
to their handicap melée. It's true – no matter
where you go, you can find your people with
pétanque!



Speaking of Philadelphia, our very own **Eric** and **Noah Hertert** (right bottom photo) claimed first prize in the consolante at the Philadelphia NE Regional Select Doubles tournament. Phenomenal!

And on the home front, we continued our tradition of potlucks and fun tournaments that provide the spice of life to our pétanque family.

Dan Koach and **Etienne Melon**i attended the level 1 CIEP coaching class in Asheville in October, and came back enthusiastic about what they had learned.











Les Boulefrogs has continued their outreach in schools this fall. Their first opportunity this school year came in late September, when they returned to **Elizabeth Davis Middle School** where **60 students** were able to learn and play pétanque. For about two-thirds of them, this was their first experience with the game, and their enthusiasm grew as they learned techniques for throwing, how to strategize, and how to play to their own strengths and to their opponents' weak points. For the other third, it was their second time after a visit last year, so they were eager and enthusiastic from the beginning!

What was different this time was that bad weather was not an obstacle, thanks to the **FPUSA's Matching Grant Program**, which helped fund the purchase of multiple sets of **indoor boules!**

The club also taught pétanque for two days at **Glen Allen High School** in October and is booked for two more days in schools in November and one in December. They continue to pursue avenues such as the **YMCA** and community organizations as well as other schools in the surrounding districts.

Zanesfield Pétanque Club Hosted Fall Classics

By Justin Bo Johns, President, Zanesfield Pétanque Club

This fall, the **Zanesfield Pétanque Club (ZPC)** continued its long-standing tradition by hosting two of its signature tournaments — **Buck a Boules** and the **Ohio Cup** — now in their ninth consecutive year.

Buck a Boules, held on September 14, is a unique event where players pay one dollar per boule they wish to use. Singles compete with six boules and can face off against doubles or triples teams, creating unpredictable and lively matchups. The 2025 tournament drew local competitors for a day of friendly rivalry and precision play.

After three qualifying rounds, the team of **Ruby Johns** and **Justin "Bo" Johns** emerged as the only undefeated squad at 3–0, earning a spot in the semifinals. There, Ruby and Bo defeated **Mike Epp** and **Larry Niswonger** 13–4, while **Lucy Johns** and **Mollie Johns** advanced by

topping **Ron Walls** and **Jon Dalmau** 13–8.

In the third-place matchup, Team Walls overcame Team Epp 13–8 to secure the final podium spot. The championship game featured an all-Johns family showdown, where **Lucy** and **Mollie Johns** claimed the **Buck a Boules title** with a decisive 13–6 victory over Ruby and Bo.

Just a few weeks later, on October 5, ZPC hosted the **9th Annual Ohio Cup**. Originally limited to Ohio





clubs, the event has since opened to all players as other state clubs have folded — but the spirit of friendly competition remains strong. After three qualifying games, **Lucy Johns** and **Justin "Bo" Johns** once again stood out as the only undefeated team, boasting a +26 point differential. They continued their dominant run, defeating **Larry Niswonger** and **Mike Epp** 13–5 in the final to become the 2025 Ohio Cup Champions. In the third-place match, **Ruby Johns** and **Mollie Johns** bested **Joan** and **Mike Failor** 13–1, rounding out another memorable day of spirited pétanque play in Zanesfield.

Celebrating Larry Niswonger's 89th Birthday

It's not every day a club member turns 89! In October, ZPC member **Larry Niswonger** celebrated this special milestone, and club president **Justin Bo Johns** had the opportunity to join him for a few games—on a brand-new court that Larry built entirely on his own.

As luck would have it, rain began to fall during their second game. Unlike our club terrain, Larry's new court allowed play to continue without interruption, and the two even managed to fit in a third game.

The club plans to make good use of Larry's court this winter, as its three-sided cover offers excellent protection from the elements.

Meanwhile, Larry will be spending the season relaxing and enjoying the sunshine in Florida.







Courtesy, Cooperation and Common Sense: Playing Pétanque in Chicago's Public Spaces

By Ed Von Bergen, Lincoln Park Pétanque Club

The <u>Lincoln Park Pétanque Club</u> in **Chicago** doesn't play on a dedicated gravel pétanque terrain. We play on a public gravel path that is also used by cyclists, joggers, dog walkers and many other people. We are not isolated from other people in the park; we are right in the middle of things. Initially this situation didn't seem very desirable. But we have adjusted well to our circumstances and there are now strong arguments to continue this way into the future. Here is our story.



A bright yellow rope marks the edge of our terrain. We never go outside this rope except to retrieve an errant boule or cochonnet. This leaves an obviously clear area where other users of the park know they can pass by our games unobstructed.

Throughout France pétanque is played in public spaces. You will see people walking, jogging, pushing baby strollers, walking dogs and riding bikes right next to where a group has gathered to play a game of pétanque. Sharing public space seems to be a common value among the French. You'll see pétanque being played in the middle of many other activities

in every village, town or city in France. This is facilitated of course by the wide availability of gravel surfaces in French squares, parks and public gardens.

When the Lincoln Park Pétanque Club began searching for a location, the availability of a suitable gravel surface was a challenge. **Chicago's Lincoln Park** stretches for seven miles along the Lake Michigan shoreline, comprising 1,200 acres of public space. It has 25 miles of public trails, paths and walkways but nearly all of them are paved. It seems that gravel has given way to cement, asphalt or paver bricks as the material of choice within the Chicago park system. Yet, there remains one ribbon of gravel gently winding its way through the park **between Fullerton and Belmont Avenues.**

For the Lincoln Park Pétanque Club, this ribbon of gravel became an acceptable location although initially it did not seem ideal. We began playing along this path, using a fluorescent yellow rope laid down lengthwise in the middle of the path to mark the limit of our pétanque terrain. We wanted to give a clear signal to other people that an area of the path remained open and unobstructed by our games.



Every time we play, a jogger, dog walker or pedestrian stops to ask us about our game. This proximity to other people in the park helps us find and recruit new players.

As time passed, we began to realize that playing in a location with many people passing by had unique advantages. Soon, people stopped to talk or to take pictures. Many people remarked that they had seen this game played during their trips to France, but never in the United States. And because Chicago is a tourist destination, on several occasions we've had French tourists stop and join in our games spontaneously. Today, about one-third of our members are people who were just passing by our games and recognized pétanque as "that French game I always wanted to try." Just playing pétanque near other people has proven to be an important recruitment tool that builds our membership.

Then, as our club grew, we realized that we had terrific free space for growth. It has been easy to add an extra playing terrain to our string of terrains simply by laying down an additional rope. We always place our terrains on the same side of the path so that other people do not have to zig zag through our playing areas in order to bypass our games. So, what we have today is a long string of terrains, laid end to end, occupying just a little less than one-half of the width of this gravel thoroughfare. Of course we have space between the playing areas, and if we need an additional terrain for late arrivals, we just add another playing space on one end or the other of this chain of terrains.

We can move up and down this path in search of better surface and playing conditions. In the summer we play in the shade of hundred-year-old oak trees. During early or late season games we tend to move into sunnier locations. After a rain shower, there can be puddles or damp areas, so we move away from those spots. And in the fall, there are places where more leaves have fallen, so we move to avoid that situation. It never dawned on us during our first season that moving up and down this long ribbon of gravel would have the advantages we have now come to realize.



Our players observe the game and wait for their turn to play on only one side of the path. This protocol allows bicyclists and others to easily understand that there is a clear area for them to pass by our pétanque games.

Compared to other places in the US, our pétanque terrains are a little on the narrow side. But this is necessary because we always remain courteous to other people who want to use the same gravel path for other reasons. Courtesy and consideration for other users of the path have become strong cultural values held by all members of the Lincoln Park Pétanque Club. That is why we never cross over the yellow ropes we use to mark off our playing terrains. We watch the games and wait for our turn to play on a grassy area located "on our side of the path". Sometimes bicyclists arrive at high speed next to where we play. And as those cyclists look 50 or 100 yards ahead of where they are, they need to be able to see that

there is an obviously clear space available for their use. So, we never walk across the path into the "non-pétanque zone" except to collect an errant boule or cochonnet.

Our biggest issues involve shooting and boules that can potentially leave the areas we have marked off with our ropes. We play on an open gravel surface with no side boards and no end boards that you find on custom built dedicated pétanque terrains. So, we have developed special protocols to manage this situation with safety and common sense in mind. One of our local rules is that any boule that simply touches the rope becomes an out of bounds boule. And the physical diameter of the rope (as opposed to a string that is most frequently used) helps deflect a boule back into our designated playing area.

Because we have no backboards to stop boules that have missed their target while shooting, we need to ask another player to be a "catcher." We also announce our intention to shoot so that another player can walk to the far end of the terrain to catch the shot boule. The catcher then stops the shot boule from going too far away from the terrain or into an adjacent playing area along our chain of terrains. The catcher also has another important role to play. That role is to signal to the shooter that an "all-clear" condition exists and that it is okay for them to shoot. Bicyclists, joggers and even pedestrians can arrive adjacent to our playing areas more quickly than you would think. This is another role for the catcher; to signal to the shooter not to shoot based on a soon to arrive bicyclist or pedestrian adjacent to our playing area. In practice this is all fairly routine and obvious. We use a thumbs up signal or a palms-out gesture to signal go/no-go situations, and it all works out pretty well. This protocol really becomes a simple application of common sense and courtesy towards others.



Chicago is blessed with a wonderful park system. And Lincoln Park, with its cool lake breezes in the summer, is among the very best. By exercising courtesy, cooperation and common sense, the Lincoln Park Pétanque Club has found a way to share the park's single ribbon of gravel with others and to maximize the advantages of playing pétanque near other people.

Lincoln Park Pétanque Club's Trophy Dinner

By Ed Von Bergen, Lincoln Park Pétanque Club

The Lincoln Park Pétanque Club held its 2025 trophy awards dinner on October 14, 2025, at **La Crêperie** restaurant in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. In operation since 1972, La Crêperie is arguably Chicago's oldest French restaurant and holds the distinction of being the oldest crêperie in the US. In addition to wine and food, conversation and laughter, the Club presented three perpetual trophies to the 2025 winners in three categories.

Le Trophée Rosa was awarded to the club member who accumulated the greatest number of points during the summer playing season running from Memorial Day to Labor Day. This trophy was donated to our club by **Michèle Rosa** from the **Nice Métropole Pétanque Club** and carries her name.

La Vieille Boule was awarded to the novice player over age 65 who won the competition reserved for club members in this category.

Le Cochonnet d'Or was awarded to the novice player under age 65 who won the competition reserved for players in this category.

The trophies are due to be returned to the Club by Bastille Day next summer so that 2026 winners' names can be engraved and added to the trophy bases.

The **Rosa Trophy** (right) was created from a 30cm-tall pétanque trophy won by **Michèle Rosa** in 2011 during a competition held in Nice. The original trophy base is inscribed in the Niçois dialect and identifies the location on the **Colline du Château** in Nice where that competition was held.



La Vieille Boule is an example of a boule cloutée (nail-covered ball) which was the way most boules were created about 100 years ago (left). The "Old Ball" trophy is awarded to the winning player in a competition reserved for players with less than three years of pétanque experience and who are over 65 years of age.



Since we have an "Old Ball" trophy for our senior citizens, we also need to have something available for the youngsters among us. So, we created **Le Cochonnet d'Or** trophy for our novice members under age 65 (right). The **Golden Cochonnet** is an OBUT cochonnet that has been covered in gold leaf and then sealed so it can be handled. Part of the trophy that holds the Golden Cochonnet is a silver chalice that was purchased from a silver merchant on Boulevard Haussmann in Paris. This trophy is awarded to the winning player in a competition reserved for players with less than three years of pétanque experience and who are under 65 years of age.





Our 2025 trophy winners were: **Al Zdunek** (La Vieille Boule), **Barry Salzman** (Le Trophée Rosa), and **Lucas Dailey** (Le Cochonnet d'Or).



It didn't take **Lucas Dailey** and his wife **Amy Matsuhashi** very long to discover the chalice of the Golden Cochonnet Trophy is entirely suitable for sharing a cocktail to celebrate Lucas' victory.

The Tunisian Trio of National Capital Club de Pétanque

By Roger Mattioli, National Capital Club de Pétanque



The National Capital Club de **Pétanque (NCCdP)** is very lucky to have 3 gifted players from Tunisia: Abdul, Imed, and Hedi. **Abdul** has been with the Club for many years. Imed and Hedi joined us just in the past year. All three are talented players who first learned to play in their home country of Tunisia. They are the friendliest and most gentlemanly of players, but they especially enjoy demolishing the opposing team by shooting opponents boules away from the cochonnet!

Abdul is from Rades on the coast near the capital Tunis. He started playing pétanque with

Etoile Sportive de Rades (ESR) when he was 13 years old. He has been playing pétanque for 40 years now and has been a long standing member of NCCdP since 2006.

Imed is from Hammam Lif also on the coast near Tunis. At the age of 18, he started playing pétanque in Hammam-Lif. In 2019,he was in Greece playing on the **Palaio Faliro** pétanque team. In 2023 back in Tunisia, he played with the **Soliman Club** where he participated in many competitions. He joined NCCdP this year.

Hedi is from a beautiful peninsula called Menzel Abdel Rahman, near Bizerte. He started playing pétanque at the age of 5 after receiving his first set of boules as a gift from his neighbor, a coach for the local team. He fell in love with the game and soon joined the local club, and he competed in both national and international tournaments with the **Menzel Abdel Rahman** team. He moved to France after university, where he played for 3-4 years. Later, he and his wife moved to St Louis where unfortunately, there was no pétanque. A sad 10 year break! Hedi is excited to have joined NCCdP this year where he has reconnected with pétanque and is meeting new players.

World Famous (maybe) NCCdP Picnics

As all pétanque players know, our games are very much a social occasion. A time for friendly banter with friends along with serious, and sometimes not so serious, play. A time for sharing a few snacks and perhaps a few liquid beverages. In addition to weekly play, NCCdP also organizes two to three potluck picnics every year. We are lucky to have our courts located in



Virginia Highlands Park in Arlington,

Virginia, right across the **Potomac River** from Washington, DC. The Arlington Park Service ensures that we have plenty of picnic tables available adjacent to our courts. On October 11th, we had our most recent picnic - over 30 club members, family, and friends turned out. We started games around 11 am, broke for the picnic at 12:30 pm, and picked up play again after lunch. It was a memorable experience! We gorged ourselves on many French favorites such as fromage, crème caramel, jambon, crepes, and Bordeaux (fermented grape juice). Our president **Jamil** tells us that even boulistes in Paris know of our piqueniques! A truly enjoyable social experience. Great camaraderie! That's what it's all about! Looking forward to the next one!







Carolina Pétanque: A Season of Fun, Feasts, Friendly Rivalry, and Growth

By Shirley Jones, Carolina Pétanque

Winston-Salem Gets Silly

Winston-Salem kicked off the season with a burst of laughter at their "Silly Social **Pétanque Tournament.**" Players navigated a whirlwind of whimsical rules, each game powered by a deck of "silly cards" inspired by Monopoly-style twists. One moment you're closest to the circle, and the next you're handing prize tickets to the opposing team.

At the end of the tournament, those coveted tickets turned into prizes—the more you collected, the better the reward. It was pure joy from start to finish, and a reminder that sometimes the best competition is the least serious one.

Turkey Gobblers and Handcrafted Medals

Winston-Salem kept the fun rolling with their festive "Turkey Gobbler Panache." Twenty-eight players turned out for an afternoon of boules, turkey, and all the fixings.

Rom Still (right) earned the title of Top Turkey, proudly wearing one of Preston Myer's beautifully handcrafted medals. These unique creations—medals, consolante trophies, or



magnets—have become beloved collector's items for anyone who plays (and wins!) at Winston-Salem.

Asheville on the Move

Asheville has been buzzing with activity these past few months. Summer opened with the spirited **Traveling Trophy Tournament**, a friendly showdown between the **Asheville** group (Carolina Pétanque) and the **Atlanta Pétanque League** (photo below). Atlanta managed to hold on to the trophy once again—setting the stage for a rematch next year!



Bastille Day brought costumes and creativity with the group's annual **Costume Pétanque Tournament**. Soon after, many members registered for the **Mid-America Singles Tournament**, preparing by hosting their own **Tête-à-Tête** event to sharpen strategy and gain confidence. And it worked—Asheville players arrived ready to compete.

To cap off the season, players enjoyed a strategy masterclass, "**To Point or To Shoot**," taught by legendary pétanque champion **Marco Foyot**, offering insights straight from one of the greats.





Charlotte's Pétanque Scene on the Rise

The Charlotte group of Carolina Pétanque is thriving, thanks to the dedication of new coordinators **Mica Gadhia** and **Stéphane Brico**. The group recently gathered to celebrate its growing membership and the upcoming renovation of their courts—made possible through an **FPUSA Club Grant** and support from the **Charlotte Parks and Recreation Department**. To mark the occasion, they hosted their **first-ever tournament**, a *panaché* with thirty players from Carolina Pétanque groups across the state. Bringing players together for friendly competition and camaraderie made for an exceptionally successful day. Bravo, Charlotte!

Members Encourage the Next Generation

Whenever we get the chance, Carolina Pétanque loves introducing *younger players* to our sport. **Gary** and **Shirley's** grandson, **Myles**, joined us on the courts recently, and **Stewart** returned from college in Chapel Hill to play again this summer. **Sherry Turner's** grandson also learned indoor pétanque while staying with her. We've even had two mother–son pairs playing in Greensboro and at our new Kernersville location!



indoor and outdoor boules — and we've put them to great use. Thank you, FPUSA, for helping us grow the next generation of players.









Mid-America Regional Select Triples & Women's Triples Winners

Thank you to Carolina Pétanque for hosting!



Select Triples Winners

Gold: Hassan Lakhdar (Amelia), Stacey Linh (Tampa), & Jerry Miller (Amelia)

Silver: Juan Hernandez, Kathy Cline, & Marc Quilici

(Carolina) **Bronze:** Gary

Montgomery, Xavier Dupuy, Laurent Meurisse (Atlanta)



Women's Triples Winners

Gold: Jessica Lehman, Honor Woodward, & Joyce Keeton (Classic City)

Silver: Shirley Jones (Carolina), Reemy Ghazal (Ohlala), & Kelly Brownlee (Bell Buckle)

Bronze: Carolyn Hayes, Maggie Sweeney, & Dawn Pollard (Carolina)

Mid-America Regional Singles Winners

Thank you to Carolina Pétanque for hosting!

Women's Singles Winners



Gold: (center) Kelly Brownlee (Bell Buckle)

Silver: (left) Tracie Jeffries (Carolina Pétanque)

Bronze: (right) Honor Woodard (Classic City Pétanque)

Men's Singles Winners



Gold: (center) Raymond Nielsen (Ohlala)

Silver: (2nd L) Juan Hernandez (Carolina

Pétanque)

Bronze: (2nd R) Olivier Hidalgo (Local 718 Pétanque)

[Medalists are pictured with Bill Cooke (L), President, and John Wilson (R), VP, Carolina Pétanque]

News from Central



New Players, New Energy in Dallas

On October 12, 2025, **Dallas Pétanque Club** proudly hosted its first-ever friendly carousel tournament in collaboration with a local group called "**OUI DALLAS**", a vibrant community of young expatriates living in the DFW area. The event was a resounding success, drawing enthusiastic participation from many individuals experiencing the game for the very first time. The atmosphere was lively, inclusive, and filled with excitement—setting a strong foundation for future tournaments.



Roaring Fork Pétanque Club: Building Community One Sunday at a Time

By Salvador López, President, Roaring Fork Petanque Club

Roaring Fork Pétanque Club is a new FPUSA club based in **Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley**, and



this first year has been all about simple, consistent play and welcoming new people to the game. We started the club in early 2025 with a single private piste in **Glenwood Springs** and a small group of curious friends. Most of them had never thrown a boule before. Now, our regular Sunday sessions have become a standing date: people show up with coffee, kids, dogs, and plenty of questions. We provide boules, rings, and jacks so newcomers can jump right in.

One of our favorite moments this year was watching a brand-new player—who came "just to watch"—end up staying for three games, asking about FPUSA, and then bringing a friend the following week. That's been a common pattern: someone tries pétanque once, realizes how accessible it is, and suddenly they're talking about strategy, favorite boules brands, and when they can play again. Because pétanque is still relatively unknown in our area, a lot of what we do is storytelling and education. We explain the basics, share a bit about the culture of the game, and talk about the wider FPUSA community. For many of our players, discovering that there's a national federation, official rules, and real tournaments has been a fun surprise. A few members are already eyeing FPUSA events in Colorado and neighboring states.

Looking ahead, we're working on expanding beyond our original piste into local parks like Veltus Park, Sayre Park, Sopris Park, and Two Rivers Park, and eventually into nearby towns like Carbondale, Basalt, and Aspen. We'd also love to develop beginner clinics and youth-friendly sessions so families feel even more welcome. For now, our "big event" is still the small, weekly ritual: raking the piste, laying out the boules, greeting whoever shows up, and watching strangers become teammates. It's a simple formula, but it's working—and we're grateful to be part of the FPUSA family as we grow. If any FPUSA members find themselves in western Colorado and want to throw a few ends with us, we'd be thrilled to host you. Roaring Fork's Facebook Page.



Thibodaux Highlights: From Summer Heat to Regional Success

The Thibodaux Pétanque Club hosted the **Central Regional Select Doubles Tournament** on November 8–9, 2025 in Thibodaux, Louisiana. Sixteen teams competed over a beautiful fall weekend filled with great play and camaraderie.

Gold: Guy Diebold (Thibodaux) & Marco Foyot (La Boule Aixoise Pétanque, FR)

Silver: Al Guarisco & Ed Hammerli

(Thibodaux)

Bronze: Edward Vaissiere & Kimberly Lanski (Nelson Ranch)



On the day before the tournament, pétanque legend **Marco Foyot** led several small-group clinics. With only six players per session, participants received personalized coaching and insightful strategy tips. His training made an immediate impact as players put his insights to work during matches the next day. Best of all, Marco's passion is contagious. He made us laugh while showing how a master strategist experiences the game—elevated, thoughtful, and full of joy.

Remembering the Dog Days of Summer

This past summer our club welcomed two former APL members, Tricia and Emmanuel Domingo, who relocated to Thibodaux from Atlanta. Summer also brought extreme temperatures and high humidity making club play especially challenging. Nonetheless, our hardy group-helped by electric fans and early morning start times-turned out for weekly games and monthly club matches. Now that fall has arrived, the more moderate temperatures make it so much easier to enjoy our favorite activity.

The end of summer saw pétanque connect players from the bayou to the boatyard as TPC members Catherine Diebold, Guy Diebold, Tricia Domingo, and Emmanuel Domingo traveled northeast to compete in the Boatyard Cup hosted by the Maine Boules Club. The event was exceptionally well organized and a memorable experience for all — pétanque connects players from bayou to boatyard!



Bill Durocher, Jordan Fabre, Angle Gleason, and Marco Foyo



Catherine Diebold, Guy Diebold, Tricia Domingo, and Emmanuel Domingo





Meanwhile, on the west coast, TPC member **Al Guarisco** and his wife **Arlette** visited **Boule d'Or in San Francisco** enjoying 12 days of friendly games. No matter how far you travel, chances are you can find an FPUSA club to welcome you into their pétanque circle!

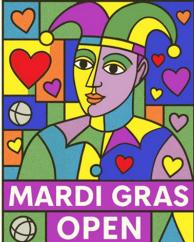
As summer brought travels, tournaments, and sunshine to our pétanque friends near and far, it also brought sadness to our club. We lost our dear member **Bert Sison** in July after a sudden illness. His cheerful spirit, generosity, and love of pétanque touched us all and will be fondly remembered. (A full tribute to Bert appears in the In Memoriam section.)

Mardi Gras Open 2026

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for the 2026 Mardi Gras Open, to be held **February 14–15**, **2026**. This year's event promises double the fun as we celebrate **Mardi Gras and Valentine's Day** both on and off the terrain. For details and registration, visit www.thibodauxpetanqueclub.org.

2026 Mardi Gras Open

THIBODAUX
PÉTANQUE CLUB



Select Doubles - \$120 Entry per Team

Valentine's Weekend - Feb. 14-15, 2026

Peltier Park, Thibodaux, LA

Cash Prizes

Raffle – Contests – Gumbo – Jambalaya

Mardi Gras Parades

Friday: Afternoon social play & contests Saturday: 5 qualifying games (Swiss) Sunday: Elimination brackets by group (A, B, C)

Register online at thibodauxpetanqueclub.org or scan the QR code below

Email us: thibodauxpetanqueclub@gmail.com)

Pétanque + Mardi Gras + Love = Mardi Gras Open

To register, please visit our webpage thibodauxpetanqueclub.org or scan the QR code.





News from Northwest



The Cascadia Cup: Pétanque's Pacific Northwest Championship

By Joe Cortright, President, Portland Pétanque Club

In August, the **Portland Pétanque Club** hosted an exciting new regional competition: the **Cascadia Cup**. This inaugural event represents a bold initiative to unite pétanque clubs across the Pacific Northwest in a spirited battle for regional supremacy.

The club vs. club nature of the competition creates a very different competitive dynamic from the usual pétanque tournament which focuses on single players, pairs, or triples.

With at least six players on each team, and with multiple head-to-head meetings between clubs, the tournament definitely encourages and builds on team-spirit. Each club had to provide a roster of at least six players, and each team was required to have a mix of men and women players. Held on August 16-17, 2025, the competition brought together seven clubs. Modeled after



Team Walla Walla

competitions in France, the clubs of the Pacific Northwest Region of FPUSA agreed to sponsor this club championship in Portland. Participating clubs included teams from **Seattle, Bainbridge Island, Edmonds, Eugene, Walla Walla, and host Portland,** with the eventual champions coming from **Port Townsend**. Each club fielded six-player teams to compete across three formats: singles, doubles, and triples.

The tournament structure was a round-robin format with seven rounds each day. Teams faced off in two seven-team poules for each event type, alternating between triples rounds and combined singles/doubles rounds. A total of **252 games** were played. Among the seven clubs, each competed in 36 games across triples, doubles, and singles, testing both stamina and versatility. The winning club was determined with a point system assigning 10 points to each win in triples, 7 points in doubles and 5 points in singles.



Cascadia Cup Champion - Team Port Townsend

By establishing the Cascadia Cup, organizers fostered a sense of regional identity among Northwest pétanque players, similar to the passionate soccer rivalry shared by Portland Timbers, Seattle Sounders, and Vancouver Whitecaps. The inaugural tournament's success, capped by **Port Townsend's** victory as the first-ever Cascadia Cup champions, elevated the level of competitive play and demonstrated the vibrancy of the region's pétanque community.



Team Portland

This event signals a new chapter for competitive pétanque in the Northwest, with **Port Townsend** claiming the inaugural title and setting a high standard for future competitions. The success of the first Cascadia Cup likely inspires similar regional tournaments nationwide while establishing an annual tradition for crowning the Pacific Northwest's finest pétanque club.



Team Eugene



Portland's Sauvie Island Open Challenge: A Hoedown of a Showdown

By Neil Bastian

Roughly **60 players** braved the rough terrain at this inaugural event in July. The Sauvie Island Open in Portland was a jam packed, whirlwind weekend testing the endurance and skill of all who attended. Roughly modeled after the **Montreal Festival de Pétanque**, we jammed in five separate events which lasted to near dark. The terrain was rough, the food fantastic, the farm air refreshing, and the temperature perfect!

The lengthy days also made for an extended awards ceremony worth sticking around for...if only to bear witness to Emile Boujeke (LBNY) bust his best move onstage as he celebrated with others to the Best of Queen! Go to our Petanquesport's FB page for pictures and tournament results. While the event was not perfect, everyone seemed to leave with eager promises to return.



Update: Unfortunately the SIOC will need to find another venue for 2026. **Pascal Tisseur & Co.** have already identified several alternative locations we think would work very nicely. But wherever we land, you can be assured it will be another fun filled, quality event. We'll keep you posted. Until then, adieux.



Northwest Regional Select Doubles & Select Triples Winners

Thank you to Walla Walla Pétanque Club for hosting!



Select Doubles Winners

Gold: Crissy Shaffer (Portland) & Tom Nguyen (Walla Walla) (left photo)

Silver: Lavant Woolfe & Kendra Woolfe (Walla Walla)

Bronze: Patrick Trompeter & Bi (Seattle)

Select Triples Winners

Gold: Ed Porto (Petaluma), Celia Crittenden (Portland), & Neil Bastian (Eugene) (right photo)

Silver: Brad Hansen (Seattle), James Tierney (Maine), &

Patrick Trompeter (Seattle)

Bronze: Scott Muir (Portland), Barbara Kongsbak (Portland), & Brian Gabbard (Walla Walla)



Hand Measuring Tool for FPUSA Clubs

Guy Diebold (Thibodaux Pétanque) designed and crafted a custom hand measuring tool, producing one for every FPUSA club. In collaboration with **Pétanque America**, the tools were mailed or hand-delivered to clubs that requested one. If your club would like to receive a measuring tool, please contact Michelle Dang (secretary@usapetanque.org) or Heidi Davison (heidi@heididavison.com).



New FPUSA Member/Coach Finder Feature

A MY PROFILE

FPUSA Profile

Member Finder Preferences

setting the below options.

Profile Picture

Contact Phone Number

C Show Address

Sactown Petangue

Show Email Address

Contact Me

Address Line 2

Country

Control what details appear on your public profile by enabling and

FPUSA has introduced a new feature to help members connect more easily! Members can now choose whether to display their profiles so others can find and connect with them through the Member Finder page on the FPUSA website.

To manage your visibility settings, follow these steps:

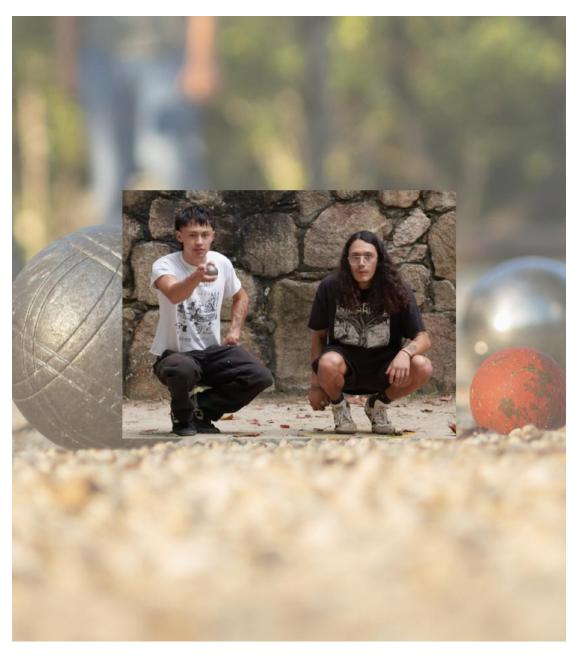
- 1. Log in to your FPUSA account at fpusa.justgo.com. Please do not create a new account. Click "Forgot Password" if you forgot your password. If you don't remember your username, please email Michelle at secretary@usapetanque.org
- 2. Go to **My Profile**.
- 3. Click on the **Member Details** on top.
- 4. Click on the **Member Finder** tab (far right tab).
- 5. Click "Yes" or "No" to appear on the finder.
- 6. Control what details appear on your public profile by enabling and setting the various options. **Note:** If you do not want your email
 - to show, you can disable the Show Email option and enable the **Contact Me** option. This option allows emails to be sent directly to your email that is listed in your JustGo Profile.
- 7. **Tip:** To display your club as part of your public profile but not your home address, toggle the **Show Address** button and enter your club's name (and club location as desired) in the **Address** field(s) instead of your home address (see Michelle's Member Finder's profile for an example).



Members who are coaches can do the same by clicking on the Coach Finder tab next to the Member Finder tab (<u>Coach Finder</u> webpage). As of this writing, the Umpire Finder is not available yet, but it is in the works!

Please take a moment to update your preferences and make it easier to connect with fellow pétanque players across the country! If you need assistance, feel free to reach out to Michelle Dang, secretary@usapetanque.org.

New FPUSA Promotional Video (in Partnership with Pétanque America) Find Your People...



Link to Video

We love seeing where pétanque takes you! Here are a few snapshots shared by members from near and far, proving that our love of the game knows no borders.



Michael Mathis in Paris, France

Thomas Canestraro in Philadelphia, PA

A Global Game

It's hard to pin down exactly how many people play pétanque worldwide, but it's far more common than you might think. The Fédération Internationale de Pétanque et Jeu Provençal (FIPJP) reports nearly **800,000 licensed players**, while other estimates indicate that **10–40 million** people enjoy it recreationally in more than **160 countries**. So look for it on your next adventure!

In Memoriam



Eddy Pay

1943–2005 La Pétanque Marinière

Born in the Philippines and fluent in six languages, Eddy was a kind and generous man who made friends and touched lives wherever he went. A lover of music, especially jazz, he hosted his own radio show on KPFA after retiring from twenty-five years working at San Francisco's Muni. Some of his other passions were family, food, and pétanque. Eddy lived for pétanque. Whether playing or watching it on TV & YouTube, he



could not get enough. During his and Beth's regular trips to her home in Brazil, he would send photos of games with his Rio club. A skilled player, he was great as a partner and challenging as an opponent. Eddy was a cherished member of our pétanque family. He will be remembered for his gracious, giving spirit.

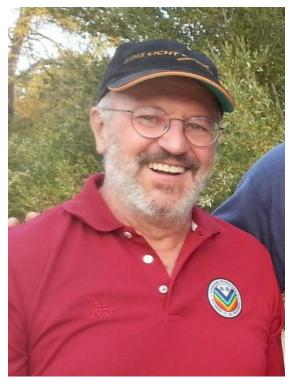
(photo credit: Alain Efron)

Etienne Rijkheer

1950-2025 Lamorinda Pétanque Club

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of our long-time member and dear friend, Etienne Rijkheer. Many of you will fondly remember Etienne, his wife Beth, and their faithful dog Rosa, who were a cherished presence in our pétanque community.

Etienne was a dedicated National Sport Director and a Certified FPUSA Regional Umpire. Beyond his leadership on the courts, he generously contributed his technical expertise — developing websites and online tools that streamlined tournament information and registration for players. Etienne's warmth, generosity, and passion for the sport touched everyone who knew him. He will be deeply missed by all of us at Lamorinda and by the broader pétanque family.





Art Case

1938-2025 Eugene Pétanque International Club

Art Case of the Eugene Pétanque Intl. Club passed away peacefully September 25th after battling various illnesses over the past 2-3 years. Despite his prolonged illness, Art was always positive, making jokes, and never looking for attention or sympathy. Beloved, valued, and one of our longest running members, he always had a great story to tell in his soft, grizzled voice about his time in the Navy, or Yuma, the sawmill or about his family.

Art was one of the inspirations for, and the embodiment of, our club logo which is, "A Game For Everyone." This includes people of all ages, gender, physical ability, skill, orientation and language, as well as of any social class, religion, or politics. He walked the walk and made the effort to bring everybody together.

It's been said that money doesn't change who you are, it reveals who you are. This is a bit like pétanque. Playing pétanque can reveal part of who you are. For Art, it was his gentle soul, his generous nature, and the fun loving kid who bought a set of the biggest 800g boules available for sale and, with his eagle eye for a measure and his mischievous grin, jokingly warned opponents with a gentle laugh, "Never bet against the bigger boule." He just laughed when our club umpire explained why that wasn't actually a good bet, but he never stopped saying it. He will be missed, but not forgotten.



Bert Ward Sison

1953–2025 Thibodaux Pétanque Club

The Thibodaux Pétanque Club remembers our dear friend and fellow member, Bert Sison.

Bert had a beautiful spirit—always cheerful, kind, and eager to lend a helping hand. His enthusiasm for pétanque was matched only by the joy he found in sharing the game with his wife, son, and grandchildren.

Bert's warmth, generosity, and bright smile brought light to every gathering. Though he is missed dearly, his joyful spirit continues to live on among us.



Jacques Despretz

1940–2025 La Boule New Yorkaise

Jacques Despretz was a member of La Boule New Yorkaise for many decades. Born in Paris, he moved to New York in 1958 and was a restaurateur, avid soccer fan (and one-time player), and loved to cook. Jacques was a regular at the courts in Bryant Park, playing with good humor, and he was known to break out into song at post-tournament celebrations, as well. He will certainly be missed on and off the courts.

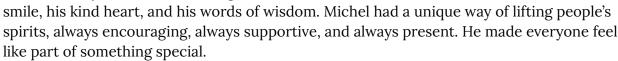
Michel Ribet

1937-2025 Club de Pétanque San Diego

It is with great sadness and heavy hearts that we share the news of the passing of our beloved friend and member of the Club de Pétanque San Diego, Michel Ribet.

Michel was more than just a pétanque player; he was a true sportsman in every sense of the word. His passion for life was contagious. Whether he was throwing boules on the court, running long distances in his beloved marathons, or sharing a drink and laughter with friends at every turn, Michel always brought energy and positivity to every moment.

Those who had the privilege to know him will always remember his bright



Michel, we will miss you deeply. We will miss the friendship you so generously shared with everyone around you.

You leave behind not only wonderful memories but also a lasting example of how to live life with passion, kindness, and joy.

Rest in peace, dear Michel.

Your San Diego pétanque family will always carry your spirit with us in every throw, every smile, and every shared moment on and off the court.



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WE WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR