



Roustabouts RV Club

The (Mostly)

Official Guide to Disc Bowls

Forget reversing the rig into a tight spot - this is the real test of campground skill!

A friendly, plain-English guide to the Disc Bowls Conditions & Rules.

1. The Gear (What we're throwing around)

- **The discs:** There are two sets of six: one light colour and one dark. Each disc should be 187 mm in diameter and 25 mm thick, with a 45° chamfer on one side. The centre hole may be up to 25 mm, and each disc must weigh 275-300 g. In short: oversized drink coasters, but with specifications.
- **The kitty:** A lawn bowls kitty is recommended for tournament play. For practice, a cricket ball or baseball may be used. Think of the kitty as the prime waterfront campsite - everyone wants to park closest.
- **The arena:** A rope-marked rectangle 9 m long × 2.5 m wide, preferably on flat grass. Two small markers show halfway. The rope is a boundary, not a trip hazard challenge.

2. The Players (Who's to blame)

- **The teams:** Disc Bowls can be played singles, pairs or triples - check the event draw for the format being used.
- **Singles:** One player uses all six discs of their colour. Plenty of responsibility; nobody else to blame.
- **Pairs:** The lead and skipper use three discs each.
- **Triples:** The lead, second and skipper use two discs each.
- **Stick to your role:** Players must stay in their nominated position for the duration of the tournament. No changing jobs because your first throw went sightseeing.
- **Six ends, not six guesses:** A game is played over six ends. Play and scoring alternate between the two ends until all six are complete.

3. The Bosses (The Officials)

- **Tournament Director (or deputy):** Prepares the draw, allocates courts and generally administers the tournament. The person with the clipboard has earned a little respect.
- **The umpire:** Controls the game and applies the rules. The umpire's decision is final, though they may consult the Tournament Director or deputy.
- **The scorer:** Calls foot faults from the bowling end and records the score as advised by the umpire. After six ends, the scorer totals the points, declares the winner and gives the sheet to the Director for the master scoreboard.

A quick correction to the "mostly official" folklore: the rules specify six ends and a 9 m × 2.5 m court. No two-minute forfeit rule appears in the rules provided; follow any separate event instructions from the Tournament Director.

4. The Goal of the Game (And the start)

- **The mission:** Throw your discs so they finish closer to the kitty than the opposition's nearest disc. Precision beats enthusiasm - although enthusiasm is welcome.
- **The coin toss:** The umpire tosses a coin between the two skippers. The winner chooses to throw first or invites the opposing team to lead. The toss decides who starts, not who gets to rewrite the rules.
- **Rolling the kitty:** The original lead rolls the kitty. It must remain in the playing area between halfway and the baseline. If it does not, the opposing lead has a go. If the kitty remains in the playing area, the umpire centralises it; if it still will not stay in the required area, the umpire places it centrally at the $\frac{3}{4}$ position. In every case, the original lead throws the first disc.
- **Throwing order:** The leads alternate, followed by the seconds and then the skippers. Continue in that order until all 12 discs have been thrown.
- **Need a ruling?** Any player may ask the umpire which disc is closest to the kitty. On request, skippers may inspect the head before their final throw at each end. Asking is fine; moving the evidence is not.

5. How to Play (Without causing a scene)

- **Watch your feet:** Throw from behind the baseline, with both feet inside the width of the sidelines. A foot outside the sidelines, on the rope or over it is a foot fault, and the disc is out of play.
- **The rope means out:** A disc that rolls outside the court and comes to rest fully or partly inside is out of play. A disc resting against, under or over the perimeter rope is also out. The rope is not a helpful guide rail.
- **Wrong turn:** A disc thrown out of sequence is out of play. Remove it and return any discs it disturbed as closely as possible to their previous positions. The player who was due next plays; play continues normally until the offending player's proper turn, which they miss. The opposition then has two players play consecutively. Keep your eyes on the order, not just the target.
- **Umpire housekeeping:** The umpire removes any out-of-play disc before the next throw and replaces any disturbed discs as closely as possible. The same applies if the kitty is disturbed.
- **Hands off:** All discs in play must remain where they land until the end has been scored. No nudging, polishing, or "just checking" with your shoe.

6. Treat the Kitty with Respect

- **Still in play?** The kitty is in play while the portion of its surface on which it rests is inside the court.
- **The big consequence:** If your team knocks the kitty out of the court, your team loses that end, and the opposition receives three points. That is a very expensive way to move a little ball.

Remember: the out-of-play disc is removed before the next throw, but all discs that remain in play stay exactly where they landed until scoring is complete.

7. Scoring (Or, who's buying the snacks?)

- **Who enters the court?** After all 12 discs have been thrown, only the skippers, umpire and scorer may enter the court to decide which team is closest and how many points are scored. Everyone else stays outside the court at the bowling end while measurements are taken.
- **Counting points:** A team scores one point for every disc closer to the kitty than the opposition's nearest disc. More than one disc can score - provided each is closer than that nearest opposition disc.
- **Dead level:** If the two opposing nearest discs are equal distance from the kitty, the end is scoreless. No score is better than arguing over an imaginary millimetre.
- **How to measure:** Measure from the closest part of the disc to the kitty, using calipers or a steel measuring tape. If only one disc is in contact with the kitty (over, under or against it), that disc wins, together with any other discs from that team closer than the opposition. If opposing discs are in contact with the kitty, the end is a tie and scoreless.
- **If skippers disagree:** The umpire measures and advises the scorer. While the umpire is measuring, all other players remain outside the court at the bowling end until the number of shots has been indicated. The tape measure is the star witness.

8. Six Ends - and Then What?

- **Normal finish:** At the end of six ends, the team with the highest total score wins.
- **Game tied?** The umpire centres the kitty in the playing area. Only the skippers take part in the playoff, using three discs each. The umpire tosses a coin to decide who leads off, then the skippers throw alternately until all six playoff discs have been thrown. The higher score wins.
- **Victory speech:** Prepare it if you must - but wait until the umpire confirms the result. The caravan can wait another minute.

9. Good Sports, Good Mates

- **No touching:** Do not touch a thrown disc unless directed by the umpire.
- **Wait your turn to walk:** Everyone waits until all discs have been thrown and the end scored before walking to the other end of the playing area.
- **Final word:** The umpire's decision is final, though they may consult the Tournament Director or deputy. Friendly banter is encouraged; moving the goalposts (or discs) is not.

The Roustabouts Quick Check

- Feet behind the baseline; both feet inside the sidelines.
- Follow the correct throwing order. No turn-taking by guesswork.
- Hands off discs and kitty unless the umpire directs otherwise.
- Wait outside the court while the end is measured and scored.
- Knock the kitty out? The opposition gets three points.
- Six ends. Highest total wins; a tie goes to a skipper playoff with three discs each.

Good aim. Good mates. Good sportsmanship.