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Bocce gets rolling for the 2022 season



Bocce is, by most accounts, the most popular on-campus sport. Throughout the spring and summer, it is not uncommon to see 60 or more players and spectators lining the two bocce courts. Bill Moore has been the unofficial leader of the Bocce Advisory Panel since the first court was installed. While Moore knew nothing about bocce when he first came to our community, he was a quick study and was instrumental in spearheading what is now a competitive and highly desirable spring activity.

In 2013, the first court was built, but according to Moore, it was rarely used, and interest in the sport was low. After conducting

a short survey to encourage and gauge interest in an organized competition, bocce took off. "The first year we had 54 players. The second year we had 76 players, and the third year we had 119," explained Moore. Now in its 8th season, the committee is expecting more than 140 players and has 12 organized teams ranging from 5 to 17 competitors per team!

For those unfamiliar with bocce, the object is to roll a baseball-sized wood ball toward a white ball golf ball-sized object called a pallino. The goal is to get your balls closer to the pallino than your opponents. "We play a match consisting of as many as three games. If you win two out of three games, you win the match," explains Moore. And the competition can be fierce. "If you have the impression that people of a certain age are not competitive, you are very wrong," shares Moore.

In order to organize the competition, Moore and the panel of seven members reached out for help. "When we first started this, we met with the people in charge of the league in Norristown. They have more than 400 players! We played a couple of games with them and they said, 'here are the rules,'" remembers Moore. "So we kept almost all of those rules and boiled them down to a one-pager."

Bocce became so popular that a second court was needed. "The first 3 or 4 seasons we only had the one court," explained Moore. "When we got to almost 100 players, we created a grass court while we waited for the funding and approval of a second one. We used marker paint and measured and drew up our own court on the grass. We played for a year or two on the grass court. If it were up to me, we would have kept the grass court. It was fun!"

Whether you play or not, bocce is a lot of fun. The weekend matches always attract a crowd and all are welcome. With six matches scheduled each Saturday (weather permitting), there is plenty of time to catch some of the action. "People bring chairs and drinks. There is an ice cooler provided to keep beverages cold. It's a great time," said Moore. "When you are there and watching it all, you certainly get the impression that everyone is having a good time."