

## Hang on a minute!



If you've read the rules adopted by the FIPJP Executive Committee on the 4th December 2016 you'll have seen that Article 21 – "Time allowed to play" says

***Once the jack is thrown each player has the maximum duration of one minute to play his or her boule. This short period starts from the moment when the previous boule or jack stops or, if it is necessary to measure a point, from the moment the latter has been effected.***

***Any player who does not comply with this period of time will incur the penalties specified in Article 35 "Penalties".***

So let's spend some time looking at this as most novices are unaware of it and tend to play all three of their boules in under a minute or in extreme cases in under 10 seconds.

A player has 60 seconds to play each boule. This may seem short or it may seem long but if you have 60 seconds let's use that time. What can you do in those seconds?

- a) you can walk up to the head have a look and then walk back to the circle.
- b) You can consult with your captain about what shot to play
- c) You can smooth out a place where a boule has previously landed
- d) You can clean your boules of grit and damp
- e) You can compose yourself mentally and rehearse the shot you are about to play in your head.

In fact you can do all of those and still be within the 60 seconds. And if you do all those things there's a good chance that the shot you play will be better than if you'd stepped into the circle and played your boule without thinking in a couple of seconds.

As you play more and more games against experienced players you'll notice they take their time. They'll do all the things in the list and play better because of it.

Whether pointing or shooting there are a few stages to go through before you launch your boule. Positioning yourself, loading the boule in your hand. The list goes on. If you rush these stages you won't execute the shot properly and the boule could go anywhere. You won't be helping your team improve their position in the game.

So do it. Learn to take your time especially if you find yourself playing in a league match or a competition. Practise it during social games at your home club so you can do it comfortably.

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Now and again there will be players and teams who regularly go over the 60 second rule. They spend ages talking about the next shot and appear not to notice the 60 seconds are passing. Why do they do this?

They do it to take the intensity out of a game and to frustrate the opposition. They usually do it when they're losing and use this tactic to wind you up and hope that your play will suffer. Don't let them!

Some of the players who do this may be quite good players. They know the rules and they're exploiting them. "No problem" you're thinking. When rules are broken action will be taken. And the FIPJP has a mechanism to penalise the offenders. It's in Article 35.

***For non-observation of the rules of the game the players incur the following penalties:***

- 1) Warning;***
- 2) Disqualification of the boule played or to be played;***
- 3) Disqualification of the boule played or to be played and the following one;***
- 4) Exclusion of the responsible player for the game;***
- 5) Disqualification of the team responsible;***
- 6) Disqualification of the two teams in case of complicity.***

Woo-hoo! Cheats never prosper. The world is fair, the rules are just.

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How are these penalties decided? Who's in charge of the investigation? Is the evidence of foul play available for examination? Can the charges be proved beyond reasonable doubt? Do I need a solicitor?

FIPJP has thought of everything. They created Article 31 just for these situations. Here it is.

***To be considered, any complaint must be made to the Umpire.***

Hands up anyone who's ever seen an Umpire at a petanque game. Thought so. Hands up anyone who knows an Umpire. Thought so. So the 60 seconds rule is in place but almost

impossible to enforce unless there's an Umpire in the vicinity and he sees the incident happening. Otherwise it's one person's word against another and natural justice is the loser.



And the quality of umpires is often strange. At a recent regional event we heard from one of our players who'd been playing in high level event and accidentally trod on the circle while throwing (thus committing a foot fault - which we've all done now and again).

A player from the opposing team said "I'm an Umpire; that's an illegal throw" and promptly removed the boule from the game! Read through Article 35 for guidance on how Umpires should rule.

The sad fact is that International body that is responsible for the rules has created a rule (oops article) that is unenforceable except at the highest level when Umpires officiate. In a game at your local club you won't have evidence and you haven't got an Umpire to adjudicate on your claim. And even if you had both of these the first punishment is a warning.

Unless of course the incident was recorded on a smart phone.

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Here's a follow up to the original article written 2 years later.

## 60 seconds is a long time in Pétanque.

There's always plenty of discussion about how long people take to play but until now apart from a feeling everyone else takes much longer than you there's no evidence to back up these assertions. But it's one of the most annoying things about playing the game. The frustration with a player who appears to be a slow player is not because they take over 60 seconds (because the evidence - see later - says they rarely do) but because they are significantly more than the natural rhythm of the game. Players taking under 20 seconds have a low tolerance of players taking over 30 seconds and are almost apoplectic about anyone taking 50 seconds. Just as a player throwing 3 boules in 10 seconds as a novice is obviously too fast someone at the other extreme of the timespan attracts the same intolerance.

So today I decided to get some evidence. It was a cup final match at a local club and I sampled three games. I did 9 ends in total and I recorded the times between the ball landing and the next ball landing and recorded it on my smartphone which had a timer with a lap function. When it looked into the data in real time the key thing was that very few

people took longer than the allotted time with most of them taking under 20 seconds. In fact out of 108 throws only on 3 occasions did anyone exceed the time allowed. The average end took just under 5 minutes whereas if every player had taken 60 seconds to throw the boule it would've been obviously 12 minutes so players are playing much faster than the maximum permitted time.

Unfortunately my smart phone at the time did not allow me to export the data to a spreadsheet so I thought a bit more and realised you need a bit more organisation and an extra pair of hands and a data entry sheet and you can do some serious analysis.

End No.				
	Team A	Player	Team B	Notes
Boule 1				
Boule 2				
Boule 3				
Boule 4				
Boule 5				
Boule 6				
Boule 7				
Boule 8				
Boule 9				
Boule 10				
Boule 11				
Boule 12				
Total				
Total Mins				
End duration			Minutes	
Average			Minutes	

You can print several of these on an A4 sheet and armed with a stopwatch or a smart phone and a pen you and a friend can record an entire game.

One person has to be the scribe and record the data as it is collected and spoken by the timekeeper. As teams may play many boules consecutively and players may not you have to have the ability to record that.

Put the data into a spreadsheet, throw in some formulas do some basic calculations and look at the findings

So it's something that you should do on a training day or a normal club session. Arrange for a group of players to play as normal except they'll be recorded on the day and data will be analysed and fed back to them. This will tell you that some players don't take enough time to think but some players are taking too much. You should be able to coach your players to measure time better and know if they're in danger of running over the time. By doing some analysis on your playing style and timings you're prepared better to combat the tactics of these "slow" players.

It won't stop the players who deliberately take 120 seconds and exceed the limit knowing it will knock normal rhythm players off their game. But your players may be better informed and better able to resist these rulebreakers.