



The game originated in France so obviously so much of its vocabulary comes from there as well. Occasionally at our club we have “talk like a Frenchman” games where everyone tries to remember their O level French and fails. Here’s some of the common phrases you hear while you’re on the piste in France.

When things go well it’s common to hear Bravo! This is probably Italian but has moved into French and English and is easy to remember. A quiet bien joué (bee-ann-ju-ay) means well played and bien tiré (bee-ann-tir-ay) is good shot. A humorous modern addition when a boules takes its own meandering path to the jack is téléguidé – remote control.

When things go wrong the language changes. Some of these are untranslatable. Most English people know Merde and it’s easy to say. Don’t forget the useful double merde (doo-bler-maired) and the rarely heard triple variety.

Other unhappy expletives are a mix of putain (poo-tan), bordelle and merde. On its own putain (literally prostitute) means b****cks, or bloody hell but with the other words can mean fer cryin’ out loud or ferchrissakes according to how forcefully they are spat out.

Another phrase often heard just after someone has missed a shot is J’ai pas le droit which probably means Oh no I’ve missed it but could be more sinister. Maybe our French speaking readers can help out here. Translating idioms from one language to another is fraught with danger.

Finally the French hardly ever refer to the cochonnet. It’s an urban myth. They talk about le but or le petit. Cochonnet only exists in in O level French text books circa 1970.

Allez salut maintenant!