



An end of boules only has 12 boules in it. 6 for each team. They only have 6 bullets

If you throw one of your boules without thinking your team is losing 16% of its efficiency and
If you throw 2 boules without thinking you're wasting a third of your team's ammunition.

This means each boule is valuable and must improve your team's place in the end. This doesn't necessarily mean getting closer and gaining the point - maybe it's better to put in a blocker or shoot out an opposition boule to make room.

So before anyone plays talk to your team before you throw. It may seem obvious what to do but have a chat. The most experienced player in your team (probably the captain) should lead this discussion. It's the captain's job to manage his team through the end, keeping them focussed and calm and being positive. Don't get into the habit of thinking "I'm just a pointer I throw the first 3 for our team then I let the shooter take over". The team should choose the best option for the situation and then the best player to execute it. Don't become a robot.

However your opposition are in the same position. They only have 6 bullets. If you can force them to play more of their boules than you do you build up an advantage. If you can make them use all of theirs while you have plenty in hand they cannot change the game but you can. This is called the boule advantage.

So to use this strategy count the boules that have been played. If you can't see 12 ask if anyone has any left to play. Always know how many to be played and how big your advantage if you have one actually is. If they have 2 and you have 5 you can speculate with a risky shot and still hold the advantage.

If you're pointing first you should aim to be about a foot in front of the coche. Don't go past the coche. 2 feet in front is better than 6 inches past. This makes it as hard as possible for the opposition and they may waste 2 or more boules trying to beat it by pointing. They may choose to shoot it and waste 2 or more boules trying to shoot it out. If they are inexperienced they may waste all their boules shooting and most of them will be dead. The more boules they take the bigger your boule advantage becomes.

It's also a psychological barrier if they can see your boule obscuring the coche even though it looks much nearer than it is. Boule devant = boule d'argent.

If your opposition point first and they play a good shot as above you have to choose between beating it by pointing or shooting it out. You're now in a defensive mode if you point or an attacking mode if you shoot. If you don't regain the point after 2 shots you are in defensive mode for the rest of that end. It's time to shut up shop and limit the damage.

If they don't point well and leave it open for you to take the point easily and you do so you now have the advantage - you hold the point and they have to play next. You have taken the advantage from them. They may not retake it without using more than one boule. This builds your advantage.

If you think you can't win an end aim to lose if by only one point. If you're shooting a boule that's holding the point and you fail with 2 shots then stop. Now is the time to lose just by one point or clog it up and hope your opponents do something daft and give away the point.

If you find yourself building up a handy lead - 5 or more points it's worth playing many boules in front to block access to the coche and clog up the end so it's only a 1 point end so you don't lose much if you do lose and half the time you'll increase your lead. The same tactic can be employed if your opposition is building up the lead. Don't play expansive boules. Keep it tight. If you gain a point even with boules in hand take it and claw your way back into the game. Boules behind the coche can't be knocked nearer. Boules in front can. Your opposition may sometimes do it for you.

If you arrive at a position where your opposition has used all their boules and you have almost all yours left it's worth thinking about shooting the coche even if you hold the point. The reason for doing this is either to hit it off the piste so you score the boules in hand or to spring the coche a few metres away where you can roll in a few winners easily.

If your shooter isn't hitting many and you have another in your team change the order. If your pointer looks low on confidence do the same thing. Don't do this unilaterally - chat to your team mates and your captain.

Look hard at your opposition in the first few ends. Are they shooters? Are they long pointers. Do they talk or are they solitary types? If they throw long coches you throw short. If they have shooters throw long. If they like to play quickly slow down your game. Work out what they don't like and do it. If they start arguing or complaining all the better.

Never give up or stop talking to your team. If things don't seem to be working change your style or order of play. Stay in the game. Something unusual might happen. The opposition may run out of steam or get stuck on 12. It may rain. A fluke shot may shift momentum.

Don't be greedy. Once you've won the end and have boules to play you have to decide how many you want to win by. If it's wide open and you can roll in more winners then do it. If you might knock out your winner take the points on offer. If you score one every end you'll win the game. Slow and sure wins the race.

Most league or highly competitive games take a long time as teams think long and hard about every shot. Be prepared for this. Switch your phone off; go to the loo before you start; have your waterproof jacket and bottle of water nearby. Don't chat to spectators. Give 100% to the game. It's not a social or practice session.