

## **UMPIRE'S REPORT**

### **COCHE MOVED BY FIRST BOULE OF AN END**

This topic was the subject of a long note from me last year after an unfortunate incident at one of the Qualifying events for the Inter-Regional squad. I was very careful at that time to check out my statement by reference to Mike Pegg, who is an International Umpire of very high repute who quite possibly is more respected abroad than he is here, which if true is rather a sad indictment of some people in UK pétanque. He is a member of the FIPJP umpires commission, so is more or less infinitely better placed than anyone else in this country to provide an explanation of the International Rules or any supposed difference between the "BPF" version (which is the internationally accepted English version) and the original French version.

The topic came up again at the September SCPA Full Council meeting following a reported interpretation of the rule about the "moved coche" at the Inter-Regional competition that was contrary to what I wrote last year. As a result, I have again been in contact with Mike, and he has categorically stated that last year's explanation was correct; he has no knowledge of any contrary interpretation at this year's Inter-Regional match. The EPA National Umpire, John Thatcher, has also been copied in on this correspondence.

Briefly, the correct interpretation is as follows:

The position of the coche should always be marked after it has been thrown.

The team NOT throwing the coche has the right to contest the validity of the coche as originally thrown until they play their first boule, even if they may have given an apparent indication of accepting it before the first team throws its first boule. This right has to be respected, even if it feels like unsporting behaviour on the part of the second team. Potential irritation is best avoided by properly measuring and agreeing the validity of the coche's position, if necessary through an umpire, before a boule is thrown if there is any doubt.

If the original position of the coche was not marked and it is moved by the first boule thrown, the validity of its original position cannot be challenged in any circumstances, and it is valid where it lies (subject to Article 9 – "Dead Jack").

If the original position of the coche WAS marked and it is moved by the first boule thrown, subject to Article 9 only the ORIGINAL (i.e. the "thrown") position of the coche can be challenged, by measuring to the ORIGINAL mark. If THAT was invalid, the coche and first boule have to be rethrown.

The position that the coche may have been moved to by the first boule thrown is of ABSOLUTELY NO SIGNIFICANCE AT ALL in determining its validity, subject to Article 9.

There is NO SUBSTANCE WHATSOEVER in the frequently-expressed opinion that "the second team has the right to play to a coche between 6 and 10 metres long" (for adults). People who hold this opinion often say that "the second team has the right to play to a valid coche". They are right! As indicated in the previous paragraph, a coche that was valid when thrown REMAINS VALID even if moved by the first boule thrown to a position beyond 10 metres or less than 6 metres (subject to Article 9) from the circle, for adults, so the second team has no basis whatsoever for challenging its moved position.

A proper reading of the whole of Articles 8 and 11 of the rules together leaves no room for doubt about this interpretation.

I hope that this will finally nail this issue because, frankly, I find the continuing time-consuming debate about it rather boring and futile. The rules and the correct interpretation of them on this issue are clear, and Mike has even gone to the trouble recently of consulting his colleagues on the international FIPJP umpires commission to confirm aspects of it. That is more than good enough for me, and it should be good enough for everyone else.

Please make sure that this is brought to the attention of all club members.

Richard Powell

SPCA Umpire – 12 October 2006