



Portland Petanque and the Community

Two Decades of Community, Engagement, and Activation



The Portland Petanque Club at Westmoreland Park

ABOUT THE CLUB

The Portland Petanque Club was founded in 2001 by a group of local players, including french-speaking immigrants who had learned the sport abroad. Portland Petanque Club is a not for profit organization registered with the state of Oregon since (2001). PPC's registration number is 055808-99, and its mailing address is PO BOX 82866, Portland, OR 97282. The organization is governed by an elected board of directors of five persons. Currently, PPC has 109 members. Members pay annual dues (\$40 individual/\$70 family) to belong to the club. To encourage new persons to try the sport, PPC offers unlimited free play—membership in the club is voluntary.

The club has been a member in good standing since its founding, 2002, of the national pétanque organization, the Federation Petanque USA, FPUSA, which is in turn a member of the International governing body of Petanque, Federation International de Petanque and Jeu Provençal, FIPJP.

A separate legal organization, the “Tri-Sports Group”, created and governed jointly by Portland Petanque Club, the Portland Lawn Bowling Club, and the Portland Croquet Connection, operates the grounds and facilities of the Portland Lawn Bowling Club (PLBC). The terms of the joint arrangement are spelled out in a written agreement entered into by the three clubs on June 26, 2003. A copy of this agreement is attached. In addition, petanque's presence in the park is specifically mentioned in the Portland Parks Bureau Westmoreland Park website, which notes:

In 1945, lawn bowling facilities were constructed; the grass playing surface is also used for croquet and the gravel playing surface is used for petanque.

Access for all, year-round

PPC strongly encourages the public to try the sport of petanque. The club regularly solicits passersby in Westmoreland Park, and has a “free to play” policy, that encourages new players to play the game without charge, with club provided balls until what time, if any, they choose to join the club. PPC promotes the sport citywide, and has gotten media coverage through the local Sellwood Bee, and a feature story produced by KGW-TV. The club designed and paid for an informative sign that explains the game and invites people to play. Petanque is a global, multi-cultural sport, played in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.

Games are social, encouraging interaction, with groups of four or six divided into teams of two or three persons, with frequent mixing of players of all backgrounds and abilities. PPC members have developed a “Petanque for Kids” curriculum, and hosted visits and demonstrations for local schools. Petanque is an easy-to-learn, low barrier sport that embraces persons of all abilities, and PPC is committed to being an open and welcoming environment for all who want to give the game a try.

A game for all ages and abilities

Petanque is one of the many “bowling” sports that include lawn-bowling, bocce, and others. Petanque is a relatively recent invention. It is a descendent of the French game “Jeu de boules,” and was specially adapted to allow players of all ages and abilities to compete equitably. In Jeu de Boules (today called Boules Lyonnaise), players take a running start by throwing their balls as much as 60 feet. This was too difficult and tiring for older players, and in 1906, in the town of La Ciotat in the South of France, players began playing a game that came to be called “petanque” a provencal term meaning “feet together.” Players must stand with both feet inside a drawn circle while playing their balls, and distances are shortened from the earlier game.



Older players who have trouble bending or kneeling to pick up their boules routinely use a special magnet to lift the steel balls. The game even has special provisions for differently abled players who may need assistance or support to stand in the circle.

A famously social game. Petanque is a simple game to play, and requires no extraordinary ability, and only modest hand-eye coordination. Beginners can—as at PPC they regularly do—play with and against more experienced players. The tradition at Portland Petanque Club is to start games each day with a random throw-out that mixes all the players in different games, promoting social interaction and learning.

Petanque offers equal opportunities for all genders. PPC is home to many of the nation’s most successful men and women players, and includes two women who have been national champions multiple times, and two women who have been selected to represent the US in international competitions since 2017.



There is even “Petanque for Kids.” Long time club member Janet Kirtland, a retired school teacher, has developed a special introductory program for younger children. Kids as young as five can learn the basics of the game, starting with smaller, safer resilient balls, but learning the principles of the game. It’s a popular multi-generational game too: Three generations of the Agnesse family belong to the club, with the youngest learning the game their “gran-pere” played growing up in France.

Petanque is a global, multi-cultural sport. In french-speaking countries around the world, petanque is a popular leisure pastime. PPC periodically hosts members of the francophone community: we’ve had French classes from local schools bring field trips to the club to learn the game, as well as going to schools in the area to demonstrate the game. The local Alliance Francaise and other french-speaking social groups have joined us to play the game, or demonstrate it on Bastille Day.

Year-round, all weather activity at Westmoreland Park

While lawn-bowling and croquet are largely seasonal, fair-weather uses of the club and facilities, Portland Petanque members use the club year-round, with three regularly scheduled playing times (Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons) and many informal playing times besides. Petanque is played in fair weather and foul, and in conditions and on terrain in which other boule-sports cannot be played. PPC members provide “eyes on the park” during these times.



Club-contributed improvements to Westmoreland Park

Improvements to the Portland Lawn Bowling Club facility. After it was founded in 2002, PPC made contact with the Portland Lawn Bowling Club to discuss opportunities for sharing the facility. PLBC’s “North Lawn” at the time was a little used, and poor condition astro-turf surface. PLBC, PPC, and Croquet entered into a joint agreement for the management of the club grounds, and mutually agreed to designate the North Lawn area for use by the Portland Petanque Club. PPC undertook the expense to remove and dispose of the decaying astro-turf, added aggregate and other material to the terrain surface, and graded it for use as a petanque court.

Since entering into that agreement, PPC has actively led efforts to maintain and improve the area in and around PLBC. In 2006 (with the assistance of Parks), Portland Petanque Club planted and tended nine major shade trees (eight of which have survived to maturity today). In 2006, PPC volunteers replaced the decaying wood barriers around the petanque terrain with concrete edging pavers, provided by Parks Bureau. In addition, PPC paid for and/or contributed the bulk of the labor to install new carpet and tile (2007), and paint the clubhouse (materials provided by Parks), at a cost, borne solely by Portland Petanque Club, of approximately \$4,000.



In 2013, Portland Petanque Club designed and paid for an educational and explanatory sign which was erected by Parks Bureau staff. The sign describes the game of petanque and outlines its main rules. A panel added by Parks Bureau describes the history of Westmoreland Park. PPC members routinely greet people passing by who watch the game from the path alongside the courts, answering their questions and inviting them to play. Many of the club members have been recruited from those walking past the courts, who are seeing the game for the first time.

Active participation in the development of the sport

Members of the Portland Petanque Club are active in promoting the sport throughout the nation. The Portland Petanque Club is a member-affiliate of the Federation of Petanque USA, the sports national governing organization. Joe Martin, founding President of the Portland Petanque Club, served as President of the national federation from 2008 to 2011. The club's current president Steve Walker, serves as secretary of the national federation. The sport of petanque is governed by rules and a code of conduct adopted by FPUSA, and enforced by certified Umpires (Portland has four such umpires). FPUSA also provides liability insurance coverage for the club and its members and guests, with the City of Portland as an additional insured. FPUSA is one of a worldwide association of national federations that promotes the sport, adopts rules and organizes international competitions.



Portland Petanque Club has made a home at Westmoreland Park over the past two decades

We're closely tied to the local community. Local businesses (below) have sponsored many events at the club. During the Covid-19 lockdown (April-June 2020), the club used its funds to purchase gift certificates from local businesses for use as future prizes in order to help these businesses weather the loss of sales. The club has hosted fund-raisers for local elementary schools, with PPC members serving as volunteers at these events. PPC also holds its own fund-raising tournaments for charitable causes, donating proceeds to members with uninsured medical bills for cancer treatment, and in the Spring of 2022, for funds to aid Ukrainian war refugees.

Our Portland sponsors

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| Allen Trust | Moreland Dental |
| Brew Dr Kombucha | Moreland Liquor Store |
| Cascade Residential Mortgage | OnPoint Credit Union |
| Fat Alberts | QFC |
| Fetch Coffee | San Felipe Taqueria |
| Galaxy Stoneworks | Sellwood Saloon |
| Gigantic Brewing | Tom Dwyer Automotive |
| Keller Williams/Barbara Kongsbak | Unicorn Brewing |
| La Provence | UPS Store |

The club has hosted fund-raisers for local schools—**Llewellyn Elementary, Duniway Elementary, Buckman Elementary, and Sellwood Middle school**. In September 2022 we hosted our first post-COVID fund-raising event for Sellwood Middle, with PPC members serving as volunteers at these events.

A nationally recognized center for petanque

For the past ten years, Portland Petanque Club has sponsored the Rose City Open, an international tournament that attracts players from all of the US, and from other nations. The RCO is one of the largest petanque tournaments in the US, and brings visitors to the local community.

A recent open featured 42 teams of 84 players from over 24 clubs in Oregon, Washington, California, Alaska, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, Texas, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, Canada, Mexico, and France, including several World Champions. These guests are all housed at local airbnb's or hosted by our local players.



PPC also hosts various national and/or regional competitions each year, each attracting players and thus visitors to Sellwood from other areas that pour revenue into local businesses, which are promoted by PPC through our Local Sponsorship Directory and signage at the events. In addition, the club patronizes local businesses for its purchases of key supplies to mark, maintain and improve the courts and clubhouse.

Plans for the future

Portland Petanque Club is eager to build on its record of activating the space at the north end of Westmoreland Park, and would be pleased to support and enter into a friendship agreement with the Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation and the other clubs making use of this facility.

Regular play activities at the park

Members of the Portland Petanque club gather for social play three times a week at Westmoreland Park. In addition, over the course of the year, the club typically schedules about 20 different events, including club, regional, and national tournaments, trainings, and petanque-themed social activities.

2022 calendar of events

Tournament	Date	Format
Season Opener - 9 am	Sun 3/20	Doubles
Web Foot Open - 9 am	Sun 4/10	6 Balls
Rules & Etiquette Clinic - 12 pm	Sun 4/24	Seminar
May Day Melee - 9 am	Sun 5/1	Red/Blue Melee
Club Championship Mixed Doubles - 9 am	Sun 5/15	Mixed Doubles
Pointing and Shooting Clinic & Social - 3 pm	Sat 5/21	Seminar
World Games Warm-up - 9 am	Sat 6/4	Doubles
Pointing and Shooting Competition - 12 pm	Sun 6/5	Skills Contest
Strategy Clinic & Social - 3 pm	Sat 6/18	Seminar
Northwest Regional Mixed Doubles - 9 am	Sat 6/25	Mixed
Northwest Regional Men's & Women's Doubles - 9 am	Sun 6/26	Men's / Women's
Putt Putt Petanque & Social - 3 pm	Sat 7/9	Golf w/ Petanque
Club Championship Singles - 9 am	Sun 7/24	Singles
Club Picnic & 3-Round Panache - 12 pm	Sun 7/31	Red/Blue Panache
Rose` 3-Round Pointing Singles & Social - 3:00 pm	Sat 8/20	Pointing Tourney
Club Championship Select Doubles - 9 am	Sun 8/28	Select
Rose City Open - 9 am	Sat/Sun 9/10-11	Select
Middle School Fund Raiser	Sat 9/17	Fund Raiser
September Serenade & Social - 3 pm	Sat 9/24	Red/Blue Melee
Halloween Panache - 10am	Sun 10/30	Red/Blue Panach

