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Bell Tower Park Property Owners' Association

BELL TOWER NOTES II

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Rolling with Tradition: Bocce Comes to BTP

Article by Nina Anderson with help from John Davenport

At the 2023 Bell Tower Park Candidates Night, numerous residents asked about amenities in our community, particularly the tennis courts. At that time, there were no committees at BTP, only the Social Committee. Then, newly elected President John Davenport created other committees when he took over, and POA Board liaisons were assigned to each committee. John Davenport became part of the Amenities Committee.

George Echardt, a former CAM at BTP, and John Davenport discussed the maintenance of the tennis courts. They knew that the clay surface on both courts was scheduled to be replaced in 2024, and it was going to be very expensive. The maintenance of those courts would also be costly. John suggested changing the courts to a hard-court surface, adding pickleball courts on one side with a tennis court on the other. He also suggested adding a bocce (pronounced "botch-ee") court, as numerous requests were received from residents. George agreed that it was an excellent idea.

The idea for a different surface for the sports courts and a new bocce court was presented to the Amenities Committee, and they believed it was an excellent addition for the community as well. The

Amenities Committee sought out vendors, complete with total cost breakdowns and reviews of each vendor. They presented the POA Board with their recommendation to utilize Sport Surfaces for the resurfacing job and an additional bocce court.



The next hurdle was getting the residents' approval. Since there would be a change to the amenities, the Bell Tower Park POA documents required a residential vote. A notice was sent to the community to make residents aware of not only the changes to be made to the sports courts, but also the potential long-term cost savings. The change would mean an assessment to fund the majority of the costs. Ballots were returned from the homeowners, and

the residents overwhelmingly voted in favor of the change.

Finally, in June, 2024, a contract was signed with Sport Surfaces to change the tennis court surface from clay to asphalt with four pickleball courts on one side and one tennis court on the other. Sport Surfaces was also instructed to install a bocce court on the north side of the tennis and pickleball courts.

The summer of 2024 passed without much progress. This was due to other jobs secured by Sport Surfaces, as well as an excessive amount of rain, which delayed the work. Fall 2024 brought two hurricanes to BTP, which meant further delays to the sports courts. Finally, in November, 2024, Sport Surfaces broke ground, and on February 21, 2025, the Bell Tower Park Tennis Court and Pickleball Court projects were complete.

What about the Bocce Court? That was delayed for months due to permitting issues with Lee County. After weeks of no progress, John Woodard, Keith Miller, and John Davenport met with a Lee County representative to find out what was holding up the process. They found that it was not considered a major project – one that should pass rather easily, and the meeting resulted in a streamlined application process.

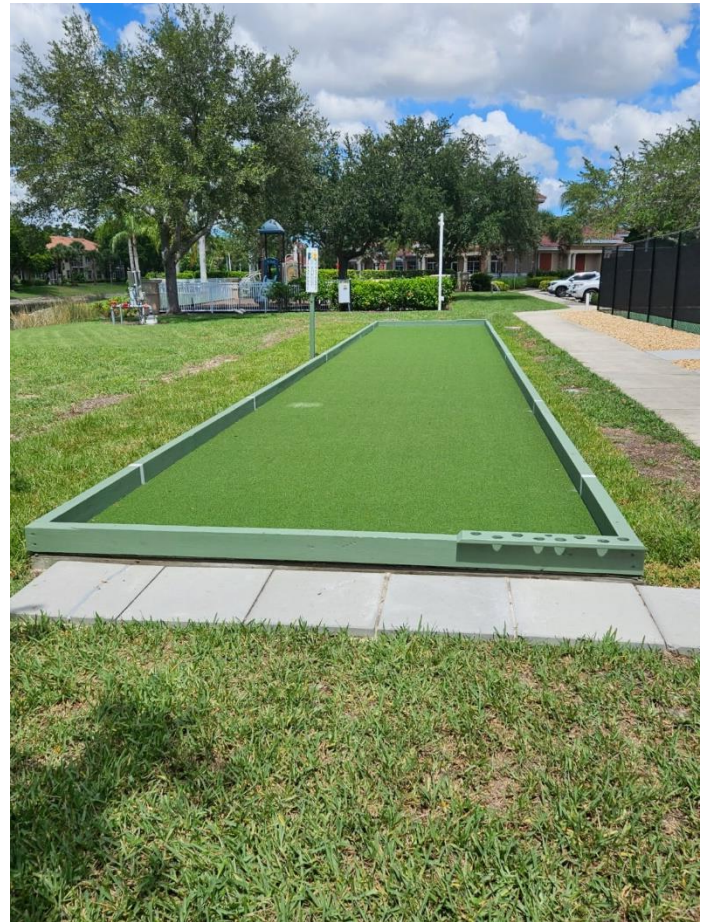
The Bell Tower Park Bocce Court was installed in June 2025 in only four days! John Woodard and John Davenport stained the wood bumpers around the court to improve the appearance and make it look more professional. They also installed 24-inch square pavers to act as a walkway at each end of the court so players do not have to walk on the grass.

BTP is currently waiting for the final inspection of the court by a Lee County representative. Once the court passes inspection, the office staff will send out an “email blast” alerting residents that the BTP Bocce Court is open for play! Bocce balls will be stored in the unlocked storage room next to the Fitness Center.

Special thanks to John Davenport, Keith Miller, and John Woodard for all the extra work they did in getting this project completed. POA President Ron McEwen turned over the entire project to these three men, and they worked hard to see it through. Though frustrated on numerous occasions, the project was completed. Some blood, sweat, and tears went into the court to make sure it was completed as per the contract specifications, and it looks great! The entire community is thankful for all their hard work, and we know they are very proud of the final product.

Bocce is a highly versatile sport that can be played on several flat surfaces, including clay, concrete, grass, artificial turf, and sand. Bocce balls are made from different compounds, depending on the type of bocce that is played. In volo and pétanque games, the bocce balls are made from a brass composition. For ruffa bocce, the balls are colored and made from solid resin.

As a sport, bocce offers many social and physical benefits. It can be played casually or competitively



and is accessible to people of all ages and fitness levels.

So now that BTP has a bocce court, how do you play? Games typically consist of two teams. Each team can have 1 to 4 people. The object of bocce is to have your team's bocce balls closer to the "pallino" (small target ball) than your opponent's balls. The team with the closest ball to the pallino scores a point. Each bocce ball closer than the opponent's balls scores another point. The first team to reach 10

points wins the game. (There is even a scoreboard on the BTP court!) A typical match is 3 games.

To learn more about the history of bocce and to view the official rules of the sport, go to:

<https://www.boccebuildersofamerica.com/history/standards/>

It's almost time to toss the pallino and try to get a "baci" (kiss). All you need to do is get your bocce ball to touch the pallino! See you on the court!

