



May 2014

This month

As it is that rather dead time of the year, winter, many of us are having a good rest from the summer exertions. A number of clubs are having winter events to keep members in touch with one another. Some of the Wellington clubs are having indoor croquet, winter lunches, indoor bowls and Mahjong. What a diverse range of activities to share with your croquet friends.

May is the traditional month for club and Association annual general meetings. We all appreciate the hard work our committees put in and say thank you to the outgoing executives and welcome to the incoming ones.

Croquet New Zealand asks that you tell us of your new committees when they are elected so we can put the details in the Yearbook.

From the Exec

The Executive met in Wellington on Sunday 25th May. The key things worked on at the meeting were (1) approving the budget and business plan for 2014/15, (2) Updating the policy for funding international play, (3) preliminary work around the AGM and (4) confirming the details of a new award.

The CNZ budget is aiming for a small surplus in 2014/15. Areas to be focussed on are

- an increased role for the SDO as the work Greg is doing is very well received;
- some money put aside for producing coaching resources, clubkit resources, and other publications to help foster enthusiasm and publicity;

- another round of CNZ coaching clinics throughout the country. (if clubs are keen to host these then please let the Executive Director know)

Before the AGM, CNZ will be providing information on our strategic plan and there will be a session at the AGM, where Associations will be asked to put forward their thoughts as to what Croquet NZ should be focussing on. We also hope to have discussion about how to assist clubs with planning... as this was a major area needing attention, based on the results garnered from the club questionnaires completed last year.

CNZ will also provide information about a key external funding source that is at a high risk of losing after the 2014/15 financial year. The Community Sport grant from Sport New Zealand (we receive \$35,000 pa to achieve certain goals) is likely to reduce but more likely disappear entirely for the 2015/16 financial year - despite us exceeding our targets over the last few years. The number one focus of SportNZ in the community sport area is on having more kids playing sport, and realistically we cannot contribute as much to this focus as many other sports. We would like Associations and Clubs to consider the information that will be sent out and be prepared to contribute to a discussion on this and what to do at the AGM.

Don't forget to get your nominations in for the Executive, and the AGM Awards. We have received a couple of very worthy nominations already but always keen to see people recognised for their play and/or voluntary contributions.

Sport Development Officer

Greg has been busy writing coaching articles this month which you will read below. (Ed)

He would appreciate hearing of any news, feedback on this article, or developments taking place, and if any assistance is required, please ask. Greg can be contacted at the CNZ office by email, admin@croquet.org.nz or by phone (04) 916 0258.

Tournaments

GOLF CROQUET

GC Worlds & U21 GC Worlds, Mt Maunganui - February 2015

General

The GC Selection panel will meet on the 1st July 2014 to select the New Zealand players for the above events.

The panel will only consider those players who register their interest in playing these events by contacting the Convenor of the GC Selection Panel before 20 June 2014. (John Christie - johnchristie8@gmail.com).

The panel will endeavour to pick the players most likely to produce the best results in the Championships. The selectors may show priority to those players who show commitment to playing in CNZ tournaments and other ranking events on a regular basis.

Below is the new method of allocating places in World Championships

A new method for allocating places in World Championships is in place

There are Member Places, Wildcard Places, and Ranking Places.

For the GC World Championships (field size 80),

New Zealand will have 8 Places: 8 (2 Member places + 6 for being the Host)

There will be Wildcard places (2 + 2 U21), Qualifier places (4) available for the WCF to fill.

The balance of places (probably about half the field) will be filled by Ranking Places All players who wish to play in the event will be put into the pool of players for Ranking places and listed in order of world ranking. These places will be filled by the WCF first by going down the ranking list to ensure a strong field.

For the U21 GC World Championships (field size 28),

New Zealand will have 4 Places: (2 member places + 2 for as Host)

There will be Wildcard places (2) available for the WCF to fill.

The balance of places (probably about half the field) will be filled by Ranking Places. All players who wish to play in the event will be put into the pool of players for Ranking places and listed in order of world ranking. These places will be filled by the WCF first by going down the ranking list to ensure a strong field.

The Golf Croquet Silver Badge competition

The Golf Croquet Silver Badge competition will be played in the following divisions this coming season. Badges will be awarded as per the attached table.

GC Premier	0-2
GC Senior	3-5
GC Intermediate	6-8
GC Primary	9-12

Regional News

Taranaki

West End Croquet Club, New Plymouth has 46 members. Our club opened 1925 so we will be celebrating our 90th birthday next March.

Five members are in their 80s the eldest being 87 and she is on a golf croquet handicap of 5. Two of these 80s plus also play 18 holes of golf each week.

The youngest player Felix Webby aged 14 unable to be in this photo as he is on a study course for his College in Japan.

Sadly, we farewelled our Patron Robin Samson at the closing day. She joined the club in 1997 and resigns from play at the end of this season.

Evelyn Cowie



Manawatu-Wanganui

Levin Club

The Levin Croquet Club has had one of its best seasons in memory. The club won the Manawatu/Wanganui Association Interclub competition for the second year running. The club was third in the Golf Croquet Interclub. A Secondary Schools Golf Croquet team, Connell and Declan Leahy from Waiopahu College was entered in the National Secondary Schools competition for the first time and won the qualifying round in Palmerston North in March then went on to perform very creditably in the National final against twenty three other teams at Rose

Gardens in April. Ted Anderson had the distinction of winning both the AC A grade Silver Badge and the Premier GC Silver Badge competitions. Several members have played successfully in tournaments and handicaps have reduced as a result. Twilight Golf Croquet again proved popular with interest from several players in continuing as club members. Membership has exceeded the amount of space available to play so the club is currently looking to sell its property and move to a new venue with four lawns.

Lois Molloy

Thames Valley Croquet

Midland League Final – Golf Croquet.

This competition is held between the Croquet Clubs in Thames Valley and Waikato.

Twenty three teams took part this past year making up a total of ninety-two players.

After the playing of fifty-five matches and 275 games between September and March, the semi-finals were played at the beginning of May 2014. The first semi-final was between Waihi Gold and Waihi Silver with Waihi Gold winning. The other semi-final was played between Morrinsville Blue and Claudelands Green with Morrinsville Blue winning. Good to see Claudelands coming into the semi-finals this year.

The final was played on neutral lawns at Te Aroha. Waihi Gold (in blue and gold) won seven games to three.

Congratulations to the winners and to all the players who made up the competition. We look forward to seeing you all again in the coming season.



Waihi Gold - Liz Jackson, Gordon Haszard, Kathy McAlpine and Jo Allen. Morrinsville Blue - Norma James, Ron Wearne, Rob Arnold and Ian McLeod

Over 70's Tournament on 3 April 2014

3 games of 1 ½ hours are played with a different partner each time. Between games 1 and 2 they come in for an old fashioned morning tea - Royal Dalton cups and saucers or similar, silver tea service, sandwiches and small cakes plus white table cloths. Players sit and are served at the table.



Waihi Croquet Club Over 70's

Back Row: John Groves, Dawnry Slavich, Boyd Jones, Don Morris, Claire Twentyman, Madeline Hadwin, Judy Matthews, Heather Prince and Ron Matthews.

Front Row: Zelma Duggan (who started this tournament), Ineke Dulon Barre, Pat Anderson, Lois Morris, Jan Seales, Gail Reid, Mavis Watts, Joy Morgan, Kathy McAlpine and Jean Fisher

Gwen Falconer, Secretary TVCA

Otago Croquet Association

OCA ANNUAL TOURNAMENT

This tournament began on 8 March. Overall entries were a bit disappointing, especially for golf croquet where some events had to be cancelled. However, there was some good competition in the Association senior events and the winner and runner-up in the 3 and under were:



Murray Goldfinch - Runner-up Chris Shilling - Winner The Champions! Congratulations!

Trophies were presented by Jacqui Frood, Association Life Member

Chris and Murray have both had a busy and successful season. Chris won the Heenan Plate in the singles at the National Championships in Wellington and the Doubles Plate with Anthony Ritchie at the same event. These performances gained him entry to the Silver Tray Invitation event tournament for the best eight players in the country at Christchurch. He finished third-equal. Murray as a volunteer at the MacRobertson Shield 1st Test was presented with a certificate and badge in appreciation of his work as a hoop setter, quite a challenge I believe, under very inclement weather conditions. Thanks also went to Nairn Smith for his umpiring work at the tournament.



4-9 Championship
Carol Leishman
(Manager) June
McDougall Winner
Daphne Hannagan
Runner-up

10-16 Championship
Shirley Ungemuth
Winner
Joan Carter Runner-
up



OCA GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIP



(6 and under) Joan Dickinson
(runner-up & (7 and over) June
McDougall (winner) both from
Punga

(7 and over) Shirley
Ungemuth (Leith)



Wakatipu Croquet Club

Wakatipu Croquet Club has struggled with declining numbers this season but we have had some enjoyable games in Wanaka, Alexandra, Winton, Gore and Invercargill. Our own Tournament was a success as usual. There is always good fun, comradeship, and great games played.

Our season has been tinged with sadness with the passing of our President, Frances Lewis. We are missing her greatly.

Good Health to everyone. Please keep warm and safe over the winter months. Kind Regards from the Wakatipu Croquet Club Inc. Queenstown

Ruby Hutton Secretary

ALEXANDRA EASTER TOURNAMENT

As usual, some of our keen croquet players enjoyed this tournament – and they had nice weather. I couldn't believe that Alexandra had sunshine while here in Dunedin the weather was so atrocious, especially on Good Friday. The results from the tournament were:

Championship Doubles - Trish Dollan (Waimate) & Eleanor Pelvin (Alexandra) 1, Shirley Ungemuth & Joan Carter (Leith) 2.
Championship Singles - Division One Murray Goldfinch (Leith) 1, Brian Gilbert (Wanaka) 2.
Division Two Joan Dickinson (Punga) 1,



Another possible Croquet First??

Husband and wife Peter and Carol Harding were both made Life Members of the Alexandra Croquet Club Inc. on 10th May 2014

Peter and Carol Harding began their croquet careers in Auckland in 1995 and it was not long before they both reached the top Grade.

The couple have been prominent in the development of the Alexandra Croquet Club which was on the wane when they arrived. Together they both made the club what it is today.

Peter has held positions of Club Captain, Tournament Manager, running the Easter Tournament for 5 years, umpiring and is still Coach/Handicapper. He also has a great interest in the Golf Croquet and brought in a new format for the Golf Croquet Tournament

which proved very successful and worked well for all the players.

Peter was also willing to share his knowledge whether it be stroke play or tactics. He spent many hours down at the Club encouraging new and old players with both Association and Golf Croquet

Carol also did so much for the club, from the general running of the club rooms, tending the gardens, organising interclub, providing food, welcoming new players and helping them to understand the game along with help to coach.

Carol has held the position of President for 11 years and has now taken on the position of the club captain.

Carol represents the Croquet Club in the Alexandra Senior Blossom Queen and was the runner-up.

Congratulations Carol & Peter

*Audrey O’Kane-Marshall Secretary
Alexandra Croquet Club Inc.*

From Tainui

At their AGM June Mills was made a Life Member of the Tainui Croquet Club. June has belonged to the club for 26 years and in that time has held the positions of President, Club Captain, Kitchen duties and Coach. June is still in the position of Coach, a position she has enjoyed over many years helping and encouraging new members.

Congratulations June!!



Dorothy Walsh (President) and June Mills

Wellington Association

The Wellington Association had for many years held a gala day at which the trophies are presented to winners of WCA events. The 2014 Gala Day was held at the Paraparaumu Club and was somewhat different in its format from previous years. This time the day included coaching as follows:

COACHING Sessions of 20 to 30 minutes will be repeated 3 or 4 times. This will enable small groups to rotate through all clinics.	
ASSOCIATION CROQUET	GOLF CROQUET
Greg Bryant	Tom Berryman
Rover peel peg-out	Promotional shots
	Ricochet shots
Paul Skinley	Using the invisible ball
Cannons etc	& more
UMPIRING - SHOT WATCHING MADE EASY	
John Dawson will divulge the secrets of where to stand and what to look for when watching for faults and/or other hampered shots.	
FUN/SKILL GAMES	
Plimmerton’s Maze, the Bobs Board and Tennis Croquet	

The Paraparaumu Club reported on the day:

WCA Gala Day. Held on 3 May and run by Julia Murphy, WCA President, this turned out to be a great success, despite the weather. After a late start because of rain, everyone enjoyed games of One-Ball and Golf Croquet, followed in the afternoon by very popular coaching sessions run by Greg Bryant, Paul Skinley and Tom Berryman. Brian Boutel also held a “hints for umpires” session. Also available were several fun games until prize-giving at the end of the day.



Still smiling despite the weather

Francie Vagg Club Captain Paraparaumu Club

Wainuiomata Club

The Wainuiomata club members are reeling from a disastrous fire in their club rooms which has destroyed most of the hard work put in by members to build up a happy and thriving club. In a week between 19 & 26 April 2014 the club had 2 break-ins and graffiti was sprayed on the walls. A week afterwards, following the annual general meeting arsonists struck. Some of the windows and screens are intact but many are broken or damaged. The ceiling has been taken down and the club equipment melted in the heat of the blaze. Assessors have been in and while the decision is made on an insurance pay out, the club is contemplating its future.

We wish the club success is re-establishing the club rooms



Coaching Corner

Rush Strokes

What is a *rush*?

A rush describes a stroke in which a player hits their ball (the striker's ball) into another ball (the roqueted ball), and sends the roqueted ball to a predetermined position on the lawn.

Generally, the distance between the striker's ball and the ball to be rushed is short; within a yard or so. The greater the distance between the two balls, the less likely you are to achieve a desirable outcome.

A rush is most commonly referred to in association croquet; rushing to a position where the following croquet stroke is played from an optimal position. An optimal position might be a spot from which the distance each ball in the following croquet stroke, and in particular the striker's ball, is shortened to make the following croquet stroke easier and more successful.

In golf croquet, a rush might be used to send an opponent ball to a position on the lawn that makes the opponents shot as difficult as possible. Sometimes, it is a reasonable tactic to rush partner ball to the next hoop in order to gain an advantage at that hoop.

In each code, the technique of playing a good rush is the same.

We look at playing techniques and *straight* rushes this month. Next month, we'll look at *cut* rushes and some of the tactical options that cut rush principles present in golf croquet.

Straight rushes

In a *straight* rush, the RUSH LINE and the LINE OF AIM are the same (Figure 1).

Association Croquet: It doesn't matter where the striker's ball goes after hitting the roqueted ball. Upon hitting the roqueted ball, the striker's ball becomes 'a ball in hand' and

is placed in contact with the roqueted ball for the following croquet stroke.

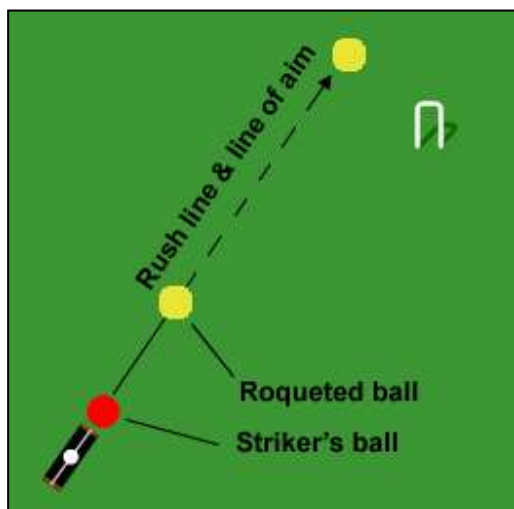


Figure 1: Straight Rush

Golf Croquet:

In golf croquet, the striker may want the roqueted ball to travel to a far distant position, but may want the striker's ball to stay close to where the roqueted ball *was* – for example, rushing the opponent away while staying in position for the hoop themselves. This is achieved by accurately hitting the roquet ball in the middle. Follow the technique guidelines below to achieve this consistently. Stun shots, or checking the follow-through will produce less accurate results more often. Unless the distance between the two balls is very short, resist the temptation to play a stun shot.

- The key to a successful straight rush is to cause the striker's ball to contact the roqueted ball in the middle, thus causing the roquet ball to travel straight ahead to the predetermined spot.
- The strikers ball must travel flatly along the ground so that as much energy as possible is transferred to the roqueted ball.

Technique:

If you are having trouble executing a good rush, it may be useful to have a coach observe your strokes to provide feedback on your technique as it can be difficult to analyse each component by yourself. In practice, become competent with one component at a time. Be patient and methodical in your approach to perfecting rush strokes.

1. Stalk the ball as for all roquets.

It is essential that you and your mallet are lined up correctly with the target. Select the centre point of the target roquet ball, aligning yourself from that point and the line back through the centre of your striker's ball. Stalk that line as you approach your stance. If the stroke requires a lot of power, you may find it useful to stand slightly further back from your striker's ball to encourage a flatter swing. Experiment with this to find an optimum distance.

2. The mallet shaft should be vertical on impact. Any forward lean will result in the striker's ball jumping or riding up and over the roqueted ball.

A common error is to try and force the shot, or to stay thinking about the roquet ball during the swing, rather than bringing your focus back to hitting your striker's ball correctly after you are lined up and in your stance.

3. The body must be kept still.

As in (2) above, avoid dipping your shoulders or 'squatting' from your knees during the shot when trying to apply extra energy. Swing through, as you normally would from your shoulders, allowing the mallet to swing right through your striker's ball. 'Body' includes your head. Stay focused on where your mallet is going to strike your ball and watch your mallet hit it.

4. The swing should be smooth and unhurried.

Allow the mallet to reach the full height of your backswing.

5. Your mallet should follow through. Checking, or stopping the mallet can cause you to miss-time the shot, introduce unwanted body movement and potentially hit your ball off-centre. Only restrict your follow through on the shortest distances say less than a foot between the two balls to avoid a fault in golf croquet.

6. In a straight rush, the power needed is similar to that of sending a single ball a required distance.

Practice and experiment with these techniques. If you can hit a single ball correctly, you can produce a good rush just as easily.

Next month, we'll look at cut rushes and some of the tactical options that cut rush principles present in golf croquet.

Greg Bryant

In Inner Game - Article 2

In the ZONE

Part 1

In last month's Croquet Matters, we discussed a psychological technique termed *visualization* and how this can be applied in a croquet context. How many of you, unable to access a croquet lawn over the winter months, are now visualizing your perfect next game come the new season?

This month, we look at what visualization can help us prepare for... being in the *ZONE*. Primarily, this article is appropriate for players with a measure of competence. While many readers may be new to the game and still working out the basic physical attributes of play, this topic provides a guide to what a 'purple patch' is and how we can create that state of mind in the future...

For those that are new to croquet, it is very probable that you may have experienced a situation in other fields that this article describes. If you can recall that situation, imagine how playing a game of croquet with the mind-set you experienced would feel like... incorporate that feeling into your visualization exercises.

So what is this "zone"? How can players find it? And how does it affect performance?

In the simplest terms, the "zone" (or "flow" as some sport psychologists' call it), is generally described as "the pinnacle of achievement for an athlete", and characterizes "a state in which an athlete performs to the best of his or her ability" (Young & Pain 1999). It combines a balance of excitement and awareness, and is often associated with a relaxed yet focused high-level performance (Caruso 2005).

In an examination of flow by Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi (1999), 10 essential elements of the zone were identified. Weinberg and Gould (2011) do an excellent job of summarizing each element. They are as follows:

1. **Balance of challenge and skills:** For flow to occur it is imperative that a competitor believes that he or she has the skills to successfully meet the physical, technical, and mental challenges faced (see Image 1).

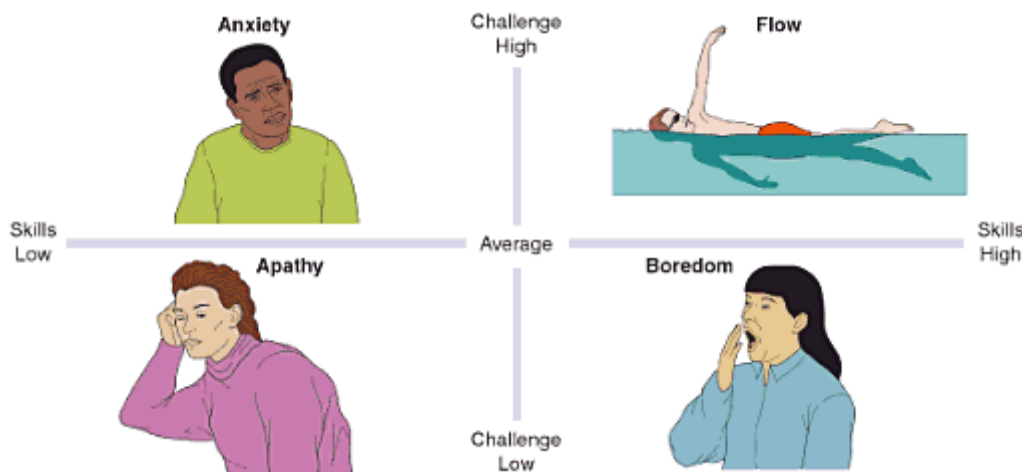


Image 1: Flow Model (Kimiecik & Stein 1992)

2. **Complete absorption in the activity:** The participant is so involved in the activity that nothing else seems to matter.
3. **Clear goals:** Goals are so clearly set that the player knows exactly what to do. This clarity of intention facilitates concentration and attention.
4. **Merging of action and awareness:** The player is aware of their actions but not of the awareness itself.
5. **Total concentration on the task at hand:** Participants report that they feel like a beam of concentrated energy. Crowd noise, opponent reactions, and other distractions simply don't matter. The focus of attention is clearly on the task at hand.
6. **Loss of self-consciousness:** Participants report that their ego is completely lost in the activity itself.
7. **A sense of control:** This element of flow refers to the fact that the athlete is not actively aware of control; rather, they are simply not worried by the possibility of lack of control.
8. **No goals or rewards external to the activity:** The athlete participates purely because of the activity itself, without seeking any other reward.
9. **Transformation of time:** Athletes in the zone typically report that time seems to speed up, although for some it slows down. However, most individuals in the zone report transformations in their perceptions of time.
10. **Effortless movement:** This element refers to the fact that the athlete is performing well but yet is not really thinking about it and doesn't appear to be trying too hard.

A player in the zone is not only able to suppress and ignore negative thoughts, but they are also found to have higher self-esteem and confidence (Carstedt 2003). Clearly, achieving flow or being in the zone gives a competitor a remarkable advantage. The ability to repress negative thoughts and focus on the task at hand is a crucial part of performing well and meeting our own expectations of success.

In this article we have looked at what the *zone* is and how playing in the zone state can have a positive effect on our performance. Next month we'll look at how we can achieve a state of flow during competition as well as the different factors that can disrupt and prevent us from getting in the zone.

Greg Bryant – Sports Development Officer

Croquet Questions and Answers

I recently purchased a peripherally weighted mallet and it seems I'm no longer able to roquet as well as I could with my old mallet. Should I change my mallet and what do you recommend?

A decision to change your mallet on the basis of one aspect of your game should not be taken too lightly. You may well end up turning croquet into an expensive sport, without making any improvement. This question is not uncommon, and tends to raise more questions:

1. Are you definitely missing more roquets than you used to? Quite often, the biggest difference is not that more are being missed than before, but what was previously a wide miss (and consequently dismissed) is more often a 'near miss' now (which is not as easily dismissed).
2. As an association croquet player, are there other aspects of your game that you believe have improved with the new mallet?
3. Quite often, a *new mallet honeymoon* occurs which can distort our perceptions. When we start out with a new mallet, we tend to focus more on the basic techniques and consequently produce better results. As our shot making confidence rises and we begin to think of other things again – the next shot, next break, opposition, winning the game, we can perceive a drop in form (usually correctly).
4. Does the new mallet, being of a different weight, head or shaft length, cause you to play with a radically different technique?
5. Is the shaft a different shape? Often a slight change to the orientation of a non-circular shaft can make a difference.

If there is absolutely no known improvement in any aspect of your game, you have allowed yourself enough time and practice to know, and you are simply not comfortable with the new mallet, then perhaps a change is worth considering. But if you have found a type of shot or shots is more consistent, it's worth looking at avenues other than changing your mallet.

As long as you are comfortable in your stance, well balanced, and have a reasonable technique, you can hit a roquet with almost anything. If your stop shots, drive shot ratio's or rushes are more consistent, or easier to judge, think about how you can develop your break play using those shots and treat your roquets as a technical area for improvement.

Check the immediate things first. A peripherally weighted mallet can feel lighter because of the different weight distribution. Are you tending to over-hit or force your shots more than with the old mallet? You may have a tendency to do this when the lawns you usually play on are too heavy. Is the head or shaft longer than before? A slight adjustment of your feet positions may be all that is required.

With those checked off, the best thing to do is practice. Know what your success ratio of various distances up to 13 yards is say 5, 7, 10 yards. Don't be concerned for any distance beyond that for now. Then set S.M.A.R.T. goals around those distances and review them every 10 practice sessions or so. If there is no improvement after several sessions, technical or psychological approaches should be discussed with an experienced coach.

Greg Bryant

Croquet Matters was prepared by the Executive Director and Sport Development Officer and Pamela George