



MODULE L1M2

# SINGLE BALL STROKES

ROQUET, RUSH and HOOP RUNNING



## The Roquet

### Objective:

A roquet is a single ball stroke in which we aim our striker's ball at another ball on the lawn... and successfully hit that target ball.

The primary objective of a roquet is to cause our striker's ball to hit another ball. We are not concerned with where either ball comes to rest after the roquet is made at this stage (see Rushes later in this module).

**Golf croquet:** A roquet in GC is usually referred to as a *clearance*, that is, to *clear* the target ball away from its current position. For example, clearing an opponent's ball away from hoop running position

**Association croquet:** The roquet is the most fundamental stroke in Association Croquet. A roquet made in Association croquet awards the striker with two extra shots – a *croquet stroke* and a *continuation stroke*.

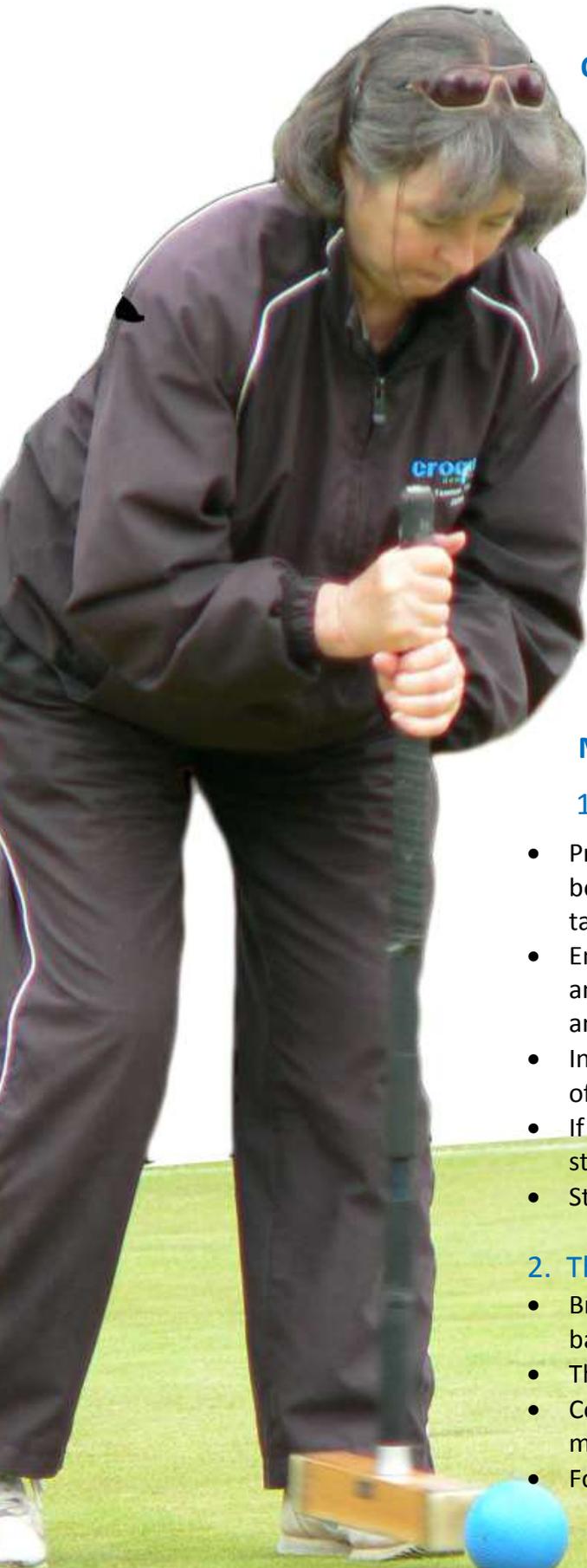
### Method:

#### 1. Stalking the Target

- Prepare to approach the striker's ball from 3-4 metres behind it. From that point, line up the striker's ball with the target ball.
- Ensure the mallet is pointing straight forward, grip the mallet and approach the striker's ball. Walk into the stance position and do not alter the position of the hands on the mallet.
- In the stance, your eyes should be positioned over the back of the ball.
- If the position feels uncomfortable or the approach not straight, quit the stance and stalk again.
- Stalk all strokes!

#### 2. The stroke

- Bring the mallet back smoothly and slowly into the backswing, keeping the body and shoulders still.
- The swing should be a smooth and flat pendulum.
- Contact with the striker's ball should be made with the mallet shaft vertical. You should see the mallet strike the ball.
- Follow through with the mallet towards the target.





**Coaching note:** The roquet is a fundamental stroke in croquet. Often when a player is having problems, the coach will return to this stroke to ensure that a player's technique is correct. This can apply to all abilities of players. Stalk, approach, stance, swing, hit and follow through must all function correctly. In diagnosing technique, the coach will check each of these stages.

Generally a player cannot see their own stroke. In addition, beginning players are typically unable to detect their own errors. The player will often benefit from having another player provide them with feedback about their stroke.

Sometimes players appear to line up a ball incorrectly, but when they swing, do so along the correct line. In these cases a coach should accept that the player can perform consistently in this way.



## Module L1M2 Skill learning: Roquets

### Group coaching session practise suggestions:

- a. Work in pairs. Aim at a ball 3 yards away. Remember to use the full Aim-Stalk-Swing-Follow-through technique. Aim to hit the centre of the target ball.  
Gradually increase the target distance up to 7 metres.
- b. Aim at the centre peg. Explain that this is a narrower target so there is less room for error at the same distance.
- c. Devise a competition whereby players score points by successfully hitting targets at varying distances



### Individual practice suggestions:

Practicing fundamental roquet strokes in a focused way can be an extremely beneficial method of improving all types single ball strokes. On the following page, a roquet practice worksheet will assist players to monitor their progress and compare outcomes when developing new techniques.





## Rushes

### Objective

- A rush is a short roquet in which the aim is to send the roqueted ball to a predetermined position on the lawn.
- **Golf croquet:** Rushing is a very useful GC skill. A well-executed rush can send an opponent ball to a far distant spot while causing the strikers ball to remain close to the action!

Sometimes it is a useful tactic to rush partner ball to the next hoop in order to gain an advantage at that hoop.

- **Association croquet:** The roquet is the most fundamental stroke in Association Croquet. A roquet in Association Croquet awards the striker with two extra shots – a *croquet stroke* and a *continuation stroke*.

The striker's ball must travel flatly along the ground so as much energy as possible is transferred to the roqueted ball.

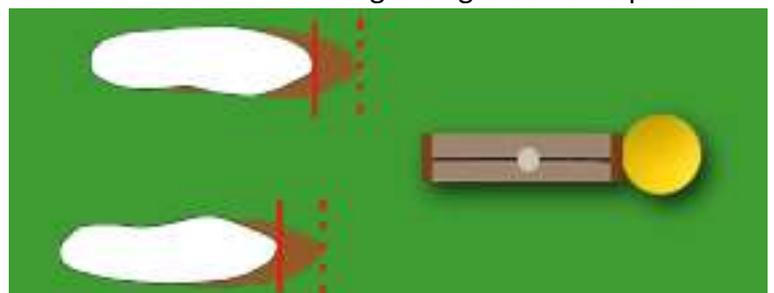


### Method

1. Stalk the ball as for all roquets.
2. The mallet shaft should be vertical on impact. Any forward lean will result in the striker's ball jumping.
3. The body must be kept still.
4. The swing should be smooth and unhurried.
5. The mallet should follow through with the centre of the mallet striking the centre of the ball.
6. In a straight rush, the power needed is similar to that of sending a single ball a required distance.

- **Stance**

Producing a *flatter* swing in more powerful rushes can help the striker's ball travel flatly along the ground to transfer more energy into the roqueted ball. This is achieved by maintaining the usual swing of the mallet and taking up a stance that is slightly further back from the striker's ball. (Figure 1)



**Figure 1: Stance further back for powerful rushes.**

- **Focus**

Once stalked and in the stance, accuracy can be assisted by bringing focus back to the striker's ball and hitting it correctly, swinging the mallet from the shoulders, through the centre of the strikers ball and along the line of aim.

## Cut Rushes

### Objective

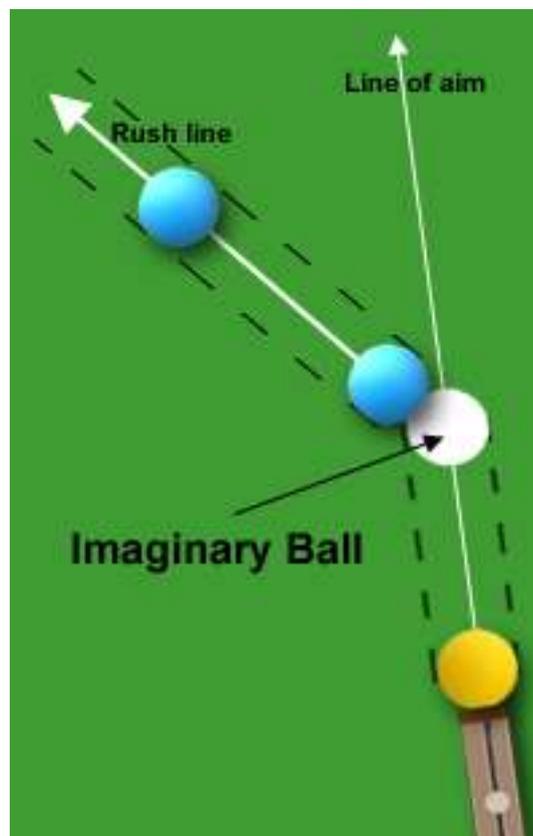
- The cut rush is used to propel the roqueted ball at an angle. In a cut rush, the rush line and the line of aim differ.
- The finer the cut, the more powerful the stroke needs to be to move the roqueted ball any significant distance.

### Method

To find an aiming point on the ball to be rushed, an imaginary ball can be introduced to establish the striker's line of aim. (Figure 2)

In practice, an actual ball can be introduced temporarily to clarify where the striker's ball needs to make contact with the ball to be rushed;

- 1) Place a ball in contact with the ball that is to be rushed so the line through the centre of the two balls points in the direction of the rush line. (The white imaginary ball in figure 2)
  - 2) The striker's line of aim is the line that joins the centre of the striker's ball and the (temporarily placed) imaginary ball. This is now *as if* the striker is playing a straight rush on the temporary ball.
  - 3) Remove the temporary ball and attempt a cut rush by playing a normal stroke along the determined line of aim.
- Remember that the aiming takes place from 3-4 yards behind the striker's ball – prior to stalking the ball.
  - ALWAYS stalk the striker's ball
  - The mallet shaft should be vertical on impact. Any forward lean will result in the striker's ball jumping.
  - The body must be kept still.
  - The swing should be smooth and unhurried, and swung from the shoulders
  - The mallet should follow through with the centre of the mallet striking the centre of the ball.



**Figure 2: Using an imaginary ball to find the line of aim for a cut rush.**



## Module L1M1 Skill learning (3)

### Rush Stroke Practice suggestions



#### Exercise 1:

Straight Rush; Start with two balls a foot apart, play a straight rush across the lawn, attempting to keep the rush ball within the tramlines through hoop 5 and hoops 1 & 4.

If the rushed ball reaches the far side of the lawn, try increasing the starting distance between the two balls.



#### Exercise 2:

This Rush Game is a good competition game for groups of players and an excellent individual practice routine.

Start with two balls from any one of the four corners, one a foot infield of the first. Using a series of small rushes (some of which will be straight, but the majority will be cut rushes) rush the partner ball onto the peg. (To succeed at this activity, players will need to make small rushes to maintain control.) Count the number of strokes used, and encourage players to practice this activity to try to reduce the number of strokes they take.

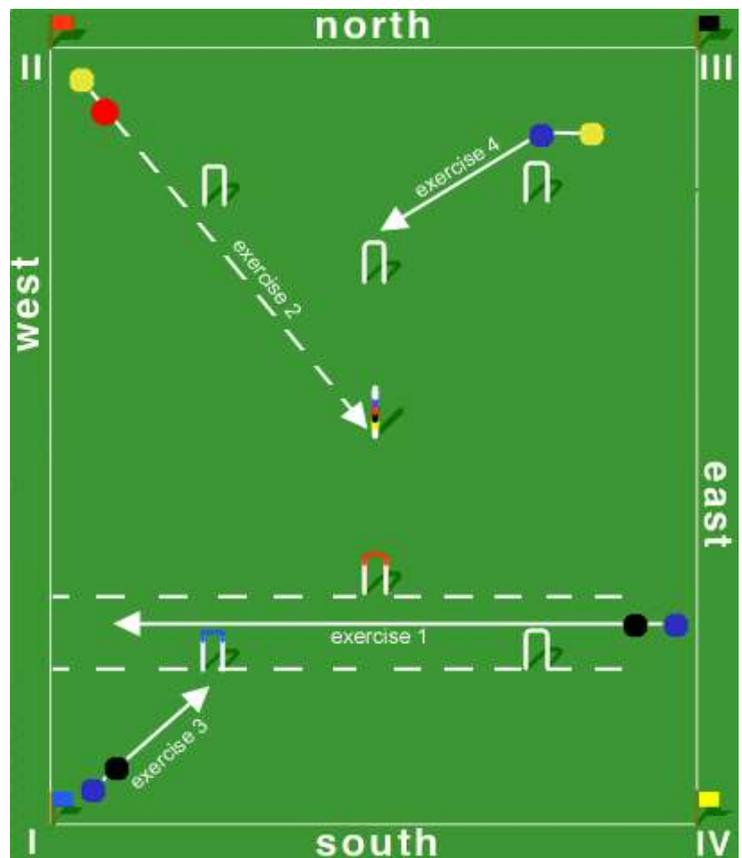


Figure 3: Rush exercises

#### Exercise 3:

Play a straight rush from corner 1 to a foot in front of hoop 1. Take croquet from the rushed ball (hoop approach) and try running the hoop with the striker's ball.

The emphasis is the rush stroke. Place a circular string line of 1 metre circumference in front of hoop 1 for the ball to be rushed into.

#### Exercise 4:

Cut Rush; from the non-playing side of hoop 10 (4 back) with a rush pointing at the Northern side of hoop 2, play a cut rush, rushing the ball to in front of hoop 11 (Penultimate). Try running the 11<sup>th</sup> hoop with the rushed ball.

**Practise success.** If rushes fail to work, shorten the distance between the balls until accurate rushes can be confidently made. Then gradually increase the distance between the balls again.

# Hoop Running

## Objective

**Golf Croquet:** Both sides contest the same hoop in order. The first side to run the hoop wins the point for that side.

**Association Croquet:** The first side to run all 12 hoops in order with each ball, and peg out, wins the match. A player that runs their hoop in order is awarded with an extra shot.

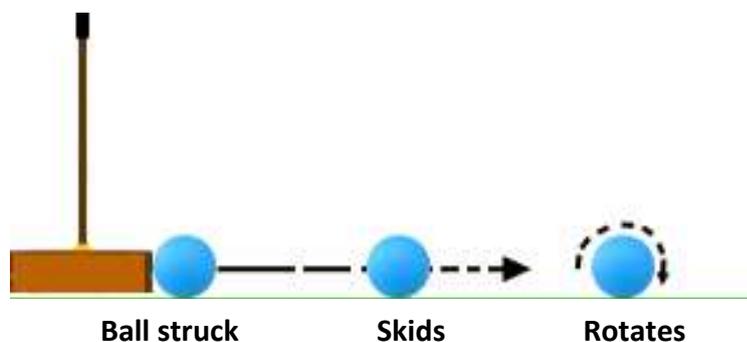
## Method:

There are two options to choose from when running a hoop:

- Run the hoop hard. The advantage of this is that a ball is less likely to stick within the hoop. The disadvantage is that the player is more likely to lose control in the swing and less likely to get any assistance from *ball rotation* (see below)
- Run the hoop with control. This is usually the best option when the hoop is attempted from a close hoop running position.

### Ball rotation:

When struck with a mallet, a ball will skid for a distance (depending on how firmly it is struck) before it begins to rotate (figure 4).



A very firm stroke will cause the ball to skid further. A less powerful swing, with follow through, will generate ball rotation sooner.

Forward rotation of the ball will help carry it through the hoop if it connects with a leg of the hoop. Imagine a forward spinning object that connects with an obstacle. The forward spinning momentum will cause the object to climb up or around the obstacle.

### 1. Stalking the ball

- As with all single ball strokes, the striker's ball should be stalked.
- Walk into a comfortable stance position. If it does not feel right, (uncomfortable stance or misaligned) re-stalk the ball.

### 2. The Swing

- The stroke should be either:
  - played softly so that the ball has time to begin to roll, or
  - played firmly to get the ball well beyond the hoop.
- The mallet head should be kept straight and the player encouraged to strike through smoothly with a flat swing with follow through.
- As with all strokes, watch the mallet strike the ball.



### 3. Aiming Point

There are a number of ways players can aim for hoop running:

1. When side onto the hoop, aim between the centre and the far leg of the hoop.
2. Aim to miss the near leg of the hoop with the side of the player's ball.
3. Aim for an imaginary ball about to enter the hoop from that angle.
4. Aim for an imaginary ball on the other side of the hoop.
5. Aim for the 'magic aiming point' about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a ball width in front of the jaws of the hoop. As long as the hoop is possible, the ball will travel over the 'magic aiming point' from any angle.



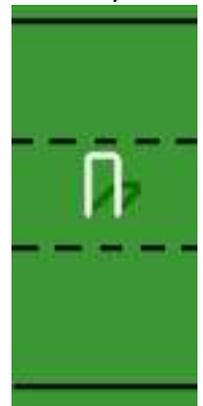
#### Hoop running competition

In pairs, one each side of the hoop, take alternate hoop shots from any distance you choose. Place a ball marker next to your ball before each shot. 10 shots each. The player to score the longest hoop is the winner.

#### Hoop tennis (Figure 5)

This is a great two player game for practicing hoop control. One player each side of the hoop. Place markers 1 foot from the hoop (service line) and 2 yards from the hoop (Baseline). The server plays the 1<sup>st</sup> shot from the service line. Following the serve, each player attempts the hoop from where the ball lays. To stay in the rally, the hoop must be run and the ball must stop before it reaches the opponent's baseline. Score as in tennis – best of 3 games. Change service for each rally.

More experienced players can shorten the baseline distance.



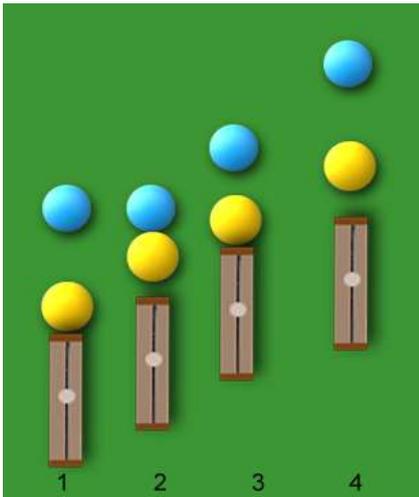
#### Practice Routines

Figure 5

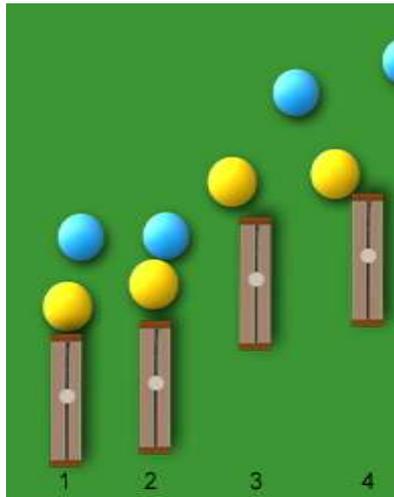
- a. Practise running hoops from a variety of positions. (Players can practise in pairs, one on each side of the hoop.)
- b. Count the number of times a player runs a hoop back and forth. This activity develops control.



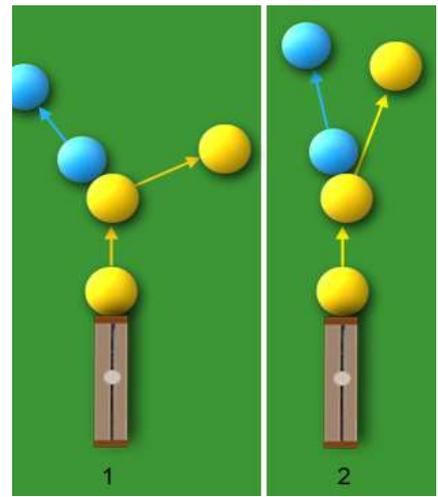
## Double Taps and Crushes – Some Common Faults



1. Striker hits yellow
2. Yellow roquets blue
3. Yellow stops and the mallet catches up with yellow, hitting it again which is a fault
4. Yellow continues to travel forward a *significant* distance



1. Striker hits yellow
  2. Yellow roquets blue
  - 3 & 4. Yellow slows and the mallet catches up with yellow, hitting it again which is a fault.
- After hitting Yellow again, it may travel along an unlikely line of direction.



1. When the two balls start close together (2-3cm or so) then part at about 45° when the roquet is made, it is *probably* a clean shot
2. When the balls start close together (2-3cm or so) but part at less than 45° when the roquet is made, the stroke is *probably* a fault.



Striker attempts to run the hoop with the blue ball



The ball's progress is 'checked' by the hoop leg



The Striker's mallet continues forward...



Striker's mallet catches up with the ball, causing a 2<sup>nd</sup> hit (Fault)



Striker's ball is promoted through the hoop...



Striker's ball completes the hoop but it does not count.



## Jump Shots

### Objective

A jump shot is a single ball stroke used to:

- Jump another ball, a hoop or the peg in order to make a roquet or run a hoop.
- Make a hoop at a sharp angle (because of the forward spin placed on the striker's ball by this stroke).

### Method

- 1) Stalk the ball as in all other single ball strokes. A jump shot will be generated if the usual swing is used but the mallet strikes the ball earlier in the forward swing i.e. before the mallet gets to vertical. Bring feet forward of the usual position to achieve this.
- 2) The feel and body position should be the same as for a roll, That is, well forward so that the angle of the shaft of the mallet is forward from the vertical position.
- 3) The face of the mallet should strike the ball above half height. To gain greater height, the face of the mallet should strike the ball well above half height.
- 4) The stroke must include a large back swing and the forward swing must carry through. The swing should not be hurried or accelerated.
- 5) The body should be kept as still as possible throughout the stroke.

**Note:** The trajectory of the jump is altered by the angle of the shaft of the mallet on impact. A low trajectory is achieved by leaning the shaft of the mallet only slightly forward from the perpendicular position to the ground.



### Practice

Suggestion: This stroke should be practised on hard ground and preferably not on a croquet court to avoid indentations and other damage to the court.

- (A) Off-court practice - Place striker's ball 2 feet behind a ball to be jumped. (Check that no-one is standing in the line of aim)
- (B) On-court practice - Place an impeding ball in a hoop. Jump through hoop without striking the impeding ball.
- (C) Attempt a hoop from an acute angle with a jump shot. Control is easier to maintain when the mallet is held lower down shaft than usual (with more of a *crouch* position)

**Note:** If the above practice is likely to cause damage to the court surface, an off-court hoop should be set up.



# A 13 point game of Golf Croquet (a hand-out for reference)

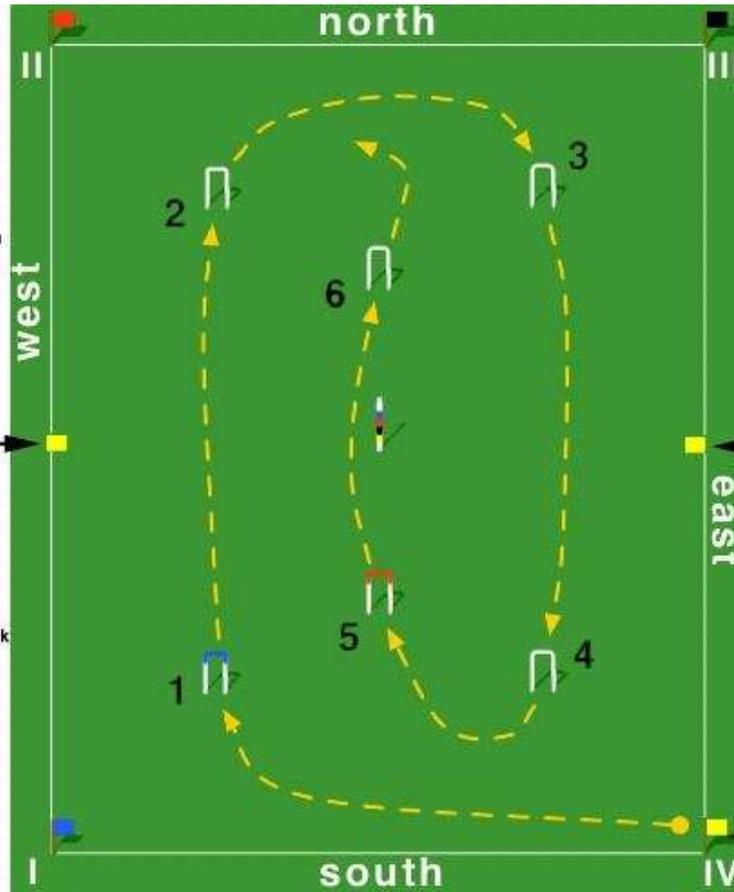
## First 6 hoops

Best of 13 hoop points - first to 7 points wins!

Balls are played in order - blue - red - black - yellow

Off-side penalty spot

Score the hoop before your opponent or knock them away



Everyone contests the same hoop. When the hoop is scored, everyone contests the next hoop in order

Off-side penalty spot

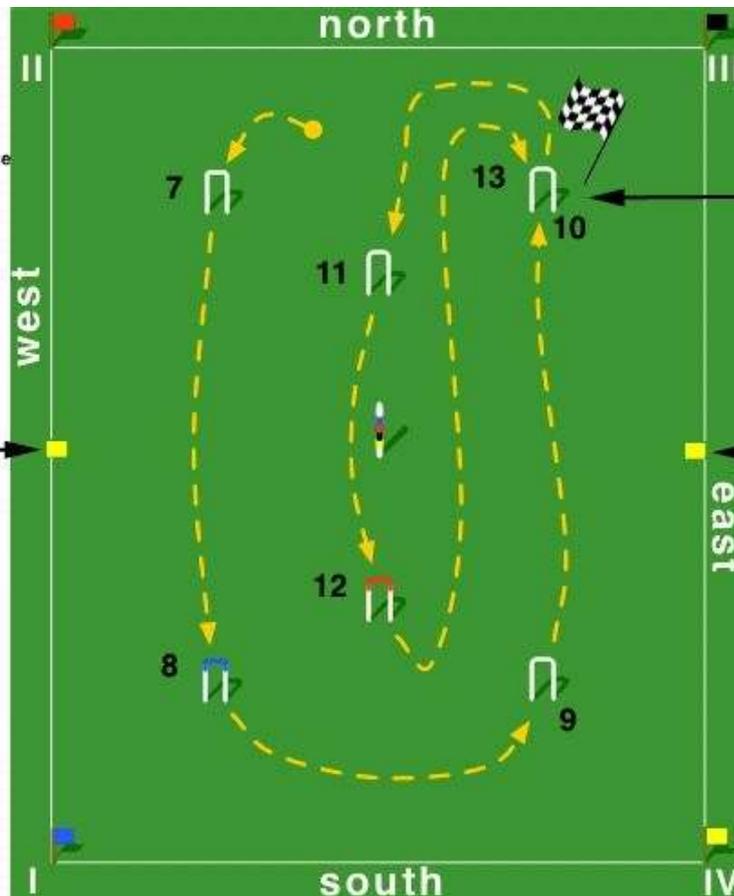
Doubles or singles  
blue partners black  
red partners yellow

START  
within 1 yard  
of corner IV

## Second 6 hoops

The colour sequence is on the centre peg

Off-side penalty spot



If scores are tied after the 12th hoop, hoop 3 is contested again (13th point)

Off-side penalty spot

## Golf Croquet Rules (not all, but enough to play a game!)

1. There are four balls, **blue, red, black** and **yellow**, which must be played in that **order**.
2. The person whose turn it is to play is called the **striker**. A turn consists of just one stroke.
3. In Singles one player uses the blue and black balls, the other red and yellow. In Doubles each player strikes their own ball — with blue partnering black and red partnering yellow.
4. **Toss a** coin to start the game. The winner starts first by striking the blue ball, the next person the red ball, and so on.
5. Each person starts in the court within one yard of corner 4. In succeeding turns you strike your ball from where it lies. The first hoop to be run is hoop 1, in the direction indicated on the diagram.
6. Once someone has run hoop 1 **everyone** then plays to run hoop 2, and so on. The game proceeds in the sequence shown and the **first** side to run **seven** hoops wins.
7. A hoop is run when no part of the ball protrudes beyond the side of the hoop from which it started. A ball may take more than one turn to run a hoop.
8. If a ball other than the striker's ball is hit through the hoop (peeled) by the striker's ball then the hoop counts for that peeled ball, even if the striker's ball also goes through that hoop.
9. Each turn consists of striking the correct ball with the face of the mallet head and with no other part of the mallet. Accidentally touching your ball counts as a strike. When it is your turn you have to take it — you are not allowed to 'pass'.
10. When striking your ball be careful not to touch another ball with your mallet as this constitutes a 'fault'. It is also a fault to hit your own ball more than once — a 'double tap' — or to 'crush' your ball into a hoop or the peg. Great care has to be taken to avoid these faults when your ball is close to an upright of a hoop and at an angle to the opening.
11. If a **fault** is committed the turn ends, no points are scored, and your **opponent can decide** to take his turn from where the balls are or to have them returned to where they were.
12. Even if it's not your turn you must not touch any ball, or let it touch you, or you will lose your next turn. So don't trip over a ball, and watch out for moving balls. They can move very fast! If you do touch a ball your opponent can choose to leave it where it comes to rest or to put it back where it was before.
13. It is important not to play the wrong ball or play out of turn. If this does happen in a **doubles game**, your opponent can choose whether or not to replace the balls or leave them where they are, and choose which ball to restart with. For example: if yellow was played (wrongly) after blue, your opponent can choose to continue with either the black or the blue ball. A hoop run by the wrong ball does not count as a hoop point. Playing the wrong ball in a **singles game** does not incur the same penalty (unless a fault has occurred). The balls are replaced and the player then plays the correct ball. In singles you should stop your opponent from striking the wrong ball before they hit it.
14. When all balls have stopped any ball which has left the court is replaced on the boundary at the place where it went off.
15. After a turn in which a hoop point is scored any ball that is over halfway to the next hoop to be played can be declared **'offside'**, unless it got there as a result of the stroke just played: by it running the hoop or it being peeled through, or by it peeling another ball through that hoop; by an opponent's stroke, for example by the red ball being struck so that it knocks the opponent's blue or black ball beyond halfway to the next hoop; by the striker's ball being deflected off an opponent's ball to put the striker's ball beyond halfway to the next hoop.