

OFFICIAL RULINGS ON THE LAWS OF CROQUET

September 2009 Edition

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SECTION A

INTRODUCTION

1. Principal function of ORLC and responsibility for the Laws of Association Croquet.

1.1 The principal function of the Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet ('ORLC') is to act as the official repository of rulings made by the International Laws Committee ('ILC') with the approval and on behalf of the governing bodies of croquet in Australia, England, New Zealand and the United States of America ('the Four Governing Bodies' or '4GB').

1.2 The ILC consists of four individuals each of whom is nominated by one of the 4GB. At the time of writing, the 4GB have joint responsibility for the administration of the laws of Association Croquet. While it is contemplated that at some point in the future that responsibility might pass to the World Croquet Federation, that step has not yet occurred and would require the unanimous agreement of the 4GB before it could occur.

1.3 The individuals nominated to the ILC are currently:

- Max Hooper (Australian Croquet Association)
- Graeme Roberts (Croquet New Zealand)
- Martyn Selman (United States Croquet Association)
- Ian Vincent (Croquet Association)

They are indebted to Stephen Mulliner, who edited the 2000 Edition of the laws and wrote the initial draft of this document, and to Yvonne Yeates and Ashton Hulme for proof-reading this revised edition

2. Background

2.1 Official Rulings first appeared in 1990 as a result of a decision of an International Laws Meeting held in 1990 in Christchurch, New Zealand. It was agreed that some recent changes made to the Laws had proved to cause as many problems of interpretation as they aimed to solve. It was recognised that questions of laws interpretation would sometimes give rise to differences of opinion. It was therefore desirable that the official interpretation in such cases should be made known.

2.2 Following prompting from members of the Australian Laws Committee in the mid-1990s, it was agreed to produce a new edition of the Laws. The main goals of the 6th Edition were:

- 2.2.1 to improve the organisation and transparency of the Laws;
- 2.2.2 to deal with situations not covered by the 5th Edition;

2.2.3 to simplify the treatment of errors and interference with play; and

2.2.4 to provide a comprehensive Index.

2.3 The 6th Edition was published in August 2000 and came into force from 1 September 2000. Although a key goal has been to make the Laws more transparent so that one reading of the relevant law(s) should be sufficient to answer any given query, it is inevitable that from time to time players and referees will encounter situations for which the Laws do not appear to provide a clear-cut answer. It is hoped that most such cases, when communicated through national laws committees to the ILC, will be shown to be capable of easy resolution and will merit inclusion in ORLC only as examples of how a particular law operates in the relevant circumstances.

2.4 However, it is possible that more serious differences of interpretation will arise which will demand an authoritative ruling on which interpretation is to be followed in future. Such decisions will have the status of Official Rulings and will appear in ORLC. It is for this reason that ORLC is made a mandatory source of reference by Law 55(a).

2.5 Official rulings are given in section C1 below. Draft rulings, which are candidates to become official rulings unless objections are raised to them, are given in section C2. These are intended as guidance as to how the Laws should currently be interpreted and so carry at least as much weight as the commentary. On the other hand, the possible amendments given in section C3, and issues for future discussion in section C4 are speculation as to what may happen in future and should not be used for current interpretation.

2.6 In January, 2008, the ILC proposed a set of amendments to the 6th Edition, to consolidate the rulings that had been made since the 6th Edition came into force, clarify the wording where it was felt to be unclear and introduce some minor changes, mainly simplifications, in the way the game is played. These were adopted by the 4GB and have now taken effect in all of their domains.

3. Additional function

3.1 A further useful function of ORLC is to act as a commentary on the Laws. Croquet players and referees have been familiar with Prichard's Commentary on the Laws of Croquet (revised in 1988 by Bill Lamb) and with Graeme Roberts' Referees Handbook. Both would have required extensive updating to accommodate the 6th Edition and it makes good sense to use ORLC instead which might otherwise be a rather slim volume in its early months and years.

3.2 As suggested above, in the great majority of cases the solution to an issue should be apparent from one reading of the Laws, aided by reference to the comprehensive Index. Nonetheless, there are areas, such as the error laws (Laws 22 to 28), which benefit from fuller explanation..

4. Structure of the Laws

Although the provision of an index should make it easier to find the law on a particular matter, the contents pages still repay study as they reveal the structure of the laws. They are divided into four numbered parts, which are in turn sub-divided into lettered sections.

Part 1 provides an outline of the game, followed by the laws relating to the court and equipment and a set of definitions of terms used throughout the laws.

Part 2 is the core of the laws, giving the laws of ordinary single play. Section 2A describes the game as it should be played; Section 2B deals with errors and Section 2C deals with other forms of interference with play.

Part 3 deals with other forms of play: Advanced, Handicap, Doubles and Shortened games.

Part 4 specifies the conduct of the players and ends with the overriding law, which governs interpretation.

5. Revision timetable

It is intended to revise this document as required in the light of comments received and to deal with any further issues arising from play under the amended Laws. Comments should be sent to one of the representatives named above, or can be e-mailed to the discussion list croquet-laws#nottingham-lists.org.uk.

6. Changes Log

This section gives a log of significant changes since the June 2002 Edition of this document. The ILC is grateful to those who took the trouble to submit comments.

September 2009

Minor corrections to paras 17.4.3, 25.2, 27.6.2, 27.5.4, 33.5, and 43.2.

April 2009

Paragraph A2.5 expanded to state applicability of rulings and other sections of part C.

Draft ruling on Law 15(c) promoted and new draft rulings on Laws 13(b)(1)(E), 27(a), 33(d)(1) and 33(d)(2) added.

List of outstanding issues updated.

Historical references to timing of changes removed throughout part D.

Reference to monitoring of usage of moulded grips deleted from D3.4.2.

Material in D5.1 to D5.4 reordered.

Dubious explanation removed from D6.1.1.

Distinction between weather and its effects removed and example of puddles added to D7.1.

Commentary on Law 13(b) updated to refer to draft ruling and include examples of interference under Law 33.

Introductory paragraph about terminology added to D14.1.

New paragraph D14.2 about ball falling back into a hoop added, with material formerly in D17.1.

Reference to Law 19(b) added to D16.4.

Mention of difficult conditions removed from D19.7.

Commentary on limit of claims expanded in D22.4 and table added as Appendix 1.

Note about previous errors added to D23.2.

Commentary on Law 24 re-written.

Misleading analogy to compound errors removed from D26.1.

Commentary on Law 27(a) extended to cover the case of playing in the knowledge that a ball has been moved for double bankers.

Conditions for end of turn re-written with specific example in D27.5 and D27.6. Commentary on the meaning of “visibly” added to D28.10.

Commentary on distinction between categories of interference revised in D29.4.

Commentary on Law 33(d) extended to refer to draft rulings and other issues.

Commentary on Law 37(e) extended to cover the case of an unnoticed roquet.

March 2008

Revised to take account of the 2008 Amendments to 6th Edition.

Additions to and restructuring of possible changes (section C4)..

Minor clarifications to 4.33 and 13.3.

SECTION B

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL CHANGES TO THE SIXTH EDITION

The amendments proposed in January, 2008, make no major change to the way Croquet has been played since 1961. The minor changes that they make can be summarised as follows:

- a) In court cannons (Law 6(h)). The restriction that one of the balls in a cannon must be a yard-line ball has been dropped.
- b) Foot sliding (Law 28(a)(1)). It is now a fault to deliberately use the foot or leg to guide the mallet.
- c) Causing Damage (28(a)(15)). Liability to being faulted for causing substantial damage to the court with the mallet is now restricted to certain types of stroke, rather than the manner in which the stroke was played.
- d) Interference by Outside Agencies (Laws 31 and 33). Strokes that suffer interference will only be replayed in strictly defined circumstances, and not if the interference could have been anticipated. There is now a right to a replay if misled by the position of a ball that has suffered interference.
- e) Optional replacement of balls after a fault in handicap games (Law 37(h)). The exception for handicap games that was introduced when replacement of balls after a fault was made optional has been removed.
- f) Balls larger than hoops (Laws 35(b), 53(b)). An alternative to Law 35(b), to allow a replay if a ball is found to touch both uprights of a hoop on some axis, has been provided in Law 53(b) for tournament organisers who wish to adopt it.
- g) Restoration of Bisesques (Law 39(a)(3)). An anomaly in the restoration of bisesques after errors has been corrected.
- h) Standard of proof for faults (Law 48(d)). The degree of certainty needed before a fault can be given is now defined.
- i) Impasses (Law 53(f)). Although no change to the Laws has been made, advice has been given about changes to regulations to resolve impasses.
- j) Doubles (Law 40(b)). It has been clarified that a doubles match can start in the absence of one of the players.
- k) Playing when not Entitled (Law 25). The limit of claims for starting a turn prematurely has been increased and better provision made for interleaved turns.

[The changes made by the 6th Edition can be found at the [Introduction to the 6th Edition of the Laws](#).]

SECTION C

1. OFFICIAL RULINGS

Corrections to cross-references The following cross references should be corrected:

In Law 17(c), replace “16(c)(2)(C)” by “16(c)”.

In Law 44(d) insert “44(b)(2),” after “Laws”, and delete “, 44(b)(4)”.

Law 15(c): This is not an exhaustive list of things that may happen after a ball has hit the peg in a stroke in which it is pegged out. If live, it may also be roqueted (in which case the striker's turn will end under Law 4(d)(3)).

2. DRAFT RULINGS

Law 13(b)(1)(E): The words “without specifying which” apply only to the second case, that of declaring a stroke played. After rectifying the error of starting a turn by playing one of his adversary's balls, the striker has no choice and is responsible for the position of the ball he played (under Law 13(b)(1)(D)) and both his balls.

Law 27(a)(1): This clause does not apply to a ball that has been moved to expedite a double-banked game if the striker plays or is about to play a stroke which he believes will not affect the ball in either its lawful or actual position.

Law 33(d)(1): This clause does not apply to strokes started after the interference.

Law 33(d)(2): This clause applies only to interference under Law 33(a), not to interference by natural forces. There is no replay under Law 33(a)(1) if the turn ends under this clause.

3. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The following changes are noted for when the laws are next amended:

- a) change Law 28(a)(6) to bring the definition of a hampered stroke in line with that in 28(a)(15).
- b) To clarify the intended meaning (as indicated in the commentary):

In Law 38, first sentence, replace “became” by “becomes” and “has been” by “is”.

4. ISSUES FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

The following issues have been noted for future consideration by the ILC (but no decisions have been taken on their desirability nor on priority for dealing with them): The specific issues are listed in order of the law concerned.

a) Overall structure and style

1. Shortening and simplification.
2. Gender neutral language.
3. Reduction in number of cross-references.
4. Definition to be given before use of a term.
5. Translatability.
6. Consistency and simplicity of language.
7. Improvements to the index.
8. Incorporation of commentary in published text.
9. Include summary of limit of claims.

b) Specific Issues

1. Metrication and tolerances.
2. Specification of hoop width as gap between ball and hoop.
3. Adjustment of equipment.
4. Ball specifications.
5. Mallet specifications, including treatment of non-bevelled edges.
6. Start and end of turn and game.
7. Extension of striking period to include casting.
8. Redrafting of Law 6(b)(1), to remove the tautology “stationary position”.
9. Elimination of the term “Ball in hand”.
10. Outside Agencies.
11. Replacement of ball with back to court.
12. Wiring when swing impeded by a ball.
13. Re-drafting of Law 14.
14. Whether a ball should become dead (although otherwise remaining in play) when pegged-out.
15. Elimination of the term “Deemed Roquet”.
16. Limits of Claims.
17. Penalties for errors.
18. Multiple Errors and Interaction between Errors and Interferences.
19. Playing in the knowledge that a ball has been moved for double bankers.
20. Elimination of the term “Purport”.
21. Playing with balls not in play, including those from other sets.
22. Include playing a bisque with the SB in the yard-line area under 27(g).
23. Rationalisation of faults.
24. Limit of claims for errors when bisque taken quickly.
25. Doubles with a missing player.
26. Rush or jump peels of hoop 1 in 1 and 3-Back games.
27. Unauthorised advice, particularly when about to commit an error.
28. Harmonisation with rules of Golf Croquet and the USCA game where differences are not fundamental to the structure of either game.
29. Refereeing regulations.
30. Refereeing of close double taps.
31. Review of 2008 amendments (e.g. Impasse regulation, alternative to 35(b), Law 33).

SECTION D

COMMENTARY

The Commentary on any Law should be read with the text of the relevant Law to hand as the text is not repeated in full within the Commentary. The purpose of a Commentary is not to restate the Law in different words. Instead, it is to explain its purpose and underlying principle, using examples when helpful, and to draw attention to any less obvious points.

List of abbreviations

B, R, K and Y: Blue, Red, Black and Yellow Balls

Bob : the player of Blue or Black

Roy: the player of Red or Yellow

CB: croqueted ball

OB: other ball

RB: roqueted ball

SB: striker's ball

ES: erroneous stroke

OR: official ruling

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Section A: An Outline of the Game

1. AN OUTLINE OF THE GAME

1.1 This law is strictly introductory and its provisions are wholly subject to the detailed laws that follow it. It is therefore never correct to justify anything by reference to Law 1 alone if the matter is covered elsewhere. This law does, however, define (in 1(b)) which balls belong to the game and partner each other (balls belonging to a double banked game are outside agencies, under Law 7) and (in 1(d)) the Striker, as the player whose turn it is, and the Striker's Ball. The other player is referred to as the Adversary, though this is only implicitly defined in Law 4(e). Law 1(e) also presents a succinct summary of the structure of the game and the striker's entitlements at the start of every turn.

1.2 Note that extra strokes are earned one at a time (see Law 1(e)). Making a roquet earns the striker the right only to play a croquet stroke. If he does that successfully, then he earns the right to play a continuation stroke. The statement that making a roquet earns the right to two extra strokes is strictly incorrect.

Section B: The Court and Equipment

2. THE COURT

2.1 This is straightforward. Law 2(a) deals with the standard court and Law 2(b) with variations and imperfections. The final sentence of Law 2(b)(1) states that the actual boundary is an abstraction defined by the physical marking on the court. It is a compromise between the obvious, but impractical, definitions of being a straight line between the corners or of being the ragged edge of the actual marking. "Vicinity" is left to the judgement of the referee, but will typically be taken as the length of the straight edge used to test whether a ball is on or off the court; the definition is intended to regularise the use of such a test and requires that small areas where the marking material has missed or spilled should be ignored. If mallets are placed either side of the ball, it is better to place them on the inner side of the boundary and look to see if the ball protrudes between them, rather than place them over the white line and look for a gap.

2.2 Law 2(b)(2) deals with cord (string) boundaries and invokes Law 35(d) if such a boundary is disturbed. The situation envisaged in Law 2(b)(3) is where three balls have been replaced at different points on the yard-line and the striker, intending to roquet the middle one, finds that the one behind it is visible. Once adjusted, balls moved into court are not replaced, so to avoid anomalies it is better to move either the striker's ball or one that needs to be moved towards the boundary instead.

2.3 Players should check that they are happy with the locations of the hoops and the peg and the boundaries before they start a game because Law 2(b)(5) deems that they will have accepted them as correct by starting the game. Only gross errors ('material discrepancies') such as a missing peg or hoop or a location wrong by a substantial amount may then be remedied under Law 55. Contrast this with the treatment of a misaligned peg or hoop (see Law 3(a)(3) and 3(b)(3)).

3. EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES

3.1 The peg (Law 3(a))

3.1.1 The peg extension is not part of the peg for the purposes of scoring a peg point but neither is it an outside agency when attached to the peg (see Law 3(a)(2)).

3.1.2 It is commonplace for a peg in soft ground or in a large peg hole to be knocked away from the vertical by the impact of a ball. This causes a breach of Law 3(a)(1), which requires the peg to be vertical at all times. Accordingly either player may request that a leaning peg be straightened at any time.

3.1.3 However, Law 3(a)(3) directs that the striker is not allowed to gain an advantage from having the peg straightened. Thus, if the striker lays an imperfect cross-peg and notices that straightening the peg would improve the cross-peg, the referee should check how much of each ball can be seen by the other before straightening the peg. He must then adjust the position of either (or both) balls to ensure that they have the same size of target as before. The referee should also be aware of the positions of the uninvolved balls and should ensure that adjusting either of the cross-pegged balls does not inadvertently create or destroy a wired position.

3.1.4 The reference to the striker is deliberate. The adversary is able to require that the peg be straightened to his advantage provided that he does so when he is still the adversary. In practice, this will occur only when he sees the striker has laid a cross-peg when the peg is leaning. However, if he delays calling attention to the leaning peg until he has become the striker, he will still be able to have the peg straightened but the balls will be adjusted as necessary to ensure that he gains no advantage thereby. Thus he will not be able to engineer a larger target or a wired position that did not exist before the peg was straightened. If a wiring lift is claimed, the test must be carried out before the peg is straightened.

3.1.5 The reference to Law 53(a) and the Regulations for Tournaments allows the regulations to specify that requests to have a peg corrected should not be made in time-limited games unless the correction will be material to the course of the game. This prevents Law 3(a)(3) being abused by an unscrupulous player who wishes to use up time.

3.2 The hoops (Law 3(b))

3.2.1 Note the reference in Law 3(b)(1) to Law 53(b) for tournament and match play to permit the use of hoops narrower than 3¾ inches.

3.2.2 Note the tolerance of +/- 1/2 inch in the height of the hoop, which is to allow hoops to be firmed up by knocking them into the ground as a tournament proceeds. However, a player is entitled to expect that hoops will be set so that their carrots do not protrude significantly above the ground, as otherwise they would not comply with the requirements for the uprights in Law 3(b)(1).

3.2.3 Only the striker is entitled to ask that a misaligned hoop be corrected. Misalignment usually means that it is leaning towards the north or south but may include leaning to the east or west or being twisted in the ground. However, the striker is not allowed to gain any advantage from the option that the law grants. Any wiring test or tests whether a ball has scored a hoop point or is in the jaws must be carried out before a hoop is adjusted. If the striker asks for a hoop to be correctly aligned after playing a hoop approach, the position of the striker's ball should be adjusted to ensure that he faces a hoop stroke of equal difficulty after the hoop has been corrected.

3.2.4 If a hoop is found to be too narrow it must reset (see Laws 35(b) and 53(b) if it was so narrow that a ball could stick in it). Similarly, it must be reset if it is too wide or loose (as the Law requires it to be firmly

fixed). Note that players should not adjust, nor stamp or knock in loose hoops themselves, but should at least consult their opponent and preferably (particularly if there is another game on the lawn that might be affected) a referee.

3.3 The balls (Law 3(c))

3.3.1 It is important that the balls in a set should have effectively identical rebound characteristics and the Tournament Referee should, if possible, check that this is so before a tournament starts, at least to the extent of ensuring that sets with different characteristics have not got mixed up.

3.3.2 Temporary removal of a ball between strokes is permitted and does not constitute interference (under Law 33) provided that the striker is informed if someone else is removing the ball, the position of the ball is accurately marked beforehand and the ball is carefully replaced.

3.3.3 Reasonable pressure may be used to hold a ball in position, but not to the extent that a depression is formed that might affect a stroke played out of it. To ensure that balls are touching for a croquet stroke, it may be better to rub up a nap on the grass. If necessary, grass clippings or other loose material may be used to hold a ball in position on bad ground for any stroke, not just croquet strokes, but they should be cleared away afterwards.

3.3.4 Note that the striker may gain no advantage by temporary removal when preparing for a peel because he must ensure that the rotational alignment of the intended peelee is preserved. In practice, the striker should avoid temporary removal of the peelee unless really necessary. There is no need to place a mark on the peelee to indicate its rotational alignment (although its position must obviously be carefully marked before it is lifted as stated in 3.3.2 above). It should just be lifted carefully and not rotated while it is being held or wiped.

3.4 The mallet (Law 3(e))

3.4.1 The basic requirements are that a mallet must have essentially identical playing characteristics irrespective of which end of the head is used, must not offer a significant playing advantage over a traditional all-wood mallet and must not carry artificial aids (see Law 3(e)(1) to (4)). This rules out mallets with different materials or weightings in the construction of each end of the head, off-centre shafts, shafts that are not vertical below the top grip or mallets adorned with laser gun-sights, mirrors and any other products of fertile imaginations and long winter evenings. It is implicit in the definition that the head has only one pair of end-faces, thus use of the sides, or a hexagonal head, is not permitted. Heads with an I-shaped cross-section are permitted under the current law.

3.4.2 Croquet has followed golf in banning grips or shafts that are moulded to the shape of the player's hands (see Law 3(e)(2)). This requirement is relaxed for the benefit of bona fide disabled players provided that they gain no advantage over a player without the relevant disability using a normal shaft (see Law 3(e)(5)).

3.4.3 Mallets may be changed between turns but not within a turn unless the original mallet has suffered damage affecting use. The governing principle is that the striker should not gain any advantage. Law 55 may occasionally be needed. An adversary suddenly realised that his mallet was being used, accidentally and without permission, by the striker who was in the middle of a promising break. He was indignant and demanded the return of his property forthwith. Common sense, via Law 55, indicated that the mallet should immediately be returned, but that the striker should be permitted to continue with his own mallet, as it is clear that the striker would not gain an advantage by the change.

Section C: Definitions

4. START AND END OF A GAME AND TURN

4.1 A game starts when the first stroke is played (see Law 5(e)). In time-limited games, the clock should start when the mallet hits the ball. Note that, in doubles, a player can declare that a stroke has been played by his absent partner.

4.2 A game does not end until the players have both quit the court (or started another game on it) and agreed which side has won. Note that there is no requirement that the agreement be correct. Of course, almost always, the players do agree correctly who has won but time-limited games can occasionally give rise to confusion between players who cannot add up. If the players agree incorrectly that A has won and quit the court, the game has ended with that result. In the even rarer case when each player quits the court in the

belief that he has won (or lost) the game, no agreement has been reached and the game has not ended. If the time-limit has expired, no further play will be possible unless the scores were actually level (subject to the possibility of time being restored if an interference has occurred and Law 53(g)(2)(B) applies) but the game will end only when the players have worked out the true result. Reporting the result to the manager will cause the confusion to be discovered.

4.3 Note that one turn starts as soon as the preceding turn ends and that there are two distinct definitions of when that moment occurs.

4.3.1 In the normal course of events (see Law 4(e)(1)), a turn ends when the last stroke of the turn has been played and the balls and clips have then been correctly positioned (e.g. after replacing balls on the yard-line and placing clips on the correct hoops). This definition does not depend on whether the striker has quitted the court.

4.3.2 The second definition (see Law 4(e)(2)) deals with two other cases. The first is where the striker incorrectly thinks that his turn has ended (e.g. he has forgotten that he is entitled to another stroke). This definition of end of turn requires both that the striker quits the court in the belief that his turn has ended (not just to visit the pavilion!) and that the adversary then plays a stroke (see Law 4(e)(2)(A)). The order is important.

Example: Consider a case where Roy takes off with R too hard but makes a glancing roquet on B in the stroke before R leaves the court. Roy assumes wrongly that his turn has ended and replaces R on the yard-line. Before Roy has had time to quit the court, the impatient Bob steps on and roquets Y with K. If Roy now quits the court but realises his mistake before he plays the first stroke of his next turn, Roy can forestall Bob and resume his own turn after replacing all the balls correctly under Law 25(a).

4.3.3 The second case is where the striker volunteers permission for or, having been asked, allows his adversary to get on with the game while he goes to retrieve a ball that must be replaced on the yard-line. In contrast, the adversary has no grounds for grievance if, having assumed that the striker will not mind rather than having been given permission, he hits a long roquet and is then required by the striker to replay. However, if the players have come to a tacit understanding that permission is implicitly granted then the ex-striker cannot withdraw it retrospectively.

4.3.4 For handicap play, note that Law 4(e) must be modified as specified in Law 37(c)(4). The striker does not need to replace the clips before taking a bisque. He should replace the balls, in particular the striker's ball if it is in the yard-line area, but if he does not the bisque is validly taken, under Law 37(e).

4.3.5 In time limited games, tournament regulations specify that, for the sole purpose of determining who is in play when time expires, a turn ends and the next turn simultaneously begins when the striker plays the last stroke of his turn. This is to give a more precise definition than Law 4(e) (which may depend on when a ball comes to rest) and avoids an undignified scramble to replace balls and clips.

5. A STROKE AND THE STRIKING PERIOD

5.1 The term "stroke" has a wide meaning. The core of it is the action of hitting a ball, but it also extends to the entitlement to do so, as part of a turn, and the consequences of so doing. The term "striking period" refers to the period during which a fault can be committed. A stroke and striking period start at the same time, but either can end before the other.

5.2 Although it is normally obvious which ball the striker is intending to hit, a referee should ask him to nominate which he is intending to play if two balls are very close together and fault him if he hits the other. In Law 5(d,e), "the ball" refers to the one the striker is intending to hit, whereas in Law 5(h), "a ball" means any ball, and "the ball" means the one disturbed.

5.3 There are two policy reasons why a "stroke" in which the striker aims to hit a ball that does not belong to his game is regarded as a nullity, rather than a case of playing the wrong ball. The first is that, in the common case where a double-banked ball is being addressed, it is desirable that the adversary should be able to forestall, to prevent disruption to the other game, and the players in the other game cannot reasonably be prevented from drawing attention to the irregularity! The second is that it seems reasonable that colour blind players should not be penalised if they are confused by the presence of additional balls. The legal reason is that only a ball in play may influence the game (Law 6(a)); other balls are outside agencies (Law 7(a)).

5.4 If the striker wants to leave the balls where they are, he can do so by simply declaring that he will do so, which ends his turn. Technically, he should declare that he is playing a specific ball by leaving it where it lies, but the adversary is entitled to take a simple utterance (the word “deem” may well be used for historical reasons) or even a wave of the hand, as an irrevocable declaration (unless the striker can plausibly suggest that he was instead inviting his opponent to join him for tea!). If the striker does not indicate which of his two balls he has played, he becomes responsible for the position of both of them (see Law 13(b)(1)(E)). A declaration is instantaneous and has no striking period.

5.5 It is lawful to play a stroke before the previous stroke has ended unless the outcome of either stroke could be affected. This is most likely to happen when the striker has played a stop shot and plays the continuation stroke before the croqueted ball has come to rest. If the continuation stroke is played as a rush that sends the roqueted ball near to the still-moving croqueted ball, the adversary would strictly be entitled to forestall and demand that the stroke be replayed under Law 55.

5.6 Note that accidentally hitting the striker's ball during casting over the ball does not constitute a stroke. A stroke and the striking period do not begin until the mallet has passed the SB on the final backswing (see Law 5(d)). Such an accidental contact is covered by Law 5(h), which summarises the combined effect of Laws 33(c), 33(d)(3), 27(a) and 27(i).

5.7 A stroke is played if the striker accidentally fails to make contact with the SB (plays an air shot) (see Law 5(e)(2)(C)). The term 'miss' includes cases where the mallet fails to reach the ball, as well as those where it goes past the side or over the top of it. However, a stroke is not played if the striker deliberately checks or diverts the mallet and succeeds in avoiding hitting any ball with it or committing a fault (see Law 5(e)(1)). It is up to the referee to decide which applies.

5.7.1 'Stops or diverts the mallet' should be interpreted as a continuous process, which must start before the striker is aware that he has missed, or will irrevocably miss, the SB, and which ends when he regains control of his mallet and stance at the end of his truncated swing.

5.7.2 After a stroke has been annulled in this way, the striker is not required to repeat the stroke he was attempting, but can change his mind about what stroke to play, including which ball to play if he has not already elected one. It is as though he had never started the annulled stroke.

5.8 There are two possible endings for the striking period (but note that the faults covered by Laws 28(a)(1), (2) and (3) (types of illegal contact between body and mallet) cannot be committed if they occur after the end of the swing used to play the stroke).

5.8.1 Should the striker play a second stroke without quitting the stance he used to play the previous stroke, perhaps when approaching and running a hoop from very close range, the striking period for the first stroke ends when the first stroke ends or when the second stroke starts, whichever is the earlier.

5.8.3 In all other cases, the traditional rule applies that the striking period ends when the striker 'quits his stance under control'. This is a matter for the referee to decide and is intended to penalise a striker who plays a stroke in such a way that a ball is likely to rebound onto his mallet or clothing and, to avoid this, jumps out of the way and lands or falls on yet another ball, whilst not penalising accidental disturbance of a ball that is irrelevant to the stroke. There are three cases where the striker is not "under control":

- (a) jumping to avoid a moving ball;
- (b) playing in an off balance position and falling out of the stance;
- (c) disturbing a ball he was trying to avoid when leaving a stance restricted (or changed) because of the presence of another ball.

5.9 Law 5(h) specifically allows the time honoured practice of “trundling”: using a mallet to move a ball into position for a stroke.

6. STATES OF A BALL

6.1 Ball in Play (Law 6(a))

The words “prior to being played” are intended to mean that a ball placed on the court only becomes in play if a stroke is played with it. Thus if Roy puts both Yellow and Red on the court at the start of the 1st turn of the game and plays Red, then only Red becomes a ball in play, even if he did not remove Yellow.

6.2 Ball at rest (Law 6(b))

6.2.1 A ball becomes a ball at rest when it appears to stop moving. Physicists may tell us that all matter is in a state of constant motion but in croquet this test depends on the human eye. Because croquet is mainly played outdoors on grass, it is possible for balls to move apparently spontaneously, sometimes considerable distances, under the influence of gravity, wind or compressed grass blades. However, in most cases, the final position of a ball is not of critical importance and so the test need not be applied with excessive attention to micro-movements. In short, the striker can normally play his next stroke as soon as the SB appears to have stopped moving on fairly casual inspection.

6.2.2 However, there are occasions when more care is needed and they occur when a ball may have come to rest in a 'critical position', as defined in Law 6(d). This is any position to which a minor change could materially affect future play, such as determining if a turn ends or a point is scored or a ball is wired.

6.2.3 In fact, the Laws create two categories of critical position, namely 'critical but not testable' and 'critical and testable'. The latter are listed in Law 48(c)(4) and, in relation to whether a ball has come to rest, are restricted to cases when a ball may or may not:

- (a) have scored a hoop point; or
- (b) be in position to score a hoop point (or, by analogy, affect whether a hoop and/or roquet may be made); or
- (c) be off the court.

(Entitlement to a wiring lift, which is also mentioned in 48(c)(4), is not applicable as the test can only be made at the start of a turn under Law 13(e)(1)).

These testable positions have to be agreed by the players or tested by a referee and the ball is deemed not to come to rest until the test has been carried out. Critical but not testable positions are subject to the less onerous requirement that the position of the relevant ball must appear to remain unchanged for at least 5 seconds. If it moves after that, it is replaced.

To see how this should be applied in practice, consider the following situations:

6.2.3.1 On a fast lawn with a significant slope, the striker's ball comes up the slope, then rolls straight back down again to end some distance away. Although physics would tell us that its velocity must have instantaneously fallen to zero when it reversed direction, this is not sufficient to satisfy Law 6(b)(4) so it is not replaced in the higher position.

6.2.3.2 The striker's ball just staggers through its hoop and appears to stop having clearly run it. However, the striker notices that it almost immediately starts to creep back and does so for 15 seconds, by which time it is back in the jaws. It is not replaced as it had not remained stationary in a critical position for the required 5 seconds.

6.2.3.3 The striker's ball just staggers through its hoop, apparently stopping in a position where the striker thinks it has run the hoop, but is not certain. He asks his adversary to have a look (as there is no referee in sight), but before he can get there the ball has fallen back into the hoop. It was in a critical position which needed a test which had not yet been conducted, so it is not replaced.

6.2.3.4 As in 6.2.3.3, but this time the striker is more confident and, out of courtesy, asks the adversary if he wants to look. The adversary is happy to trust the striker's judgement, so resumes reading. While sizing up his next shot, the ball then falls back into the hoop. In this case, the earlier position had been agreed, so it is deemed to have come to rest and is replaced there under Law 33(c).

6.2.3.5 The striker's ball just staggers through its hoop, apparently stopping in a position in which it has clearly run it, but leaving an awkward hampered shot. The striker starts to examine his options, but the ball rolls back into the jaws. A referee should ask him whether the ball had stopped moving and, if so, whether 5 seconds had elapsed since then. The ball should only be replaced in the position where it had run the hoop if the striker is confident of both.

6.2.3.6 The striker's ball just staggers through its hoop, apparently stopping in a position in which it has clearly run it, but leaving an awkward hampered shot. The striker summons a referee to watch the shot, but before the referee arrives the ball rolls back into the jaws. Although the ball was in a critical position, as a small change to its position would affect the difficulty of the hampered shot, it had been stationary for long

enough. Furthermore, it did not need to be tested, as it had clearly run the hoop, so it is replaced in the position it was in before the referee was called.

6.2.3.7 After a poor hoop stroke, Roy replays his swing, then replaces his clip on the hoop and walks off the court. Bob comes on and looks to see whether the ball can run the hoop next time, only to find that it is now through. After checking with Roy that it had moved since he last saw it, the ball is replaced where Roy believed it had stopped, and Bob plays the first stroke of his turn, as the situation is the same as (e): the ball was in a position that was critical but did not need to be tested. Law 4(e)(1) had therefore been satisfied and Roy's turn had ended.

6.3 Ball in hand (see Law 6(c))

6.3.1 Note that a ball in hand is also an outside agency, but also that the striker's ball only becomes in hand when it comes to rest after making a roquet, so it can validly move or even peel another ball before doing so. Contrast that with going off the lawn, when it immediately becomes in hand and an outside agency.

6.3.2 Law 6(c)(4) was amended in 2008 to ensure that failing to take croquet when required to do is covered, as intended, by Law 27(f), rather than being treated as a case of striking an outside agency!

6.4 Live and dead balls (see Law 6(e))

6.4.1 It is lawful to cause the SB to hit a dead ball but that does not constitute a roquet and no further stroke is earned as a result, however the SB can go on to roquet a live ball or score a point. Obviously, if the SB makes a roquet on a live ball and, in the same stroke, hits a dead ball, the contact with the dead ball does not deprive the striker of the croquet stroke he earned by roqueting the live ball.

6.4.2 If the SB comes to rest in contact with a dead ball after a croquet stroke, the striker is entitled to play the SB as it lies in the continuation stroke. This includes playing away from the dead ball or playing into it so that the stroke has the appearance of a croquet stroke. What the striker must not do is to adjust the SB around the dead ball before playing the stroke. This would constitute the error of purporting to take croquet from a dead ball (see Law 27(d)) and would end the turn. This fate does not preclude the striker from temporarily removing either under Law 3(c)(2) to wipe it, but he would be well advised to have a good reason for doing so (such as a large blob of mud on the ball) and to inform the adversary first.

6.4.3 Note that, because of the wording of 6(e) and Law 27(c)(3), if a player roquets red but then purports to take croquet from blue, blue becomes dead and he remains alive on red.

6.5 Groups of balls (Law 6(h))

6.5.1 A cannon (see Law 19(b)) depends on the existence of a group of balls anywhere on the court. Usually, at least one of them will be on the yard-line, but this is not a requirement.

6.5.2 Note also that the SB cannot be used to bridge a gap between two balls that are one ball diameter or less apart. This is because Law 19(a) requires the SB to be placed in contact with the roqueted ball and no other.

6.5.3 Nor can the moveable cannon ball be used to bridge a gap to create a 4-ball cannon where there is a 3-ball group with a fourth ball close, but not in contact with it. The cannon ball can legally be placed in contact with the 4th ball when constructing the 3-ball cannon, but a 4-ball group does not result because Law 19(b) only refers to placing the SB before determining the size of the group, and thus the fourth ball may not be moved.

7. OUTSIDE AGENCIES

7.1 Weather is not an outside agency in croquet in order to prevent claims for replays of missed roquets due to gusts of wind or squalls of rain. Similarly, puddles are not outside agencies, but extreme events such as flash floods and dollops of snow falling onto the court (admittedly rare in a summer game but not unknown to hardy croquet players in Scotland) would be. However, it is possible for a ball at rest to be moved by gravity, wind or a combination of the two. Such a ball must be replaced (see Laws 33(b) and 33(c)).

7.2 Loose impediments are also not outside agencies in croquet to prevent claims for replays of missed roquets due to deflections caused by pebbles, twigs or acorns on the court surface. The exceptional circumstances referred to in Law 7(b) would cover a case where a handful of pebbles is thrown onto the court, perhaps hitting the striker after he has started the stroke or interfering with the path of the striker's ball during the stroke.

7.3 Note that Law 7(c) imposes a duty on the striker to remove an outside agency if it might affect play. If he does not, he will be prevented from replaying the stroke under Law 33(a)(1) if a collision does occur and must defer to his opponent if there is a disagreement as to where the balls should be placed. The reasoning is that by leaving the object in place the striker is acknowledging that it was not on his intended line or that a collision dealt with under Law 33(a)(2) would not have a material effect on the game.

PART 2: ORDINARY SINGLES PLAY

Section A: General Laws of Play

8. THE START OF A GAME

8.1 Choices of lead or colours may not be revoked once made.

8.2 Bisesques may be played before all the balls have been played into the game (see Law 37(c)(2)) although it will only seldom be tactically wise to do so.

8.3 In the first four ordinary (i.e. non-bisque) turns, the balls must be played into the game from the baulk-lines. The only exception relates to advanced play when the player of the second or third turn scores 4-back and so concedes a contact. The contact may be taken from any ball that has been played into the game and not pegged out (see Law 36(d)).

8.4 See Law 26(b) for the situation when a player cannot play the correct ball and the game must be re-started. Note this does not occur if the balls are played into the game in the order R (wrong), B (wrong), Y (wrong), because the limit of claims for the error in the 1st turn has not been reached, whether or not K is wrongly played. If the errors are discovered before a correct ball is played, the error in the 1st turn is rectified by removing all the balls and placing B or K in baulk, then Roy plays the 2nd turn.

9. ELECTION OF STRIKER'S BALL

9.1 There are only two ways of electing the SB, namely lifting it (under Laws 13 or 36) or playing a stroke with it. Likewise, no election of the RB takes place until a stroke is played (see Laws 16(d) and 19(c)).

9.2 Lifting a ball only serves to elect it as the SB if three conditions are met, namely:

- (a) that it is a ball of the striker's side; and
- (b) it is not in contact with another ball (this applies to Law 36 only; no wiring lift would be available under Law 13(a)); and
- (c) that the striker is entitled to a lift under either Laws 13 or 36 (see Law 9(b)(1)).

9.3 Lifting an enemy ball or lifting a ball of one's own side in the absence of a lift is an interference and Law 33 applies. If the mistake is not noticed before a stroke is played, it will result in an error being committed under either Law 26 (wrong ball) or Law 27(h) (lifting a ball when not entitled to do so).

9.4 A ball may be 'lifted' by moving it in any way that differs from playing a stroke. Trundling using the side of the mallet is lawful (but may not do the varnish much good!). So is trundling using the face of the mallet but it is only safe to do if the action is obviously different from that used to play a stroke.

10. BALL OFF THE COURT

10.1 The boundary should be imagined as an invisible vertical wall that touches the inside of the boundary marking. It does not matter if the lawn surface is not flat at the relevant point.

10.2 A ball goes off the court as soon as it touches the imaginary wall and it does not matter if it then rolls back inside the boundary. In rare cases, the adversary may claim that a ball approached the boundary, either perpendicularly or at a shallow angle, and then fell back or curved back into court before coming to rest. If the ball is found to be only just in court when tested, this claim may have merit. However, it should only be granted if the same effect can be demonstrated repeatedly in tests conducted by the referee.

10.3 It should be noted that a ball that hits a corner peg should not necessarily be placed on the corner spot. If the ball hits the corner peg a glancing blow, it should be withdrawn back along its line of travel to find the point at which it first touched the inner edge of the boundary marking. The extreme case would occur when a ball on the Corner 1 spot is struck towards Corner 2 and just touches the out-court side of the southern corner peg. This ball should be placed 13 feet south of Corner 2!

10.4 The striker should always take care to observe precisely where balls go off the court. If there is a possibility of a cannon, such as shooting from B-baulk at two East boundary balls, the striker should have the outcome watched, usually by asking the adversary to stand near the target balls.

11. BALL IN THE YARD-LINE AREA

If the SB comes to rest in the yard-line area, it only becomes a ball in hand at the end of the last stroke of the turn. This can lead to confusion in handicap play where some players are unsure whether the SB has to be placed on the yard-line before playing the first stroke of the bisque turn. The answer is that the bisque turn is a separate turn and the SB must be placed on the yard-line before the new turn can be started.

12. PLACEMENT OF A BALL OFF THE COURT OR IN THE YARD-LINE AREA

12.1 Law 12(b) refers to direct and indirect interference with replacement. Direct interference occurs when a ball (X) that has gone off the court (or come to rest in the yard-line area) cannot be placed on the point on the yard-line closest to where it went off the court (or lay inside the yard-line area) because of the presence of another ball (Y) on or close to the yard-line. X must therefore be placed in contact with Y on either side as the striker chooses.

12.2 Indirect interference occurs when a third ball (Z) lies sufficiently close to Y to prevent the striker replacing X on that side of Y. He is now entitled to place X on the yard-line in contact with either Y or Z.

12.3 There are no special provisions for replacing balls in or near corners. Hence, if Roy shoots with R from the end of A-baulk at B in C4 and misses, he will normally place R on the W side of B to minimise the target for Bob. If Bob now likewise shoots with K at R and misses, he is entitled to place K in contact with either B or R. Bob may be expected to place K in contact with R so that he only gives a single-ball target for Y.

13. WIRING LIFT

13.1 A ball that is in contact with another ball at the start of a turn is not entitled to a lift as, if the striker chooses to play with it, he not only can but must take croquet. (See Laws 13(a), 16(c) and 18(b)).

13.2 Although a ball lifted must usually be played from baulk, the striker can take croquet immediately from a ball that it could touch if placed on a baulk-line, in which case he can place his ball anywhere in contact with it to take croquet.

13.3 Note that 13(b)(1)(E) ensures that the striker is always responsible for the position of at least one of his balls after playing a turn. Note the draft ruling that the words “without specifying which” apply only to the case of declaring a stroke played, not to playing an adversary's ball at the start of a turn. Thus if a player does the latter, he remains or becomes responsible for the position of both his balls. Note also that a player is always responsible for the position of a ball replaced following rectification of an error committed by him (see Law 13(b)(1)(D)).

13.4 However, he does not become (but does remain, if he was previously) responsible for the position of a ball replaced following the correction of an interference (Law 13(b)(2)). The reason is that the striker is often an innocent victim of interference and/or correction of the interference involves deeming play not to have occurred. To understand the meaning of “does not become”, two examples of interference under Law 33 may be useful:

13.4.1 if the striker plays a roll stroke in which the croquetted ball collides with a ball from a double-banked game, it must be placed where it would otherwise have come to rest under Law 33(a)(2). The act of playing the stroke caused the striker to become responsible for its position (Law 13(b)(1)(B)), and the subsequent interference and placement does not alter that.

13.4.2 if a high wind (or even the striker, outside the striking period) causes a ball not otherwise involved in the stroke to move, it must be replaced. Again, the interference does not change responsibility: if the

opponent was responsible for the position of the ball before the interference, the opponent remains so; if the striker was, then he still is.

13.5 A ball is wired if it has to pass through a hoop to hit the target ball, no matter how close to the hoop it is. It does not matter that it might be able to miss the target ball on either side without touching a wire (see the reference to 'including the jaws' in Law 13(c)(1)).

13.6 However, the swing of the mallet is not impeded simply because part of the head would enter the jaws of a hoop before contacting the relevant ball in order to drive it freely towards the target ball (see the reference to 'excluding the jaws' in Law 13(c)(2)).

13.7 If the striker claims that a ball is wired by virtue of an impeded swing, the referee must ensure that the position is tested with the mallet the claimant was using in the turn before the turn in which the allegedly wired ball was positioned by the claimant's adversary (see Law 13(d)). This removes the temptation to carry a second, wide-faced mallet for use only in these situations.

13.8 Note that in the marginal case where the referee can detect no curvature in the line joining the relevant ball and the two test balls, the striker is entitled to a lift (see Law 13(e)(2)).

13.9 Law 13(f) provides explicit guidance as to the three consequences of lifting a ball in accordance with Law 13(a)(2), namely that:

13.9.1 such lifting constitutes a valid and irrevocable election of the SB for that turn under Law 9(b)(1);

13.9.2 the striker is obliged to play the ball from an unoccupied point on either baulk-line (or take croquet from a ball it could touch when on a baulk-line) and may not play it from where it originally lay (unless that happened to be on a baulk-line); and

13.9.3 the striker remains free to change the position from which he wishes to play the SB until he actually plays a stroke.

14. HOOP POINT

14.1 Terminology

14.1.1 Although a ball may lawfully pass through any of the hoops on the court, it is only by passing through the one that is its next in the sequence shown in Diagram 1, in the correct direction, that scores a point and allows the ball to score its next one. This is known as “running a hoop in order”, which is sometimes abbreviated to just “running”.

14.2 Ball falling back

14.2.1 A depression or “Rabbit run” can sometimes develop in the ground between the uprights of a hoop, so that a ball clears the playing side, or even the jaws, but then falls back so that it ends the stroke in a position where it is protruding from the playing side. If so, it has not run the hoop. This is the case even if it hits a ball that was some distance behind the hoop. If the ball it hit was live, a roquet will have been made but the hoop will not have been scored.

14.3 Ball in a hoop

14.3.1 Note that a ball halfway through its hoop in order does not always lose the right to complete the running in a subsequent stroke simply because it becomes a ball in hand. Laws 6(c)(1) to (3) list all the instances in which a ball can become a ball in hand but only five are relevant to the situation of a ball half-way through a hoop (Laws 6(c)(1)(A), (C) and (D) and Laws 6(c)(2)(A) and (B)).

14.3.2 Only Law 6(c)(1)(C) (placing the ball for a croquet stroke as specified in Law 14(d)(4)(A)) and Law 6(c)(2)(A) (lifting the ball under Law 13 or 36 as specified in Law 14(d)(4)(B)) cause it to lose its right to complete the running. Note that 14(d)(4)(A) carefully prevents the striker trying to keep position to run the hoop with the striker's ball (or third or fourth ball in a cannon) by playing a croquet stroke from where the balls lie.

14.3.3 The prohibition on completing the running, after becoming in hand for one of these reasons, is lifted if the ball starts to run the hoop again (otherwise the ball could never run the hoop!).

14.3.4 If a ball in a hoop becomes in hand for the other reasons, namely temporary removal under Law 3(c)(2) (see Law 6(c)(1)(A)) or replacement following rectification of an error or correction of an interference (see Law 6(c)(1)(D)), then it can complete the running from the position in which it is replaced.

14.4 Ball entering back of a hoop

14.4.1 If a ball enters a hoop in order from the non-playing side, it cannot score the hoop point in that stroke, even if it reaches a point on the playing side where it is visibly clear of the jaws before returning through the hoop and finally coming to rest at a point where it has apparently scored the hoop. The governing principles are that dynamic situations are too difficult to judge reliably and that all such situations should be treated alike.

14.4.2 If a ball enters its hoop in order from the non-playing side and comes to rest within the jaws but in a position where it does not break the plane of the non-playing side (see the first illustration in Diagram 3 in the Laws) then it can score the hoop point in a subsequent stroke. This is analogous to the situation where the striker roquets a ball into the jaws of the hoop and the SB, when placed for the croquet stroke, is within the jaws but does not break the plane of the non-playing side so that the SB can score the hoop point in the croquet stroke or a subsequent stroke.

14.5 Ball kicked through a hoop

Law 14(e) refers to a ball being peeled as a consequence of a stroke. This means that if the striker accidentally kicks a ball through a hoop while taking up his stance and this was noticed before the ball was subsequently affected by play, the point is not scored and the ball must be replaced under Law 33(c). If this was not noticed before the ball was affected by play, it is treated under Law 27(i) as though the position to which it had been kicked was lawful, but this change of lawful position was not a consequence of a stroke, so the ball must begin to run the hoop again.

15. PEG POINT

15.1 If the SB is a rover, it may cause another rover to be pegged out through the agency of another ball (see Law 15(a)(2)). The same principle applies in Law 15(b)(4). However, if the SB is not a rover and causes a rover to hit the peg or to hit another rover ball onto the peg, that ball is not pegged out in either situation.

15.2 A ball that is pegged out does not disappear at the moment of pegging out. It remains a ball in play until the end of that stroke (see Laws 6(a) and 15(c)). It is therefore able to cause other balls to move and score points as a consequence of that stroke.

15.3 It is now lawful to delay removing a pegged out ball from the court if the striker is about to peg out the striker's ball in the following stroke and the pegged out ball is unlikely to interfere. This legitimises a common practice.

16. ROQUET

16.1 All hoop and roquet situations are now dealt with in Law 17. Hence Law 16(b) is now concerned solely with actual roquet situations which do not involve the SB passing through its hoop in order.

16.2 Law 16(b) is phrased deliberately widely to encompass all forms of contact between the SB and a live ball. Thus a roquet is made if:

16.2.1 the SB croquets a ball into a live ball which then rebounds off a hoop and hits the SB; or

16.2.2 the SB croquets a ball onto the peg so that a ball resting against the peg is propelled into the path of the SB.

16.3 Law 16(c) There are five situations in which a roquet may be deemed to be made :

16.3.1 the most obvious is when the striker starts a turn by electing a ball that is already in contact with another ball (and does not choose to lift it if he is entitled to do so under Law 36). Note that he has no choice but to take croquet if he does so elect, and that Laws 18(b) and 19(a,d) give him power to arrange the balls in anticipation of doing so, but that 19(c) does not commit him until the stroke is played.

16.3.2 almost as obvious is when the striker starts a turn by lifting a ball and lawfully placing it in contact with another ball. In the start of game and Law 13 and Law 36 lift situations, the other ball must either be on a baulk-line or so close to it that a ball placed on the baulk-line can touch it. In practice, it is usually tactically better to create a rush rather than taking croquet immediately. In the Law 36 contact situation, the other ball can be anywhere on the lawn.

16.3.3 the next most common situation is when the SB runs a hoop off the boundary so that it must therefore be placed on the yard-line under Law 12. If the hoop has been run at an angle, it is possible for the SB to have left the court directly behind a yard-line (or near yard-line) ball and must therefore be placed in contact with it.

16.3.4 the fourth situation is a fairly rare bird and occurs when the striker plays an Irish peel (a croquet stroke in which both the SB and the CB pass through a hoop) or a half-jump through a hoop and the SB comes to rest in contact with the CB or the ball that was half-jumped.

16.3.5 the fifth and last situation is a much rarer bird and occurs when the striker plays a croquet stroke which, either accidentally or by design, causes the croqueted ball to hit a third ball (X) so that X leaves the court or enters the yard-line area and must be placed on the yard-line under Law 12. If the SB has come to rest, almost certainly unintentionally, on or near the yard-line, it is possible that X will have to be placed in contact with it.

16.4 Law 16(d), together with Law 19(b), are the laws that make a group of balls important.

16.4.1 Once a group has been formed and a roquet deemed to be made on one ball in the group, it may instead be deemed to be made on any other live ball in the group. This can provide the striker with valuable tactical flexibility, particularly in setting up a peeling break. The striker must proceed by playing a cannon (see Law 19(b)).

Example: B is on the corner spot of Corner 1 and K is in contact with it on the West boundary. Roy has a lift and places R in contact with B to create a 3-ball group. He may now treat K as the RB if he wishes.

16.4.2 Note that this right does not apply in the case of an actual roquet, when the striker rushes a live ball behind another live ball on the yard-line. Although a 3-ball group will be formed when the RB is placed on the yard-line in contact with the other ball and the SB is placed in contact with the RB, the striker cannot change the identity of the RB. However, he must proceed by playing a cannon (see Law 19(b)) and will gain the usual tactical advantages that accrue therefrom.

17. HOOP AND ROQUET SITUATIONS

17.1 This law provides a comprehensive treatment of all cases where the SB hits a ball in the same stroke as it completes the running of a hoop in order. Completing the running is defined in Law 14(c), which requires that the ball not only leaves the playing side of the hoop but does not re-enter it and remain there when it comes to rest. Thus Law 17 does not cover a case in which the SB passes through its hoop, hits a ball, and then rolls back into a position where it has not run it (see 14.2.1 for this case).

Providing that the SB does complete the running, there are five situations (assuming that there is only one OB):

17.2 OB well behind the hoop

17.2.1 If the SB completes the running of a hoop and then hits a ball, it is a simple case of hoop followed by actual roquet (see Law 17(a)). It obviously does not matter whether the RB was 6 inches beyond the hoop or 25 yards beyond.

17.3 OB just behind the hoop

17.3.1 If the SB starts to run the hoop, then hits a ball which was clear of the non-playing side before the start of the stroke, and then completes the running, strict logic would demand that a roquet was made, but no hoop was scored, if the OB was live before the stroke started.

17.3.2 However, the physical situation described above conceals a difficult marginal case, namely where the OB is only just less than a ball diameter beyond the plane of the playing side and the hoop stroke is played with jump. How can a referee be certain that the back of the SB did not clear the plane of the playing side (and thus complete the running) before the front of the SB made its first contact with the OB?

17.3.3 In order to avoid presenting referees with such a difficult dynamic question, the policy of the law is to simplify matters in favour of the striker. Hence, provided that the OB is clear of the plane of the non-playing side before the stroke starts (which is a static question that a referee can determine before the stroke is played) and the SB finally completes the running (which is a static question that a referee can determine after the stroke has ended), the contact between SB and OB is deemed to occur after the hoop point has been scored. Hence, the analysis is deemed to be identical to 17.2 above.

17.4 Live OB in a hoop

17.4.1 If the OB is in the jaws of the hoop, i.e. not clear of the plane of the non-playing side, when the stroke starts, the striker may wish to jump it in order to score the hoop point. This can present the same dynamic question as detailed in 17.3.2, namely whether the first contact between SB and OB occurred before or after the SB completed the running.

17.4.2 If the first contact occurs before the SB completes the running and the OB was live, the analysis would be roquet and no hoop. If the first contact occurred afterwards, the analysis would be hoop followed by roquet. How is a referee able to tell what goes on between the hoop uprights?

17.4.3 The policy of the law is again to simplify matters by deeming that all such contacts with a live ball, irrespective of when they occur, are treated as roquet and no hoop (see Law 17(b)(1)).

17.5 Dead OB in a hoop

17.5.1 If the OB is dead in the situation discussed in 17.4, a similar issue arises. The policy adopted is again to simplify matters by deeming that all contacts during the stroke with a dead ball in the jaws are ignored so that the analysis is hoop and no roquet (see Law 17(b)(2)).

17.5.2 This gives the striker a tactical bonus when trying to complete a straight rover peel. If the peelee sticks in rover, the striker can half-jump it in the knowledge that any subsequent contacts between SB and peelee, which happen quite often, do not count as roquets and hence will not impede his chances of pegging out the peelee.

17.5.3 The only exception is when the SB and OB come to rest in contact with each other when a roquet is deemed to have been made (see Law 16(c) referred to by Law 17(c)).

17.6 Irish peel

17.6.1 The last situation is the Irish peel position. Here the striker plays a croquet stroke (usually but not always a roll) in which both SB and CB are sent through the hoop in the same stroke. The CB is treated in the same way as a dead OB (see 17.5 above) and no later contacts between SB and CB in the stroke count as a roquet (see Law 17(b)(3)).

17.6.2 The same exception applies if the SB and CB come to rest in contact (see Law 16(c) referred to by Law 17(c)).

17.6.3 The same analysis applies in the infrequent case of a continuation stroke played with the SB and OB in contact. This usually occurs after a failed Irish peel when the striker has had the good fortune to have the SB end up in contact with the CB and with the centres of the balls lined up so that another Irish peel can be played which will send the SB through the hoop. In such cases the striker must not make the fatal error of adjusting the SB in contact with the CB before playing the continuation stroke as this is penalized by end of turn under Law 27(d).

17.7 Multiple OBs

17.7.1 If the SB hits more than one OB in the stroke and 17(b)(1) applies to one and 17(a) to the other, then the former overrides the latter and the hoop is not scored. If only one of 17(a) or 17(b) apply, then the ball roqueted is determined by laws Law 16(b)(1) and (2).

18. CONSEQUENCES OF A ROQUET

This law is declaratory and needs no comment, other than to note that 18(b) applies in anticipation of the stroke being played in the case of roquets deemed at the start of a turn under Law 16(c), where the striker is not committed to his election of the SB and RB until he actually plays the stroke.

19. PLACING BALLS FOR A CROQUET STROKE

19.1 Note the requirement in Law 19(a) and (b) that balls must be placed on the ground. This was introduced many years ago. A leading Australian player had rushed a ball into hoop 1 when the only remaining live ball was near hoop 2. Nothing daunted, he carefully balanced the SB on top of the RB and played it from there. The authorities obviously took a dim view of such ingenuity.

19.2 Law 19(b) sets out the correct procedure for playing a cannon. The position of the RB is sacred and it should not be moved. If it is moved, it must be replaced. Note that the SB and the 3rd ball ('cannon ball')

must not touch. If they do, the striker commits the error of purporting to take croquet from the 3rd ball. Usually it will be live, Law 27(e) will apply and the striker will be required to replay correctly. But should it happen to be dead, the turn ends under Law 27(d). The same applies in a 4-ball cannon, although there is nothing to stop the striker placing the 4th ball in contact with both the RB and the 3rd ball if he wishes. Normally, the 4th ball is placed in contact with the 3rd ball so that it will travel towards the next hoop when the stroke is played. Note that the striker cannot create a cannon, or include a 4th ball, by placing balls to “bridge the gap” (see 6.5.2,3).

19.3 If the striker creates a cannon in which the third ball is dead, the stroke should be watched by a referee. With most arrangements of the balls, the striker may hit the striker's ball a second time, or maintain contact with it, after it has hit the dead ball. That would be a fault, since the contact with the dead ball would not be a roquet (see the discussion at 28.11). With some arrangements, such a fault would be unavoidable. If the striker does not call a referee, the adversary should exercise his right to do so.

19.4 Law 19(c) restates the principle shared with Law 9(b) and Law 16(d), namely that there is no election of any ball until a stroke is played. The only exception relates to the possibility of the election of the SB by lifting a ball under Law 9(b)(1).

19.5 Law 19(d) is required to make sense of Laws 19(a) and (b) in situations where the first stroke of a turn is a croquet stroke or a cannon. This is a consequence of the principle referred to in 19.3 because, before the first stroke of the turn is played, no election of any ball has occurred.

19.6 Note the requirement in Law 3(c)(4) that, when attempting a peel, the rotational alignment of the RB must be preserved. This prevents the striker from minimising pull when using balls with noticeable unmilled spots on the surface. However, it is lawful for the striker to seek to minimise pull by aligning the SB so that its least milled spot is in contact with the RB.

19.7 Law 3(c)(3) allows for the use of reasonable pressure on the balls to get them to stay in contact for the croquet stroke, but this does not extend to creating depressions that will affect the subsequent motion of the balls. A mallet may be used to assist in placing the SB, which may be helpful for infirm players. Raising a nap on the turf to apply the necessary lateral force, or making a slight depression at a point between where the two balls are to be placed, is usually more effective than treading on the balls in their intended position. Law 3(c)(3) permits the use of grass clippings or similar material to ensure that SB and RB remain in contact while the croquet stroke is played. Similar material is that which will hold the balls in position without affecting the course of either ball.

20. CROQUET STROKE

This law needs no comment, save to draw attention to Law 20(a) which clarifies the correct usage of the expression 'taking croquet'. It is correct to refer to the SB taking croquet from a particular ball or to refer to the striker taking croquet. It is incorrect to refer to the SB taking croquet without specifying the identity of the croquetted ball. It is acceptable to refer to the striker taking croquet with [X] from [Y].

21. CONTINUATION STROKE

This law gives separate treatment to two different concepts, namely the requirement to take croquet immediately, if a roquet is made in either a hoop stroke or a croquet stroke, and the non-cumulative nature of continuation strokes.

Section B: Errors in Play

22. GENERAL PRINCIPLES (ERRORS)

22.1 The distinction between errors and interferences should be understood. Errors are mistakes that involve playing a stroke incorrectly in some way; a fault is a specific type of error. Interferences are irregularities or mistakes of a different nature (see 29 for a fuller analysis of interferences).

22.2 If an error is discovered within its limit of claims, the consequence is that it is 'rectified'. This means that the game is restored to its state immediately before the first stroke in error was played. This entails replacing the balls and the clips. Whether the striker remains in play or his turn ends depends on the nature of

the error. Note the exception in relation to faults, but not other errors, where the adversary can elect to have the balls left as they lay after the fault was committed (see 28.19 below).

22.3 When replacing balls to rectify an error, note the distinction in Law 22(d)(1) between faults, which require exact replacement, and other errors, which may leave the offender with a choice. Note also that the lawful position may be some distance from where the ball was actually played, e.g. if the striker sends the croqueted ball off in a cannon, but does not notice until after playing a croquet stroke which he was not entitled to, the SB must be placed where it came to rest after the cannon, rather than in contact with the ball it roqueted (because of the exceptions cited in Laws 18(a)(3,4)). The striker can choose any position that a ball could have been at the start of the stroke, not just the turn, thus if he plays an adversary's ball when entitled to a lift he can place what should have been the striker's ball in baulk.

22.4 The limit of claims for an error is given in the law governing that error and is usually introduced by the words "and the error is discovered before". The exception is the miscellaneous cases of playing with a ball misplaced dealt with under Law 27(i), which cannot be rectified once the stroke has been played. A table summarising the various limits has been produced: in general, the greater the disruption to the normal course of the game caused by making an error, the longer the limit of claims and greater the penalty if the error is discovered in time.

22.4.1 For example, suppose Red roquets Black, but places Red in contact with Blue and purports to play a croquet stroke. If Blue is a dead ball (i.e. Red has already taken croquet from it in this turn since last running a hoop), then the limit of claims is when Bob plays the first stroke of his next turn (Law 27(d)). On the other hand, if Blue is live, then the error is dealt with under Law 27(e) and the limit of claims is two further strokes of Roy's turn. The stroke in which the error was made is ignored in counting those. If Red goes on to roquet Yellow (which would be the first further stroke) and the error is then discovered, the error should be rectified, but once Red then takes croquet from Yellow (the second further stroke), it is too late to do so. If Blue went off when Red purported to take croquet from it, Roy's turn would end before he could play two further strokes, so under Law 22(e) the limit of claims would be the first stroke of Bob's turn (or of Roy's bisque if he took one).

22.5 Law 22(f)(1) lays down the principle that, if an error is not discovered until after its limit of claims, it is ignored and so the balls remain where they are and any hoops scored count. There are three important exceptions:

22.5.1 This only applies to hoops run in order. Hoops run out of order are not scored, so if a clip is wrongly advanced it must be corrected at any time before the end of the game. See 25.8 and 25.9 for examples of this.

22.5.2 The reference to Law 40(d) expresses a fundamental principle of doubles play that each player should play his own ball and that a strong player should not be able to mask his partner's weaknesses by scoring points directly for his ball. In handicap doubles play, the same principle operates to limit the number of peels to four. Accordingly, if he should play his partner's ball in error and thereby appear to score a point in order for that ball or to score a fifth peel in handicap play, these apparent points are ignored if the error is discovered at any time before the end of the game.

22.5.3 Law 22(f)(2) states that a peg point may not be scored for any ball when striking an enemy ball. This prevents Bob, when playing R, a rover, from pegging it out by hitting it onto the peg or from pegging out B, also a rover, in what he thinks is a croquet stroke. If this form of wrong ball is committed and is discovered at any time before the end of the game, Law 30 applies and the game is restored to its position before the unlawful peg out occurred. This will also allow rectification of the wrong ball error that led to the peg-out.

22.6 Law 22(g) confirms the common sense point that the earliest irregularity, error or interference, discovered together, is dealt with. As of 2008, it covers all interferences.

23. FORESTALLING PLAY

23.1 Definition

23.1.1 Law 23(a) provides a definition designed to provide an objective test of whether or not the adversary has been successful in forestalling. The definition contains three significant elements:

23.1.2 The adversary must be acting in the discharge of his duties as a referee, usually to inform the striker that he has committed an error or interference or that he is about to play a questionable stroke without having

it watched. If he merely wishes to draw the striker's attention to the physical attractions of the local scenery, human or otherwise, he is not forestalling and the striker will not offend Law 32 if he ignores him.

23.1.3 The request need not begin with the words 'Please stop play' and it is more usual to begin with the striker's name. The striker should get short shrift from a referee if he argues that he was entitled to ignore the calling of his name because that in itself was not a request to cease play.

23.1.4 The request must be made loudly enough to be heard by a striker with normal hearing. It will therefore depend on the physical circumstances but not on the abilities of the striker. More volume will be required in a gale or under the flight-path of a low-flying jet but not because the striker is hard of hearing. It may still be necessary to run onto the court and stand in front of a stone-deaf player to get him to stop play but the adversary is entitled to ask that play be taken back to where he would have been able to forestall an unhandicapped striker by normal means.

23.2 When not to forestall (1)

Law 23(b) sets out the fatal errors that policy demands should NOT be forestalled in advance. These are purporting to take croquet from a dead ball (Law 27(d)), attempting to run a wrong hoop (which is likely to lead to a breach of Law 25) and playing a wrong ball (Law 26). The reason for the policy is to avoid bad blood because, if the adversary was under the normal duty to forestall in advance but failed to do so, the reason could either be genuine failure to notice or deliberate blindness so as not to warn the striker and thus gain the innings. Human nature being what it is, some strikers would assume the less honourable reason and relationships would be strained. The prohibition on forestalling when a fatal error may be imminent exists even if a minor error has occurred. It applies only to these unconditionally fatal errors, not to other errors, even if the striker's turn may end for some other reason if they are left unforestalled. The prohibition does not apply if a fatal error has already occurred, nor if the striker is about to play when not entitled to do so, e.g. after running the wrong hoop.

23.3 When not to forestall (2)

Law 23(d) governs the timing of the forestalling request. The policy is that the adversary should interrupt the striker between strokes so that there is no danger of putting him off. In particular, there should be no profit to the adversary in forestalling half-way through a stroke for trivial reasons, such as a ball unconnected with the stroke being misplaced by 1 mm. In such circumstances, if the striker is so affected by the interruption that he sticks in a hoop, he is likely to get a replay under Law 34(a). However, Law 23(d) does admit of emergencies, such as realising that an important limit of claims will expire if the mallet hits the ball or that the striker is about to be hit from another game. Then you can bellow 'X, stop!' fortissimo without reservations.

23.4 When to forestall

Law 23(c) sets out when the adversary is obliged to forestall, subject of course to Law 23(b) (see 23.2 above) and, as to timing, to Law 23(d) (see 23.3 above):

- (a) in order to have a questionable stroke watched by a referee;
- (b) to warn the striker that an interference or non-fatal error is about to occur;
- (c) to warn the striker that he has not played all the strokes to which he is entitled, typically when he appears to be unaware that he has made a roquet or that he is entitled to a continuation stroke; and
- (d) to ensure that the clips are properly placed.

23.5 Why forestall

The policy reason for requiring the adversary to forestall in other circumstances, notwithstanding that it may be to his disadvantage (see Law 48(b)), is that both players have a duty to ensure that the game is played according to the Laws and it is generally easier, and less likely to cause disputes, to sort out problems before, or as soon as possible after, they arise, rather than some time later.

24. COMPOUND ERRORS

24.1 Law 24(a) states what should happen if more than one error is made.

24.1.1 Law 24(a)(1) deals with the case of multiple errors in a single stroke and means that the lowest numbered, of the error laws (Laws 25-28) that cover the situation, is the only one that should be applied.

Thus, for example, if Roy plays Blue, a wrong ball (Law 26), in a stroke in which he also commits a fault (Law 28), only the wrong ball law is applied and Bob has no choice as to whether the error is rectified.

24.1.2 However, if the first error law to apply is one of Laws 27(e-i) and a fault is committed in that stroke, the position is more complicated. Suppose Roy correctly took off with Red from Yellow, which was on the yard-line, at the start of his turn, intending to get a rush on Blue, which was by a distant hoop. While placing Yellow back on the yard-line, he failed to notice that Red hit Blue in the stroke, before ending in a hampered position near the hoop. He attempted to roquet Blue (again), but committed a fault. Two errors have been made in that stroke and, under Law 24(a)(1), the only law that should be applied is Law 27(f), which comes before Law 28. Therefore Red is placed anywhere in contact with Blue and Bob cannot have the balls left where they ended up, as he could have done if it had just been a fault. However, Law 27(f) goes on to say that we must look at Law 4(d), which in turn means that Law 28 applies after all to end Roy's turn.

24.1.3 Law 24(a)(2) deals with the case of errors being made in different strokes. For example, suppose Roy, correctly playing Red, attempts a slightly hampered stroke, trying to roquet Yellow. He doesn't think it needs to be watched, so he makes the roquet, but then plays Yellow in the croquet stroke. Bob, from the other end of the court, notices the wrong ball and forestalls. At this point, Roy began to have doubts about his previous stroke, and asks a referee who had been watching. The referee stated that it was indeed a fault, under a clause of Law 28 that Roy was only dimly aware of. Although Law 26 (wrong ball) is the lower numbered law, it is Law 28 that applies in this case as that error occurred in the previous stroke, so Bob has a choice of whether the balls are replaced to the hampered position or left where they ended after the roquet.

24.2 Law 24(b) modifies the effect of Law 24(a)(2), which would otherwise mean that the earlier error was dealt with even though it was discovered after its limit of claims. Thus in the example in 24.1.3, if the wrong ball had not been noticed until Roy had played a continuation stroke, it would be too late to rectify the fault and Yellow would be replaced where it was roqueted to, and Red would be placed anywhere in contact with Yellow.

25. PLAYING WHEN NOT ENTITLED

25.1 Law 25(a). This law avoids the use of the terms “striker” and “adversary”, as these can be very confusing when someone is playing when not entitled. Playing when not entitled means playing when it is the other side's turn to play (as opposed to playing with the wrong ball or taking croquet without previously making a roquet, which are dealt with by Laws 26 and 27).

25.2 There are two common cases. The first is that a player plays too many strokes in a turn, usually because they carry on after running a hoop out of order, but possibly because they have failed to notice that they sent a ball off in a croquet stroke. In this case, providing the error is noticed before the first stroke to be played by the other side, any points scored in the excess strokes are cancelled and the balls are replaced in their lawful position at the end of the last valid stroke. The opponent then starts his turn (unless the offender takes a bisque).

25.3 The second case is that a player starts playing before his opponent has finished tidying up the balls and clips at the end of his turn (and no permission has been granted under Law 4(e)(2)(B)). In this case, the balls are again replaced and points cancelled, but it will be the offender who plays once the non-offender has tidied up (unless the non-offender takes a bisque), and the limit of claims is the start of the non-offender's next turn.

25.4 Things get more complex in the rarer cases of interleaved “turns”. These are usually the result of one player being called away, but can occur if a player fails to notice that their opponent has made a roquet. It is to cover these cases that Law 25(a)(2) specifies that only some balls should be replaced.

25.5 Playing after the opponent has forestalled play is not treated as an error. Instead it is a form of interference with the game by the striker and is dealt with under Law 32. Note that it is quite possible that, once the matter has been settled, the striker will be able to resume his innings and replay the stroke or strokes that he played after he was forestalled. There is no limit of claims specified for this interference, but a referee acting under Law 55 would be likely to rule by analogy with that for Law 25.

25.6 Note that running a hoop out of order is not itself an error. The stroke stands, but does not score a point or earn a continuation stroke. It is the continuation stroke and any subsequent strokes in the break that are in error.

25.7 If the error is not discovered until after the limit of claims, it is ignored and any points made in order for any ball during the strokes in error are counted (as specified in Law 22(f)). The reason for this is to avoid serious disruption to the game if the error comes to light (possibly because of some unguarded comment by a spectator) many turns later.

25.8 However, this does not extend to points claimed out of order, which are cancelled if the error is discovered at any time before the end of the game. Thus if a break, apparently from 1-Back to Peg, was made with Red, which included a straight peel of Yellow through Penultimate, but it was later found that Red had missed out 3-Back, the peel on Yellow stands, but the Red clip goes back to 3-Back. The opponent may be entitled to a replay under Law 31(a)(1) if he was misled by Red's clip being on Peg rather than 3-Back.

25.9 Where a Striker re-runs a hoop he has already run and the error is not noticed until after the start of his opponent's next turn, any such re-run hoops are ignored, and all hoops that are in sequence under Law 1(c) with properly run hoops are validly run. Thus if, in a 22pt game starting at hoop 3, Blue ran hoops 3, 4, 1, 2, 3,4,5 and 6, and then realised the error when Red went round in the correct order, Blue's clip remains on 1-Back, as 5 was in order after he first ran 4.

26. PLAYING A WRONG BALL

26.1 Law 26(a)(1) deals with the basic error. The limit of claims is the first stroke of the adversary's next turn in all cases where the adversary plays a correct ball. The additional wording 'before the first stroke of the next turn to be started by playing a correct ball' is designed to cover cases when both players get confused and play an enemy ball for a number of turns. Then, discovery of such a sequence within the limit of claims of the last such error results in the game being taken back to its last lawful position.

26.2 Law 26(b) covers a sequence of play (wrong-correct-correct) to which Law 26(a)(1) does not apply yet which leaves the player of the fourth turn unable to play a lawful stroke because both balls of his side have already been played into the game. The only remedy is to restart the game and restore any bisques that may have been played (see Law 39(a)(2)). See 8.4 for a related example where 26(b) does not apply.

26.3 Law 26(c) provides a pragmatic solution when the players accidentally exchange colours from the start of the game and do not realise their error until after the first stroke of the fifth turn - perhaps not until one is about to win. It makes more sense to endorse the swap and let the players carry on.

26.4 Note the point made at 5.2 above, that striking a ball that is not in play does not count as a stroke, and thus is not an error under Law 26. The laws currently do not deal with this explicitly (other than as interference under Law 33(c)), but this is one of the items scheduled for consideration in the next revision. The ruling used for the 2008 World Championship was:

“If the striker's ball goes off the lawn and the striker retrieves a ball from another game and plays that, this is not playing a wrong ball under the terms of Law 26. It does not matter what colour the retrieved ball may be. If the striker does not retrieve the correct ball, he or she is playing an outside agency. Strokes following this mistake are null and void once the mistake is discovered. Play must therefore revert to the point when the outside agency was first played, and the striker must resume the turn from there with the correct ball.”

27. PLAYING WHEN A BALL IS MISPLACED

27.1 General

27.1.1 Unlike errors under the previous law, playing a wrong ball, or the faults in the next law, these errors are not (with the exception of 27(d)) in themselves fatal.

27.1.2 No error can be committed under this law unless the striker actually plays a stroke with a ball misplaced. A ball can become misplaced either as the result of uncorrected interference, or by a player failing to place it in a lawful position when required to do so, or moving it when not entitled to do so. Law 27(a) requires the adversary to forestall (unless the striker is about to commit a fatal error, see Law 23(b)) if he observes that the striker is about to commit such an error, as it is easier to sort things out before rather than afterwards, then goes on to state how the remaining sub-laws should be applied if the error is not prevented. However, this law (even if taken in combination with Law 22(b), which prohibits deliberately making an error) is not intended to prevent the striker playing in the knowledge that a ball of his game, that

is irrelevant to his intended stroke, has been removed to allow a double-banked game to proceed (see the draft ruling to this effect).

27.1.3 Note that Law 27 only applies to misplacement that occurred before the start of a stroke. If interference occurs during a stroke, Law 33 applies to that stroke (but Law 27 will apply to subsequent strokes if the interference is not noticed and the affected balls have not been moved in the course of play).

27.1.4 Note also that Law 31(a)(2) may entitle the striker to replay a stroke which would otherwise be an error under Law 27, if the striker was misled by the position of a ball that had suffered interference, or been moved to avoid it.

27.1.5 However, in the case where the incoming striker finds two, typically yard-line, balls in a different position (touching or just apart) than his adversary thought he had left them in, and takes croquet or a rush accordingly, the interaction between Laws 27 and 31 leads to uncertainty. It might be impossible to tell whether the adversary misplaced them, interfered with them after placing them correctly, or they subsequently moved apart. Problems will be avoided if the player whose turn has ended tells the incoming striker whether or not the balls should be in contact or, failing which, the incoming striker queries the position, but, if not, Law 55 should be invoked to ensure that neither player is seriously disadvantaged by the breakdown in communication.

27.2 Law 27(b)

27.2.1 Law 27(b) tackles situations where balls accidentally fall into contact or fall apart just before a stroke. Now the striker's intent is taken into account to determine the appropriate treatment of the stroke in such circumstances. Thus, if the SB and the CB move apart as the croquet stroke is being played, the nature of the stroke does not change and the laws applicable to croquet strokes still apply, including the requirement that the striker must move or shake the CB. If the balls part sufficiently in a croquet stroke so that the mallet visibly hits the SB more than once, a fault is still committed, but not if the stroke is merely noisy. This may seem harsh if the failure to shake was genuinely the result of the balls falling apart, but if it were not a fault then a striker who committed it could always claim that the balls had fallen apart, and the referee would have no way of knowing. The latest research suggests that a parting of 2 mm or less will NOT lead to a double tap.

27.3 Law 27(c)

27.3.1 Law 27(c) defines the term, 'purporting to take croquet'. Purporting to do something means giving the appearance of doing something without actually doing it. Taking croquet involves the SB and the RB as required by Law 20. Taking croquet from the wrong ball is a contradiction in terms because, if the RB is not involved, one is not taking croquet. Hence the need for the term as one may 'purport' to take croquet from anything. However, 27(c)(3) dictates that a purported croquet stroke is to be treated like a real one (so, for example, the turn ends if either ball goes off the lawn, and the purportedly croqueted ball becomes dead).

27.4 Law 27(d)

27.4.1 Law 27(d) deals with the first of three mutually exclusive errors (the others are dealt with in Law 27(e) and (f)) and covers the fatal error of purporting to take croquet from a dead ball. The striker can gain a significant advantage if he takes croquet twice from the same ball between hoops, such as being able to rescue a much delayed peeling break. What is worse, the error may well not be noticed until long after the normal two stroke limit of claims. Justice can only be done if the limit of claims is extended to the first stroke of the adversary's next turn. This in turn requires that the error be made fatal as otherwise the unscrupulous would be tempted to 'remember' such an error many strokes ago when confronted with the imminent demise of a break.

27.4.2 Since the error is made only if the stroke is played with the balls misplaced, the striker can recover if he incorrectly moves the SB before playing a continuation stroke when it is in contact with another ball. He should notify the adversary of the problem, replace the SB accurately where it was at the end of the previous stroke and get his adversary's agreement that the replacement is satisfactory. Similarly, in the rare case where a ball in the yard-line area is placed in contact with the SB before a continuation stroke is played, no error is committed (provided that the SB is left in the position where it came to rest), as no ball is misplaced.

27.5 Law 27(e)

27.5.1 Law 27(e) covers both 'taking croquet from the wrong ball' and 'taking croquet when not entitled to' and is limited to live ball situations. It applies whenever the striker has made a roquet and then purported to

take croquet from a live ball other than the RB. Note that Law 25 applies if the striker is not entitled to play a stroke at all.

27.5.2 If the error is discovered before the LOC, it is rectified so the balls and clips will be replaced in their lawful positions before the first stroke in error. In addition, the stroke or strokes in error must be analysed to see if a turn-ending event occurred. If it did, the striker's turn ends, leaving the balls in that position, otherwise he is entitled to continue his turn by playing a lawful stroke. Thus if the ball struck in the purported croquet stroke, or the following continuation stroke, was a wrong ball, or the striker had previously run a wrong hoop and was not entitled to play at all, he is not shielded from the consequences of those errors by committing this more minor one.

27.5.2.1 To spell this out, suppose Roy, correctly playing Red at the start of his turn, roqueted Blue (in what we will call stroke 1), but then took croquet (strictly, purported to take croquet) with Red from Black instead of Blue (in stroke 2). . Stroke 1 was lawful and stroke 2 is the first stroke in error. If the error is discovered before any further stroke has been played, Roy's turn will end if, in stroke 2:

- (a) either Red or Black was sent off the court as specified in Law 20 (Law 4(d)(2)); or
- (b) Red, being already a rover, hit the peg (Law 4(d)(3)) (subject to Law 38 in handicap games); or
- (c) Red, being already a rover, hit another rover which then hit the peg (Law 4(d)(3)); or
- (d) a fault was committed including failing to shake Black (Law 4(d)(7))

27.5.2.2 If the error is not discovered immediately, but Roy plays a further stroke (stroke3, the second stroke in error) and the error is then discovered before any more strokes are played, Roy's turn will end:

- (a) if any of the reasons listed in 27.5.2.1 applied to stroke 2; or
- (b) if Red made a roquet in stroke 2 and took croquet in stroke 3, if any of the reasons listed in 27.5.2.1 applied to stroke 3; or
- (c) if Red did not make a roquet in stroke 2, it failed to make a roquet or score a hoop point in order for Red in stroke 3 (Law 4(d)(1)); or
- (d) if Red, being already a rover, hit the peg in stroke 3 (Law 4(d)(3)) (subject to Law 38 in handicap games); or
- (e) if Red, being already a rover, hit another rover in stroke 3 which then hit the peg (Law 4(d)(3)); or
- (f) a wrong ball was played, a fault was committed, or the striker purported to take croquet from a dead ball in stroke 3.

27.5.3 Usually, this error is noticed immediately or not at all. However, if the error is noticed after the LOC, it is necessary to consider how liveness and deadness have been affected. The answer is that the definitions in Law 6(e) apply and so the live ball involved in the purported croquet stroke becomes dead and the ball actually roqueted remains live and can be roqueted again before the next hoop point is scored for the SB.

27.5.4 For example, suppose Bob plays B, roquets K, purports to take croquet from Y (stroke 1) and then, under the misapprehension that he roqueted R in that stroke, purports to take croquet from R (stroke 2), at which point his errors are discovered.

27.5.4.1 He will be entitled to resume his turn by taking croquet from K after his initial error is rectified. The second error is within the limit of claims of the first one, and hence ignored except for the determining whether he is entitled to continue his turn.

27.5.4.2 When applying this, stroke 1 is treated as though B roqueted Y, not K, and thus as a valid croquet stroke, entitling Bob to play the continuation stroke. In this, second, stroke, a further error was committed, but this is treated as though he had roqueted R in stroke 1, and thus, on this analysis, he would be entitled to a continuation stroke and so nothing fatal has happened to end his turn.

27.5.5 Laws 27(d) and 27(e) deal with purporting to take croquet from a dead or live ball, but do not cover the case of purporting to do so from a ball not in play, or one belonging to another game, which can happen if the striker retrieves the wrong ball after rushing one off the lawn, or gets confused by the presence of a double-banked ball. This is scheduled for consideration in the next revision, but in the meantime it would seem reasonable to deal with it by substituting the ball roqueted for the outside agency. It seems generally accepted that the striker gets no relief if he attempts to roquet an outside agency: the collision is just treated as interference under Law 33(a).

27.6 Law 27(f)

27.6.1 Law 27(f) deals with the case when Roy, correctly playing Red, roquets Blue (in stroke 1), but fails to appreciate the fact. Instead of taking croquet as required, he plays another stroke (stroke 2), e.g. he attempts

to roquet the same ball again or another ball or attempts to run a hoop. However, note that his turn will end if he misses the attempted roquet or fails the hoop in stroke 2, which is the first stroke in error.

27.6.2 If the error is discovered before any further strokes are played, Roy's turn will end if, in stroke 2:

- (a) neither a roquet was made nor a hoop point was scored in order for Red (Law 4(d)(1)); or
- (b) Red, being already a rover, hit the peg (Law 4(d)(3)) (subject to Law 38 in handicap games); or
- (c) Red, being already a rover, hit another rover which then hit the peg (Law 4(d)(3)); or
- (d) he committed a fault or a wrong ball was played (Law 4(d)(7)).

27.6.3 If Roy plays a further stroke (stroke 3) and the error is discovered immediately after that, the striker's turn will end if any of the reasons listed in 27.6.1 applied to stroke 2 or if any of the reasons specified in 27.5.2.2(b-f) applied to stroke 3.

27.7 Laws 27(g) and 27(h)

27.7.1 Laws 27(g) and 27(h) provide a more meaningful limit of claims for two related forms of playing with a ball misplaced, namely failing to play a ball from baulk and lifting a ball when not entitled to do so. The adversary has two strokes, like every other significant non-fatal error, in which to react. The same principles about end of turn apply as described in 27.5.2 and 27.6. Note "materially" in Law 27(g) is to prevent (unverifiable) claims from the adversary after a successful lift shot or from the striker after an unsuccessful one, that the lift shot must be replayed because it was taken from a position 1mm off the baulk line.

27.8 Law 27(i)

27.8.1 Law 27(i) is the sweep-up sub-law which covers all other cases. The game continues as if the misplaced ball lawfully occupied the position it was in.

28. FAULTS

28.1 An internet survey conducted in 1999 revealed, unsurprisingly, that faults represented the most frequent category of error committed by players and which gave referees the most exercise. Accordingly, in view of the practical importance of faults, each of the 15 faults will be discussed separately.

28.2 Law 28(a) - the definitions of the faults

As a precursor, it is worth noting that, as an aid to memorising them, the faults are organised into four distinct groups.

28.2.1 (1) to (5) deal with unlawful methods of using the mallet.

28.2.2 (6) to (10) deal with unlawful contacts between mallet and the striker's ball.

28.2.3 (11) to (13) deal with unlawful movements of balls, whether by mallet or the striker's body or clothes.

28.2.4 (14) and (15) are the specialised faults- croquet strokes and substantial damage.

28.3 It should always be borne in mind that no fault can be committed outside the striking period (see Law 5(h) and 5.5 above). The period within which a fault can be committed has been shortened in respect of Laws 28(a)(1) to (3) so that it ends at the end of the swing of the mallet and does not depend on the striker quitting his stance under control. The standard of proof required to declare that a fault has been committed was defined in 2008, in Law 48(d).

28.4 Law 28(a)(1)

'touches the head of the mallet with his hand, or slides the mallet along his foot or leg to guide it'

The second clause bans the practice of using the foot to prevent the mallet hitting an obstacle (such as a hoop upright) instead of the ball in a hampered stroke. "Foot" includes shoe because of 28(c). Accidental contact between mallet and the leg or foot is not a fault, only deliberately using them to guide the mallet.

28.5 Law 28(a)(2)

'rests the shaft of the mallet or a hand or arm on the ground or an outside agency'

The words 'or an outside agency' are to counter any bright ideas of placing the law book (or anything else) under the shaft etc to circumvent the law. Note, however, that a hoop is not an outside agency and thus it is

legal to rest the shaft of the mallet on or against a hoop. Note also that a hand brushing along the grass in a horizontal sweep shot is not a fault because it is not 'resting on the ground'.

28.6 Law 28(a)(3)

'rests the shaft of the mallet or a hand or arm directly connected with the stroke against any part of his legs or feet'

Note that the fault is to rest the shaft, hand or arm, on the leg or feet, not merely to touch them during the swing.

28.7 Law 28(a)(4)

'moves the striker's ball other than by striking it with the mallet audibly and distinctly'

This covers any ball movement brought about by anything other than a traditional stroke. Hitting a ball from the vertical and then sliding the mallet round the surface so that it can be pushed round an upright or another ball offends this sub-law - despite what some ingenious players may think!

28.8 Law 28(a)(5)

'causes or attempts to cause the mallet to strike the striker's ball by kicking, hitting, dropping or throwing the mallet'

'Dropping' and 'throwing' prohibit letting go of the mallet completely. Strokes that involve holding on to the top of the shaft while dropping the head are not faults under this sub-law.

28.9 Law 28(a)(6)

'strikes the striker's ball with any part of the mallet other than an end face of the head, either:

- A. deliberately; or
- B. accidentally in a stroke which requires special care because of the proximity of a hoop or the peg or another ball'

This sub-law deals with 'hampered' strokes although that term no longer appears in the Laws. Hampering by a hoop occurs frequently after a hoop is run by too little and the risk is that the SB will be hit with the bevelled edge in the continuation stroke.

Hampering by a ball is less common and the reference to the proximity of another ball never means the CB in an ordinary croquet stroke. The culprit is usually a ball that is uninvolved with the stroke about to be played but which is sufficiently close to the path of the mallet or the striker's stance to pose a real risk of a fault under Law 28(a)(8), (12) or (13).

Cannons are another source of hampered strokes although there is no hard and fast rule because it depends on how the cannon is arranged. A good example of a cannon which does require special care is the three-balls-in-a-line cannon played with split so that the SB travels to the fourth ball. The cannon ball will prevent the CB from moving and there is a risk of the side of the mallet glancing the CB. A mishit in which the SB is not struck cleanly with the playing face in this situation should definitely be faulted.

This fault only applies to the first impact between the mallet and the ball struck: see Law 28(a)(7) and the exemptions in 28(d) for subsequent contacts.

28.10 Law 28(a)(7)

“(A) in a croquet stroke, or continuation stroke when the striker's ball is touching another ball, allows the mallet to contact the striker's ball visibly more than once; or

(B) in any other stroke, allows the mallet to contact the striker's ball more than once; or

(C) in any stroke, allows the mallet to remain in contact with the striker's ball for an observable period;”

This sub-law covers both multiple and unduly prolonged contact between the mallet and the striker's ball. These are amalgamated partly in recognition of the difficulty in distinguishing between them. High speed

photography shows that many croquet strokes, which to human senses are perfectly acceptable, do in fact have multiple contacts, and contact times considerably longer than single ball strokes.

To ensure that the game remains playable, a laxer standard, namely that the multiple contact must be visible, is applied to croquet strokes. The principal target of this fault in croquet strokes is 'shepherding', namely guiding the SB with the mallet in a hoop approach after the balls have parted contact, or very extreme pass rolls. "Dirty sounding" croquet strokes may be inelegant, but the striker gains no advantage from poor technique.

"Visibly" means capable of being seen by someone with normal eyesight standing in a good position to observe the stroke. It is not necessary that such an observer was in place for the stroke to be a fault, only that the multiple contact would have been seen if there was. It is not enough, for this sub-law, for the hypothetical observer to deduce that there must have been multiple contacts by analysing the physical behavior of the mallet and balls.

Single ball strokes, e.g. hammer strokes, can still be faulted on the basis of prolonged sound.

Note that subsequent contact with any part of the mallet, not just the face, is a fault.

Note the exemptions provided by Law 28(d) for roquets and pegging-out. A very short rush, i.e. less than 2 inches (5 cm), can lead on occasion to the SB being 'carried' forward by the mallet after the contact between SB and RB. A similar effect can be achieved during pegging out, whether in the croquet stroke or a single ball stroke. In all cases, the policy of the Laws is not to penalise these accidents which are often unavoidable consequences of an essentially excellent previous stroke.

However, a scatter shot, where the SB lies very close to but not in contact with a dead ball, does not benefit from this exemption, and these are faults under this or the following sub-law.

28.11 Law 28(a)(8)

'allows the mallet to be in contact with the striker's ball after the striker's ball has hit another ball'

The reason for this sub-clause is that if the two balls are very close apart, say less than 2mm, but not actually touching, the mallet may still be in contact with the striker's ball when the SB hits the nearby one. The striker could therefore claim not to have breached Law 28(a)(7)(B), nor 28(a)(7)(C) if the contact was not observably long, and a referee would find it impossible to decide. This plugs the gap and makes it clear that close scatter shots (the same exemption for roquets applies as for Law 28(a)(7)) are faults if the striker's ball continues forward a significant distance after a direct impact. Angled scatter shots are more difficult to judge, but will be faults if the angle between the directions travelled by the two balls is significantly less than it would have been if the balls had been further apart.

Note that this sub-clause does not apply to croquet strokes (as the SB starts in contact with the RB rather than hitting it), unless there is a third ball nearby (as in a cannon involving a dead ball).

28.12 Law 28(a)(9)

'strikes the striker's ball so as to cause it to touch a hoop upright or, unless the striker's ball is pegged out in the stroke, the peg when in contact with the mallet'

This is the classic crush stroke but it is more difficult to commit than many referees seem to believe. Professor Stan Hall demonstrated that a croquet ball remains in contact with a mallet end-face for a very short time, and somewhat paradoxically, does so for longer in gentle shots. In any event, the longest distance that mallet and ball will travel in contact with each other is about 1 cm (less than 0.5 inches). Note that this does NOT mean that any ball within 1 cm from an upright is therefore a candidate for a crush. The distance that matters is that between the impact points on (a) the ball's circumference and (b) the upright's circumference. In practice, unless the striker is so incompetent as to drive the SB almost straight at the upright (in which case he will double tap anyway), this means that the nearest point of the ball must be within 1-2 mm of the upright before there is any real chance of a crush.

28.13 Law 28(a)(10)

'strikes the striker's ball when it lies in contact with a hoop upright or, unless the striker's ball is pegged out in the stroke, the peg otherwise than in a direction away therefrom'

This is the easiest way to commit a crush but should only occur if the striker is ignorant of basic physics or tries to play close to the forbidden line and the referee believes he transgressed it.

28.14 Law 28(a)(11)

'moves or shakes a ball at rest by hitting a hoop or the peg with the mallet or with any part of his body or clothes'

The main instances are:

1. hitting a hoop or the peg in the backswing when a ball is in contact with it;
2. hitting a hoop or the peg on the forward swing, when aiming instead to hit a ball resting on it.
- 3.

28.15 Law 28(a)(12)

'touches any ball, other than the striker's ball, with the mallet'

Remember that faults can only occur during the striking period. Touching a ball while taking practice swings is not penalised.

28.16 Law 28(a)(13)

'touches any ball with any part of his body or clothes'

Note the definition of 'clothes' in Law 28(c). This includes a clip, so woe betide the striker whose clip falls off his pocket and hits a ball during the striking period.

28.17 Law 28(a)(14)

'in a croquet stroke, plays away from or fails to move or shake the croqueted ball'

Note that a fault is committed if the striker plays away from the CB even though it moves or shakes, as it may well do if it was 'leaning' against the SB.

28.18 Law 28(a)(15)

'damages the court with the mallet, to the extent that a subsequent stroke played over the damaged area could be significantly affected, in a stroke in which either:

(A) his swing is restricted by a hoop, or the peg, or a ball not in contact with the striker's ball;
or

(B) he is attempting to make the striker's ball jump; or

(C) the striker's ball is part of a group.'

This sub-law is intended to deter the striker from damaging the court in situations where he could reasonably lessen the risk of doing so by playing his stroke in a different way. It does not cover damage caused in an otherwise unexceptional stroke, either as a result of a mishit or faulty technique. An example of the latter is allowing the trailing edge of the mallet to fall back into the lawn, which should be dealt with by coaching or warning after the game, or in persistent cases by sanction by the host club. Similarly, damage caused by temper or high spirits are outside its scope (as it is unlikely to be caused during the striking period).

The damage must be caused by the mallet, not just the ball.

The law does not specify an objective test as to whether a subsequent stroke played over the damaged area could be significantly affected, but it is clear that it is the potential effect on subsequent strokes, rather than cosmetic appearance, that must be considered. The effect on gentle, as well as hard strokes, must be taken into account. The potential effect must be significant: the initial guidance offered is that this condition is satisfied if a ball passing over the (unrepaired) damage, at a speed such that it will stop about a mallet's (shaft) length away, would come to rest more than a ball's width from where it would have done if the damage was not there. This deviation could be in distance as well as direction. This test may have to be relaxed on an uneven court.

The test in 28(a)(15)(A) is slightly different than that in 28(a)(6)(B), though both specify what are commonly known as “hampered strokes”. Under this definition, a stroke in which the striker has a normal swing but an awkward stance because a ball is near his foot, is not hampered, but it is under 28(a)(6)(B). It is likely that this distinction will be removed in a future revision.

28.19 Law 28(b)

28.19.1 Law 28(b) sets out the remedy for a fault. No point can be scored as the result of a fault discovered before the limit of claims. In addition, the adversary has the right to choose whether the balls should be left in the positions they arrived at as a result of the fault or be replaced in the positions they occupied before the fault. This removes any point to leaving a foot close to a hoop when trying to jump an angled hoop from a position that is wired from an enemy ball on the far side of the hoop and eases the conscience of a striker who declares a marginal fault when replacement of the balls would be to his advantage. Note the reference to Law 37(h) which specifies the order of events if the striker has the option of taking a half-bisque or bisque (see 37.6 below).

28.19.2 If the positions to which the balls may be replaced is critical, it is reasonable for their positions after the first stroke in error to be marked and for them to be provisionally replaced, so that the adversary (who may have been denied a good view prior to the stroke being played by Laws 48(e) and 51(b)) may see their exact positions before making his decision. However, once he has announced his decision he cannot then change his mind.

28.20 Law 28(d)(1)

28.20.1 Law 28(d)(1) gives exemptions from Law 28(a) to enable close roquets and peg-outs to be played lawfully.

28.20.2 Note that if subsequent contact between mallet and ball is exempted under Law 28(d)(1), the exemption applies to contact with any part of the mallet, not just the end-face. Thus it is not a fault if the SB jumps in making a roquet and is then hit by the shaft of the mallet, but it would be if it bounced off a hoop between making the roquet and being hit again by the mallet. However, there is no exemption for any contact between the mallet and a non-striker's, e.g. croqueted, ball, even if it is pegged out in the stroke.

28.20.3 In the case of roquets, the exemption given by Law 28(d)(1) is restricted by its last sentence. It is a fault if, after making a roquet, the striker's ball hits something else and then touches the mallet again. The objects referred to are hoops, the peg or another ball. The following examples may help to clarify this:

(a) mallet hits SB; mallet hits SB; SB hits RB. This is a fault, as the double tap occurred before the roquet was made.

(b) mallet hits SB; SB hits RB; SB hits mallet. This is not a fault, as exemption 28(d)(1)(A) applies.

(c) mallet hits SB; SB hits RB; SB hits object; SB hits mallet. This is a fault, as the last sentence of 28(d)(1) means that the exemption 28(d)(1)(A) does not apply.

(d) mallet hits SB; SB hits RB; SB hits mallet; SB hits object. This not a fault, as exemption 28(d)(1)(A) applies. (Note that use of the tense “has hit”, rather than “hits” or “goes on to hit”, means that the last sentence of 28(d)(1) does not apply in this case, as there was no contact between the mallet and the SB after the SB hit the object.)

(e) mallet hits SB; SB hits object; SB hits RB; SB hits mallet. This is not a fault, as exemption 28(d)(1)(A) applies. (The last sentence of 28(d)(1) does not apply, as the SB hit the object before, rather than after, making the roquet.)

28.20.4 For the practical effect of this, consider the case of the striker trying to run a hoop from close to, or even in the jaws, with another ball just behind the hoop. If the SB is straight in front of (or in) the hoop, and the other ball is more than a ball's width clear of the non-playing side, then the striker can double tap after his ball has hit the other one with impunity, provided that he ends up having run the hoop, as Law 17(a) states that a roquet will have been made (and thus exemption 28(d)(1)(A) applies, example (b) above). If, however, the other ball is closer to the hoop (but still clear of the jaws), there is a risk that the striker's ball will hit an upright after hitting that ball and thus a subsequent impact by the mallet will not be exempted (example (c)). This is very likely to be the case if the hoop is at all angled.

28.20.5 Another case where the last sentence of Law 28(d)(1) bites is in rushes after gentle cannons, in which the striker aims to promote the previously croqueted ball into court to use later in a break. Note, however, that it does not stop the striker from shovelling several balls along the yard-line if he is roqueting

the nearest one, as, despite the numerous contacts between mallet and SB, the SB will only hit the roqueted ball, not a third one.

Section C: Interference with Play

29. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

29.1 It is important to grasp that errors and interferences are mutually exclusive and are therefore governed by different principles.

29.2 An error is a mistake made by the striker in the playing of a stroke (see 22 above for the analysis).

29.3 An interference can take one of three forms. It can be:

29.3.1 a mistake made by either player that involves something other than playing a stroke incorrectly; or

29.3.2 a disturbance of the game by an active factor unconnected with either player, otherwise known as an outside agency; or

29.3.3 a disturbance of the game by a passive factor unconnected with either player.

Note that Law 29(a) uses the term 'irregularity' as a collective noun for the mistakes and disturbances detailed above.

29.4 The mistakes referred to in 29.3.1 form two further categories:

29.4.1 Interferences dealt with under Laws 30 to 32, which can affect several strokes. Their limit of claims is the end of the game and they are corrected by deeming all strokes played after the interference not to have occurred.

29.4.2 Interferences dealt with under Laws 33 to 35, which generally affect just a single stroke. The limit of claims is either before the stroke is played (e.g. moving balls to avoid special damage), before the next stroke (when a ball in motion has been affected) or until subsequent play has affected the relevant ball (when a ball at rest has been affected).

30. BALLS WRONGLY REMOVED OR NOT REMOVED FROM THE GAME

30.1 Note the important requirement in the first line of Law 30(a) that the game must have been affected before an interference can have occurred. This proviso will almost always apply only in the case when a ball has not been removed from the game after having been pegged out. It is designed to avoid time-wasting in cases where a pegged-out ball has not been thrown completely clear of the court or has rolled back into court. Providing that no-one has attempted to involve such a ball in subsequent play, there is no need to waste time by taking the game back to the point when the ball should have been properly removed from the court under Law 15(d).

30.2 It is just possible that the proviso can apply when a ball has been wrongly removed. However, this would require discovery of the wrong removal soon after the event and any intervening strokes to have been clearly unaffected by the presence or absence of the affected ball.

Example: Consider a handicap game in which B, R and K are for the peg and Y is for rover. Bob is laid up near Corner 1 with a difficult cut rush with B on K to the peg. Roy shoots with R at B and K from Corner 3 and hits the peg instead, bouncing off to near hoop 4. Roy forgets that he cannot peg out R until Y is a rover and knocks R off the court. Bob now rushes K accurately to the peg and pegs out K in the croquet stroke. Just as he is about to hit B onto the peg, Roy remembers that R should have remained on court. In these circumstances, a referee would be entitled to rule that R should be replaced but that Bob need not replay his turn and can continue with the peg out. Had R finished near the peg, perhaps in between the peg and where K came to rest, a different decision would be appropriate.

30.3 Law 30(b) enshrines a consequence of deeming all play following a major interference not to have occurred. The game is restored to its position immediately before the interference was committed and any limit of claims outstanding at that point in time becomes relevant again and any error then outstanding can be rectified. The same principle is applied in Laws 31(c) and 32(b).

31. MISPLACED CLIPS AND MISLEADING INFORMATION

31.1 This is one of the laws (Law 50(a) is the other) that demands Solomon-like powers of judgement from a referee. If a player claims that he has been misled into a line of play that he would not otherwise have adopted, the referee must listen to the claim and come to his own opinion as to its credibility. In general, the further back in time the misleading event is claimed to have been, the more convincing the evidence must be. While no hard and fast rule should be laid down, one would expect few claims to be allowed if they are based on having been misled more than two turns ago. The referee should also note the line of play adopted after a replay has been granted. It should be substantively different from the original and not just a minor variation designed to get a second bite at the cherry.

31.2 The most potent historic claim one can imagine is from the player who has just learned from his adversary that, early in the game while the player was absent, the adversary accidentally peeled one of the player's balls but forgot to move the clip to the next hoop.

31.3 Law 31(c) performs the same function as Laws 30(b) and 32(b).

31.4 Note that the list of examples of lines of play in Law 31(d) is not exhaustive. The reference to Law 37(g) adds the decision whether or not to take a half-bisque or bisque.

31.5 Note that relief can be obtained if a clip is misplaced by an outside agency (in practice, double bankers or a careless referee), but not if wrong information is provided by anyone other than the adversary. Note also that the adversary cannot force the striker to replay, even if he was misled, if he decides it is not in his interest to do so. However, if he does choose a replay, he can only replay from when he would first have adopted a different line of play (had he known the correct position of the clip), not from some later time.

31.6 A player is also entitled to a replay if he is misled by the position of a ball that has been interfered with, or moved by double-bankers to avoid interference. In this case, he is still entitled to play a stroke with the same intention in the replay if he was, e.g. taking off to get a rush on that ball or shooting at a ball that had been moved off the lawn.

32. PLAYING WHEN FORESTALLED

32.1 This law recognises the difference between the Law 25 error of playing a stroke which should not have been played because it was not that player's turn and that of playing a stroke at a time when play had been temporarily suspended (i.e. forestalled). It may well be that once the matter the adversary wished to raise has been settled, the striker will be able to resume his turn and replay the stroke or strokes he played after he was forestalled.

32.2 Law 32(b) performs the same function as Laws 30(b) and 31(c).

32.3 No limit of claims is defined for this interference, as in most circumstances the adversary will be immediately aware that the striker has carried on playing. However, in a case where the adversary is distracted or the striker has not offered the adversary the option of having the balls replaced after a fault and quickly taken a bisque, then the first stroke of the adversary's next turn would be an appropriate limit to impose when applying Law 55(b)(2), by analogy with Law 25(a).

33. INTERFERENCE WITH A BALL

33.1.Introduction

33.1.1 A stroke during which ball(s) suffer interference is replayed only in very limited circumstances. In particular, a stroke is only replayed if a point or roquet might have been made, or a ball would have come to rest in a critical position, had the interference not occurred, and even then only if the interference could not have been anticipated. If the criteria for a replay are not met, the balls are to be placed as close as can be judged as to where they would have come to rest (even if there is considerable uncertainty about that). No point or roquet can be claimed after interference (even if the players agree that it was inevitable).

33.1.2 The law is structured into four sub-laws, which are discussed in turn below. The first, Law 33(a), deals with the most common case, that of interference by an outside agency or player, during a stroke. The second deals with interference by forces of nature during a stroke and the third with the simpler case of

interference between strokes. The final part, to which the others are subject, deals with the interaction between Law 33 and other laws.

33.1.3 A striker seeing a collision between one of the balls in his game (say Blue) and one from a double-banked game (say Green), should mark as accurately as possible the point where the collision occurred and the direction that Blue was travelling. He should also mark where both Blue and Green actually came to rest. This is not only to help in applying Law 33 to his own game, but also to assist the players in the double-banked one apply it to their game.

33.2 Interference by an outside agency or a player

33.2.1 Law 33(a) covers interference by an outside agency or players during a stroke, but recognises the prior claim of Law 28 if the striker interferes with a ball during the striking period, thereby converting the interference into an error. Remember, however, that the striking period does not start until the mallet has passed the ball on the final backswing (Law 5(d)), so touching a ball while casting is covered by Law 33(c). There are three faults where the striker improperly moves or touches a ball, dealt with by Laws 28(a)(11) to (13). If the fault is not noticed until after the limit of claims for the fault, Law 33 does not apply and so the ball disturbed is not replaced..

33.2.2 Outside agencies are defined in Law 7, but by far the most common case is a ball belonging to a double banked game. Note that, under Law 7(c), the striker has a duty to remove an outside agency that he thinks might affect his stroke and it is for this reason that a distinction is made (in Law 33(a)(1)(C)) between stationary and moving outside agencies.

33.2.3 If all the conditions in Law 33(a)(1)(A-C) are met, the stroke must be replayed: the striker doesn't have an option.

33.2.4 The first condition for a replay is that no further stroke has been played (which is a sort of limit of claims). However, the striker, realising that interference has occurred but not wanting to replay, must not deliberately play another stroke to prevent one, but must instead forestall under Law 23(c)(3).

33.2.5 The second condition is that something significant might have happened had the interference not occurred. In the case of potential points or roquets, "might" should be interpreted to mean more than just a theoretical or outside chance. The condition is met if the striker thought blue was heading toward red, even if it was still quite some distance away. On the other hand it is not sufficient to say, when it appeared that Blue was going to miss Red, that a worm cast or a gust of wind might have deflected it on. Note that the point or roquet does not have to be one intended by the striker.

33.2.6 The other potential significant event is a ball coming to rest in a critical position (which is defined in Law 6(d)). The likelihood of this may be harder to judge, but it was included to cover the case when the striker was playing for a wired position or a rush. Again, purely theoretical chances should be ignored.

33.2.7 The final condition for a replay is that the interference was by an outside agency that moved after or was moving when the striker finally took up his stance (or by the adversary). If not, the striker should have seen and removed it if he thought it might affect play. This means that the most common time there will be a replay is when moving balls from different games collide.

33.2.8 Having said there were three conditions for a replay, there are implicitly two more. The first is stated in Law 33(d)(2). There is no replay if the turn would have ended under Law 20(c) (ball off the court in a croquet stroke) had the interference not occurred. The other is invoked by Law 22(g), which means that if the stroke interfered with was played in error, (e.g. when not entitled, with the wrong ball, or within the limit of claims of a previous error), the error law takes precedence.

33.2.9 Although the law does not specify it, the term "replay" implies that any ball moved by the stroke interfered with should be replaced to a position that was lawful before that stroke, any points scored, roquets made, or responsibility for position taken in it are cancelled, and the striker plays another stroke. If he had lawfully taken a lift, he is still committed to playing the ball from baulk. He is not required to attempt to reproduce the stroke interfered with. Indeed, if he had taken croquet from the wrong live ball, the replay should be from the correct one.

33.2.10 If any of the conditions for a replay are not met, then only points or roquets made before, but not (neither actually nor potentially, because of Law 33(d)(1)) after, any interference with the ball(s) involved in them stand. Thus if Blue runs hoop 3 hard and then hits a stationary Green, which might have prevented it from hitting Red and did deflect Blue onto Black, the hoop is scored but no roquet is made.

33.2.11 The game then continues after placing any balls that were or might have been affected as near as possible to the positions they would have ended in had the interference not occurred (thus all the balls, including Red, in the example above need to be moved.) Of course, it is impossible to predict those positions exactly, but experience will determine where the balls might plausibly have ended and an unexceptional position (i.e. one that is not particularly favourable to one side or the other) within that range should be chosen.

33.2.12 Given that the striker is on the lawn, he should take the initiative in attempting to agree with his opponent where the balls should be placed. In most cases, the opponent will be happy to accept the striker's judgement, but if not Law 48(f) should be used to govern the dispute. The players can consult witnesses (usually players from the double-banked game), to assist them with this, but only if they agree to do so. If Green had not moved since the striker finally took up his stance for the stroke, then the striker should accept the opinion of his opponent (assuming that his opponent was in a position to give one and unless it appears entirely unreasonable), otherwise the opinion of the player with the best view of what happened (usually, but not always, the striker) should be given greater weight. In the last resort, if they cannot agree, they should ask a referee to adjudicate.

33.2.13 A referee is likely to be called if the ball might have gone out, or may have hit a hoop or a dead ball. The referee should choose a neutral (to the interests of both sides) position within the area within which Blue could plausibly have come to rest, given the evidence available. Usually this will be the mid-point of that area, unless that position happens to be particularly favourable (or disadvantageous) to one side compared with other plausible ones. If the collision was with a stationary ball, he should favour the adversary if one side or other has to get an advantage.

33.2.14 If Blue's agreed or adjudicated position is found to be critical (as defined by Law 6(d)), then the conditions for a replay should be checked (see 33.2 above). Otherwise, Blue is placed in the agreed or adjudicated position (and then moved to the yard-line if required by Law 12). If Blue was the striker's or croqueted ball in a croquet stroke, then the turn ends if that position is off the court, whether or not Blue actually went off. Conversely, if that position is on the court, the turn continues even if Blue was deflected over the boundary.

33.2.15 Things get more complicated in the relatively unlikely event that Blue might have gone on to hit a hoop, the peg or a primary coloured ball (say Red). If there is no question of a point or roquet, then the same procedure as that described above for straightforward cases should be followed. However, judging the nearest point to where Blue would have ended is likely to be more arbitrary, as there will be much greater uncertainty about it.

33.2.16. If the conditions for a replay are not met, then purely speculative collisions after interference should be ignored. If, however, it is likely that Blue would have hit a hoop at speed, but the interference was far enough away to make it uncertain where it would have bounced off to, then it should be placed on the yard-line in a neutral position, possibly midway between the intended line and the maximum likely deflection. On the other hand, if Blue just trickled up to Green, which was stuck in a hoop, then it might well be reasonable to place Blue close to the hoop and wired from much of the court, or even, in an extreme case, in the jaws. In each case it is a matter of assessing the range of positions where the Blue could plausibly have ended, had it not hit Green, and choosing one that gives neither side a gratuitous advantage.

33.3 Interference by Natural Forces

33.3.1 Law 33(b) deals with interference during a stroke, but by natural forces rather than the players or an outside agency. It represents a compromise between the policy of not allowing weather to count as an outside agency (see 7 above) and allowing relief from the effects of high wind (as is common in Wellington, New Zealand) or a burst water main (as in Australia in 2000). Both are capable of moving balls at rest between strokes and such movement is treated as interference, unless it was subsequently moved as a result of the stroke. For example, the striker cannot claim a roquet, or even a replay, if his ball was blown off course or "hilled off", but he does make a roquet if his ball is blown or hills onto the target, and if the target is blown into the path of his ball. If a ball that had partly run its hoop is blown through it, it is replaced and does not score the hoop (because it was not a consequence of a stroke under Law 14(a)(1)), unless it goes on to hit or be hit by a ball moved by the stroke.

33.4 Interference between strokes

33.4.1 Law 33(c) deals with interference, by any cause, between strokes. The most frequent case is touching a ball while casting, for which there is no penalty and the ball should be replaced before the stroke is played.

However, if the striker, possibly unaware that he has touched the ball on his backswing, carries on and plays the stroke, Law 33(d)(3) states that Law 27(a) applies, which in turn means that the stroke is valid under Law 27(i) (in the absence of any other error or interference).

33.5 Interaction with other Laws

33.5.1 As its title states, Law 33(d) deals with the interaction between the provisions in Laws 33(a-c) and other laws.

33.5.2 The intention of the word “relevant” in Law 33(d)(1) is that this clause only applies to interference during a stroke (i.e. not to cases dealt with by Law 33(b) or Law 33(c)), and if the interference was material to whether or not the ball might have scored a point or been involved in a roquet (see the draft ruling to this effect). Consider the following examples:

33.5.2.1 the striker's ball runs its hoop, but then hits a stationary outside agency, so there is no replay. The hoop point stands, as the interference was after, rather than before, the hoop was run.

33.5.2.2 a croquet stroke in which a long-distance peel is made but the striker's ball suffers interference for which there is no replay. The peel counts, whether or not the interference with the striker's ball occurred before or after the peeler ran the hoop, as the interference was with the striker's ball, not the peeler.

33.5.2.3 a the striker's ball roquets a ball from his game that had been moved, unbeknown to either player, by a double-banker before the start of the stroke. Law 33(d)(1) does not apply, because the interference occurred between, rather than during, a stroke (there is a ruling to this effect). Instead Law 33(d)(3) refers us to Law 27, as discussed in 33.5.4.

33.5.3 Law 33(d)(2) also only applies to interference during a stroke by an outside agency or player, not to that by natural forces, so there is no relief for the striker if either ball is blown off the lawn during a croquet stroke. It takes precedence over any requirement to replay the stroke under Law 33(a)(1). Again, there is a ruling to this effect.

33.5.4 Law 33(d)(3) deals with cases where the requirement to place or replace balls under Law 33 has not been met before the start of the next stroke, most likely because the players are unaware of the interference. Thus in example 33.5.2.3, the ball interfered with by the double banker should have been replaced before the stroke was played, under Law 33(c). Law 33(d)(3) states that it should be treated as being misplaced, and Law 27(a) should be applied. This in turn invokes Law 27(i), so the roquet counts, unless the striker claims a replay under Law 31(a)(2).

33.5.5 This interaction between Law 27 and Law 33 effectively provides a limit of claims for dealing with interference. Normally, interference is noticed immediately and dealt with before the next stroke. However, it can happen unobserved, in which case any balls that should have been placed or replaced had the interference been noticed become misplaced at the start of the next stroke, and so an error under Law 27 will be committed in it. The striker may also be entitled to a replay under Law 31(a)(2) if he was misled by the position of a misplaced ball. Furthermore, Law 27(a)(3) means that if the interference is discovered at any time before the end of the game, any balls that have not since been moved by a stroke (or lifted) must still be placed or replaced as required by Law 33.

34. INTERFERENCE WITH THE PLAYING OF A STROKE

34.1 Law 34(a) deals with interference with a stroke other than to a ball (which is covered by Law 33). It includes the striker being put off by the adversary forestalling at the wrong time, the adversary or someone else brushing past the striker as he swings, a projectile hitting the striker and all other accidents that might have a material effect on the outcome of the stroke.

34.2 Laws 34(b), (c) and (d) deal with passive disturbances to the game (see 29.3.3 above) and allow the striker suitable relief before he plays the next stroke. There is no other remedy available. Special damage may be remedied by repair when appropriate, or grass clippings can be used to temporarily hold a ball in position under Law 3(c)(3).

34.3 Law 34(e) ensures that the striker gains no unfair advantage from such relief. Note that a ball moved to maintain a positional relationship with the SB should be replaced as soon as it will no longer be affected by the striker's line of play, a deliberately wide term that reflects the difficulty of predicting how many strokes will be played in the vicinity of a ball so moved. Sometimes, such a ball will be affected by subsequent play

before it has been replaced and, consistently with the principle set out in Law 27(a)(3), it ceases to be a candidate for replacement.

35. MISCELLANEOUS INTERFERENCE

35.1 Law 35 lists four unconnected examples of interference with the smooth running of a game.

35.2 Law 35(b) deals with balls jamming in hoops. There are two distinct parts to this sub-law.

35.2.1 The first sentence is mandatory and requires that the hoop and ball be checked and the offender adjusted (if the hoop) or replaced (if the ball). It does not matter whether the jamming is instantaneous or the ball remains firmly wedged in the hoop. The point is that the equipment must be correct at all times and the jamming is evidence that something needs correction.

35.2.2 The second sentence offers the striker the option of a replay if a ball remains jammed in a hoop at the end of the stroke and his turn would not otherwise have ended. Hence, if the ball lingers in the hoop and then falls free, it is hard luck but there is no replay. It may seem odd to offer the striker the option of a replay as one would think that he would be bound to take it. The reason is to avoid penalising the striker in a case where the jammed ball is a long-distance peelee rather than the SB. It will do his peeling chances less harm to leave the peelee in a properly-adjusted hoop than to expect him to repeat a 20 yard peel!

35.2.3 Note that an alternative version of Law 35(b) is provided in Law 53(b), which allows a replay if the ball comes back out of the hoop or just staggers through. It can be used at the discretion of tournament organisers. The ILC will review the issue in the light of experience with the alternative.

35.3 The procedure governing a displaced boundary cord is common sense. It should be straightened as soon as the displacement is noticed unless to do so would affect the game. In those circumstances, it should be straightened as soon as the test or affected stroke has been completed.

PART 3: OTHER FORMS OF PLAY

Section A: Advanced Singles Play

36. OPTIONAL LIFT OR CONTACT

36.1 Note the exemption provided by Law 36(d) if the striker is taking contact under Law 36(b)(2) in the first four turns of the game - in practice only the third and fourth turns are relevant. He is not bound by the requirements of Law 8(b) that such turns must be started from a baulk-line.

36.2 Law 36(e) provides explicit guidance as to the striker's choices in certain situations when he also has a lift or contact under Law 36. It serves a similar purpose to Law 13(f) in this respect (see 13.8 above) but offers the striker a wider range of choice in certain situations. These extra choices arise because a ball in contact with another ball can be lifted under Law 36 but not under Law 13, and Law 9(b)(1) excludes the case of lifting a ball in contact with another one from being one in which the striker's ball is elected.

36.3 Hence, if the striker lifts a ball of his side that is in contact with its partner ball, he does not elect it as the SB thereby and may replace it and elect the other ball of his side if he so wishes (see Law 36(e)(2)). If he lifts a ball in contact with an enemy ball, he is free to replace it and take croquet from that ball (see Law 36(e)(3)), but may not replace it and lift his other ball instead.

36.4 Having lifted a ball, the striker remains free to change the position on either baulk-line from which he wishes to play the SB until he actually plays a stroke (see Law 36(e)(4)). This is identical to the provision in Law 13(f)(2) (see 13.8.3 above).

Section B: Handicap Singles Play

37. BISQUES

37.1 A bisque is a whole new turn, thus all the balls become live and the SB must be placed on the yard-line (lined-in) if necessary before starting it. The role of the half-bisque confuses some people. No point may be

scored (though a ball may start to run its hoop) in a half-bisque turn which appears to limit its utility. However, this underrates its significance if used correctly.

37.1.1 If it is received on its own, it guarantees the innings at least once by allowing the striker to shoot at a boundary ball with impunity. The confidence given to the half-bisque receiver by this guarantee can often improve his shooting with the result that the half-bisque may be 'used' several times, much to the chagrin of the half-bisque giver.

37.1.2 If, as is more usual, it is received together with one or more bisques, it may be used as the first stage of setting out a break which is then commenced by using a bisque.

37.2 Law 37(c) repays attention. The only restrictions on a bisque-receiver's right to play a bisque or half-bisque that he possesses are:

37.2.1 in a time-limited game (see Law 53(g)(3)); and

37.2.2 when the SB has been pegged out in the turn just played.

Otherwise he can play it or them or some of them after any ordinary turn or bisque turn at any stage of the game. A modified definition of end of turn is required for this: see Law 37(c)(4). There is nothing to stop the striker in the first turn of the game from using every bisque he possesses one after the other. Not very wise, of course, but that is a different matter.

37.3 Law 37(d) governs the indication of intention to play a bisque or half-bisque. Note that if the bisque-receiver quits the court without comment, he has indicated that he does not intend to play a bisque or half-bisque and he may not change his mind (see Law 37(d)(3)). Note that leaving the court to retrieve a ball does not constitute quitting it. All that he needs to do to preserve his choice, perhaps while he comes off to don his waterproofs, is to inform his adversary before he quits the court that he has not yet decided. Law 37(d)(4) deals with the case of an opponent who does not wait for the striker to indicate his intention.

37.4 Law 37(e) covers the case where the striker indicates his intention of playing a bisque and then does so before he has finished his previous turn. The adversary should forestall, but if he fails to do so the bisque is validly played, even if a ball has been left misplaced in the yard-line area (though Law 27 will apply to the stroke(s) played). The previous turn is treated as having ended, so the limit of claims for minor errors, e.g. purporting to take croquet from a live ball in that turn, will have passed.. However, if the striker made a roquet, without realising it, in what he thought was the final stroke of his turn, indicated his intention and then started a bisque with a rush, he has committed a Law 27(f) error in the bisque turn, as the lawful position of the striker's ball was in contact with the ball roqueted in the last stroke of the previous turn.

37.5 The wording of Law 37(f): Law 37(a) requires that a bisque be played with the SB of the immediately preceding turn. However, this may cause a difficulty when a striker plays a wrong ball in the first stroke of a turn. In such a case, Law 37(f) permits the striker to play with either of his balls if he wishes to take a bisque after the error has been rectified. However, Law 37(f) also requires that the bisque must be played with a ball that 'could lawfully have been played in the first stroke of the turn'. There are three situations where the striker does not have a choice of balls, namely:

37.5.1 after the third or fourth turns of the game;

37.5.2 when the striker has already elected a ball as the striker's ball by lifting it under Law 13 (see Law 9(b)(1)); and

37.5.3 when one ball of his side has already been pegged out.

Otherwise, if the striker plays an enemy ball in the first stroke of a turn, he may play either of his balls if he decides to play a bisque. Law 43(b) contains the same principle (see 43.2 below).

Examples:

1. Bob plays B in turn 1, Roy plays R in turn 2 and Bob then plays B (or R or Y) in turn 3. The error is discovered and rectified. Bob is obliged to place K on an unoccupied spot on either baulk-line (see Law 26(a)(2)). If Bob now wishes to play a bisque, he must play with K because K was the only ball that could lawfully have been played in stroke 1.
2. Bob lifts B at the start of a turn when entitled to a lift under Law 13. He replaces it and plays K instead. The error is discovered and rectified, by replacing K and placing B anywhere in baulk. If Bob now wishes to play a bisque, he must play with B which has already been elected as the SB and therefore was the only ball that could lawfully have been played in stroke 1.

3. Bob lifts B at the start of a turn under the misapprehension that he has a lift under Law 13. He replaces it and plays R instead. The error is discovered and rectified. If Bob now wishes to play a bisque, he may play with either B or K because B was not elected as the SB.
4. Bob plays R in the first stroke of a turn at a stage in the game when Y and B have already been pegged out. The error is discovered and rectified. If Bob now wishes to play a bisque, he must play with K because it is the only ball of his side still in play and therefore the only ball that could lawfully have been played in stroke 1.

37.6. Law 37(h) specifies that the adversary must decide whether the balls are to be replaced before the striker is required to decide whether or not to take a bisque.

38. PEGGING OUT IN HANDICAP GAMES

38.1 This law is often overlooked, particularly if time has been, or is about to be, called or if the striker's ball hits the peg accidentally. It only applies to handicap, not level, games. It is designed to prevent a player, who makes an early break when giving a lot of bisques, from devaluing them by pegging out his ball, leaving the bisque receiver only three balls with which to make a break. There are a couple of timing issues to note:

38.2 If Bob takes croquet with B (for peg) from R (for peg) and plays a stroke that causes both R and B to hit the peg, both R and B are pegged out irrespective of the order in which they hit the peg because it is sufficient for R to be pegged out during the stroke in which B was pegged out. If those were the only balls left in the game, the winner would be the player whose ball hit the peg first, but with a net score of zero.

38.3 Furthermore, if Bob takes croquet with B (for peg) from K (for rover) and plays a stroke that causes first B to hit the peg and then K to be peeled through rover, B is pegged out because K became a rover during that stroke. There is no requirement that K becomes a rover before B is pegged out.

39. RESTORATION OF BISQUES

39.1 Law 39(a)(1)

Note that a bisque or half-bisque played is not restored in respect of the first stroke in error. Assume that Bob fails a hoop with B, takes a bisque and then plays K in error and then fails another hoop with K and takes three more bisques before the wrong ball error is discovered. Only three bisques are restored.

39.2 Law 39(a)(3)

Assume that Bob scores hoops 1 to 3 for B with the help of one bisque, then misses out hoop 4 before "scoring" hoop 5 with the help of a further bisque, then 6 to 2-back using two more bisques. He then gives up the innings to Roy. In his next turn, Bob plays with K and takes three bisques. Later, he uses four more bisques to take B from 2-back to the peg. If Bob's omission of hoop 4 is discovered at any time before the end of the game, the B clip must be returned to hoop 4 and only the six bisques used for B after hoop 5 was run out of order are restored. In short, Bob loses eight hoops (plus one he never scored) but regains the bisques he used in scoring all but the first of them.

39.3 Law 39(b)

If play is deemed not to have occurred, it is logical that any half-bisque or bisques taken during such play should be restored.

Section C: Doubles Play

40. GENERAL

40.1 Under the pre-2008 laws, there was considerable debate as to whether a doubles game could start if a player was absent. The ILC decided that it should, and added the last sentence to Law 40(b) accordingly. There is no law about when an absent player can join the game, but custom dictates that they should give some period of notice when they arrive before doing so.

40.2 Law 40(c)(2) repays study. It is a fault if any ball touches the striker's partner or his mallet during the striking period unless this happens because the partner 'moves, picks up or arrests a ball that is not relevant to the stroke' under Laws 3(c)(2) (e.g. lifting a ball to prevent it being hit by a double banking ball), 15(c) (e.g.

stopping a ball that has been pegged out) or 18(a)(2) (e.g. stopping the SB after it has made a roquet). The intention is to avoid penalising the striker's side for acts committed by his partner that have no bearing on the game.

41. ORDINARY DOUBLES PLAY

No comment required.

42. ADVANCED DOUBLES PLAY

No comment required.

43. HANDICAP DOUBLES PLAY

43.1 It is not permitted to split a bisque into two half-bisques in handicap doubles play. Law 43(a) deliberately excludes Law 37(b)(1) but not Law 37(b)(2).

43.2 Law 37(a) requires that a bisque be played with the SB of the immediately preceding turn. However, this may cause a difficulty when a striker plays a wrong ball in the first stroke of a turn. In such a case, Law 43(b) permits either player of the side to take a bisque after the error has been rectified. However, Law 43(b) also requires that the bisque must be played by a player who 'could lawfully have played the first stroke of the turn'. There are three situations where only one member of a side complies with that requirement, namely:

43.2.1 after the third or fourth turns of the game;

43.2.2 when a ball of the side had already been elected as the striker's ball by being lifted under Law 13 (see Law 9(b)(1)); and

43.2.3 when one of the balls of the side has already been pegged out.

Law 37(f) contains the same principle (see 37.5 above).

Examples:

1. Boo plays B in turn 1, Ron plays R in turn 2 and Ken then plays B (or R or Y) in turn 3. The error is discovered and rectified. K must be placed on an unoccupied spot on either baulk-line (see Law 26(a)(2)). If Boo and Ken now wish to play a bisque, Ken must play it because Ken was the only player who could lawfully have played stroke 1.
2. Boo lifts K at the start of a turn when her side is entitled to a lift with K under Law 13. Boo then plays K from baulk. The error is discovered and rectified. If Boo and Ken now wish to play a bisque, Ken must play it because K has already been elected as the SB and therefore Ken was the only player who could lawfully have played stroke 1.
3. Boo lifts K at the start of a turn under the misapprehension that her side is entitled to a lift. She replaces it and plays R instead. The error is discovered and rectified. If Boo and Ken now wish to play a bisque, either player may play because K was not elected as the SB.
4. Boo plays R in the first stroke of a turn at a stage in the game when Y and B have already been pegged out. The error is discovered and rectified. If Boo and Ken now wish to play a bisque, Ken must play because K is the only ball of his side still in play and therefore only he could lawfully have played stroke 1.

43.3 If a player peels his partner through more than four hoops, the extra hoops are not scored, though the play is otherwise lawful. The mistake can be discovered and the points cancelled at any time before the end of the game. If the clip was advanced, it must be correctly placed and the adversaries may be entitled to a replay if they have been misled. If the peeler's partner was misled, into running the wrong hoop by a wrongly placed clip, he has no redress and would be playing when not entitled if he attempted to continue his turn.

Section D: Shortened Games

44. SHORTENED GAMES

Law 44(b)(4) describes the hoop 1 and 3-back variation. Note that in the case of an Irish peel or half-jump of both balls of a side through hoop 1, the law is generous to the striker. Hoop 1 is scored by the SB irrespective of the order in which the balls travel through the hoop.

45. ADVANCED PLAY IN SHORTENED GAMES

Law 45(c) describes the modern form of shortened advanced game known colloquially as '14 point croquet'. Hoops 3 and 4 are the lift hoops and present the striker with three tactical choices.

45.1 scoring hoops 1 and 2 only, not conceding a lift and laying up with a ball in hoop 3 and the enemy balls cross-wired at hoops 1 or 4. The plan is to finish with a straight quadruple peel.

45.2 scoring hoops 1, 2 and 3, conceding a lift and laying up with a diagonal spread leave (own balls about 8-12 yards N of C4 with a rush towards the peg, one enemy ball SW of hoop 2, the other just SE of the peg, wired from its partner and hampered on the others). The plan is to finish with a delayed triple peel.

45.3 scoring four, five or six hoops, conceding contact and hoping to win by hitting the lift or some other shot or, if pegged out, hoping to win off the contact leave.

46. HANDICAP PLAY IN SHORTENED GAMES

No comment required.

PART 4: CONDUCT OF THE GAME

Section A: General Laws of Conduct

47. THE STATE OF THE GAME

47.1 This requires little comment. The adversary is required to answer to the best of his ability any factual question about the state of the game. The list provided by Law 47(a) is deliberately detailed but it is not exhaustive. There may be other examples of questions about the state of the game.

47.2 If the adversary gives honest but erroneous information, the striker may be entitled to a replay under Law 31. If the adversary gives deliberately misleading information, this is cheating and subject to penalty under Law 55 up to and including disqualification.

47.3 The state of the game does not include information or advice about how to play a stroke. Neither does it include information or advice on the Laws or Regulations for Tournaments although the adversary is under a duty to provide information on the Laws and Regulations in his capacity as a joint referee of the game while he is so acting (see Law 48).

48. REFEREES OF THE GAME

48.1 Note that a player is a referee of the game only while he is watching the game (see Law 48(a)(2)). While he is a referee of the game, he has all the powers, duties and rights of a referee on call or on appeal. This includes an obligation to explain the law to the striker if asked. However, if the adversary is absent from the game when the striker commits an error based on a misapprehension of the law, the striker has no redress as he could always have called another referee.

48.2 Law 48(b) imposes an unqualified duty on the striker, who is always a joint referee of the game, to announce any error or interference that 'he believes or suspects that he may have committed'. Note the word 'suspects'. The striker must cease play, at least temporarily, if he is at all unsure about the legitimacy of a

stroke or whether he has played correctly. He should then consult with the adversary and obtain his agreement before resuming.

48.3 Perhaps the most frequent exercise of the striker's obligation lies in calling a referee to watch before he plays a questionable stroke. This is defined extensively in Law 48(d).

48.4 Law 48(b) imposes a similar duty on the adversary when acting as joint referee of the game. Note that the exercise of this duty is expressly subject to Law 23 (forestalling) and that, as a joint referee of the game, the adversary may be obliged to forestall play against his own interests.

48.5 Law 48(d) requires the striker to call a referee or consult the adversary if he is about to play a questionable stroke, and the adversary to forestall play if the striker does not. Note that the term questionable stroke includes not only one that may be a fault, but also one whose effect may be doubtful. It is only dynamic effects that are relevant (e.g. will the SB hit an OB that could also move because it is near a hoop upright): you do not need to summon a referee every time you are uncertain whether you are going to run a hoop, because that can be determined statically afterwards! The amount of doubt necessary to make a stroke questionable is a matter of judgement, as every attempted roquet might result in just snicking the ball, and in the case of peg outs it is to some extent a matter of local custom. In some instances, it may be more appropriate to have a rush of a rover ball to the peg watched, rather than a subsequent short peg out. One case where this law should be invoked more often is when the striker is aiming at balls close together on the yard-line, or is aiming to rush a ball near to another on the yard-line, as a cannon may or may not result.

48.6 If the adversary fails to forestall play before what he should have recognised as a questionable stroke (Law 48(d)(3)), then he is debarred from claiming a fault afterwards, unless the facts are not disputed. Thus, if he sees the striker aiming to hit a hampered shot by holding his mallet by the end of its head, he need not summon a referee (and thus alert the striker to his error) as he is in no doubt that it will be a fault, but if there is any dispute about the facts then his claim will fail.

48.7 Law 48(d)(4) states that a fault should be declared if the observer (or the striker) believes that it is more likely than not that the law was infringed. Thus a striker cannot get away with playing a stroke in such a manner that the referee is unable to determine for certain what went on; he can and should be faulted if the referee thought it likely that it was unlawful.

48.8 Law 48(e) prohibits the adversary from following the striker round the court. If the adversary is concerned about the quality of some of the striker's strokes, typically croquet strokes, he should ask for a referee in charge to be appointed so that the referee can carry out the close quarters scrutiny.

48.9 Law 48(f) is based on common sense principles of fairness. It states that independent witnesses should not be consulted without the express permission of the other player. However, if one player refuses to allow a witness to be consulted, the correct procedure is for the other player to call a referee who, as referee on appeal, is empowered to consult any witnesses he wishes, even if one of the players objects. Law 48(f) contains the well-known phrase 'the positive opinion is generally to be preferred to the negative opinion'. It should be noted that this only extends to the question of whether or not a ball has been hit or has moved. In other cases, (with the exception of a collision with a static outside agency), the opinion of the player better placed to give one is to be preferred.

49. EXPEDITION IN PLAY

49.1 Expedition in play is one of the thornier issues that can surround time-limited games. Croquet is not an aerobic activity and there is no requirement that players should sprint between strokes (although some do!). A walk that is not obviously dawdling is quite sufficient.

49.2 However, once a player has arrived at the location of his next stroke, he is expected to play 'with reasonable despatch'. It is here that complaints usually arise when a player takes a seemingly interminable time to get ready to swing the mallet in earnest. Repeated false starts and restalkings can raise the blood pressure of even the most patient of adversaries.

49.3 A nine-hoop break with a leave consists of 70 strokes and can generally be completed in 12 to 25 minutes, giving an average time per stroke of between 10 and 20 seconds. In practice, a referee is unlikely to take action until the average duration rises to 30 seconds per stroke (45 minutes for an all-round break) and should also be influenced by the tactical difficulties and lawn conditions that the striker faces. It may be argued that players differ greatly in their natural rhythms and that croquet is a game intended to be played with care. Nonetheless, if a time-limit is in operation, the adversary is entitled to consideration. It is also

worthy of note that some extraordinary accelerations in the pace of play have been seen in apparently slow players when a slender lead has become a deficit.

49.4 Nonetheless, if the referee agrees that the striker is taking an unjustifiably long time, he is fully entitled to use Law 55 to end the turn at any time. Naturally, the striker should be warned first and have explained to him the basis on which the referee will act. A less radical solution may be found in summarily and publicly awarding extra time.

50. ADVICE AND AIDS

50.1 This law deals with the issues raised when a third party interferes with a game by announcing that an error has been committed which has hitherto been unnoticed by both players. The settled policy is that croquet is a private contest between the players and that a game should not be influenced by the eyes, ears or intelligence of other people.

50.2 The only exceptions are the partner in doubles play and a 'duly authorised referee', meaning one who is officiating in some proper role and not an onlooker who just happens to be a referee. There is a further exception if the adversary wrongly volunteers advice. Although the player is not entitled to ask for such advice, it would be unfair to prohibit him from doing something that he might well have decided to do anyway. The reason for prohibiting one player from giving advice to the other is simple. Such behaviour, even if well-intentioned, can be resented as patronising and overbearing. It can also be a form of gamesmanship which is simply psychological cheating.

50.3 Law 50(a)(1)

50.3.1 This deals with the case where a bystander goes up to a player (A) who believes his turn has just ended, and who has quitted the court, and tells him, but not his adversary (B), that he, A, committed an error in that turn. If B has already played his first stroke, the limit of claims of the error will definitely have passed and there is no problem and nothing for A to do anyway, save to rebuke the bystander politely for interfering.

50.3.2 However, if the first stroke of the new turn has not yet been played, it is possible that B will remember the error unaided before the limit of claims has passed. The policy underlying Law 50(a)(1) is to retain this possibility by requiring A to say and do nothing, recognising that A can no longer influence the position of the balls and clips. If B realises that A committed an error before playing his first stroke, all well and good. If he does not and plays the first stroke of his turn, the balance of the game will have been undisturbed. Again, the bystander should be politely rebuked.

50.4 Law 50(a)(2)

This deals with the case when the striker is still on court when a bystander interferes by informing him that he has committed an error. It recognises that the information from the bystander places the striker in an impossible position if it is correct and if the limit of claims has not passed. The only logical way of continuing the game is to cease play, rectify the error and then ask a referee to restore the balance of the game (see 50.7 below).

50.5 Law 50(a)(3)

50.5.1 This deals with the case when the striker is still on court when a bystander interferes by informing the adversary that the striker has committed an error. It recognises that the information from the bystander places the adversary in an impossible position if it is correct and if the limit of claims has not passed. How can he deal with subsequent strokes in error or if the striker commits a different error in consequence of the first error. The only logical way of continuing the game is to forestall play, rectify the error and then ask a referee to restore the balance of the game (see 50.7 below).

50.5.2 The difference between Law 50(a)(2) and (3) is the role of Law 23(b). If a bystander tells the adversary that the striker has committed a non-fatal error or is about to commit a fatal error when the adversary is already aware of the fact but has not forestalled because of Law 23(b), the bystander should be politely rebuked and adversary may continue as if the bystander had not spoken.

50.6 Law 50(a)(4)

This deals with the case when a bystander announces to either player that an interference has occurred, typically that a ball is misplaced. Again the only logical way of proceeding is to cease play or forestall, correct the interference and ask a referee to restore the balance of the game (see 50.7 below).

50.7 Law 50(a), final sentence

If the error is non-fatal (i.e. covered by Law 27(e) to (i)), no action is required other than rectification because the striker will retain the innings. However, if the error is fatal, rectification must be followed by the end of the striker's turn unless the referee decides that this would not be an appropriate outcome. This is only likely to be the case in the case of a fault committed by the striker that neither side had noticed before the spectator intervened nor, in the opinion of the referee, would have been likely to have noticed.

The other fatal errors have a longer limit of claims and it will be difficult to be sure that the error would not have been noticed. In these cases, the underlying principle is that a referee must give a compromise decision under Law 55 that does not give the adversary the full benefit that would have accrued had he noticed the error or interference. This could mean requiring the adversary to start his turn by taking a lift shot at an arbitrarily placed ball.

51. MISCELLANEOUS LAWS OF CONDUCT

Law 51(a) has been expanded to prohibit the offering of advice by the adversary to the striker. This is necessary for the reasons stated in 50.2 above.

Section B: Special Laws

52. DOUBLE-BANKED GAMES

This law sets out standard procedures to be followed for the smooth running of double-banked games on the same court. Note the requirement to get the permission of the players of the other game before marking a ball of that game. For a ball in a non-critical position, normal practice is to ask the striker and rely on him to tell his adversary if the ball has not been replaced by the end of his turn, but if the position may be critical to them both players should be consulted. A player intending to consult only the striker in the other game should, however, be careful. The position of a ball may not appear to be critical, but in fact it may be for wiring purposes and the striker in the other game may be unaware of the fact.

53. TOURNAMENT AND MATCH PLAY

53.1 Law 53 imports the Regulations for Tournaments for tournaments and matches and empowers the advertised tournaments conditions to govern hoop dimensions (Law 53(b)) and impasses (Law 53(f)) (see 53.4 below).

53.2 Law 53(b)(3) is an optional (at the discretion of tournament organisers) alternative for Law 35(b), which provides that the striker may replay a stroke that he believes may have been affected by a mis-set hoop or mis-shapen ball (even if the ball staggered through the hoop), if, after measurement, it is found that the ball could jam on some axis. Some players believe this to be fairer than the standard provision and the ILC will be interested in feedback if it is used. It can be any ball that has been affected, not just the striker's ball. "Another reason" in the final phrase means a reason unconnected with the relative width of the ball and hoop, so the striker does not get a replay if he sent his ball off in a croquet stroke in which the peelee just staggered through the hoop, but would if his ball stayed on, but the peelee bounced back out of the jaws onto his mallet.

53.3 The main differences between organised and friendly games relate to the almost mandatory role of referees regarding questionable strokes, testing and repeated faults. Law 53(d) now explicitly gives both players the right to observe the referee conduct a test, providing that they do not get in the way, and to appeal if they believe that the referee is incorrectly applying the law by using an invalid procedure, but not if their observations differ from his.

53.4 The ILC issued a recommended regulation for resolving impasses under Law 53(f) in 2007, which reads:

“IMPASSE

(1) Either side may appeal to a referee that an impasse exists when it is their turn to play or a referee in charge may declare that an impasse exists.

(2) If on appeal, the referee decides that there is no impasse, play will continue normally. The referee will monitor the game until the tactical situation changes significantly, or until the referee decides that an impasse now exists.

(3) Once the referee has declared an impasse, play will continue normally for ten further turns (20 if there are only two balls in the game and both are for the peg). If the impasse still exists at the end of this period, the following remedies will be applied:-

(A) All balls still in play are removed from the lawn and then played back into the game from baulk. Except in (C) below, the clips are not moved. A coin toss will determine which side may choose to play first or second, unless there are only three balls remaining in the game, in which case the side with two balls will play first.

(B) If there are three or four balls still in the game, the game shall proceed normally.

(C) If only two balls remain in the game and both are for the peg, a tie-break contesting the last four hoops and the peg shall be played (the winning score will be recorded as +1 or 26-25). Both players are entitled to lifts under Law 36 of the Laws of Association Croquet, irrespective of who pegged out the other balls.

(D) If only two balls remain in the game and they are not both for the peg, play shall proceed normally except that no roquet will be allowed until the first stroke of:

the eleventh turn after the restart; or

the first turn after one in which a hoop point has been scored other than by peeling.

If, during the prohibition on roquets, the striker's ball hits the opponent's ball, the stroke will be treated as though the opponent's ball were dead."

Note that the entitlement to lifts in 3(C) was only intended to apply in games which started under the Laws of Advanced Play!

53.4.1 The ILC believe that an impasse should be declared in a timed game with plenty of time remaining, if neither side is willing to make progress, rather than allowing the side ahead on points to play for time. The reason for this is that time limits are a managerial necessity, rather than a fundamental part of the game.

53.5 Note that if two players want to use time-limits for a social game, they are entitled to treat it as a match and apply Law 53(g) accordingly.

54. LOCAL LAWS

No comment required.

55. OVERRIDING LAW

55.1 Law 55(a) expressly refers to this document in cases of interpretative difficulty. It is to be hoped that these will be few in number but no-one can guarantee what the imagination of croquet players and the random accidents of the game may produce. Hence the reference to ORLC as a source of guidance and, where unavoidably necessary, an authoritative statement of the correct interpretation of a particular law.

55.2 Law 55(c) sets out a wide range of measures available to a referee in order that he may do justice. That is the overriding requirement. It should not be forgotten. Neither should it be forgotten that disqualification is the last resort. The aim of the lawmakers is to promote the playing of croquet and disqualification is a public humiliation which may well cause the recipient to leave the game for good. This is not to be desired but, nonetheless, the loss of a cheat is no loss at all.