

Croquet Australia

Handicapping Regulations (Association Croquet)

Revised December 2006

These handicapping regulations apply to all Association Croquet tournaments and competitions conducted within Australia and all accredited international matches.

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The Regulations

1. Definitions:

- 1.1. **AHS Card** means the Automatic Handicapping System Card issued by Croquet Australia. The cards are available on the Croquet Australia website for printing as needed.
- 1.2. **A State, Club or Tournament Handicapper** is an Official Handicapper who has been elected or appointed to that position by the agreed procedures of the relevant State or Club, or by Croquet Australia.
- 1.3. Association Croquet **players** in these Regulations are members of croquet clubs in Australia who play Association Croquet and are affiliated (through their Club and State) to Croquet Australia. They are herein referred to as players. Players affiliated with more than one club or more than one state will only have one ID number.
- 1.4. A **tournament** is an Official Tournament organised and run by Croquet Australia, State Associations or Clubs. A tournament may consist of a single event or several discrete events (eg. Men's Singles, Women's Singles, Open Doubles.) Tournaments are governed by the Tournament Regulations.
- 1.5. An **event** is a single competitive event, open to a defined range of players, and expected to have a single winner (eg. Championship Singles for Handicaps 9-16, Women's Handicap.) Social events are excluded. An

event may be a part of a tournament, or may be independent of tournaments (eg. a club competition.)

- 1.6. **Competitive singles games** are those which are part of an event. They are governed by the Tournament Regulations and the Laws of Association Croquet, and include but are not limited to

1.6.1. Tournament games

1.6.2. Interclub, interstate and international games; and

1.6.3. Club competitions

- 1.7. A **long-running competition** is a competition where individual games are played over a number of weeks or months (i.e. a competition not held on one day or over two or more consecutive days.)
- 1.8. A player's **handicap** is a number used to determine the number of bisques to be given or received in handicap play (Laws 37 and 46.) It may also determine whether the player is eligible for a particular event.
- 1.9. A player's **index** is a number recorded on the AHS card, which changes after each competitive singles game. When the index changes sufficiently, it will trigger a change in handicap. (See the instructions on the AHS card.)

2. Handicaps:

- 2.1. These regulations govern the administration of Player handicaps under the Laws of Association Croquet.
- 2.2. Handicaps for Players shall be on a scale with a range from -3 to 24 with steps as set out on the AHS Card.
- 2.3. Every player shall have an official handicap determined as below (paragraphs 3, 4 and 10.)
- 2.4. All players will be given an initial handicap by their Club Handicapper when they start playing. Thereafter their handicap will change as described in paragraphs 3 and 4 below.
- 2.5. In handicap games players use the handicap shown on their card at the start of that game to decide bisque entitlement.
- 2.6. For level (non-handicap) singles games players use the handicap shown on their card at the start of the game to determine the index changes after the game.
- 2.7. Any Player wishing to enter singles or doubles competitions or play competitive singles or doubles matches shall be entitled to do so only if they comply with these Regulations.

3. Automatic Changes of Handicaps:

- 3.1. The Automatic Handicapping System (AHS) is the primary method by which handicaps change.
- 3.2. Whenever players play a competitive singles game, they update their AHS card according to the instructions on the card. In all cases this will result in a change in their index. When the index changes sufficiently, that will trigger a change in the player's handicap (See the instructions on the card.)

- 3.3. Indexes do not change as a result of doubles play, except as in paragraph 4.
- 3.4. While indexes change after all singles games, handicaps only change when:
 - 3.4.1. at the end of an event in a tournament played over consecutive days, the index has reached or passed the trigger point for a new handicap
 - 3.4.2. immediately after a game in a long-running competition, the index has reached or passed the trigger point for a new handicap, or
 - 3.4.3. before the next game played after a non-automatic handicap change is made.

Guidelines:

- *In a tournament with several events, if a trigger point has been reached when a player's involvement in an event concludes, then the handicap changes before continuing with other events in the tournament.*
- *During an event played over consecutive days, it is the value of the index after the player's last game in the event that determines if a handicap changes, even if a trigger point had been temporarily reached or passed during the event.*

4. Non-Automatic Changes of Handicaps

- 4.1. In some situations, the AHS is unable to respond quickly enough to changes in a player's ability. These situations include:
 - 4.1.1. The player plays very few competitive singles games
 - 4.1.2. The player's play improves or deteriorates so rapidly that the AHS cannot keep up.
- 4.2. In these situations, Tournament Handicappers and Club Handicappers are empowered to change players' handicaps. They may make changes within the following limits:
 - Handicaps 24-20: any amount of change
 - Handicaps 18-11: no less than 2 steps reduction, any increase
 - Handicaps 10-0: no less than 3 steps reduction, any increase
 - Minus handicaps: no reductions, any increase
(The steps of handicap are shown on the AHS card. Each step corresponds to 2 bisques, 1 bisque, or 0.5 bisque at various places in the handicap scale.)
- 4.3. In making these changes, handicappers must be guided by considering what handicap the player needs to be on to compete effectively with other players who are playing sufficient competitive singles games for the AHS to be effective.

Guideline:

- *10 competitive singles games over a six month period will generally be sufficient to allow handicaps to change automatically*

- 4.4. Otherwise players' handicaps should be left to change automatically.

5. Players shall:

- 5.1. complete an entry on an official Croquet Australia AHS Card for each competitive singles game played.
- 5.2. maintain an accurate record on their AHS cards of all competitive singles games they play and report their current handicap and index to Tournament or Competition Managers at the start of an event.
- 5.3. if their handicap changes as a result of games played in an event, have the Official Handicapper sign their cards before they leave the event.
- 5.4. if their handicap changes as a result of any game played in a long-running club or interclub competition, have the Club Handicapper sign their cards confirming the change before playing any other singles games.
- 5.5. immediately advise their Club Handicapper whenever their handicap changes.
- 5.6. show their official AHS cards to Tournament Managers and Handicappers on request.

Notes:

Should players wish to keep a card of non-competitive games, they may do so, but this must be kept separate from the official card.

Beginning players should be encouraged by handicappers and clubs to keep unofficial cards of singles games for interest and experience, and to assist their Club Handicapper to assess their play.

6. State Handicappers shall:

- 6.1. assist Club Handicappers in understanding the handicapping system and these Regulations
- 6.2. liaise with Club Handicappers when they are making non-automatic handicap changes, to ensure that a uniform standard applies throughout the State Association. This is particularly important when the player is playing in competitive events which may not qualify for AHS, eg. doubles events.
- 6.3. where operating as a Tournament Handicapper, fulfil all the duties as in paragraph 9.
- 6.4. carry out any other AHS-related functions as required by their State Association.

7. Club Handicappers shall:

- 7.1. make any required non-automatic handicap changes for players within the club and notify the State Handicapper of the handicaps of these players when the changes are made. Any such changes must be in accordance with paragraph 4.2, and shall be effective immediately.
- 7.2. check and sign the AHS cards of players whose handicaps change automatically as a result of games played in long-running competitions. These changes must be notified on the Handicap Changes Report Form (available on the Croquet Australia website) by the Club Handicapper to the State Handicapper immediately they take place.
- 7.3. observe the play of club members during club or interclub competitions.
- 7.4. provide a letter to accompany a club member who is about to enter a tournament/competition and is improving rapidly, addressed to the Tournament Manager suggesting that the player's handicap should be kept under review

- 7.5. keep a record of the current handicaps of all players within their club and provide assistance to those players requiring help in maintaining an accurate official AHS card.
- 7.6. assign handicaps to new players in accordance with paragraph 10 below.

Guidelines

- *In making non-automatic handicap changes, Club Handicappers are expected to use the handicaps of other players with similar skills as benchmarks.*
- *Club Handicappers will not need to seek approval from elsewhere for any decisions they make about non-automatic handicap changes. However, advice may be sought from State Handicappers if the Club Handicapper wishes, and must be sought if the player is going to play competitive games that may not qualify for AHS, eg. interclub doubles.*
- *Clubs may require that non-automatic handicap changes for club members be determined by committee and in this case the Club Handicapper shall comply with the committee's decisions.*

8. Tournament Managers shall:

- 8.1. co-operate with the Tournament Handicapper to check that Players' handicaps are accurately recorded on tournament records at the time they commence play in the tournament.
- 8.2. at the end of the Tournament, record on the Handicap Changes Report Form, the details of any Player whose handicap has changed at the end of the tournament, and changes to the handicap of any player determined by the Tournament Handicapper.
- 8.3. immediately forward that Form, together with the Tournament score sheets, to the State Handicapper if required.
- 8.4. delegate the duties of a Tournament Handicapper, to Assistant Tournament Managers at the venues for which they are responsible.

9. Tournament Handicappers shall:

- 9.1. at the start of the Tournament assist the Tournament Manager in the checking and accurate recording of Players' Handicaps.
- 9.2. be responsible for all Handicapping issues during a Tournament.
- 9.3. sign off AHS cards of all players whose handicaps have changed at the end of an event.

Guideline:

- *When signing off a card for a handicap change, a Tournament or Club Handicapper should check the calculations leading to the changes in handicap, and ensure that recent games have been properly entered on the card.*
- 9.4. in tournaments or events have discretion to make non-automatic handicap changes at the beginning of or during any event for any player in accordance with paragraph 4.2. Any such changes shall be effective immediately.
- 9.5. record and initial on a player's card, all non-automatic handicap changes as they are made.

- 9.6. ensure that an Assistant Manager or other person is designated to perform the duties of a Tournament Handicapper at subsidiary tournament venues.

Guidelines:

- *Players may have their handicap changed before a game at any time during the Tournament by the Tournament Handicapper, in accordance with paragraph 4.2.*
- *Players judged to have handicaps too high by less than the amounts specified in paragraph 4.2 will be adjusted by the normal operation of the AHS.*

10. New Players:

- 10.1. Club Handicappers shall assess each new player when they have joined the Club as an affiliated player and are admitted to general club play, and assign them a handicap based on the level at which they are best likely to compete.
- 10.2. Their starting AHS index will be the one corresponding to their starting handicap. The Club Handicapper must sign the card after assigning the initial handicap.

Guidelines:

- *To assist Club Handicappers in their assessment, they should encourage the use of AHS cards by new players for friendly games before they begin competition.*
- *Full Bisque Play and Coaching:*
State Associations and Clubs should encourage the use of full bisque handicap play (see Appendix 3 of the Laws in the Australian Laws Book) particularly for players of handicap 10-24, in order to enable them to learn, and enjoy, the use of bisques in competitive games.
- *As soon as new players take part in an organised doubles game at the club, their handicaps should be reduced to 22. This does not need to be a tournament and can include doubles games with more experienced partners.*
- *After playing in a club singles game (again, not necessarily a tournament,) the handicap should be changed to 20.*
- *If one of the above guidelines has been used, the highest handicap a player can use in a national tournament is 20.*

11. Overseas Players:

- 11.1. Overseas players will be assigned an initial handicap based on the handicaps of Australian Players of similar World Ranking.
- 11.2. This will be calculated and assigned by the Tournament Handicapper of the first tournament they enter.
- 11.3. Following that assignment, they shall be treated as any Australian player to whom the AHS applies.

12. Handicap Card use when playing Overseas

Croquet Australia, the New Zealand Croquet Council and the U.K. have agreed to allow Australian cardholders to use their Australian cards when playing in overseas tournaments.

- 12.1. When playing in the U.K. players use their cards exactly the same as in Australia.
- 12.2. Before leaving to play in New Zealand, contact the Australian National Handicapper who will assign a NZ handicap to use while away.

13. Shortened Games:

The provisions of these Regulations shall apply to shortened games played under any of the official variations in Laws 44-46

14. Players not Complying with National Handicapping Regulations

- *In the first instance, the Player should be informed that it is a requirement under the National Handicapping regulations for a Croquet Australia AHS card to be carried and filled in and that it had been noted that this had not been followed.*
- *If the behaviour were repeated at a subsequent event, the player would be reminded once more and be informed that a future tournament entry may be rejected.*
- *Possible rejection of such Player's entry in a future event.*

FURTHER GUIDELINES.

The official AHS card.

- *Instructions for use of this card are printed on it.*
- *Handicap cards can be printed from the Croquet Australia website*

Aim of the system

- *The aim of the Automatic Handicapping System is to ensure that two Players in a handicap game (or two Players on the same handicap in a championship game) have an equal chance of winning when they play each other.*
- *The Automatic Handicapping System does this by adding points when games are won and subtracting points when games are lost. These are called "index points."*

Index Points

- *Each player is required to maintain an AHS card, which records the result of every competitive singles game played and the index points added or subtracted.*
- *Index points increase after each win and decrease after each loss. The winner adds the number of points to his/her index that are shown on the AHS card for the handicaps of the two players involved. The loser subtracts the number of points shown in the same place on the AHS card. The number of points depends on whether the game is played handicap or level.*
- *For handicap games the number of points is always 10.*
- *For level games the number of the points varies depending on the handicaps of the*

two players.

Handicap Changes

- *Winning games and thus accumulating index points can result in a player reaching or passing the "trigger point" for a handicap different from the player's current handicap, at which time their handicap will reduce.*
- *Losing games and thus losing index points can result in a player reaching or passing the "trigger point" for a handicap different from the player's current handicap, at which time their handicap will increase.*
- *In events taking place on consecutive days, handicaps will change:*
 1. *only if the index has reached or passed the trigger point for a handicap different from the player's current handicap at the end of the event*

or

 2. *if, during the event, the Tournament Handicapper makes a non-automatic change to the handicap of a player.*
- *In competitions taking place over a long period of time (such as interclub and club competitions,) handicaps will change and be notified to, and signed by, the handicapper of the event as soon as the player's index reaches the trigger point for a handicap different from their present handicap. In this instance the handicap change takes place immediately, not at the end of the event. The player will be eligible to continue to play in the event.*

Players whose index falls below 900

Players whose index reduces to or falls below 900 do not revert to Handicap 22 or 24. Their handicap and index is reset to 20 and 900. No player ever returns to a Handicap of 22 or 24.

Players withdrawing from an Event

All results are deleted from the tournament score sheets as if that player never entered the event at all.

However, for Handicapping purposes, all games completed are entered on the cards of the two players concerned. All games completed or started must be recorded. If a withdrawal occurs during a game, that game should be recorded as a loss to the person who withdraws.

The Australian Croquet Association wishes to acknowledge the generous assistance of the New Zealand Croquet Council in the preparation of these Regulations.