



# **LEVEL 1 COACHING PROGRAMME**

Issued by

**CROQUET AUSTRALIA**

**Australian Croquet Association Inc.**

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<b>ADMIN SECTION:</b>	<b>page</b>
Programme provider information	2
ACA structure, etc.	3
Programme information	3
Provider arrangements, etc.	4
Re-accreditation	5
Bibliography	6
Assessments, etc.	7
Recognition of prior learning	7
Evaluation and review	8
Competency statements	8
 <b>COACHING SECTION:</b>	
Introductory notes	9
The training programme	10
The programme syllabus	11
 <b>Single-ball strokes:</b>	
Grip, stance and swing	11
Roquets	12
Rushes	13
Hoop running	14
 <b>Croquet strokes:</b>	
Fine take-offs	17
Thick take-offs	18
Hoop approaches	21
Rolls	23
Splits	28
Centre-style or side-style?	31
Right-angle cannon	32
B.O.T.T. cannon	33
 <b>Tactics</b>	<b>34</b>
 <b>Error correction</b>	<b>39</b>
 <b>Physiology</b>	<b>44</b>
Principles of good coaching	46
Goal setting	47
 What is not covered?	48
Programme evaluation	49

## **THE AUSTRALIAN CROQUET ASSOCIATION.**

### **ORGANISATION'S FUNCTION AND STRUCTURE:**

The organisation is a community-based incorporated National Sporting Organisation. It controls all competitions other than state's domestic events, and owns equipment for the same; trains coaches and referees; publishes and distributes a quarterly magazine; controls National and International handicaps of Australian players; selects players and teams for International competitions; is a member of the World Croquet Federation; has representation on the International Laws Committee; controls the day-to-day business of the Australian Croquet Association Inc. as the parent body for Association Croquet, Aussie Croquet, Golf Croquet and Gateball.

Coach education fits into the structure accordingly —

#### **LEVEL 3 COACH TRAINING ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME:**

**Level 2 Coach Training,**  
**coaching practice at Level 2,**  
**Croquet Specifics course.**  
**Research Assignment and case studies.**  
**Quadrennial updating required.**

#### **LEVEL 2 COACH TRAINING ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME:**

**Level 1 Coach Training,**  
**coaching practice at Level 1,**  
**Croquet Specifics course,**  
**Level 2 Sports Principles prior to Level 2 Croquet Specifics course.**  
**Research assignment.**  
**Quadrennial updating required.**

#### **LEVEL 1 COACH TRAINING ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME:**

**Beginner Coach Training,**  
**coaching practice at Beginner level,**  
**General Sport Principles prior to Level 1 Croquet Specifics course.**  
**Quadrennial updating required.**  
**Updating.**

#### **BEGINNER COACH TRAINING ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME:**

**Croquet Specifics course only.**  
**Quadrennial updating required.**

Aussie Croquet specific. Non accreditation:

#### **ORIENTATION COACH TRAINING PROGRAMME**

(Note: In some states a police clearance may be needed to work with school-age children.)

#### **COACH EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The above coach-training programmes are delivered through an organisational structure involving:

**National Coaching Director**

**State Coaching Directors**

State Coaching Committees

State Association Regional Coordinators

(Use is also made of the National Croquet Magazine, State Newsletters and Regional newsletters.)

## **PROGRAMME PROVIDER ARRANGEMENTS**

The State Croquet Associations are endorsed to deliver this programme on behalf of Croquet Australia, through the State Coaching Directors, provided that the programme presenter is a currently registered coach.

Where the SCD is not a currently registered coach, then the State Coaching Committee will assume the role.

No fees apply to this arrangement on behalf of Croquet Australia.

## **PROGRAMME PRESENTER & ASSESSOR ARRANGEMENTS**

All programme presenters and assessors must be currently registered coaches.

All programme presenters and assessors must be appointed by the SCD or the State Coaching Committee in the absence of a SCD.

Programme presenters and assessors with Course Presenter, Trainer or Assessor Training will normally be preferred over non-trained presenters.

All Coach Training Programme must be organised and advertised through the SCD.

Programme presenters and assessors may use assistants, but these people must be currently registered coaches.

All course presenters and assessors must deliver the Coach Training Program in accordance with the specific curricula.

SCDs will grant coaching status only after they are satisfied that the aspiring coach has undertaken all of the required work and has been properly assessed.

Only SCDs will register coaches.

Croquet Australia will monitor delivery as outlined below (See **Quality Control**)

## **AGE OF ENTRY**

Participants must be at least 16 years of age to receive coaching qualification.

## **NOMINAL DURATION OF PROGRAMMES**

Beginner Coaching Programme - 5 hours duration, all croquet specific. Assessment extra.

Level 1 Coach Training Programme - 10 hours duration for croquet specific. Includes assessment.

Level 2 Coach Training Programme - 60 hours duration for croquet specific. Includes assessment.

Level 3 Coach Training Programme - 60 hours duration (Mentored). Includes assessment.

## **TARGET MARKETS**

Beginner Coaching - Beginner coaches trained in beginner skills and tactics.

Level 1 - Primary skills and tactics.

Level 2 - Intermediate skills and tactics.

Level 3 - Advanced skills and tactics.

## **NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS**

The number of participants will be limited to 12 for each approved Programme Presenter, not including assistants. Any number may undertake to complete the Level 2 course by correspondence under the supervision of the SCD and NCD.

## **PHYSICAL SCREENING**

No physical screening check will be required of participants.

## **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Candidates must attend all teaching sessions as required by the State Coaching Committees.

## CROQUET AUSTRALIA - REACCREDITATION

### UPDATING ACTIVITIES/POINTS:

**To achieve reaccreditation after 4 years, a coach must be actively involved in coaching.**

**Beginner Coaches must accumulate 12 points during each 4 year period of registration.**

**Level 1 coaches must accumulate 24 points during each 4 year period of registration.**

**Level 2 coaches must accumulate 48 points during each 4 year period of registration.**

**Level 3 coaches must accumulate 50 points during each 4 year period of registration.**

### MANDATORY COACHING HOURS

<b>Beginner Coaches - Complete a minimum of 20 hours coaching</b>	8 pts
<b>Level 1 coaches - Complete a minimum of 40 hours coaching</b>	15 pts
<b>Level 2 coaches - Complete a minimum of 80 hours coaching</b>	30 pts
<b>Level 3 coaches - Complete a minimum of 80 hours coaching</b> (At least 20 hours must be for coaching players handicapped 7 or better)	30 pts

### OTHER WAYS OF ACCUMULATING REACCREDITATION POINTS:

Complete additional hours of coaching - for each 5 hours up to 30 hrs.	1 pt*
Mentoring other coaches in Level 1, 2, 3 courses	10 pts
Working with a senior coach - each 3 hours	2 pts
Attending updating workshops - 3 hours	2 pts
6 hours	4 pts
weekend	8 pts
Attending coaching workshops - 3 hours	2 pts
6 hours	4 pts
weekend	8 pts
Conduct a croquet specifics course - Beginner Coaching	4 pts
Level 1 Croquet Specifics	8 pts
Level 2 Croquet Specifics	16 pts
Conduct a state authorised coaching clinic - each 1/2 day	8 pts
Assist at a state authorised coaching clinic - each 1/2 day	4 pts
Be a current ACA umpire (once for each 4 year period)	1 pts
Be a current ACA referee (once for each 4 year period)	2 pts
Hold a current First Aid certificate (for each 4 year period)	2 pts
Membership on state coaching committee (for each 4 year period)	8 pts

\* This does not apply to Beginner Coaches who must accumulate 8 points for actual coaching and 4 points for attendance at 2 refresher courses over any 4 year period of registration.

**REFERENCE MATERIAL** for all courses might include-

**For Beginner Coaching:-**

Aussie Croquet - Croquet Australia  
Beginner's Croquet - Chambers B. & Hall S.  
Croquet - Teach Yourself - Gaunt D.

**For Level 1 Coach Training:-**

Attention Control Training - Nidiffer. R.  
Beginning Coaching - Aust. Sports Commission  
Croquet Coaching - Error Correction - Riches J.  
Croquet Coaching Handbook - Brereton K.  
Croquet : Lessons in Tactics - Riches J.  
Croquet Skills Videos - Brereton K.  
Mental Skills Training for Sports - Rushall B.  
The Australian Croquet Manual - Sloane R.  
Take a Bisque - Hass N.

**For Level 2 Coach Training:-**

Any of the above.  
Australian Laws Book - ACA  
Croquet : Finer Points - Riches J.  
Croquet : The Mental Approach - Riches J.  
Croquet : Next Break Strategy - Riches J.  
Plus One On Time - Gaunt D.  
Practical Umpiring - Roberts G.  
The Winning Factor - Stanton H.E.

**For Level 3 Coach Training:-**

Any of the above.  
Better Coaching - Australian Sports Commission  
Croquet - Solomon  
Croquet and How To Play It - Miller D. Thorp R.  
Drugs Sport and Exercise - ASC  
In Pursuit of Excellence - Orlick T.  
Psyching for Sport - Orlick T.  
Psyching in Sport - Nideffer R.  
The Inner Game of Gold - Gallway N.T.  
Visualisation - Video ASC  
Winning! With Sports Psychology - Video ASC

**NOTE: The following five booklets were written by the National Coaching Director in 2008, and contain specific updating material that coaches at the more advanced levels (Level 2 and 3) need to know and be able to pass on to players.**

**Croquet: The Teaching of Tactics**  
**Croquet: Openings**  
**Croquet: Endgames**  
**Croquet: Cannons**  
**Croquet: Error Correction and Hampered Shots.**

**They can be ordered from:**  
**John Riches,**  
**Address: 18/ 85 Winzor St,**  
**Salisbury, SA 5108**  
**Phone: (08) 8182 5641**  
**Email: johnriches@adam.com.au**

## Complaints Handling Procedures

All players, officials and volunteers are covered by the Croquet Australia member Protection Policy. Details are available on the ACA website.

A candidate who has a grievance in relation to the delivery or assessment process of the coach training programme must lodge a complaint with their State Coaching Director within 14 days of their participation in the programme. The State Director of coaching will consider the grievance and deliver a decision to the complainant within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. An appeal against that decision may be lodged with the National Director of Coaching within 14 days of such decision. The National Coaching Director may set up a panel to resolve the matter within 30 days of receipt of the Appeal.

## **COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING DELIVERY**

Upon successful completion of the programme the coach will be able to:-

Deal with the responsibilities and expectations of the sport environment.

Work with others.

Perform individual coaching tasks.

Manage a number of different coaching tasks.

Respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routine within the context of their relevant programme.

Demonstrate the actual teaching of all programme topics.

## **COACH ASSESSMENTS**

All training outcomes are to be assessed by the Programme Presenter upon completion of the Beginner Coaching Programme and the Croquet Specifics part of the programmes.

Correspondence programmes will be assessed by the National Coaching Director.

Assessment will be judged against the above coach competencies and following Competency Statements.

Where a competency is seen to be lacking, feedback will be provided so that the candidate can re-learn the deficient area prior to further assessment.

**Accreditation will only be conferred after satisfactory assessment.**

## **VENUE**

The teaching venue will be decided by the Programme Presenter, but must be at least one full size court, with sufficient balls to allow at least two per student.

Indoor work areas should be available.

The use of a whiteboard and croquet training board is recommended.

## **RECORDS**

A record of accreditation will be kept by the Australian Sports Commission (NCAS), the State Coaching Director (SCD) and the National Coaching Director (NCD)

## **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND CURRENT COMPETENCIES**

There will be no retrospective accreditation. All coaches must satisfy the requirements of each particular level of accreditation.

Overseas Croquet Coaches who are active coaches and who are currently accredited or registered in some other country may gain credits.

The NCD or a designated panel will examine an applicant for equivalency recognition (ie matching the applicant's knowledge and competencies with the objectives of the ACA Coach Training Programme.

The applicant must:-

meet all equivalency criteria,

may be required to complete prescribe 'catch-up' work,

may be required to complete the entire programme.

## **AWARDS AND ENTITLEMENTS**

Upon satisfactory completion of this programme, the coach, after registration, will be recognised by Croquet Australia and will be entitled to wear an ACA metal badge for the period of accreditation.

## **UPDATING AND RE-REGISTRATION**

To retain registration coaches must within each four year period -

Successfully complete a coach-training course at the next level, or -

Attain sufficient updating points for their level of accreditation as outlined by Croquet Australia.

See Updating Activities and Points page.

## **PROGRAMME EVALUATION AND REVIEW METHODS**

A course evaluation form is included at the back of this manual.

Students should fill this in and send it to the SCD after completion of the course.

A review of this course will be carried out from time to time by the ACA Coaching Committee.

## **DESIGN AND REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The National Coaching Director

State Coaching Directors (if accredited at level 2 or 3)

State Coaching Committees (as decided by the NCD)

Other consultants and stakeholders as decided from time to time by the NCD and the ACA.

## **QUADRENNIAL REVIEWS**

All Croquet Australia's Coach-Training Programmes are under constant review and will be submitted to the Australian Sports Commission for accreditation in accordance with its policy.

## **RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL RELATIONS**

Croquet Australia endorses the ASC's Code of Practice for Training Program Provider's.

In addition all enquiries for undertaking this Coach Training program will be given trainee information available from the SCD's.

## **QUALITY CONTROL**

Croquet Australia, through the National Coaching director, will make every effort to see that this programme is relevant and implemented by competent Programme Presenters.

## **COMPETENCY STATEMENTS**

For each level of Coach Training, coaches will be required to demonstrate that they can teach and plan the activities and skills as outlined in the relevant programmes.

Coaches will be required to demonstrate that they can -

- identify the needs of athletes

- use goal-setting as a tool to motivation

- evaluate their own performances and to bring about effective changes

- give correct advice about the rules of the game relevant to coaching at their level of training.

Coaches must be able to prove knowledge in these areas, either by their own playing standard or by satisfactory completion of assignments and workbooks.

Coaches must be able to demonstrate, in written form, knowledge concerning the application of the various sport sciences that relate specifically to croquet at their level of training.

Teaching ability will be assessed by the course presenter or mentor coach.

Assessments will be judged against the stated competency outcomes for the training programme.



The Level 1 Coach Training Program is the next step in coach training from the Beginner Coach Training Program and it is intended to take coaches into the area of primary player coaching within a five tiered system of Orientation, Beginner, Primary, Intermediate and Advanced.

While players ought not to be categorised into defined abilities, it is necessary to presume that learning to play the sport will advance through recognised stages. The same is true with coach training, with each Program from Beginner to Level 2 being a pre-requisite for the next level.

## About this Coach Training Program

This Program is accredited with the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) which falls within the auspices of the Australian Sports Commission's (ASC) Sport Education Section.

This Coach Training Program is open to all registered croquet players who have successfully completed the Beginner Coach Training Program.

The Beginner Coach Training Program and the Level 1 General Principles Program (conducted through the state's coaching centres), plus 20 hours coaching practice at beginner level are pre-requisites to this Program.

This part of the Program is entirely **croquet specific and is of 10 hours duration**, being conducted by the State Coaching Director (SCD) or a designated trained coach or Program presenter.

After successfully completing this Program, and upon payment of the required fee, participants will be registered with the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) and will be required to update every 4 years in order to maintain their National registration. Please refer to **Updating** page .

## Program Objectives

Coaches must be competently and thoroughly trained so as to deliver competent, professional player coaching. This Program is designed to train coaches in the areas relevant to players progressing from Beginner into Primary and towards Intermediate playing standards.

It is recognised that many coaches undertaking Level 1 Coach Training will have both playing and coaching knowledge beyond the scope of this Program, and this Program is meant to be neither restrictive nor demeaning.

## Program Outcomes

[The teaching of the basic strokes is explained in the Beginner Coaching Program and will not be repeated here, as it is assumed that the trainee coach is familiar with the Beginner Program. These Program Outcomes are additional to those of the beginner Program.]

In addition to the strokes and skills covered in the Beginner Programme, the coach will understand and be able to teach the knowledge, skill techniques and tactics required by the player at primary standard in the following areas:

1. Single-ball strokes - roquets, rushes, hoop running; use of "magic aiming points"
1. Croquet strokes - rolls, stop-shots, hoop approaches, fine and thick take-offs
2. Split croquet strokes - finding line of aim and effect of mallet slope.
3. The effect of "pull", mallet-drag and widening angle of split
5. Teaching of tactics - using the problem solving approach
4. Hoop loading. - its importance and methods of achieving it
5. Break making. - use of pivot ball; 4-ball and 3-ball breaks
6. Error Correction - walking, incorrect foot placement, body movement
7. Simple cannons - right-angle cannon, B.O.T.T. cannon

**GRIP, STALK, STANCE & SWING.**

**Learning outcomes** - The Level 1 Coach will be able to explain why different grips, stances and swings may be desirable for players at primary level, to accommodate different player needs.

**GRIP**

After the beginner player has tried the Standard grip and really needs/wants to change to another, show how the Solomon or Irish grips are used, explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each. As with the Standard grip, variations are sometimes used, but hands together is the most desirable.

**STALK**

Continue to be a real pest with the “stalk” word. Insist that every stroke is stalked and make sure that you lead by example. Remember that long-sighted players must stalk from further back than their shorter-sighted friends.

**STANCE**

If a level stance is preferred with the Standard grip, insist that the toes are pointing more or less forwards and that the feet are not too far spread. Check for overbalancing and hampered arm movements. Be aware that some players may not be evenly balanced on both feet and that their weight may be favouring one side. If these players really can not stand balanced equally on both feet, then the coach must be aware that the dominant eye remains over the mallet shaft and not allow the shaft to be held so that it is sloping to one side.

**SWING**

If the player wants to “cast”, then at this stage he should use it to loosen his shoulder muscles and to check the alignment of the mallet-head, then place the mallet on the ground (or just above, at the level where he wants it when it contacts the ball) before starting the final back-swing. Some leading players cast in a continuous motion, but for players at this level there are many possible problems associated with continuous casting. Eventually, a player who wants to cast and move into the swing in a continuous motion should be refereed to a Level 2 or 3 coach, as there are many things that should be understood by players who cast, and the correct technique for particular players can vary, depending on stature, grip, and the reason for casting.

The swing must be from the shoulders, not from the wrists, but some controlled wrist movement may be introduced if the player wishes.

Always discourage a fast swing, whether jerky or not, as the eye will not have time to see the action, especially if the player is casting, and a hurried swing usually involves body movement. All swings must always be smooth, controlled, and deliberate.

**SINGLE BALL STROKES****ROQUETS, RUSHED ROQUETS, HOOP RUNNING, BALL PLACEMENT.**

**Learning outcomes** - The Level 1 Coach will be able to teach the correct techniques and movements required for all single ball strokes; what information to impart to players; and what not to teach. There will be some refinements from the Beginner Coaching Course.

Knowledge of errors and viewing positions to detect errors will be expected. The Level 1 Coach will be asked to demonstrate how to correct certain errors and how to have the correct techniques assimilated into the player's games.

## ROQUETS

The player at primary level ought to be developing a consistent roquet style and therefore achieving many roquets at the 6 yard mark.

At this stage and once other types of stroke are taught, some problems may develop with the single ball strokes. The player should be taught that the roquet, take off, drive and single ball placement strokes are all “normal” strokes, using a smooth, flat mallet action with follow-through.

The height of the mallet back swing plus gravity plus power from the player are all used to gain distance and the order of the above is important to the success of the strokes.

If problems start to develop, the coach must be able to identify them and assist the player to regain the correct technique. (See **Error Correction**).

The coach at this level ought to be aware of “selective memory” when a player seeks help with specific problems.

“I lose games because I can’t roquet” might more truly be - “I stuck in hoops”, “I used poor tactics”, “I played poor take offs”, “My hoop approach strokes let me down”.

If a player has a problem with the roquet, the coach must stand so as to be able to see what is going wrong, remembering that there may be several errors occurring, (especially if the player has tried to solve the problem themselves), and altering only one of these may not necessarily bring about the desired result.

Unfortunately for the coach trying to identify errors in technique, some of them cannot be seen; e.g. a sudden tightening of the grip, muscular tension in the neck and shoulders, or eyes that are not acutely focused on the back of the striker’s ball. Sometimes a little trial and error may be needed.

Players should be encouraged to turn from the corner hoops and confidently go for the 6-yard roquet on the yard line.

Unfortunately many players, once taught the stop action, will want to use it for every stroke, which is why it should not be taught too early. If players complain that they can’t get any distance, check that there is sufficient back-swing for the distance to be covered and that the hands and feet are correctly placed.

If the player tries to power down with the mallet head before the back swing is completed or if muscle power only and no back-swing is used, the stroke will be doomed

Do not fall into the habit of merely telling the player what is the obvious - “you’re not swinging properly”. Coaches must instead be able to assist in altering the wrong technique.

“I always miss on the right” needs to be witnessed before any assumptions can be made.

Maybe a game or two should be watched in order to gain a true appraisal of the player’s problem(s).

Confidence gained in other areas could result in an improvement in roqueting.

Do not simply watch the result of a roquet attempt to judge the errors. The attempts must be viewed from several different angles - front, behind, side - the eyes, head, shoulders need to be watched as well as back-swing and forward swing and balance, as any one of, or several of, these may be causing the problem.

It ought to be remembered that some errors causing a poor technique may only present problems when the player is in a game situation and is nervous or tense, tired or in a hurry.

The coach must be able to organise practice drills using correct technique so that the player will be properly equipped to deal with tension.

## RUSHES

Do demonstrate the value of the rush-roquet. There can be few sadder sights when watching croquet matches than seeing a gentle little roquet, followed by a long take off - the rush-roquet having gone begging.

While coaches ought to use a problem-solving approach, sometimes players really need to be shown what to do. Rushing appears to be one of these things for many players.

The player at this level can now be expected to stand back a little further than for the normal strokes. A stop-shot action should not be used unless the balls are very close together, i.e. less than one foot apart. To obtain more force, a longer back swing will be needed. Some players might lose confidence at this stage and wish to separate the hands.

Coaches will need to explain that cut rushes will need to be hit harder than a straight rush intended to cover the same distance, as less energy from the striker's ball is transferred to the rushed ball. The finer the cut, the more force will be needed.

Explain how to determine the correct aiming point (see illustration below), in order to achieve a cut in the desired direction.

A high back swing and a relaxed and confident deliberate follow through are needed. Before attempting to rush long distances, have the player practise rushes with an easy, relaxed swing (no more than about 1 yard between the balls) over a short distances until the correct action and confidence are achieved.

The word "rush" seems to psychologically mean power, or force or some sort of big muscular action, all of which will probably ruin the stroke.

The coach should explain that it does not mean the swing should be rushed or hurried in any way. For this reason some coaches may prefer to call it initially a "knock-on" stroke.

A very common problem with rushing while using the "normal" stance, is that the striker's ball will climb over the back of the rushed ball and reduce the distance wished for. To avoid this, the player will should stand a little further back and lean his weight backwards.

Do not allow the hands to become separated; insist that they stay together and persevere with missed rushes. The correct action is vital.

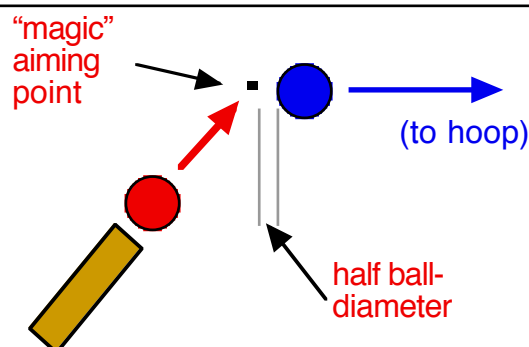
It is common knowledge that many cut rushes are under-hit. Once again, because more power is needed, players want to strike at the ball, with a secondary disaster of looking up very quickly to check the result.

Insist that the aiming point point and the centre of the striker's ball are stalked in order to get the player's feet and shoulders square to the new line of swing.

Have the player simply swing the mallet through this new line of swing, using a long back-swing and staying still - eyes down until the mallet has finished its task.

Have competitions to see who can cut balls most accurately to designated positions.

In order to find the correct line of swing for a cut-rush, the player should imagine a line from the target (usually a hoop) to the ball he wants to rush, and extend it through to the back of the ball and then half a ball-diameter further. He should stalk this "magic aiming point" and hit his ball so that the middle of the ball will pass over the aiming point, remembering to use a flat, relaxed, unhurried swing and follow-through.



The Beginner Croquet player, more often than not, attempts to run hoops (and mostly they are very good at it), from a distance of 2 feet and more from the hoop face. They have been using the “normal” stroke with “normal” follow through.

As their hoop approaches become better, they will be attempting to run hoops from nearer to the hoop. Also they will want to know what is, and is not, possible when faced with difficult hoops.

Once again, stalking is vital; never let them attempt any strokes without first stalking.

Coaches must teach the Laws with regard to “crushes” and “multiple hits”, and how to play legally strokes that require a special action. The Laws regarding Hoop and Roquet must also now be taught as the players will be finding themselves in these situations and must understand the Laws.

Do not suggest yet that players should try controlling the hoop running. It is better to get the hoop made and then sort out what to do next. However this does not mean that the player should ignore the need to have loaded the next hoop before running his current hoop; in fact, it becomes more important when the player is not likely to get a useful rush after making the hoop. The back-swing and follow-through should be slow, smooth and deliberate in most cases, but now the feet could be moved slightly further forward in order to impart a little forward spin to the ball. Do not get the player merely to tilt the mallet forward; have them arrive in the ready position and then step closer.

The idea here is that if you stand about 5 cm further forward than for a normal roquet, it is likely that the mallet will contact the ball just before the mallet reaches the bottom of its down-swing, so the mallet shaft will automatically be tilted slightly forward at the moment of impact. This presses the ball lightly onto the lawn surface, slightly retarding the bottom of the ball while the top of the ball starts moving, and thus achieving an immediate “top-spin” that will help the ball to “kick” through the hoop. It is better to stand a little forward, rather than standing as for a roquet and tilting the mallet forward which would involve having to learn a slightly different wrist action with different coordination and timing.

When running a hoop from more than 2 feet from the hoop, it is not necessary to stand further forward because by the time the ball has travelled that distance it will be rolling fully anyway. But if the ball is hit with a flat shot and reaches the hoop before travelling 2 feet, then depending on how hard it is hit, it can still be sliding or not fully rolling by the time it reaches the hoop, and may not have enough spin to help it get through the hoop, especially in wet conditions.

At this stage, players should be taught not to try to run hoops hard. They are more likely to be successful with a more gentle, steady and deliberate swing. The main thing is for them to learn not to hurry the forward swing (nor the back-swing either), so that they are not “jabbing” or “poking” at the ball. They should take a reasonable back-swing rather than a very short one, and bring the mallet foreward in a relaxed manner, with the idea of “easing” rather than “hitting” the ball through the hoop.

There is much for the coach to learn about error correction in relation to hoop-running, and it is covered in the Level 2 coach-training course. Coaches who are interested in this more advanced aspect of coaching are referred to the booklet “Error Correction and Hampered Shots” by John Riches and Wayne Davies (see Bibliography for details).

At this stage it is worth giving at least a brief answer to the commonly-asked question of how to decide whether a hoop shot should be attempted, especially when an opponent ball is present that is for the same hoop. The best answer is to advise the player to assess whether he would expect to run the hoop more than 5 times out of 10. If so, and the next hoop is loaded, then he should definitely attempt the hoop shot; but he should not take a serious risk for just one hoop when the next hoop is not loaded.

## HOOP RUNNING (Cont.)

The player should not spend much time learning or practising to run hoops from further out than one yard. The time is better spent improving their rushes and hoop approaches so that they will be able to get closer to the hoop.

The coach must teach the Laws with regard to faults in hoop-running, and should make sure that the player understands the rules regarding hoop-and-roquet situations.

Do not suggest yet that players should try controlling the hoop running. Best to get the hoop made and then sort out what to do next.

The back-swing and follow-through should still be slow, smooth and deliberate in most cases, but now the feet could be moved slightly further forward in order to impart a little forward spin to the ball. Do not get the player merely to tilt the mallet forward as this often results in the back of the mallet “wandering”. Have them arrive in the ready position and then step closer. He should not try to hit down on the ball, but rather swing the mallet parallel to the ground and low down as it approaches the ball, with the handle tilted very slightly forward. This has the effect of pressing the ball very lightly onto the court surface, thus checking slightly the bottom of the ball as the top starts to move forward, and causing the ball to roll with immediate top-spin instead of sliding across the lawn surface for the first foot or two before it starts to roll. The rolling action helps the ball to “kick” through the hoop when it touches the sides.

Use the word stalk until the player does this automatically. Be a real pest.

### MAGIC AIMING POINT

As with cut-rushes, the best way to help the player understand how to find the correct line of aim for running sidey hoops is to get him to imagine a “magic aiming point”.

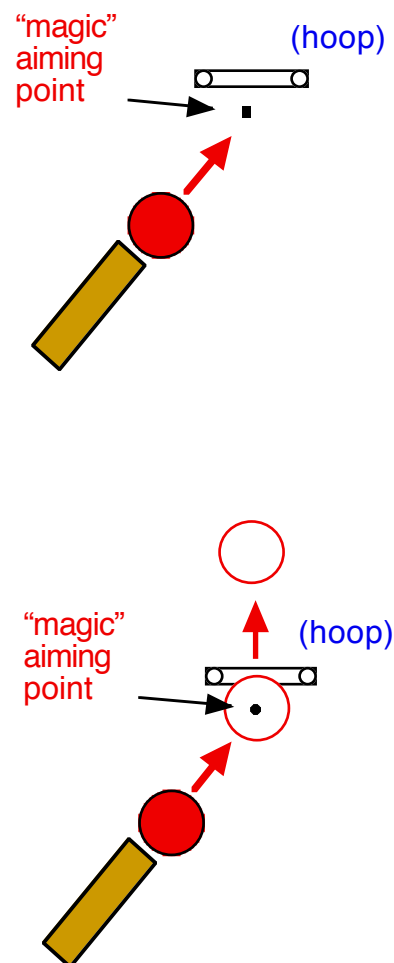
For hoop-running the point will be about half a ball-diameter in front of the middle of the hoop. He should learn to locate this point with reasonable accuracy.

The idea (as also with cut-rushes) is that the player needs to know the exact direction in which the MIDDLE of the striker's ball needs to move .

It does not help much, and in fact can be counter-productive, to tell him he must make sure that the outside of his ball misses the near hoop-leg.

That is true enough, but any concentration on the hoop-leg will increase the likelihood that his ball will hit the hoop-leg, because he has also been training his muscles to coordinate the swing so that the mallet swings toward a target he has just looked at and concentrated on.

If he concentrates on the hoop-leg (in order to ensure that his ball misses it), that is the direction in which he is likely to hit his ball.



### AIMING:

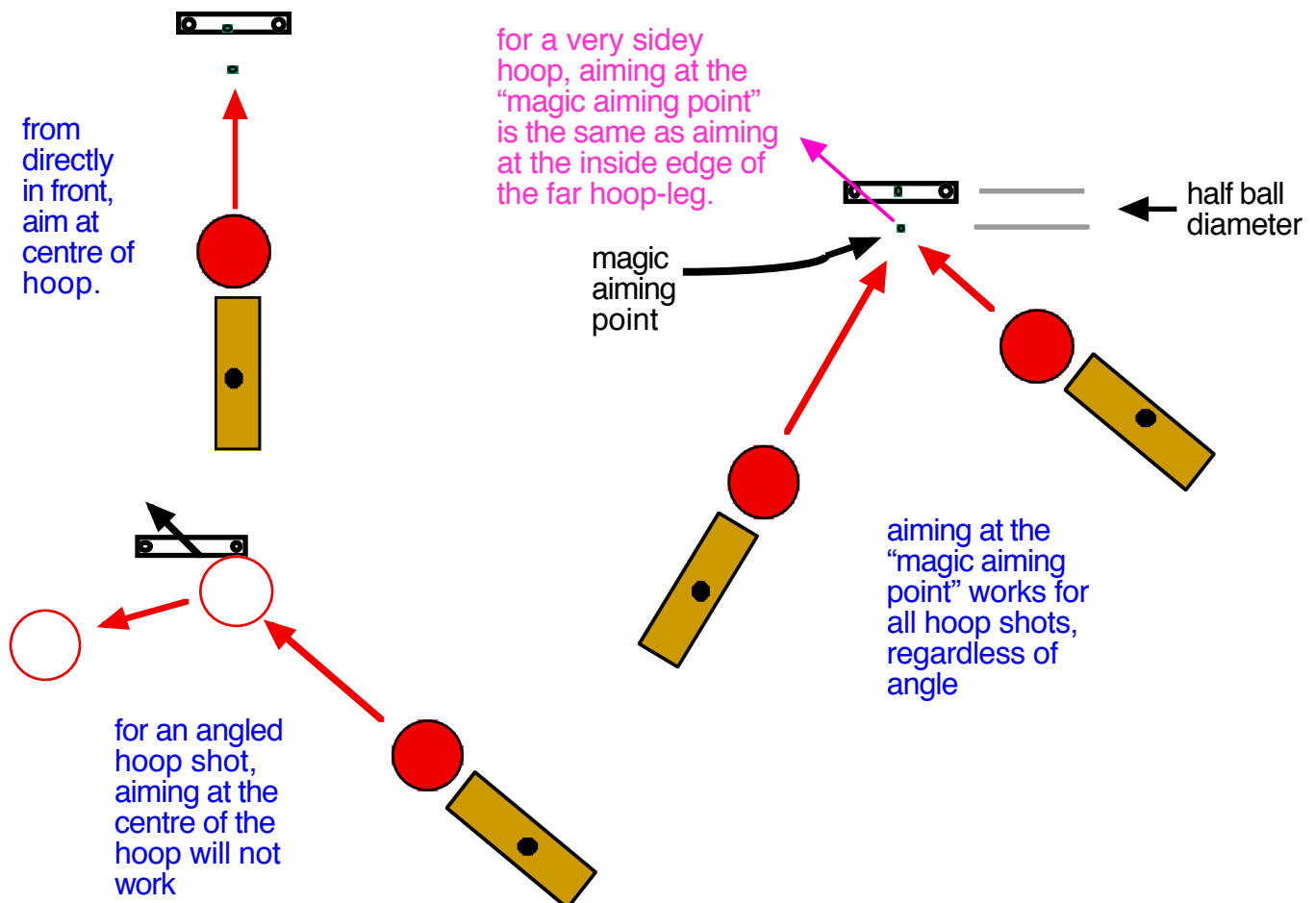
When running an angled hoop, it is important to choose the correct line of aim. If you are running the hoop from directly in front, you will aim at the centre of the hoop as shown in the diagram below; but when running an angled hoop aiming at the centre of the hoop will cause the ball to hit the near hoop-leg and the hoop will not be made.

Coaches sometimes advise the player to make sure that the ball misses the near hoop-leg. It is true that in order to make the hoop the ball must miss the near hoop-leg, but this is bad advice to give to the player because it causes him to look at the near hoop-leg as he lines up the shot and starts his forward swing. This makes it more likely than ever that the ball, instead of missing the hoop-leg, will hit it, because the player has trained himself for some time to look at a target (usually a ball he wants to roquet) and then swing his mallet directly toward the thing he last looked at. While lining up the hoop-running stroke he should completely avoid looking at the near hoop-leg. In any case, it is difficult to control where the side of the ball goes when you have to contact the middle of the ball with your mallet.

Another, much better, piece of advice is to aim at the inside edge of the far hoop-leg. This works well if the angle from which he is running the hoop is very wide (see diagram below), but not when the angle is only a slight one; and in any case, there is a better way to find the correct line of aim:

### "MAGIC AIMING POINT":

The player should learn to find a point on the ground in the exact centre of the hoop, then move half a ball-diameter in front of the hoop. This will bring him to the "magic aiming point" to which he should line up the hoop-running stroke from any angle at all. He should simply concentrate on making the middle of the ball roll over the "magic aiming point". It may take some time and regular practice before the player can confidently judge correctly a distance of half a ball-diameter, but once he learns to judge it with reasonable accuracy, the ability to do so will also help him with aiming cut-rushes, as we have seen previously. There is also a psychological advantage in removing some of the natural nervousness experienced by many players, as the focus is on aiming at a point, rather than on getting the ball through the hoop.



## **CROQUET STROKES**

**Learning outcomes** - The Level 1 Coach will be able to teach the various hand and feet positions and the type of stroke to use for the full range of Croquet Strokes needed at primary level.

He will be able to explain how various stroke proportions are worked out and teach the names that go with them.

The Level 1 Coach will be able to demonstrate what is meant by Line of Centres (LOC) and how this is used to give the croquet ball direction, plus the effect that ball friction has on the croquet ball's direction of travel and mallet drag has on the striker's ball.

The Level 1 Coach will be able to break croquet strokes down into easier elements, if learning to play them is difficult for the player. [The teaching principle is "isolate the elements".]

They will be able to understand the physics of the croquet strokes - the how it is so and why it is so.

They will also be able to discern errors in technique and assist to bring about correction so that the correct technique is learned and then assimilated into the competitive arena.

## **FINE TAKE OFFS**

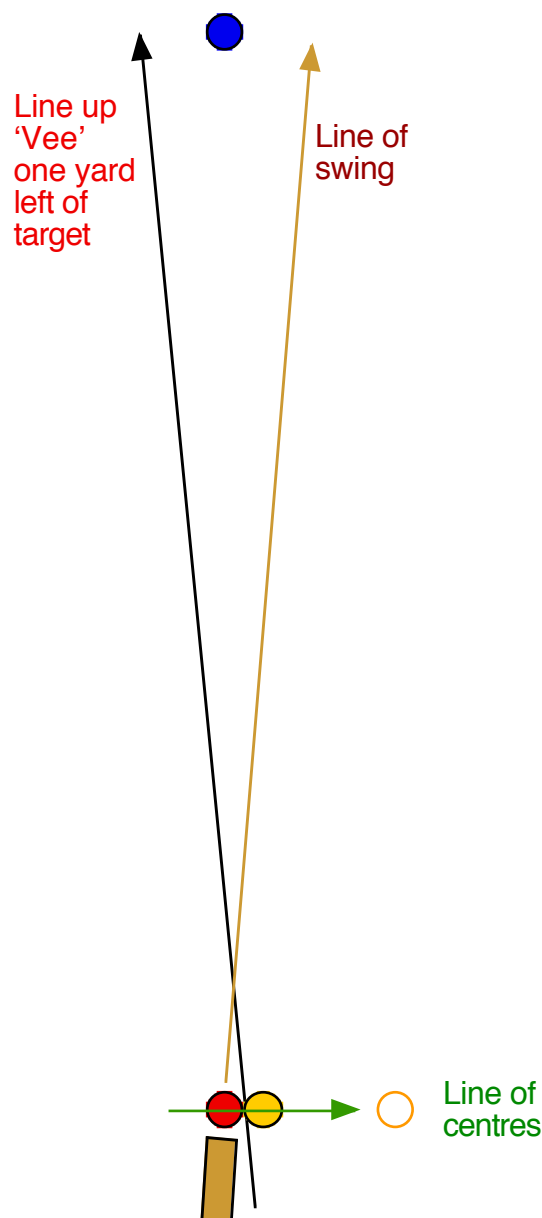
Now that the player has progressed from beginner stage, he will need to be taught how to play fine Take offs.

First, show the player that if the LOC and the line along the centre of the mallet head makes a right angle, it is likely that the croquet ball will not move or shake.

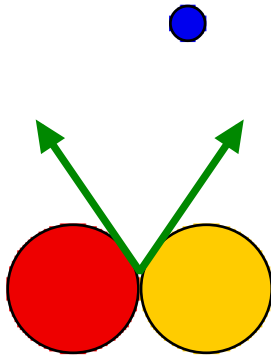
However, do not tell the player that he must turn his mallet-head and hit into the croqueted ball to make sure it moves, as this is likely to lead to a curved swing or a swing across the body

Ensure that the player can hit a ball across from one side of the lawn to the other, then teach him to take off across the lawn as shown in the diagram at right, using the following steps:

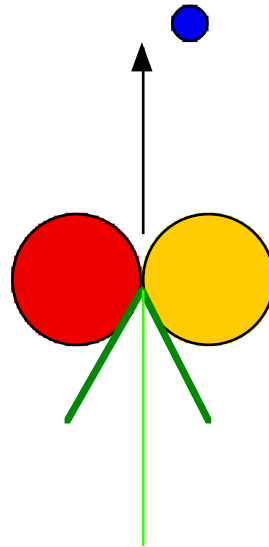
1. Teach him what the 'Vee' is, and how to line it up to a particular place. Remember that even experienced players can tend to disagree with each other about where the 'Vee' is pointing.
2. It is usually better to get them to look at the "arrow-head" underneath the balls, rather than the 'Vee' above the balls which does not really point in any particular direction (see diagram on next page).
3. For a left-side take-off across the lawn with the red ball as illustrated here, ask the player to place his ball in contact with the croqueted (yellow) ball so that the 'Vee' is pointing about one yard left of the target (blue) ball. If he mis-judges this distance, instead of telling him he is wrong and cannot see straight, ask him to allow a little more (or less) than a yard until he has it lined up the way you want it.





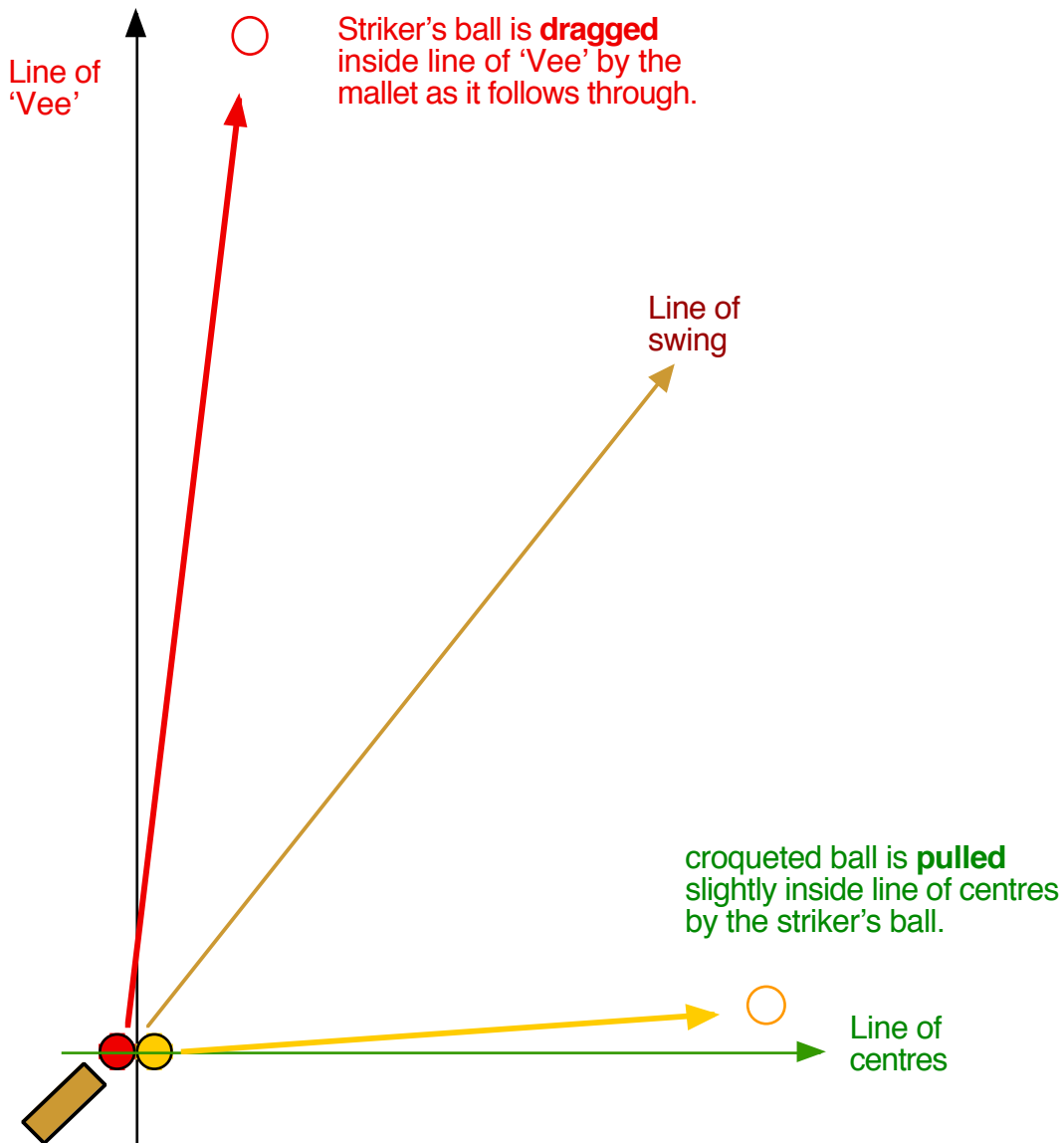


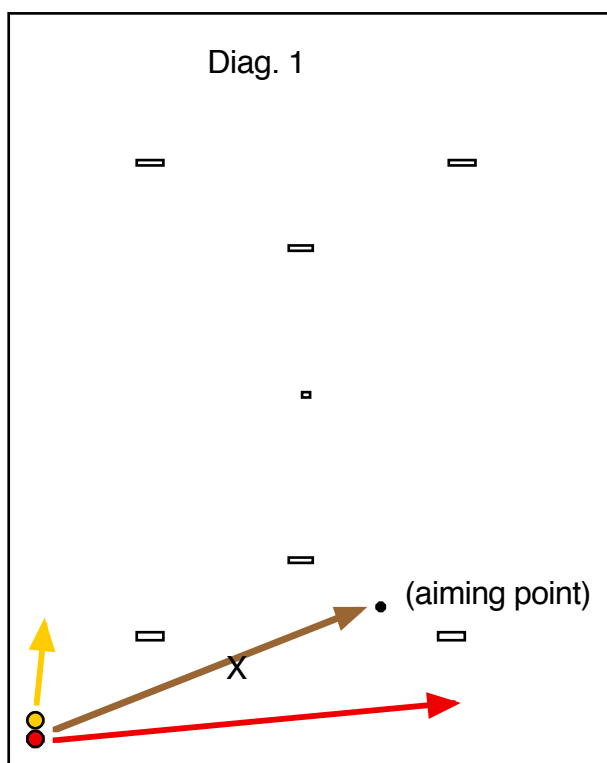
'Vee' above the balls points in two different directions and is likely to confuse the player.



"Arrow-head" below the balls, with an imaginary stem added, points one yard left of distant target ball.

## THICK TAKE-OFF





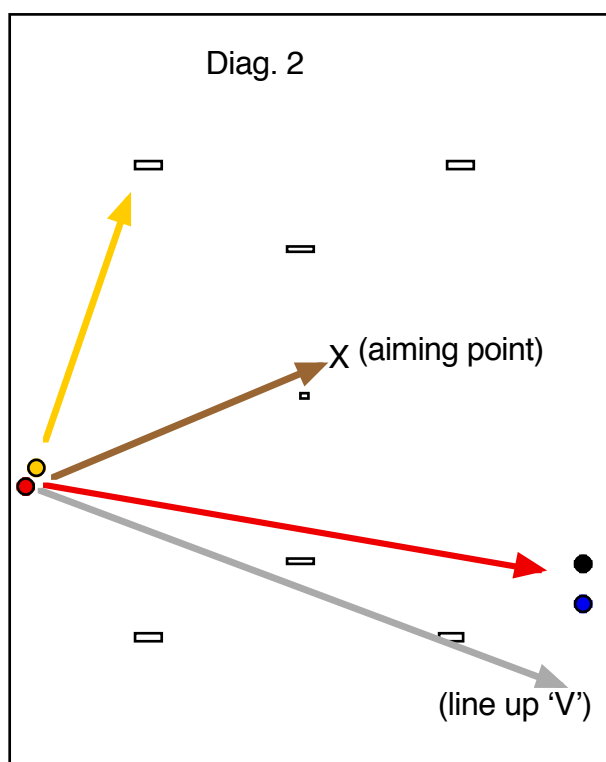
At this level it will be sufficient to teach only the most important concepts involved in the mechanics of this stroke.

Start by placing two balls (red and yellow as in Diag.1) so that red is on the 1st corner spot and yellow is on the west yard-line. Get the player to check that the LOC of the two balls is along the west yard-line toward the 2nd corner and the 'V' is lined up along the south yard-line toward the 4th corner.

Ask him to play a "thick take-off" using a flat swing as for a roquet or rush, and aiming the swing at a point halfway between hoops 4 and 5. He should try to hit hard enough to send the striker's (red) ball about level with hoop 4.

The result should be as shown in Diag.1. The yellow ball will be "pulled" by the red ball so that it goes slightly inside the west yard-line and the red ball will be "dragged" by the mallet and should finish about 3 yards inside the south yard-line.

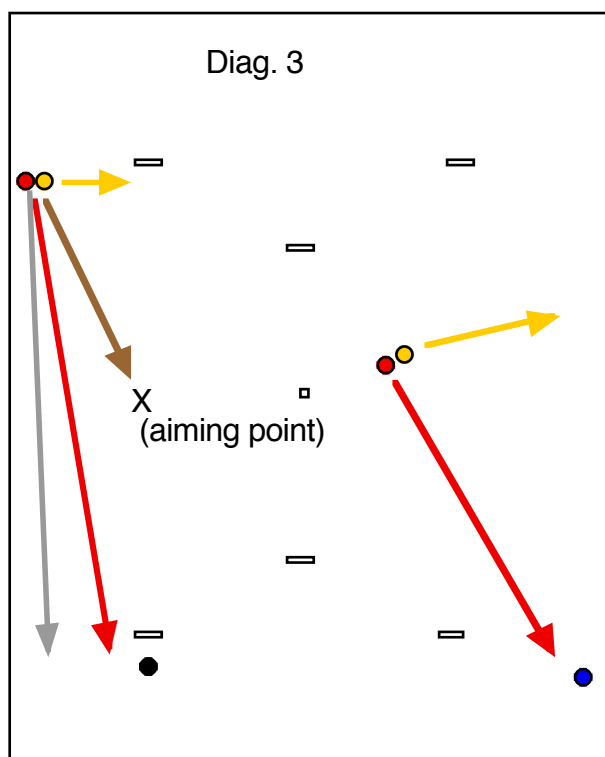
Explain that in thick take-offs it may be necessary to allow for "pull" and "drag" when you line up the balls. He should also note that the line of swing (brown arrow) passes roughly through a point (X) halfway between the two positions where the balls finished. When you know where you want the balls to finish, you must swing at an aiming point halfway between the desired finishing points. Explain also that in a thick take-off the angle of split (between the directions in which the two balls travel) is close to a right-angle, and the amount of "pull" and "drag" can vary slightly due to the way the mallet is swung and the ball is struck. For the stroke illustrated in Diag.1 the red ball was dragged in about 3 yards, but for a thick take-off right across the lawn the amount of "drag" inside the line of the 'V' would be about 4 yards.



Then let him imagine that in the 4th turn of the game he has roqueted his own "tice" ball and has the position shown in Diag.2. He can use a thick take-off to load hoop 2 while going to the opponent balls on the east border (to rush one of them back to hoop 1 and start a break).

He should allow for "drag" by lining up the 'V' about 4 yards south of the opponent's balls (see the grey arrow) and choose an aiming point (X) halfway between where he wants the balls to finish. This aiming point will be about 3 yards from the peg in the direction of hoop 3, and will be in more or less the same position regardless of where the shot is played from on the west border, since it will always be halfway between where he wants the balls to finish.

He should use a full and deliberate straight, flat swing toward the aiming point, with a long back-swing and an unhurried forward swing, using the weight of the mallet to achieve distance rather than providing additional force with his wrists and forearm muscles. The shot should be played confidently, with the intention of sending red close to the opponent's balls.



The player can then be encouraged to work out how to play a thick take-off from, say, the west border alongside hoop 2, to load hoop 2 and go to a ball at hoop 1 (see left-hand side of Diag.2).

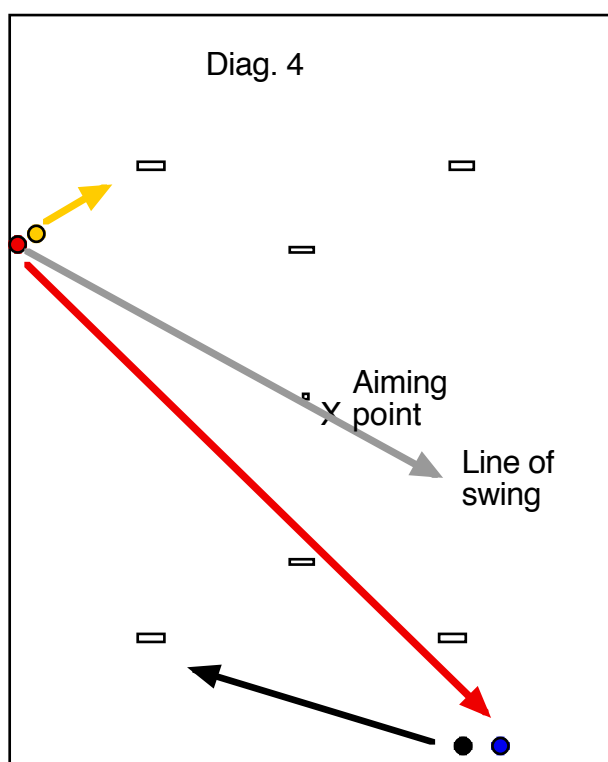
He must line up the 'V' allowing for "drag" (about 3-4 yards outside hoop 1) and find the required aiming point halfway between hoops 1 and 2, then remember to use the long, flat, unhurried swing, being careful to swing straight at the aiming point and not (as many tend to do) around a curve towards where they want the striker's ball to go.

The coach should set up similar situations where thick take-offs could be useful - both short ones and long ones - and also encourage the player to think of further situations, then line them up allowing for "drag", find the correct aiming point, and play the stroke confidently. Another example is shown on the right side of Diag.2 where red uses a thick take-off to move yellow closer to the border while going to the blue ball. (Explain why one might want to do this.)

### USING A THICK TAKE-OFF

#### 1. GETTING A RUSH.

This is the first tactic that most players learn, and could possibly be introduced at this stage if you think the player needs it. The coach should set up the balls as shown in Diag.4, with all clips on hoop 1. Tell the player that he has just played red and roqueted yellow, and ask him to suggest a way he could go about making hoop 1 and also loading hoop 2. Do not tell him what to do. Try to get him to work out as much as possible of it for himself, as he will then be more likely to remember it and think of it in game situations. If necessary, lead him with questions, e.g. "What chance would you give yourself of taking off to the hoop and then running the hoop? Even if you could do that, what would you do after making the hoop?"



Would it be easier if there was a ball you could use near the hoop? How could you try to get one there? (etc.)" If he suggests a method, ask him to try it out and then consider the result.

This method of teaching tactics is called the "Problem-solving approach", and should be used by the coach as often as possible when teaching tactical ideas that are new to the player. It takes time, but achieves better results with most players.

In a later section of this Manual you will find some pages (copied from "CROQUET: The Teaching of Tactics" by John Riches - see Bibliography), explaining how such an approach can be used to teach hoop-loading and further tactical ideas when the player is more advanced and has learnt to play a wider variety of shots.

**New tactical ideas should be taught only when the coach has assessed the student's shot-making skills as sufficient to give him a good chance of making the tactical idea "pay off" if he uses it in game situations.**

By far the best method of teaching and playing hoop approaches is the “Circle Method” as described in our coach-training courses. We assume here that the player has been taught this method but is handling it incorrectly in one of the following ways:

## (a) incorrect slope

With this method the same amount of mallet slope (about 15 degrees, with slight adjustments for greater accuracy as the player improves) can be used for approaches from any direction and length. The player needs to learn to consistently hit the ball with the mallet sloping forward this correct amount **at the instant the mallet impacts the ball** (see below).

## (b) poor judgement of distance

The player needs to learn to look at the distance from the hoop he is approaching, and place his ball so that the croqueted ball is lined up to a point the same distance directly behind the hoop. Players may have difficulty judging this distance accurately until they have practised it for some time. Some may find it helpful to imagine a circle with this radius around the hoop, with the croqueted ball lined up to go to the back of the circle, but most simply judge a distance behind the hoop equal to their distance from the hoop.

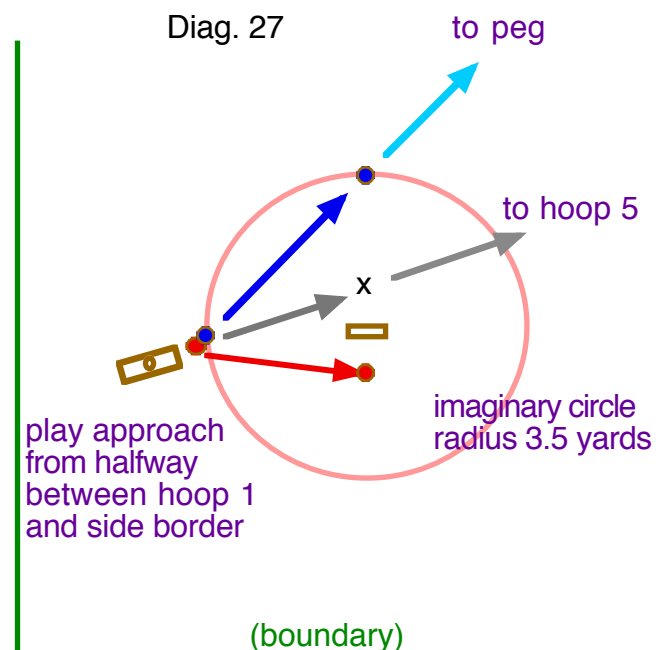
To find the correct line of swing (aim) they also need to judge one-third of the distance from the hoop to the back of the circle. The judgement of these distances can be a source of error, but its value is that the same method can be used for all hoop approaches, and the player should quickly learn to make the judgements more accurately.

## Correction:

Both of the above errors can best be corrected by having the player practise a series of hoop approaches to hoop 1 from a point three and a half yards to the side of the hoop, which will be halfway between the hoop and the side border, and in line with hoops 1 and 4.

From this particular point it so happens that the correct point at the back of the circle where the croqueted ball should be lined up will be directly in line with the peg, and the one-third aiming point for the swing will be directly at hoop 5 (see Diag. 27)

This will not be so when approaching the hoop from some other position, but it is a useful way of checking that the judgement of the distances is correct. Instead of hoop 1, any other corner hoop can be used similarly, approaching the hoop from halfway between the hoop and the side border, and lining up the croqueted ball to the peg and the swing to the nearest centre hoop.



Players who have learnt to play roll strokes before being taught the circle hoop approach (the wrong way around) will often tend to want to use a roll action for hoop approaches. With the balls lined up as described above the striker's ball will go too far, or else the croqueted ball will fall well short of the point at which it is aimed. Both balls should finish on the line of hoops 1 and 2 (more or less) if the correct amount of slope and type of swing are used.

The player must not swing around a curve trying to “shepherd” the striker's ball to the front of the hoop, and should use only the weight of the mallet to play the stroke, without any attempt to accelerate the mallet through the ball in a rolling action. He should allow the weight (inertia) of the two balls to stop most of the mallet's forward movement. This means that to an observer the correctly played hoop approach stroke may appear similar to a stop-shot, but the player should not be consciously using a stop-shot action which would bring timing into the stroke and constitute an extra possible source of error. The hands are best kept at the top of the shaft in the same position as for roqueting or hoop-running, but it is not incorrect to move one or both hands down the shaft provided the player can resist the temptation to “push” into the ball as in a roll stroke.

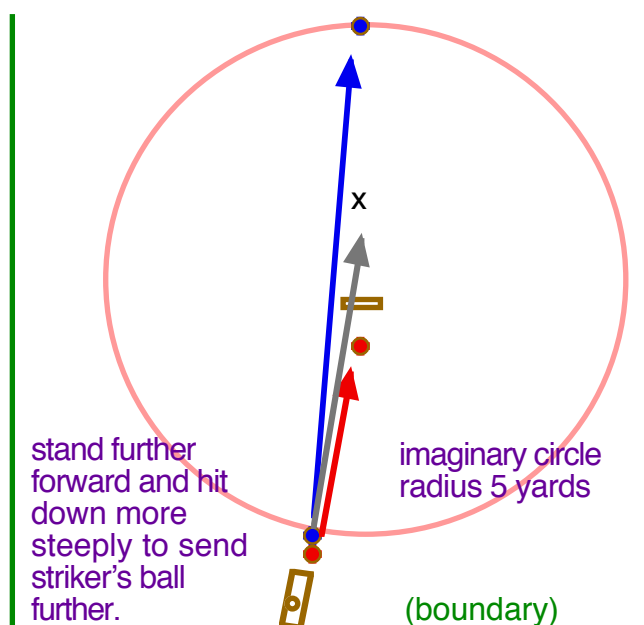
When the player progresses to learning split-shots and has some understanding of “mallet drag” and “ball slip”, he will be able to appreciate that the hoop approach is simply one type of split-shot. If he is in front of the hoop and fairly close to it, and wants to ensure a forward rush after making the hoop, he can use a stop-shot to send the croqueted ball further.

(1) If he is approaching from behind the hoop at an angle, and does not want to simply take off to the front of the hoop (which should be discouraged unless the croqueted ball is where he wants it to be after he has made the hoop), he will probably find that the striker's ball goes too far and the croqueted ball does not go far enough. This is due to "ball-slip" which refers to the fact that the surfaces of the balls will tend to slip against each other if the angle of split between the directions of the two balls exceeds 60 degrees. This will happen only when approaching from well behind the hoop.

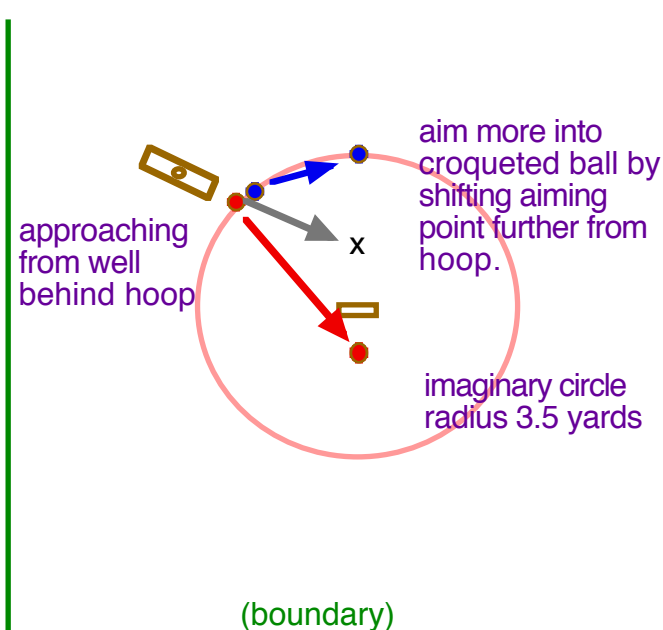
When approaching from well behind the hoop at an angle, the player should allow for “ball-slip” by hitting a little more into the croqueted ball (i.e. moving his aiming point for the swing a little more than one-third of the distance from the hoop to the back of the circle - see Diag. 29); and also standing a little further back so that the mallet shaft has less forward slope.

The player should simply stand further forward to increase the mallet slope and hit down on the ball at a sharper angle. He should not introduce a rolling action into the stroke, as that would again bring timing into it and make it harder to control the striker's ball (see Diag. 28).

Diag. 28



Diag. 29



All "Roll" strokes should be taught and played centre-style *if possible*.

An explanation of what happens with this next set of croquet strokes is needed. ie that the striker's ball is to travel further in relation to the croquet ball than was achieved with the Flat Mallet Sweep stroke.

**There are 3 ways to achieve this.**

**Mallet slope.** Preference number one. Easiest for the Solomon grippers, difficult for the Irish grippers. The feet are stepped much further forward than "normal", the mallet is sloped forward and the hands may be moved together down the handle a little. The swing should be as high as necessary for the forward propulsion of the two balls and the stroke movement should be one continuous strong pulling through type of movement. This will produce a forward squeezing effect on the ball between the mallet-face and the ground. The body should remain still. If played correctly, the striker's ball will jump up at the start of its travel.

**Mallet slope and acceleration.** Preference number two. Used by the majority of Standard and Solomon grippers. For this action, mallet slope forward, forward moved feet and hands taken down the handle and separated. Yet another variable - timing - is needed. ie, when to begin the acceleration and how rapidly to accelerate. This is a valid method of playing the stroke, but the timing introduces additional movements that need to be coordinated, and therefore additional sources of possible error.

Use this method for the Full Forward moving strokes only, *where possible*. It should not be necessary to introduce acceleration for half-rolls and three-quarter rolls, but for equal rolls and pass-rolls any attempt to use forward slope alone would involve hitting the ball almost vertically down into the lawn, so some acceleration must be used, accompanied almost inevitably by a loss of accurate control.

**The accelerated only swing.** This method should not be taught, even if the coach uses it, as it is dangerously close to being illegal. The mallet is used almost flat and the hands go right down near the head. The stroke is played with a very energetic forward pushing action, and considerable strength is required with this method to roll both balls any noticeable distance.

If players cannot use a centre-style, then the coach must be able to teach how the strokes are played using the side-style. (See **Side-style Rollers**).

Most players do not need a physics lesson about the behavior of spheres and unless you are very informed on the subject do not go down that path.

Acceleration should be avoided as far as possible. Instead, increase the slope of the mallet handle forwards, without moving the hands further down the shaft than necessary, as this would reduce the height of the back swing and so reduce the distance that can be achieved. The hands should be well out from the body, and this position should be maintained for as long as possible. The feet will also need to be moved forwards into a comfortable stance, with the toes pointing forwards towards the LOS. Many players will need to use a step-stance for long rolls, rather than a level stance, in order to keep their balance and avoid falling over.

As well as moving the feet forward - stepped stance only - the hands are separated and both are moved down the handle to about 1/3 up from the head and 1/3 down from the top, although some players do very well with both hands together about 1/3 of the way up from the head. If it's legal and it works, why not?

The moment for the acceleration is very important and it is suggested that players practice the correct technique over short distance before going for big strokes. The ball is struck just above centre and the bent knees should be translated deliberately into the forward movement.

**HALF-ROLLS.**

As the name implies, the striker's ball travels half the forward distance that the other ball travels. When addressing the ball, the feet must be further forward than for a roquet or hoop-running stroke. If using forward slope alone, the stroke is played as a strong fluid action with follow-through. Back-swing height determines the strength of the stroke. The hands should go only as far down the shaft as is needed to obtain the required forward slope, and it is vital that this forward slope is maintained until the instant the mallet contacts the striker's ball. If using acceleration, the hands may go further down the shaft than with the "forward slope alone method". The stroke played this way will need less back-swing, but needs a pronounced follow-through.

The feet should be far enough forward so that the slope of the mallet face is sufficient for the desired outcome. It will not matter if the player cannot see the balls when he takes up his stance (because his hands are well forward and blocking his view of the balls), as he will be able to see them when he swings the mallet back, and that is sufficient. Rather than stand too far forward, it is better to reach further forward with the hands, getting the mallet well out in front of the body, and elbows fairly straight.. Check that the player can find the half-way mark on the mallet handle. Some players find putting a mark on the handle at this spot useful. Be alert for the player who, after stalking, etc., slides the bottom hand further down, thus ending up with the wrong stroke. He should place his hands on the shaft in the correct positions before stalking the line of aim, and then avoid changing their positions. Some players want to stop the mallet on impact, with a jabbing action. They must follow through with both mallet and arms.

**3/4 ROLLS.**

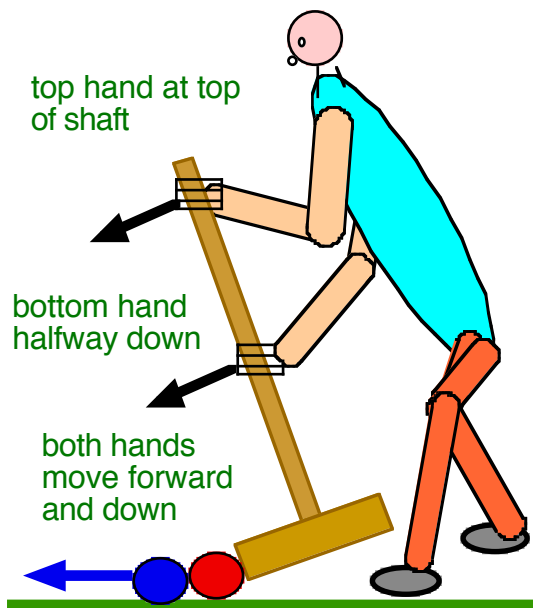
In this roll stroke the striker's ball travels about 3/4 of the distance traveled by the other ball. Using forward slope alone, the feet are placed still further forward. The same type of action is required as for the half-roll, with "normal" follow-through. It is the position of the feet (and hence the mallet slope) that controls the fraction. The 3/4 roll is probably near to the "legal" limit for this action. More forward slope can look very doubtful. The head and shoulders should remain still (not come up) and the hands must both move forward at the same rate in order to maintain the required forward slope of the mallet shaft.

Using acceleration, both hands may go down the handle a bit further. Translation of body weight may be needed for long 3/4 rolls, and follow-through is vital. The hands and mallet slope must finish as they started - away from the body. If the hands and shaft are brought back towards the body, the stroke will probably fail. All rolls should be "stalked" twice - first to check the lining up of the balls, and then when walking in along the correct line of aim. A mallet slope of about 45° is required as the mallet contacts the ball. Some players will have difficulty in judging whether the stroke required is a half-roll or a 3/4 roll or some other fraction, and for a start will need assistance from the coach.

When helping the player develop the correct type of swing, it is important for the coach to first recognise which method the player is using to propel the striker's ball forward - mallet slope, or acceleration, or a combination of the two. This understanding is needed in order to correct his swing if it is not achieving the desired result. If he is using forward slope alone, and the striker's ball is not going far enough in relation to the croqueted ball, he should be told to either stand further forward or move his hands further down the shaft so as to have more slope on the mallet, and he may also need to ensure that his top hand moves further forward, finishing with the elbow more or less straight.

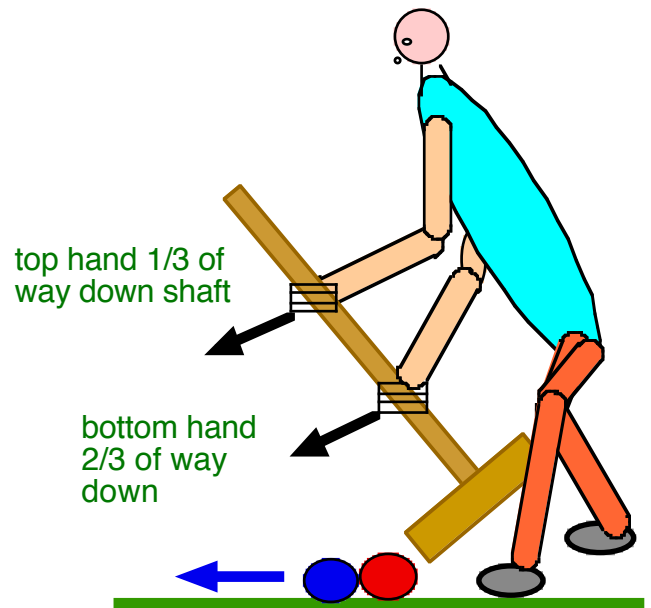
However, this advice would not help a player who is using mainly acceleration through the ball to propel the striker's ball forward. Instead, he should be told (and assisted) to start the acceleration later in the swing, and then accelerate more rapidly.





**HALF-ROLL**

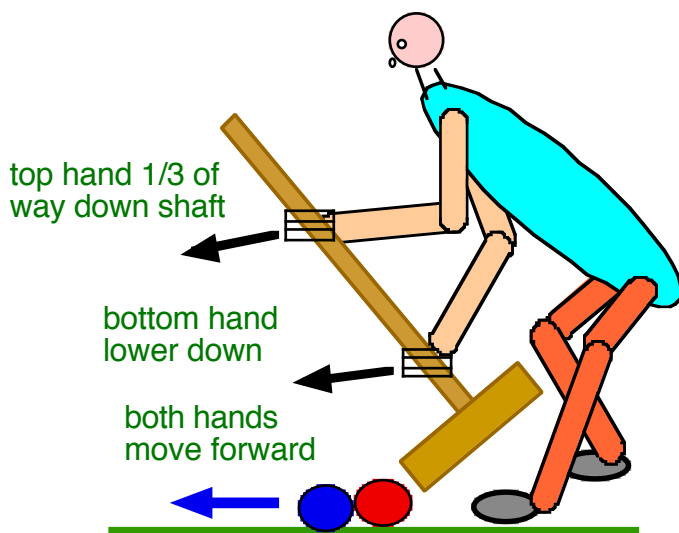
Use forward mallet slope rather than acceleration for better control.



**THREE-QUARTER-ROLL**

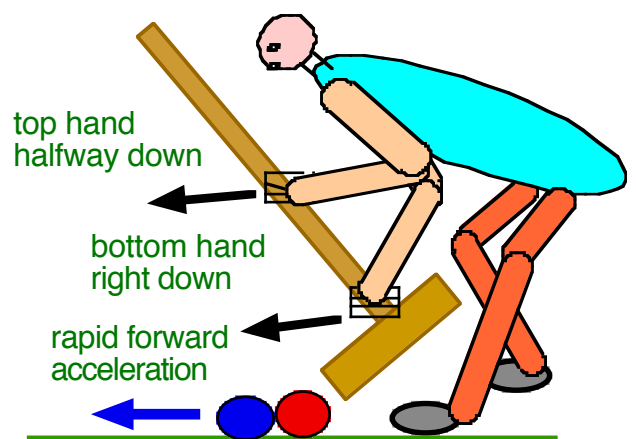
Use more forward mallet slope to send the striker's ball further.

**NOTE:** Most players will stand closer to the balls than is shown in the diagrams, but it depends on the stature of the player, the length of his legs and arms, the length of his mallet, the type of grip, etc..



**EQUAL ROLL**

Accelerate forward through balls with both hands, not just the bottom hand.



**PASS-ROLL**

Start forward swing very slowly. Accelerate late and rapidly.

**NOTE:** There are other ways to hold the mallet and play these roll shots. The grips and stance illustrated here will suit the majority of players, but not all.



**EQUAL ROLLS.**

In an equal roll, both balls travel approximately the same distance forward along more or less the same line. This may be either a short distance or a long distance. Most players will use both mallet slope and acceleration for this stroke, as mallet slope alone will usually not be sufficient to produce the desired effect.

The hands should be placed down the mallet shaft, leaving sufficient room for the necessary back swing. The front foot should be well forward. Knees must be bent and the weight translated from the player's bottom, down and through the balls. This is one stroke where body movement is useful.

It is best to succeed with the correct technique over short distances before allowing the player to try equal rolls over long distances, and it is important to have the player get these strokes correct as straight strokes before moving onto their split versions.

**PASS-ROLLS.**

In a pass-roll the striker's ball passes the forward ball, i.e. it actually travels further than the forward ball. Like the Equal roll, this stroke requires an accelerating swing. This involves timing and can make accurate control difficult. The balls cannot be sent in exactly the same direction because one ball will not pass through the other, so the line of swing must be at a slight angle to the line of centres of the two balls.

A good way to teach the technique required is to ask the player to give his ball a sharp punch just above centre, using the bottom hand. The ball should be hit slightly downward; do not try to achieve forward roll by bringing the mallet up through the back of the ball, as this is more likely to result in a fault.

For a long, very pronounced pass-roll, the player will need as high a back swing as possible. This will require a certain amount of body movement, raising the bottom and torso and then bending down into the stroke as though genuflecting into the stroke. This is when the acceleration should occur - just before the mallet strikes the ball.

It is very important that the player adheres accurately to the Line of Swing when attempting big roll strokes. Swinging around a curve will result in loss of control. Sweeping up and over the shoulder may also ruin the result. As much as possible, the follow-through must be forward rather than upward.

The Line of Swing should be stalked and sighted on something stationary on the court or surrounds, and then at the end of the stroke, check that the mallet head is still heading towards this point. For bigger strokes, some players will need to play side-style. (See Side-Style Play).

In order to get more "pass" in the roll, the player should :

- (1) use a shorter back-swing;
- (2) wait until the mallet (moving very slowly) gets closer to the ball before starting the acceleration; and
- (3) accelerate as rapidly as possible - really "attack" the ball once he starts the acceleration.

The coach can use a hoop or his hand positioned a short distance behind the mallet to prevent the player from taking too much back-swing.

Other methods of playing pass-rolls are also possible. For example, if there is a slightly wider angle of split involved in the stroke some players use an accelerating jump-shot action.

(after teaching roquets, rushes and hoop-running)

Take-offs

Circle Hoop Approach Strokes. (these have been explained on previous pages)

Flat Mallet Drives

Stop-shots

Right-angle Splits (including thick take-offs and wide-angle stop-shots)

Half-rolls

Three-quarter Rolls

Equal Rolls

Pass-rolls

Note that these shots are explained below for coaches, rather than for players.

**The teaching method should encompass two important teaching principles:**

**(1) ELIMINATE VARIABLES**

Teach methods of grip, stance and swing that involve as few variables as possible. The more things that have to be coordinated and controlled, the more possible sources of error there will be. For example, do not teach a type of swing that requires accurate timing if there is available an alternative method that avoids the need for accurate timing.

**(2) ISOLATE ELEMENTS**

Where possible, teach one aspect of the stroke (swing) at a time. For example, when teaching roquets, do not start by asking the player to try to hit a short roquet of 2-3 yards. Start by getting the player to swing smoothly from the shoulders and hit the ball in the middle. Get him to do that and send the ball the full length of the court. When he can do that, he can try to hit the ball a specified distance (e.g. to stop near a particular hoop or another ball); and then start to aim for accuracy of direction. Later you can add refinements of back-swing height, follow-through, avoidance of unnecessary body movement, etc.. When teaching split shots, start with right-angle splits which involve only the selection of the correct line of aim (halfway between the two points where you want the balls to finish), without the need to also think about mallet slope, ratio of ball distances, acceleration, wideness of angle, changes of grip, etc.. These additional considerations, and concepts such as pull, mallet-drag and ball-slip should be introduced one or two at a time.

**FLAT MALLET DRIVE**

The player should learn to swing consistently through without either accelerating or stopping (jabbing) the mallet, and without unnecessary body movement. He should learn to send the striker's ball a consistent fraction of the distance he sends the croqueted ball, whether it is a short distance or a long distance.

Depending on the weight of his mallet and arms, the striker's ball will usually go about one-quarter or one-third as far as the croqueted ball. He should try this in different parts of the lawn.

Explain that the most common use of the Flat Mallet Drive is to send the croqueted ball to a future hoop while getting near enough to roquet or rush another ball about one-quarter or one-third of the distance along the same line.

**STOP-SHOTS**

At this stage, do not spend much time teaching stop-shots. Teach only the idea of standing slightly back and swinging flat, stopping the mallet just after it contacts the ball. Do not (until later) introduce any change of grip, nor ideas such as grounding the heel of the mallet. The ratio achievable will depend on the type of mallet and stature of the player. He should avoid unnecessary body movement. Do not allow the player to use a stop-shot action for other shots, e.g. when roqueting, rushing, running hoops, etc..

**It is strongly recommended that in teaching split-shots the following order and method should be followed. There are many new concepts to teach or revise, and this procedure has been worked out to allow them to be taught one or two things at a time (“isolate elements”!), starting with fewer variables (“eliminate variables”!) and gradually introducing more complicated concepts.**

**1. Right-angle splits:** Revise thick take-offs, reminding the player of “pull” and “mallet-drag” which may need to be allowed for to a greater or lesser extent in any particular stroke.

Remind them also of the method used to find the aiming point (“halve the distance between the two points where you want the balls to finish”).

*Note that in right-angle splits there is no need to consider mallet-slope or the effect of widening the angle, since right-angle splits are always played with a flat mallet swing as for a roquet or rush, and always involve the maximum possible angle (which is in fact just under 90 degrees due to pull and mallet-drag).*

Explain also that wide-angle stop-shots follow the same principles; but if the stop-shot action is to have any effect, the angle of split must be no wider than about 60 degrees. (Compare using a stop-shot action for a fine take-off, which would be pointless and would only make the distance harder to control.)

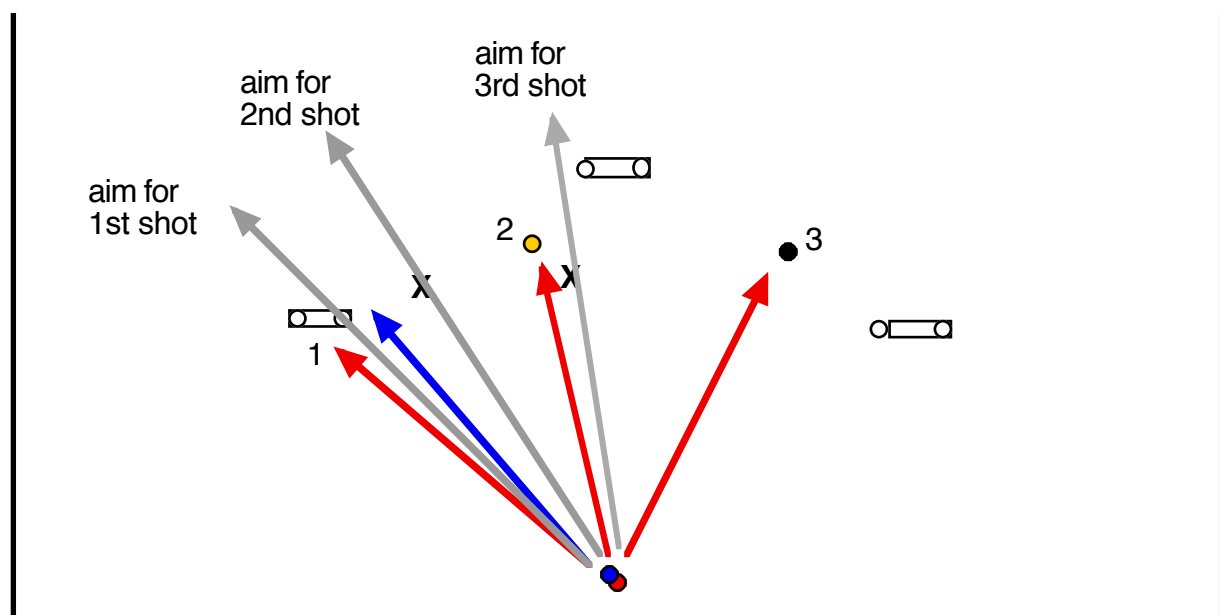
**2. Rolls:** Revise straight rolls, and the effect of using forward mallet slope to send the striker’s ball forward. Revise also the hand positions on the mallet shaft needed to obtain the various ratios (or “fractions”) in a straight drive, half-roll, three-quarter roll, equal roll or pass-roll. *Note that with these shots there was no need to consider an aiming point nor the effect of widening the angle, nor things like “pull” and “mallet-drag”.*

**3. Effect of widening angle:** Combining the above ideas, go on to demonstrate the effect of widening the angle of split. Rather than the coach demonstrating, the player should be permitted to try the different shots illustrated in the diagram on the next page, and find out for himself what happens if he does not alter the mallet slope to make allowance for a widening angle of split.

The player should by now have understood that there are at least five different hand positions which he needs to remember and be able to use confidently in order to obtain the different ratios (or “fractions”) in a straight roll. These are (approximately) -

- (1) Drive (ratio = 1/4 or 1/3): Hand positions and swing as for a normal roquet or rush.
- (2) Half-roll: One hand halfway down the shaft, other hand at top of shaft.
- (3) Three-quarter roll: Top hand 1/3 of way down shaft; bottom hand 2/3 of way down.
- (4) Equal roll: Top hand 1/3 of way down; bottom hand more than 2/3 of way down.
- (5) Pass-roll: Bottom hand right down near mallet-head; top hand about halfway down.

These positions should be regarded as a progressive sequence, and the player will be encouraged to discover for himself that as the angle of split widens, he will need to move his hand positions up one or more steps in the sequence



The shots can all be played from the yard-line in the centre of the south border, as shown. All are “equal rolls” in the sense that the two balls are to travel equal distances which in this case will be about 9 yards.

For the first shot, use an “equal roll” grip and swing to send both balls together to hoop 1.

For the second shot, send the front (blue) ball to hoop 1 and the striker’s (red) ball as close as possible to the yellow ball placed in position 2.

For the third shot send the blue ball again to hoop 1 and the red ball as close as possible to the black ball which is placed about halfway between hoops 4 and 5.

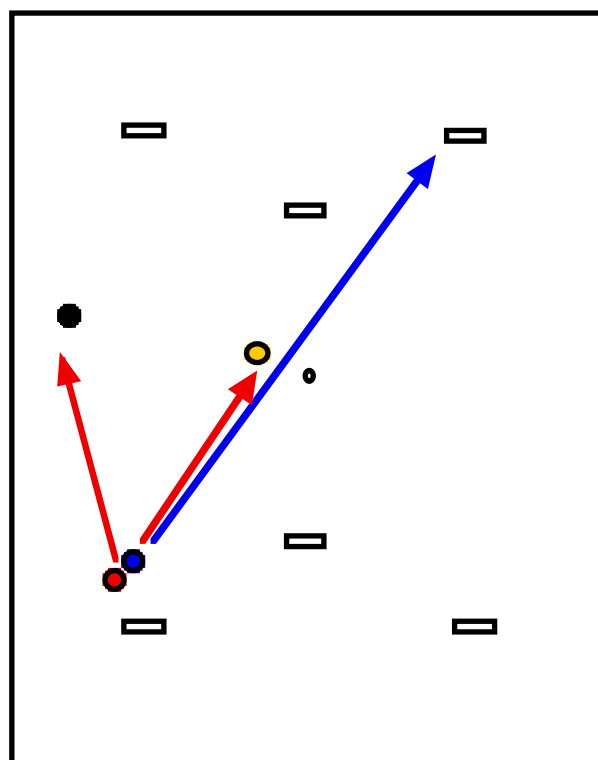
If the player selects the correct aiming point halfway between where he wants the balls to go (see point ‘X’ on diagram), then uses the same grip and swing as he did for the first equal roll, he will find that in the second shot the blue ball will fall short of hoop 1 and/or the red ball will go a yard or two past the yellow ball; and in the third shot the blue ball will fall very short, and/or the red ball will go much too far.

Explain that this is because as the angle widens the blue (croqueted) ball is less squarely in front of the red (striker’s) ball, allowing the red ball to move away more quickly and go further.

Also, the line of swing is less directly into the blue ball which therefore will not go as far as in the first equal roll. For the first shot, the player should have used the equal roll grip (step 4 in the sequence on the previous page).

For the second shot he will probably need to use the three-quarter roll grip (step 3), even though he still wants the balls to travel equal distances; and for the third shot he will need to move his hands further up the shaft, to a half-roll position (step 2), or even higher (to step 1).

Then show him how the same idea applies in different parts of the court, e.g. to the “half-roll” used after making hoop 1 to load hoop 3 and go to a pivot ball (see diagram at right). If the pivot ball is near the peg (yellow), a normal half-roll grip (step 2 in the sequence of grips) is needed, but if it is near the west border (black), the player will need to move his hands up to the normal roquet grip (step 1 in the sequence) in order to ensure that the red striker’s ball does not go too far (and possibly go out) due to the wider angle.



**4. Drive-splits:** Set up the balls as shown at right, as if the red ball has just made hoop 4 and roqueted blue about a yard behind the hoop.

Yellow is loading hoop 5, and he needs to send blue to load hoop 6 while going to yellow to make hoop 5. Ask him to proceed in steps as follows:

(1) Place red in contact with blue so that the line of centres of the two balls is just outside (to the right of) hoop 6 in order to allow for a small amount of "pull".

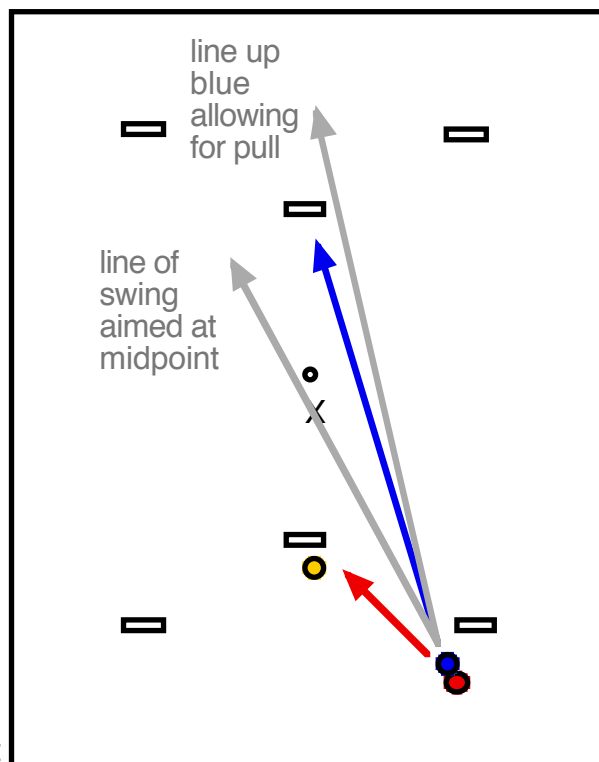
(2) Look at the distances he wants the red and blue balls to travel, and work out the ratio ("fraction") involved. In this case red is to travel about 1/3 as far as blue.

(3) Decide on the grip he will need to achieve this ratio. He should decide to use (more or less) a normal roquet grip and swing, and hold the mallet with the selected grip.

(4) Find an aiming point halfway between where the balls will finish, which in this case will be about one yard south of the peg.

(5) Look at the angle of split and decide whether there is a need to adjust his grip (by moving up the handle) for a wide angle. In this case the angle is not wide enough to require any adjustment.

(6) Stalk the line of swing, take up the correct stance, and play the stroke with a smooth, relaxed, deliberate forward swing from the shoulders - no hurrying or jabbing; and following through in the selected line of swing without any attempt to swing around a curve and "shepherd" the striker's ball towards hoop 5. ("Shepherding" usually loses control of the blue croqueted ball.)



Two further points are worth noting and pointing out at a suitable stage:

1. The Dawson balls in common use nowadays will "pull" much less than older types of ball, so in most split-shots the allowance for "pull" can be very small; but it can be important if the croqueted ball has to pass close to a hoop or the peg which you do not want it to hit.

2. Allowance for the widening angle of split may not be needed at all, until the angle of split exceeds 45 degrees, then as the angle of split widens further, the amount of allowance needed (by moving your hands up the handle) increases more rapidly. When the angle of split approaches a right-angle your hands will need to be at the top of the handle as for a normal roquet or rush stroke.

The shot illustrated above should be repeated several times, with the yellow ball moved to different positions around the hoop. In some cases the ratio will change (and with it the hand positions); or the line of swing may change, or both of these things may change, so that the stroke may no longer be a "drive-split", and may instead become a "split half-roll" or "split stop-shot".

*The whole programme of teaching split-shots will usually need to be spread over several coaching sessions, with revision of ideas learnt in previous sessions before proceeding to introduce any new ideas.*

**5. Standard splits:** Finally, the player can be taken through the above 6 steps with each of the standard splits from any hoop to the next two hoops. These are often referred to as the "bread and butter splits" which a player just has to be able to play confidently and accurately if he wants to reach higher levels of expertise. The aim is that eventually he will be able to play accurate splits from any part of the court, sending the two balls where he wants them to go. Some players will find it hard to learn, and remember to use, all six steps every time they play a split-shot.

Some players will never become confident with some of the bigger splits, but if they are on a reasonably-paced lawn and use the correct grip and swing (and a high back-swing), they should never be able to truthfully say that they lack the physical strength needed. It is not physical strength that is needed, but good technique and timing.

**NOTE:** The line of aim (swing) for most common splits can also be taught using the alternative method of “halving the angle” of split, rather than finding the point halfway between where you want the balls to finish.. Some players may find this method easier, but should be told that it does not work for take-offs (thin or thick), pass-rolls and wide-angle stop-shots. It is less accurate for because it does not allow for pull, mallet-drag and ball-slip.

## CENTRE-STYLE OR SIDE-STYLE ?

Centre-style players who use a step-stance usually have the forward foot on the same side as the top hand, eg right-handed players, with the left hand at the top, will have the left foot forward. When these players change to side-style, they tend to simply move the mallet to outside of the right leg - but retain the centre-style stance. **This is incorrect and is the reason why they swing the mallet across the body, resulting in poor control.**

**When using a side-style, right-handed players should have the right foot forward next to the ball, with the other (left) foot backward and furthest away, out to the side acting as a balance.**

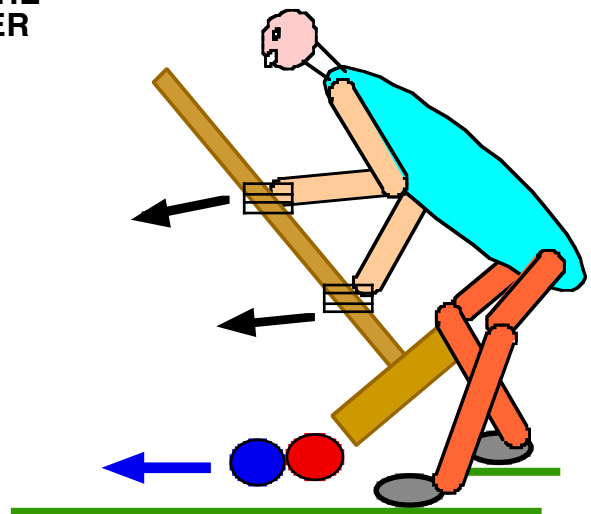
The advantage of the side-style method of rolling is that the player can use a higher backswing than he can with centre-style, and so obtain more power. The disadvantage, especially with an incorrect stance as illustrated below, is that he will not have his centre of gravity behind the line of swing, and may also have difficulty getting his sighting eye above the line of swing, making it harder to swing in a straight line directly at a selected aiming point.

### **NOTE: THE DIAGRAMS ILLUSTRATE THE STANCE FOR A RIGHT-HANDED PLAYER**

#### **INCORRECT**

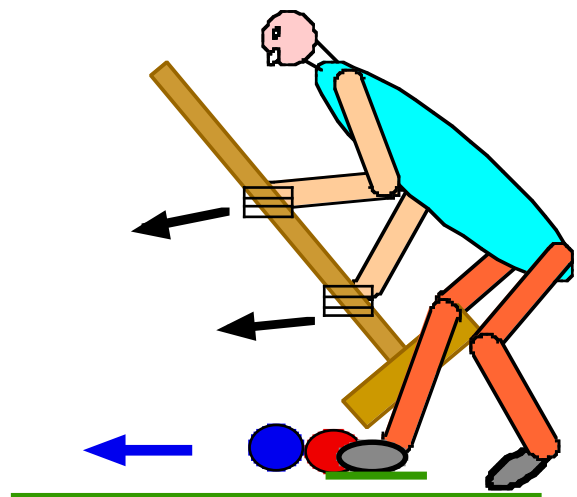
Here the player has his wrong (left) foot forward. A right-handed player with a step-stance should have his left foot forward if he plays centre-style; but if he plays any strokes side-style he should have his right foot forward.

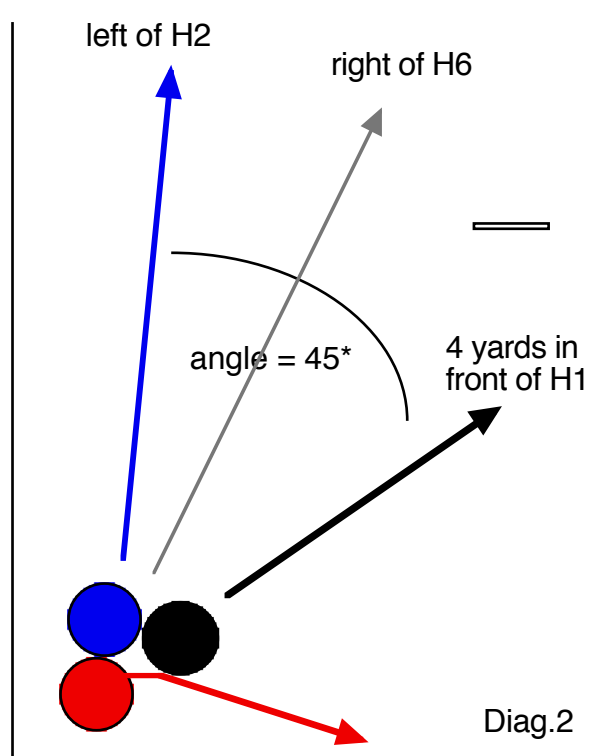
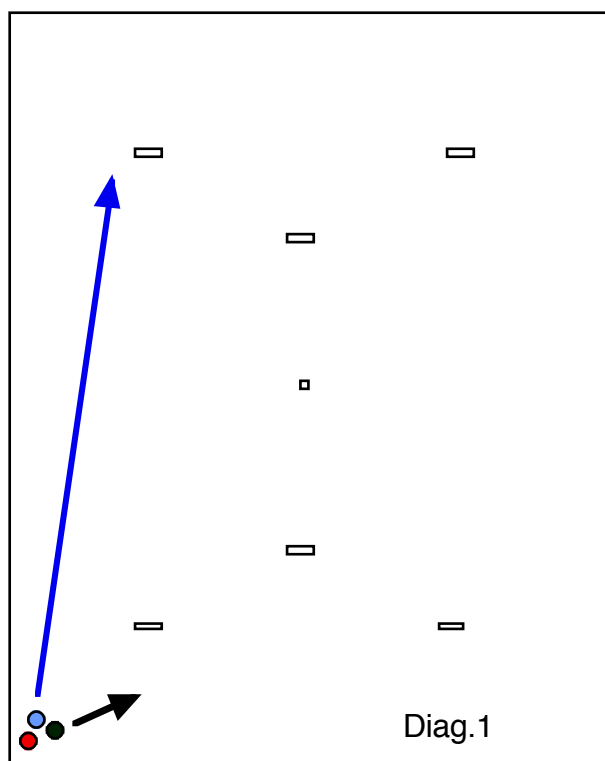
Playing with the wrong foot forward tends to cause the swing to go across the body from right to left, instead of along a straight line. This results in loss of control of the croqueted ball, difficulty in judging distance, and a tendency to lose mallet-slope due to accelerating too much with the bottom hand.



#### **CORRECT**

The right-handed player has his right foot forward for a side-style roll. He should lean his body to the right in order to get his sighting eye above the line of swing, and place his left foot backward and out to the side in order to balance the lean. Many players would stand on only the ball of the left foot, rather than placing the whole sole of the foot on the ground. This is OK provided the player retains good balance through the swing without “walking” or overbalancing.





At this stage we suggest that the player should be taught only the two cannons described here and on the following page. There are more than 25 different types of cannon. Those interested to pursue the topic further are referred to the booklet “CROQUET: Cannons” by John Riches from which these two pages are copied. (For information about availability see the Bibliography on page 6)

## SYMBOLS

In our explanations we will use the following symbols and abbreviations:

LOS = Line of swing

H1, H2, H3 ... = hoop1, hoop 2, hoop 3, ... (etc.)

C1, C2, C3, C4 = 1st corner, 2nd corner, 3rd corner, 4th corner.

45°, 60° = 45 degrees, 60 degrees.

blue and black arrows = intended paths of same coloured balls.

grey arrow = line of swing.

red arrow = path of striker's ball (not usually shown).

LUCB = line up croqueted ball (i.e. set line through centres of striker's ball and croqueted ball).

LURB = line up rushed ball (i.e. set line through centres of striker's ball and rushed ball).

## C1H1 CANNON

The above diagrams illustrate the cannon played from C1 (the 1st corner) to make H1 (hoop 1) and also load the following hoop (H2).

LUCB to about 1 yard left of (i.e. outside) H2.

LURB to go about 4 yards in front of H1.

LOS = about 1 yard right of H6

Type of swing = normal drive (or rush) stroke with flat mallet (not a stop-shot).

## NOTES

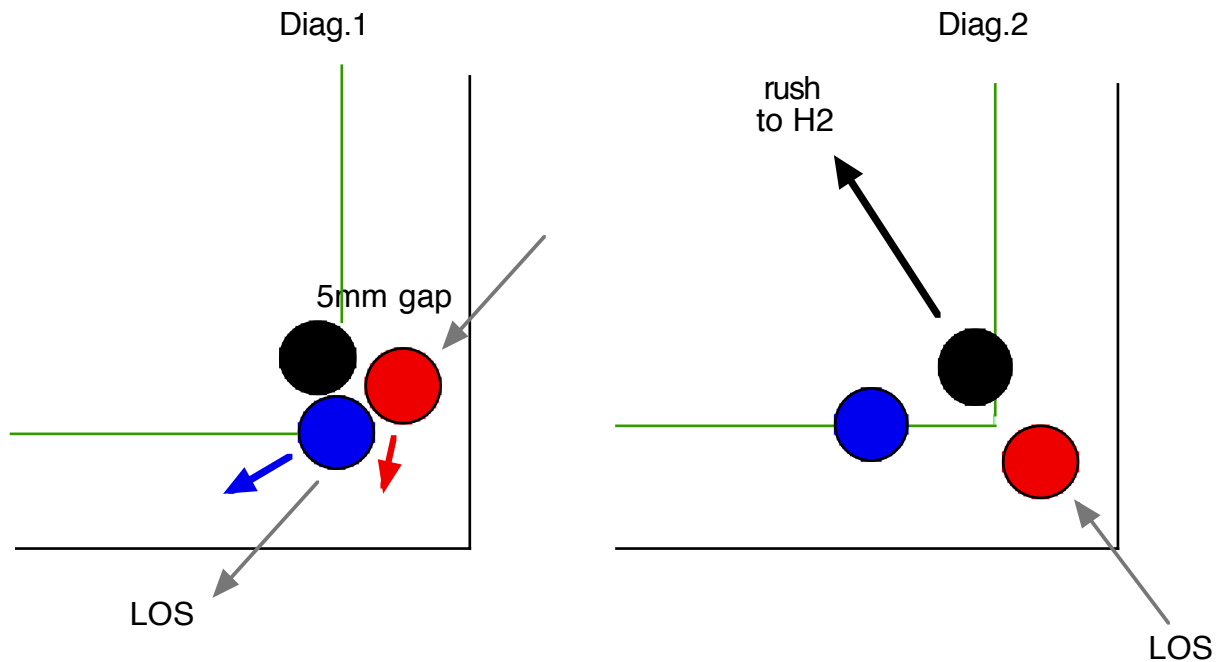
The gap should be about 25mm (maximum gap), so that the striker's ball will cut the rushed ball inwards and achieve the minimum 45° angle.

When the cannon is correctly arranged, the centres of the 3 balls form a right-angled triangle.

The cannon must be hit noticeably harder than a 2-ball load-and-hold stop-shot from C1 to load H2 and send the striker's ball in front of H1, because there is also the striker's ball that has to be moved.

The croqueted ball will pull slightly inside the LUCB line, and the rushed ball will be cut noticeably inside the LURB line shown on the diagrams.





## B.O.T.T. CANNON

The aim of this cannon is merely to obtain a good rush to your hoop.  
 Diags 1&2 illustrate the BOTT cannon as played from C4 to make H2.  
 LUCB to move away from the black ball into the yard-line area.  
 LURB to remain stationary,  
 LOS = a little left of centre of croqueted ball  
 Type of swing = sharp but gentle stop-shot.

## NOTES

The B.O.T.T. cannon is used whenever there is no possible cannon that can be used to both rush a ball to the hoop you want to make, and also load the following hoop. This occurs when the hoop you want to make is at the far end of the court.

All you can hope to do is get a good rush to your hoop, leaving the croqueted ball behind.

The best way to achieve an accurate rush is illustrated in the two diagrams at the top of this page.

In the illustrations the cannon is played in C4 to obtain a rush to H2.

The green lines in the diagrams represent the yard-lines.

The arrangement of the balls can be explained and achieved in the following stages:

- (1) leaving the croqueted ball in its correct place on the yard-line, remove the other two balls.
- (2) place the striker's (red) ball as if you were going to take off from the croqueted ball to your hoop.  
 In this case red could also be placed as if to take off from the left side of blue instead of the right side, thus producing a mirror-image of the cannon illustrated above.
- (3) pick up the black ball, **reach over the top** of the other two balls, and place it so as to make a fairly tight triangle, with a gap of 5mm or less. [Thus the name: BOTT = Ball Over The Top]
- (4) Walk around into the court and play red with a sharp but gentle stop-shot, sending blue away from black into the yard-line area, while red stops on the rush-line of black to H2.

## Note that in this cannon black does not move.

Because the third (black) ball remains stationary, you can work out exactly where you want red to finish so that it will have a simple rush on black to H2.

Be careful not to send blue out, but you must hit it far enough (about a foot) so that when it is yard-lined it will not interfere with your intended rush.

## OTHER PLACES

The "BOTT cannon" can be played from C4 for H5, H6, 1-back, penultimate or rover.

From C4 it would not normally be played for the other hoops because there are better cannons you could use.

It can similarly be played from any corner, or from any point on a yard-line, when all you need is an accurate rush to your hoop.

The BOTT cannon has replaced the two cannons described on the next page, but it needs careful practice, and players sometimes become confused trying to remember how to arrange it.



**Learning Outcome:**

During this part of the course, coaches will explore various primary to intermediate tactics and develop competence in teaching them, incorporating the range of strokes necessary to play them and the practice drills needed to make the player feel confident about employing them.

**Recommended teaching method:**

The teaching of tactics is one of the most difficult areas of croquet coaching.

In order to teach a new tactical idea to a player, the coach must be able to show the player that the tactic is warranted, will make a difference, and is the correct choice.

A player who uses “Aunt Emma” tactics and wins games, for example, will not be easily persuaded that there is a better tactical approach, particularly if initial games are lost because of any alteration.

The best way to go about teaching tactics at primary level is to use the following 5-point plan.

- (1) Teach one new tactic at a time.
- (2) Isolate the tactic to be taught.
- (3) Explain the reason for it.
- (4) Teach the strokes necessary to support the tactic.
- (5) Assimilate the new tactic and strokes into the competitive situation.

**PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH:**

In teaching the application of a tactic to a specific situation, it is recommended that the coach use the following “problem-solving approach.

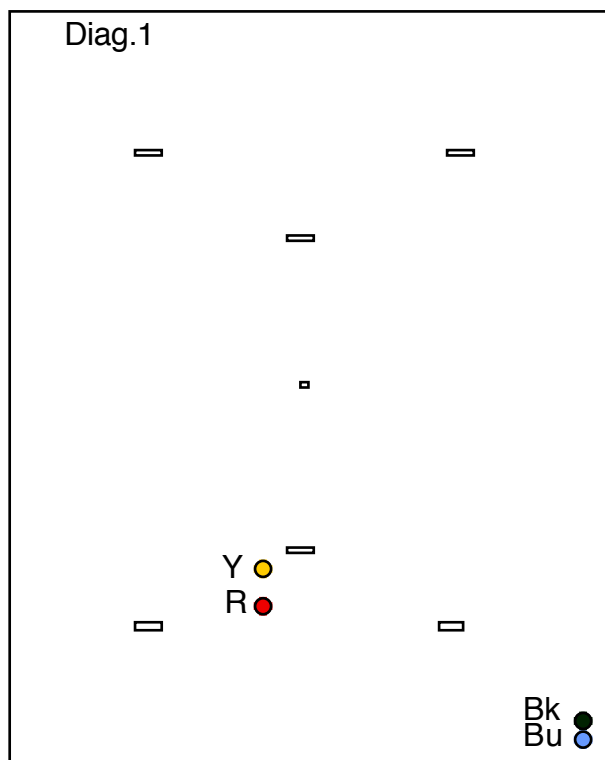
1. Set up a specific position in which the tactic can be used to advantage.
2. Ask the player what he would do if the situation arose in a game.
3. Get him to do it, and discuss the result.
4. Ask him whether he can think of a better line of play.
5. If necessary, make suggestions until he thinks of the correct tactic.
6. Get him to start again and use the correct tactic.
7. Compare the results of the two methods.
8. When he is convinced that the new method is correct, ask him to suggest other situations in which it could be used. If necessary, the coach can set up further such situations in other parts of the lawn.
9. Discuss with him a means of helping him remember when and how to use it in his games.
10. Follow up at a later coaching session by asking whether he has used the new tactical idea.

Tactical ideas that the coach could consider teaching using this method when the player is ready include:

- \* Load-and-hold strokes to set up breaks
- \* Moving Pivots.
- \* When and how to bring the 4th ball into the break.
- \* Different Starts.
- \* Covering the border..

Coaches must teach their players that just because something did not work this time, it does not mean that the wrong tactical decision was made. There is of course a corollary to this: If a tactic does happen to succeed, it does not necessarily mean that it was the *correct* tactical choice. In any case, croquet is not an exact science and the variations and changing plans are what make the sport so great.

**The following three pages are copied from the booklet “Croquet: The Teaching of tactics” by John Riches” (for availability see details in the Bibliography) and contain specific examples of ways the “problem-solving approach” should be used in teaching new tactical ideas.**

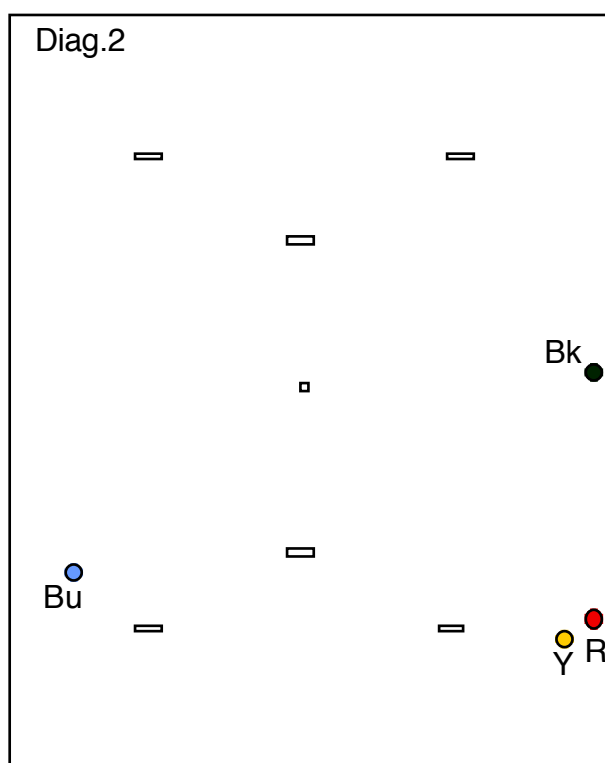


This should probably be one of the first and most important tactical lessons, yet the point it makes is frequently overlooked, even by experienced players.

The coach should set up the position shown in Diagram 1 and ask the player how he would continue the game as red and yellow, if red is for hoop 5 and yellow is for hoop 4.

Many players will decide to play red, make hoop 5, then take off to the opponent's balls in the 4th corner and rush one of them to hoop 6. Let him play the strokes until his turn ends - most likely with yellow still in the middle of the court. Then point out the disadvantages of what he has done, and ask him if he can think of anything better he could have done.

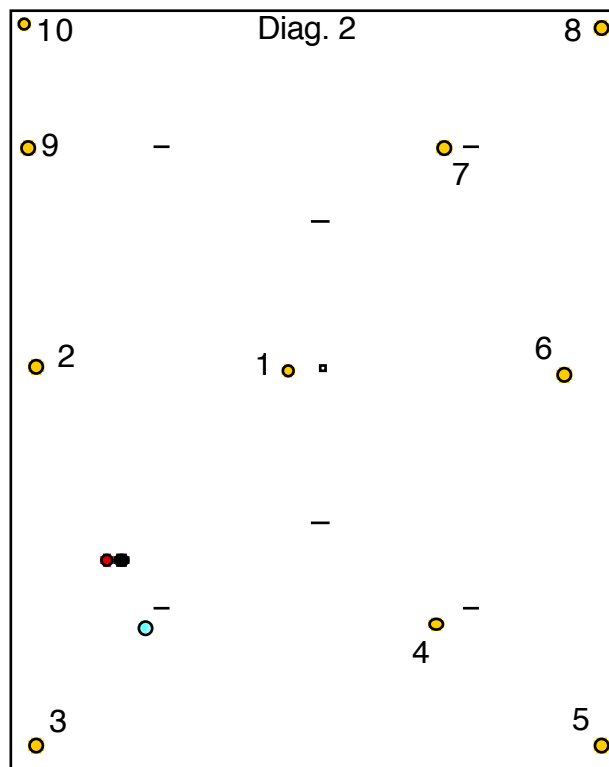
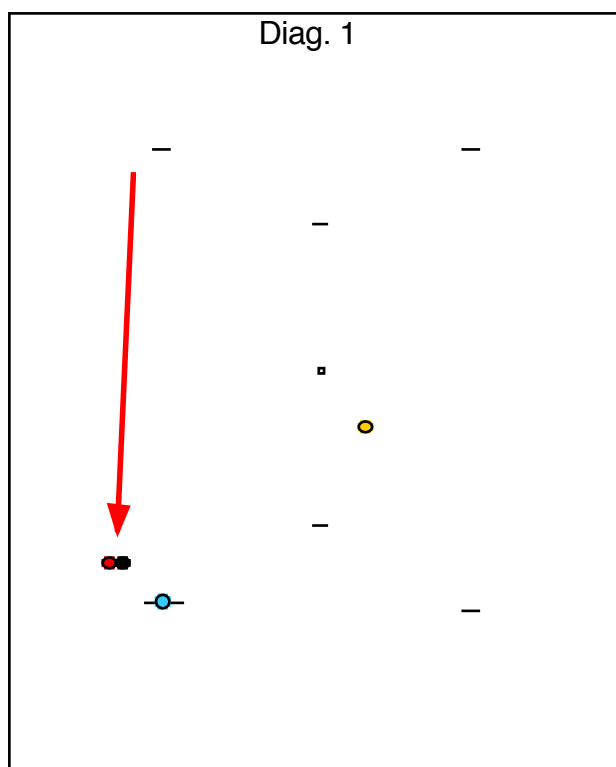
If he thinks a bit further ahead he may try to rush yellow to 2-back after making hoop 5, hoping to establish a break by making both hoops 6 and 1-back from the one opponent ball. Such forward thinking should be commended, but the player should be encouraged to think again.



A more advanced thinker may rush yellow to hoop 6, then take off back to the opponent's balls in the 4th corner, and rush one of them to hoop 5 with a 3-ball break set up. Again the student should be permitted to play the strokes and can be commended on his tactical acuity. This would in fact have been the correct thing to do if the yellow clip had been on 4-back (as it will be in another of these topics - see "setting up breaks" on the next page). Then the coach can ask whether the student considered playing yellow instead of red, whereupon the player should be able to both see and explain the advantage of doing so. Again get him to play the strokes and find out how easy it is to set up a break this way - possibly even a 4-ball break by bringing both opponent balls into the court after making hoop 4, or by using a cannon in the 4th corner.

Then set up the position in Diag.2 and ask him how he would continue as the player of red and yellow if red is for hoop 4 and yellow for hoop 1. He may want to make hoop 4 with red and then try to find a way of continuing the break, and he may even succeed in doing so when asked to demonstrate his idea.

Again the best way is to play yellow. Then use red to load hoop 2 as yellow goes to black, and take off from black to blue, which he should be able to rush closer to hoop 1. Let him try this method and compare it with playing red and making hoop 4. The positions of blue and black can be altered so as to make the choice of which ball to play either easier or more difficult, and of course the choice will also depend on the shots that the player can handle comfortably. He should not try to use a pass-roll to send black near the peg as he goes to blue, since that would involve an unnecessary additional risk. It is good, but not immediately essential, to bring the fourth ball into the break. The principle here is: **A good (though not certain) chance of a break is better than the certainty of making one or two hoops without a break set up.**



One of the tactical ideas that few players understand well is the importance of loading hoops ahead, the many ways of doing it, and the best way to do it in particular situations.

Many players would insist that they do make a habit of loading hoops ahead in order to set up breaks, and most coaches would claim that they teach and stress the importance of doing it; but when shown positions such as those given here and asked how they would continue the game, the players would in many cases fail to think of and use the correct method.

It must be admitted that in some of the situations the "correct method" of loading the next hoop before making the current one may involve one or more shots that the player is not comfortable in playing, and so would be unwise to attempt, but most of them will fail to even consider the various possible ways - let alone the best way - in which they could have loaded the next hoop.

In Diag.1 blue has failed to make hoop 1 from his partner (black) ball, and then red has shot from near hoop 2 and roqueted black. Set up the position on the lawn (note where yellow is) and ask the player how he would continue from that position in a game. [With a group of players, ask them to find and try to demonstrate a way that no-one else has yet suggested.]

Many will simply make hoop 1 from blue without even thinking about loading hoop 2. Then suggest that they might have found it easier to make more than one hoop if, before making hoop 1, they had been able to load hoop 2; and ask whether they can find a way of doing it. They will probably be very surprised when you tell them that in fact there are at least 6 ways it can be done, though some of them involve difficult shots that in this position would not be worth using. Hoop 2 can be loaded with any of the three balls (black, blue or yellow) as follows:

- (1) with black, by splitting black to hoop 2 while going to yellow, then taking off back to blue.
- (2) with black, by stop-shotting black to hoop 2, then turning around to roquet blue.
- (3) with blue, by rushing it out to border in front of hoop 1 and using a load-and hold stop-shot.
- (4) with yellow, by taking off to it, rushing it to hoop 2, and taking off back to blue to make hoop 1.
- (5) with yellow, by taking off to it, and splitting it to hoop 2 while coming back to blue.
- (6) with yellow, by taking off to it, and rushing it to the south border, then sending it to hoop 2.

In cases (4), (5) and (6) some players, instead of taking off to yellow, may choose to roll black towards the peg for use as a pivot ball, while going to yellow. Get the player to try each method of loading hoop 2, then select the one he prefers, and ask him why he would not choose the others. Then move the yellow ball to various other positions as shown in Diag 2, and get him to think about which of the six methods he will use (if any) with yellow in each of the nine positions shown.

In position 8, and possibly also position 5 and 6, he may decide that loading hoop 2 is either impossible or impractical, though a good player may choose to use method (5) with yellow in positions 5 and 6. With yellow in position 7 there is no need to load hoop 2 - just make hoop 1 and then get a rush to hoop 2, since hoop 3 is already loaded. In position 9 use a thick takeoff. The player should also look at similar positions with different hoops in other parts of the court.

**Learning Outcome:**

Coaches must demonstrate the ability to teach (not play) these breaks. Demonstration by the coach is usually a waste of time, and can be counter-productive if the player sees the coach playing accurate strokes that he knows he will be unable to duplicate.

The coach should teach the principles (“tactics” if you like), ensure that the player learns and understands them, then later teach the strokes needed to go with them. There are many variations on the theme and more than one way to play a 4-ball break.. Start with the basic methods as described below.

Even if you cannot play the strokes yourself - **YOU MUST BE ABLE TO TEACH THEM.**

**THE 4-BALL BREAK:**

**The Pattern:** Have the hoop after your current one loaded, a “Pivot Ball” somewhere near the peg, and a rush (if needed) to your current hoop.

After running the current hoop, the ball roqueted - the “Reception Ball” - is then croqueted to load your next plus one hoop, while the striker’s ball travels to the pivot ball, which is roqueted (see diagram below), before going to the ball waiting at the next hoop.

**Teaching method:** Set up the balls as explained above and let the player make hoop 1. This will bring him to the situation shown in the diagram below. He should then use a half-roll to send the reception (blue) ball to load hoop 3 while the (red) striker’s ball goes to where it can roquet the (black) pivot ball.

Then he can roquet the pivot ball and take off to the yellow ball waiting at hoop 2.

After making hoop 2, he should use a similar pattern - send yellow to load hoop 4 while going once more to the black pivot ball, and take off to make hoop 3 from the blue ball that had been sent there after making hoop 1. He will soon realise that it is easier if he can load the hoops accurately and control the placement of the pivot ball. Discuss with him the best positions for each ball before he plays each stroke.

**IMPORTANT: If the balls do not go approximately where they were intended to go, put them there and continue the break.**

DO NOT try to explain what he did wrong in playing the shot.

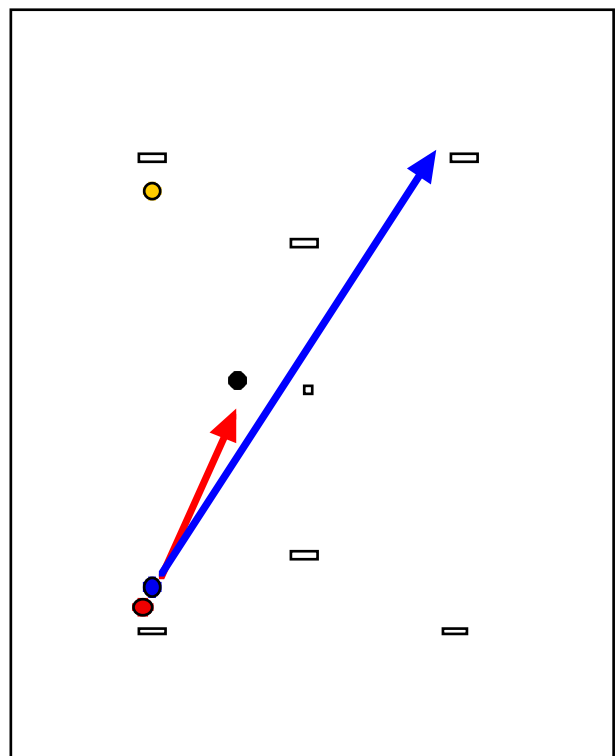
DO NOT ask or allow him to replay the shot.

DO compliment him on anything and everything that he gets right.

**Remember: You are teaching a tactical concept - the layout of a 4-ball break - and you should avoid trying to teach more than one thing at a time if it is at all possible.**

Many coaches find it very difficult to refrain from complicating the teaching procedure by wanting to correct the player’s poor shots.

First he must understand the pattern (what shots he needs to play) before he can go back to concentrating on how to play them accurately (correct grip, mallet slope, aiming point, swing, etc.).



As you teach these breaks, keep asking - NOT TELLING - the player what he thinks he should do next. In other words, use a “problem-solving: approach”. If he can work something out for himself he will be far more likely to remember it and use it in his games than if you tell him what to do without him having to do any thinking.

## THE 3-BALL BREAK:

**The Pattern:** Have the hoop after your current hoop loaded and a rush to the current hoop. After running the current hoop, use the reception ball to load the next plus one hoop while going to the ball at the next hoop.

**Teaching method:** Set up the situation without a pivot ball as shown in the top diagram at right. Ask the student how he can now load hoop 3 while going to make hoop 2 from yellow. It will obviously require a three-quarter split-roll which he should by now be able to play, but it is not an easy stroke.

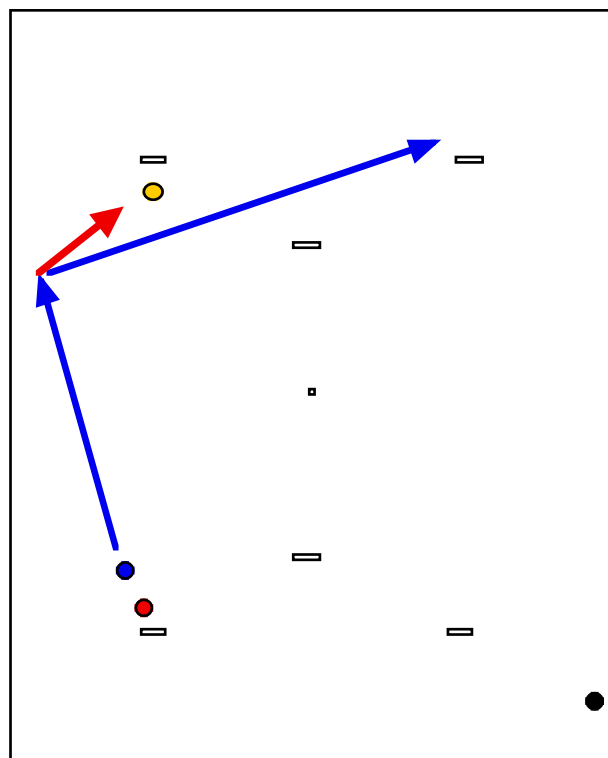
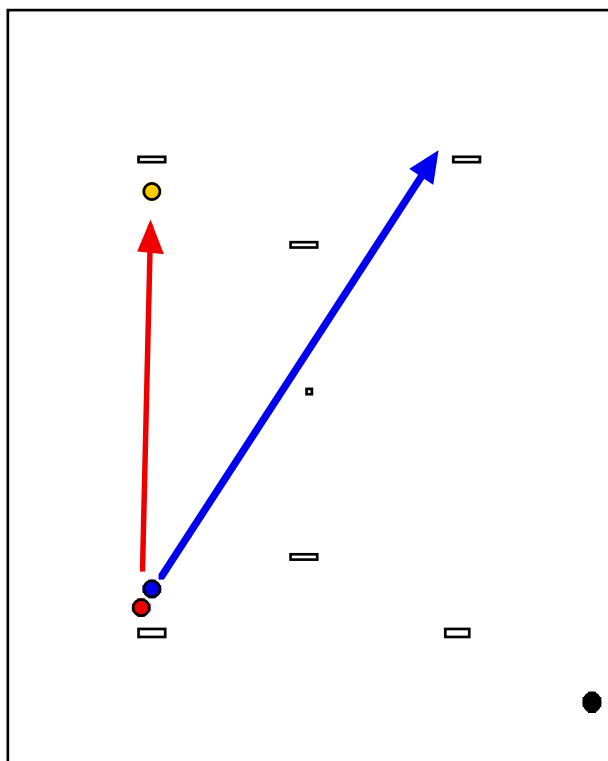
Ask him whether he can suggest a way of making things easier for himself.

He should (perhaps with some help) be able to realise that it would be an advantage if he could play the split-shot from closer to hoop 2; and he could do that if he had a forward rush after making hoop 1.

Let him try making hoop 1 again, attempting to get a forward rush. If he fails, put the balls where he would have liked them to go, and let him play the rush, followed by the split to load hoop 3 while going to yellow.

Then ask him if he can think of the best possible place from which to play the split-shot. With help, he may realise that it is somewhere near the west border as shown in the bottom diagram at right, allowing a split-drive. Let him make hoop 1 again, this time trying for a rush to the “ideal” place.

[This involves a new idea -- rush-line theory -- that should not be taught at this stage.]



Then let him proceed to make hoop 2, and again work out the ideal place to obtain a rush to after making hoop 2. He should eventually be able to make up (for himself, in his own words) a simple rule such as “in a 3-ball break, it is good to get a rush to the outside of the court, not to the centre”.

## Learning Outcome:

At the end of this section, coaches will be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the art and implementation of correcting errors that present themselves in the croquet teaching environment.

The method used for error correction is the **DRAMA** method, as it contains the five separate elements of error correction that comprise the complete spotting, changing and retraining that is required of the croquet coach from this level of training forwards.

It is recommended that coaches use this mnemonic - **D.R.A.M.A.**

D Diagnose the problem

R Recognise the error

A Alter the technique

M Maintain the new technique

A ssimilate the new into the competitive environment

How are these things brought about?

**DIAGNOSING** the problem is *mostly* fairly simple. The outcome of the stroke is not as intended.

Something has gone wrong - stuck in a hoop, missed the roquet, fails to move both balls in a Take off, does not pull off an equal roll etc.

Coaches please note: **Simply announcing what the problem is, is not error correction.** This is only the very beginning of your job. Be wary of accepting without question the player's version of the problem. Do not immediately accept the player's own diagnosis of his problem. Check that the problem really is what he thinks it is.

**RECOGNISING** the error or errors is the next step and this can range from straight forward to downright difficult. It takes perseverance and practice, plus a complete knowledge of the subject.

The coach will need to consider possible causes and must know where to stand and what to look for. Be aware of disabilities, personal peculiarities or specific medical conditions. Training in this course plus communication with other coaches will start you off on the right track. If you are faced with a problem involving errors that you can neither spot nor correct, do not bluff your way through. Please admit your humanness and seek help, or refer the player to a coach with training at a higher level..

Assess whether or not the error is worth correcting and in what ways. This can depend on the willingness of the player to work consistently on overcoming the problem, as some errors in technique cannot be fixed in the short term. Remember, "if it is not broken, don't fix it".

Also assess whether the time taken to fix an error may be more profitably spent working on some other aspect of the player's development.

**ALTERING** the technique cannot be achieved if coaches do not have a solid grounding of what constitutes a correct technique, or at least a technique that will produce a desired result.

Coaches will need to explain the problem and the reason for changing. Explain what will be involved in the way of player commitment and expectations. Use goal setting as the motivational tool.

It may be that the muscles will need to be trained (or retrained) to coordinate differently.

Try to eliminate variables (eg timing), isolate elements, and look for success in one area at a time.

Work out practice drills and organise definite practice sessions, some with the coach and others without.

Encourage the player to go out on his own for practice sessions (not too long), but make sure that he knows how to most profitably use the time he intends to spend practising.

**MAINTAINING** the new skill will not be too difficult if the player agrees to the commitment. The coach will need to arrange follow up coaching sessions and retrain the player if necessary. He should check that the player is still using the corrected technique in future weeks.

**ASSIMILATING** the new technique into the competitive game situation may not be easy, as it will be in pressure situations that the player may revert back to the old method.

Watch the mental approach and give positive reinforcement. Remind the player that they do not need to be confident of 100% success, nor of immediate success.

Once again, use goal setting as the training tool.

Discuss jointly when to start using the new technique in games and how the player can remember to use a check list when under stress. Seek and give feedback.

Coaches must realise that the correction of errors involves aspects such as *determination, organisation, psychology and encouragement* and the player will need help in each of these areas.

Many errors are only corrected over an extended period of time, with repeated involvement of the coach and continuing commitment by the player.

Remember that the science of error correction in croquet coaching is still developing, and has a long way to go. The coach should be continually questioning his coaching methods and looking for better ones.

A coach who wishes to go further into error correction will find much of interest in the booklet "Croquet: Error Correction and Hampered Shots" by John Riches (current ACA National Coaching Director - 2008-9) from which the following three pages are copied as examples of the approach to use. See the Bibliography page in this Manual for further details.

### **SOME THINGS TO AVOID:**

DO NOT tell a player about the errors you have noticed in his technique unless he has agreed to you coaching him.

DO NOT start offering advice and telling him what he is doing wrong while you and he are playing a game, ESPECIALLY if he is beating you. It is most unfair to an opponent, even in a friendly game, to change the whole psychology of the game in this way. Some coaches have used this ploy as a means of "saving face", as after they lose they can say that the opponent won only because they helped him, and they were obviously not really trying to beat him; but such tactics are a sign of weakness and insecurity in the coach.

DO NOT, as a rule, try to coach a player and tell him what he should have done immediately after he has lost a game. It may seem a good time to do it while the game is still fresh in his memory, and with some players it may be helpful, but many players will not be in a good frame of mind and ready to adopt a positive attitude to suggestions for change until they have had some time to get over any emotional effect and let-down resulting from the loss.

DO NOT extend a coaching programme beyond the point of exhaustion. Plan what you will work on and do it over a series of (say) 4-6 one-hour coaching sessions, at one or two sessions per week. Then take a break, allowing the player time to consolidate the new ideas and assimilate them into his thinking and into his play when under pressure.

**“Walking”**

It is not at all uncommon to see players “walking” or stepping forward as they hit the ball, especially on a long rush, roquet or roll shot. The reason for this is simply that they do it because otherwise they would overbalance and fall forward. The total weight of the forward-moving mallet and arms moves their centre of gravity forward until it is no longer directly above their feet, so they become unstable unless some part of the body counterbalances it by moving backwards. The slighter the build of the player, the more difficulty he will have in moving enough weight backward to maintain his equilibrium without it affecting his swing. Some bend their knees, which moves their posterior slightly back, while others achieve the same result, but less effectively, by bending the trunk at the waist. Either of these movements will involve the use of additional muscles that have to be controlled and coordinated. To avoid overbalancing they take a step forward with the forward-swinging mallet, but like bending at the knees or waist, this also results in an unstable platform from which to swing. Some even use the mallet itself as a counter-balance by swinging it right up and backwards over their heads in a highly exaggerated follow-through, but this also is poor technique because the mallet-head needs a long and low follow-through so that the player can see whether or not he is keeping it in line the whole time, and to make the timing of the stroke easier.

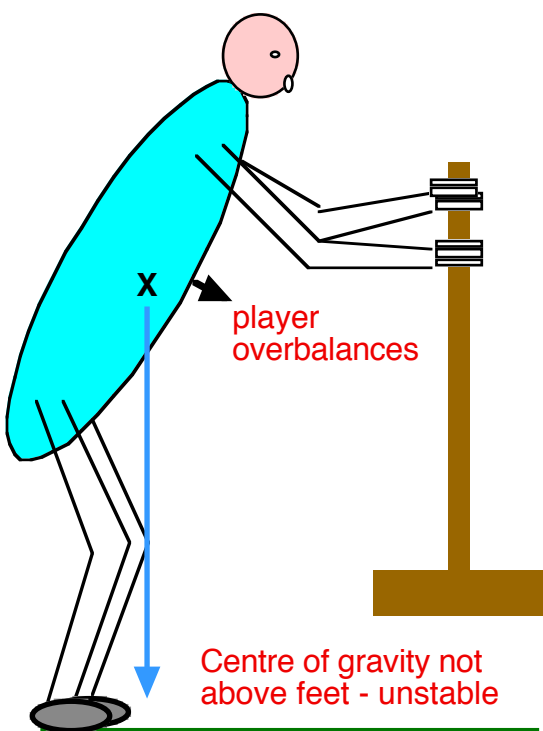
Players are more likely to “walk” as they swing if they are slight of build and use a level stance. If you ask a lightly built person with small feet and a level stance to grip the mallet handle with both hands as they would to play a stroke, and then hold the mallet out in front in the position it would reach at the end of their follow-through, they will not be able to do it, and will overbalance forward as illustrated in Diag.17. This should convince them that they need to find a solution to the problem of overbalancing.

**Correction of “walking”**

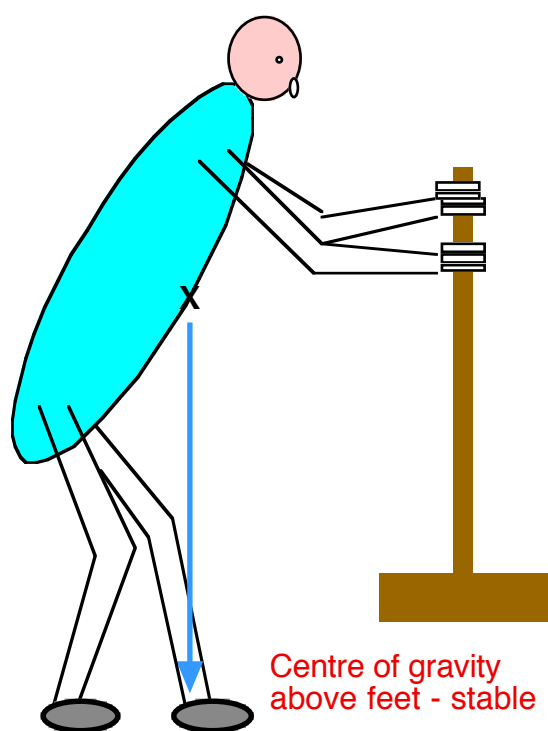
The most effective way to solve the problem of overbalancing and walking during the swing is for the player to use a step-stance with one foot well forward of the other. This should immediately enable the player to swing the mallet right through and reach forward with it in the follow-through without overbalancing or needing to step forward (see Diag.18).

However it may introduce different difficulties of finding a way to ensure that his hips, and more importantly his shoulders, are consistently taking up a position where they are more or less square to the line of swing.

Diag.17

**level stance**

Diag.18

**step-stance**



**Incorrect rear foot placement**

Some players take up a stance with one of their feet in the line of swing. They do not realise they are doing this, nor do they realise that the incorrect foot placement causes them (unknowingly) to swing the mallet back around a curve so as to avoid hitting the incorrectly placed foot.

This problem is seen surprisingly often, and occurs mainly among players who use a step-stance, although players with a level stance have also been known to do it.

Diag.19 shows how, when the coach views the player from the front and asks him to take up his stance as if addressing a ball, it can be easily seen that if the mallet is swung straight back it will hit the rear foot. This will mean that in order to swing back, the player has to take the mallet around a curve as can be seen in the overhead view illustrated in Diag.20. As the player brings the mallet forward to contact the ball he will need to find a way of bringing it back into the correct line.

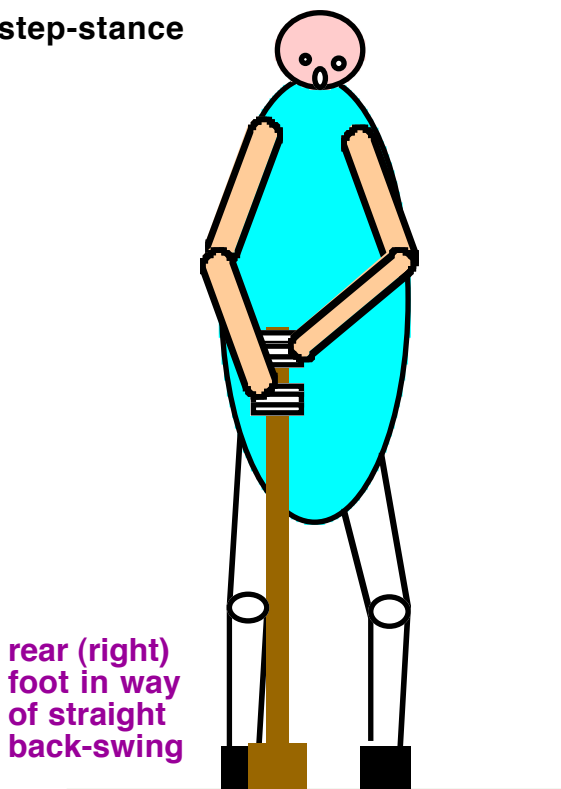
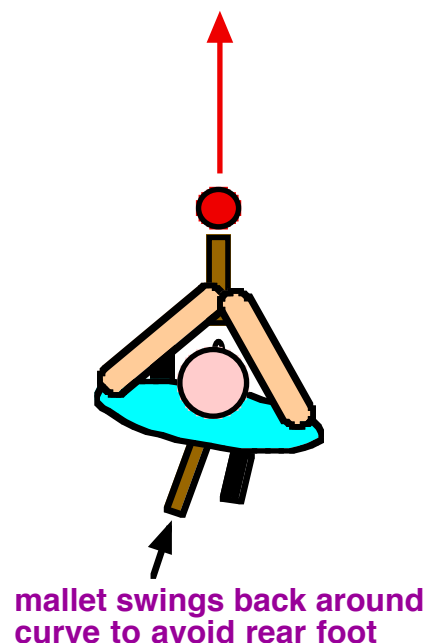
[It must be noted that there are world-class players who have used such a curved back-swing, and have managed to roquet extremely well with it, but they do not have their foot placed incorrectly in the line of swing, so there must be a different reason for the curved back-swing.]

Straightening the alignment of the mallet during the forward swing requires accurate and difficult timing, which will vary according to the length of the shot and speed of the mallet, so it is not surprising that most players with such an incorrect foot placement will not be able to roquet consistently.

**Correction of incorrect rear foot placement**

Because the player does not know he is doing it (and may take some convincing), he will need to learn to consciously walk in and place his rear foot further to the side than he has been doing. It can help to ensure that his foot is pointing parallel to the line of swing, and that his shoulders and hips are reasonably square, since many step-stance players stand with their hips and shoulders slightly rotated as shown in Diag.20, which may not necessarily lead to problems with the swing unless it involves the incorrect foot placement we have described. After taking up his stance the player should check that he can move his mallet straight back without it passing too close to his rear foot. This problem is more likely to be noticed with long shots when he takes a longer back-swing. With hoop running and short roquets his mallet may not swing back far enough to contact his rear foot; but even those shots can be affected by the habit of swinging the mallet back around a curve.

Diag.19

**step-stance**Diag.20  
(overhead view)

**Body movement**

Like some of the other things we have considered, moving body parts other than the arms may not be an error itself, but it can be a source of error because it will also mean that the shoulders are moving, making it more difficult to control the movement of the arms that are swinging the mallet, and more difficult to coordinate the additional movements with correct timing.

There are two main types of body movement -

(a) bending the knees: This is usually done to achieve more power, since it is possible to obtain more power with less effort by using the large muscles in the upper legs. However for most players the difficulty of coordinating and correctly timing the use of the various muscles makes this a dubious method of swinging the mallet.

Players who incorporate a definite and deliberate knees bend into their swing usually have a level (square) stance, use a short mallet (or a short grip), and the back-swing usually starts fairly high, with the knees bending in order to bring the mallet down onto the ball. The follow-through also usually finishes fairly high as the knees start to straighten, and it is likely that during the swing the wrists will rotate to a noticeable extent. So many muscles are brought into action, one set after another, that it must be desirable for most players to find a way of achieving the desired swing by using and coordinating fewer muscles.

(b) bending at the waist: This type of body movement is quite different from bending the knees, although both have the effect of causing the player to have to swing his arms from moving shoulders. In fact, this player may not swing his arms much at all. The player will probably have a level stance (unlike the one shown in the diagram), and use a mallet with a long shaft, keeping his nose nearer to the end of the shaft and his hands nearer to his chest than is generally recommended by coaches.

Diag. 20 is an attempt to illustrate this type of swing which is achieved almost entirely with the trunk muscles. The elbows usually remain bent throughout the swing, and the wrists are locked tightly. This means that, in contrast to the knees bender, the player uses very few muscles provided his bending at the waist does not also involve any bending at the knees. The mallet is usually swung back a long way and finishes very high in front.

Some players manage to roquet well with this action, and the coach should be wary of trying to change the swing unless there are other problems evident that also need to be corrected.

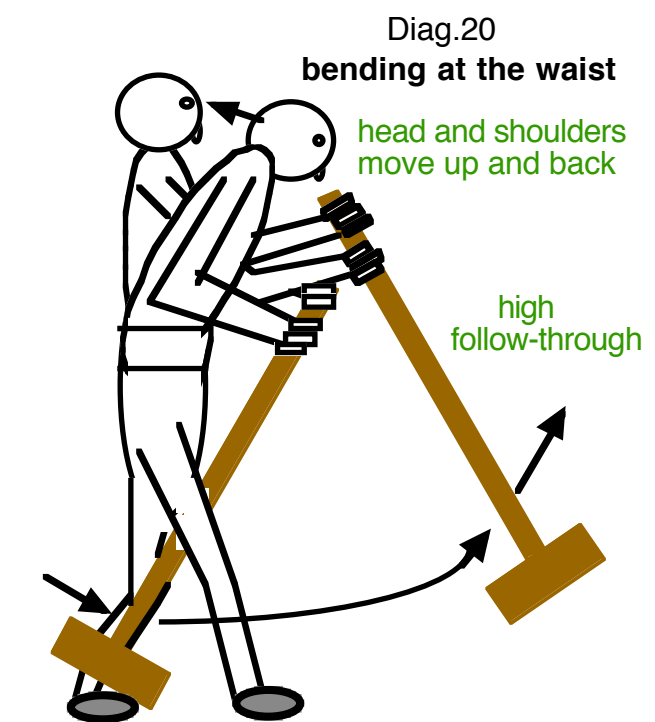
**Correction of body movement**

If he wants to change the swing, the coach will need to look for a way that suits the particular player, as what works for one player may not work for another player with the same problem.

The player could be asked to start with a fairly upright step-stance (he can go back to a level stance later if he wishes) and try swinging the mallet back and forth using only the muscles at the top of his shoulders.

He may need to be convinced that if he keeps his wrists firm, swings his arms and mallet as one unit from the shoulders, keeps his arms out in front of his body and takes a long back-swing, he will be able to easily achieve sufficient power for almost any stroke he would wish to play. He should relax the muscles in his feet, then the muscles in his upper trunk and shoulders; and before swinging he should feel that his shoulders are fixed in space, as if they are locked in position and cannot be moved at all during the swing.

Note that this type of deliberate knees-bend is quite different from the involuntary one seen in players who are very nervous and have an attack of the "yips" or "jitters".



## **HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY**

This is the science dealing with the functioning of the human body and its parts

**Learning Outcome:** On completion of this section of the programme, coaches will have gained an awareness of the importance of exercise, pre-game stretching, the 5-minute hit-up and nutrition and how these topics specifically relate to the croquet player.

### **EXERCISE:**

Bodily and mental exertion is an important part of training or improving the body's performance, in which the most important parts are the muscles.

So far as the average croquet player is concerned, even to compete in a three hour game, the muscles need to be supplied with fuel and energy, and waste eliminated. All of which delays the onset of fatigue.

When muscles become fatigued, the brain follows suit, concentration wanes, silly errors occur, confidence diminishes and the game could well be lost. Therefore, it follows that croquet players do need some sort of training to improve the various systems that cause fatigue, so that these systems can work longer and harder and not give in to the effects of fatigue.

This is not to suggest that croquet players should "do weights", although some less strenuous form of upper body exercise to improve muscle mass could well be beneficial, especially for women and older men. However, a general improvement in fitness will allow the body to perform better. It makes the heart stronger, which helps develop more blood vessels in and around the muscles, which in turn improves the ability of the blood to carry more oxygen around the body and to remove waste more efficiently.

Croquet players do not need speed or power, but exercising will improve strength, co-ordination and agility. Remember the Arthritis Foundation slogan - "move it or lose it".

As most croquet games at beginner and primary levels last for 3 hours, with a considerable amount of walking, bending and wielding a mallet weighing 3 lbs and more, and 100% concentration needed for much of the time, it is easy to see why exercising above the normal everyday level would be beneficial.

### **PRE-GAME STRETCHING - MUSCLE WARM UP:**

Croquet is no different from other sports in that stretching and warming the muscles and tendons, increasing their length and flexibility, before the start of a game or a new turn helps prepare them for the task ahead.

It is done by applying tensions to various parts of the body, either by using body weight, movement or external forces, so that the entire body becomes more flexible with a greater range of motion of the relevant parts, and it helps to reduce injury.

It helps to remove tension, aids relaxation and is the beginning of the focusing on the game or turn to come. It helps to increase the heart rate, moving oxygen to the muscles and brain, by making players breath more deeply.

It raises the body temperature a little, with the ensuring sweating causing evaporation from the skin, cooling it and cooling the blood in the vessels close to the surface. The coach should know some specific stretching exercises that are of benefit to all croquet players, from beginner to elite.

## PRINCIPLES OF GOOD COACHING

1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being.
2. Ensure the athlete's time spent with you is a positive experience.
3. Treat each athlete as an individual.
4. Be fair, considerate and honest with athletes.
5. Be professional and accept responsibility for your actions.
6. Make a commitment to providing a quality service to your athletes.
7. Operate within the rules and spirit of your sport.
8. Any physical contact with athletes should be avoided like the plague.
9. Refrain from any form of personal abuse towards your athletes.
10. Refrain from any form of harassment towards your athletes.
11. Provide a safe environment for training and competition.
12. Show concern and caution towards sick and injured athletes.
13. Be a positive role model for your sport and athletes.
14. Within the context of the activity, treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, disability, ethnic origin or religion.
15. All athletes are deserving of equal attention and opportunities.
16. Respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each individual athlete.

## FURTHER COACHING PRINCIPLES

- Help each athlete to reach his or her full potential.
- Language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation should display high standards.
- Display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved with the sport – this includes opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, the media, parents and spectators.
- Encourage your athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- Maintain or improve your current NCAS accreditation.
- Seek continual improvement through performance appraisal and ongoing coach education.
- Provide a training program that is planned and sequential.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- The guidelines of national and international bodies governing your sport should be followed.
- Coaches should educate their athletes on drugs in sport issues in consultation with the Australian Sports And Drugs Agency (ASADA).
- Check that coaching methods and explanations are appropriate to the situation and necessary for the athlete's skill development.
- Avoid and actively discourage any verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
- Be alert to any forms of abuse directed towards your athletes from other sources whilst they are in your care.
- This includes sexual and racial harassment, racial vilification and harassment on the grounds of disability.
- You should not only refrain from initiating a relationship with an athlete, but should also discourage any attempt by an athlete to initiate a sexual relationship with you, explaining the ethical basis of your refusal.
- Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards.
- Equipment, rules, training and the environment need to be appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- Provide a modified training program where appropriate.
- Allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.
- Encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- Maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes.
- \* Play by the rules, show respect and never harass anyone.

## GOAL SETTING

**GOAL SETTING** is the sorting out and clarifying of ambitions and priorities

Without goals, motivation and performance tend to be lower and athletes do not have the same feelings of being in control.

Coaches also benefit from using goal setting as a training tool in areas such as increased maturity in coaching, better communication and satisfaction.

Goals related to performance rather than outcome are the most effective - "I will win this game" is not as effective as "I will play each stroke perfectly and concentrate on doing so", or better still, "I will remember to take a slow and deliberate back-swing when running each hoop." In other words, the goal should be within the ability of the player to achieve, not dependent on others.

**The use of Goal Setting as a tool to aid development and motivation cannot be over emphasised.**

Goals must be realistic, measurable and achievable.

Goals can be personal or group goals.

Goals should be immediate, short and long term.

Goals should be assessed frequently and altered or re-affirmed as needed.

Goals should be attainable with effort and not too easily attained.

Examples:

**Immediate Goal:** To play big stop-shots, loading H2 and holding in front of H1. **Date:** 1/7/08.

Date: 1/7/08 - work with accredited coach to correct/improve technique.

Date: 1/7/08 - use correct/improved technique.

Date: 8/7/08 - playing perfect stop-shots every single time.

**Short Term Goal:** To make a break of 6 hoops in 6 weeks. **Date:** 1/7/08.

Date: By 14/7/08 - to be able to play most of the time the necessary strokes.

Date: By 21/7/08 - to make a 6 hoop break using 3 bisques.

Date: By 24/7/08 - to make a 6 hoop break using 1 bisque.

Date: By 28/7/08 - to make a 6 hoop break in practice without bisques.

Date: By 1/8/08 - playing 6 hoop breaks in 5 out of 6 competitions.

**Long Term Goal:** To have my handicap reduced by 5 by 1/1/09. **Date:** 1/1/08.

Strategies:

Work with accredited coach to isolate weaknesses.

Practice to improve at least twice a week.

Increase skill and tactical abilities.

Play in all competitions that present themselves.

Use immediate and short terms goals to check development.

Without clear and defined pathways, any old path will do and that is not good enough. Although goals should be achievable, they also must be of a sufficiently high standard to allow players to strive for them. It is always more satisfying to find the going tough but to make it in the end, than to give oneself an easy road. The "I did it and I can do it" factor is greatly rewarding.

Both the Programme Presenter and the trainee coach may wonder why certain other things have not been covered in this Level 1 Coach-Training programme.

They may have expected it to include topics such as:

Using a moving pivot in a 4-ball break (the “yard from a third” principle)

Openings

Pegging out

Cannons

Leaves.

Jump-shots

Hampered shots

Other tactical ideas

(etc.)

The explanation is that this Programme needs to be such that it can be taught (to coaches, not to players) in about 10 hours.

The Level 2 Coach-Training Programme will cover (at least in part) the above, plus a whole lot more topics, as well as going into more detail in most of the topics covered in this Level 1 manual. The Level 3 programme will go further still.

There is nothing to stop a Level 1 coach from going further and teaching some of these things if he feels confident and competent to do so, but it may be better still to pass the student on to an accredited Level 2 coach who will have been specifically trained in the coaching of more advanced topics than those covered in the Level 1 Programme.

The task of the Level 1 coach is to ensure that the player has a sound grounding in the knowledge and skills needed to cope with the basic strokes we have looked at in this manual. That will give him a good basis for further development.

Beware of trying to go too far too quickly, but ensure that the player is given enough to keep him interested and mildly challenged as he improves his skills.

Coaching sessions should not be too long - about one hour, or 90 minutes at the maximum, rather than a whole morning or afternoon - and should be regularly scheduled. The player will have a “coordination span” as well as a “concentration span”. When he begins to tire, he will remember little that is covered in a coaching session that was extended too long, and his muscles will no longer coordinate as well as they did at the start of the session.

If the player is not prepared to come out regularly, and to practise on his own between sessions, then he will be wasting both his own time and that of the coach. It is an important principle of coaching in any sport that an athlete cannot noticeably improve his coordination skills unless he practises them at least twice a week, though it may not be necessary to have the coach present at both sessions.

## PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Players and coaches may not agree with some of the coaching methods advocated in this programme. Some may be amazed to have seen teaching methods that have been used for years describes as things to avoid, and some may even resent the implication that their own tried and true methods are in any way lacking or capable of being improved upon.

Take comfort in the fact that coaching is not an exact science in any sport, least of all croquet. When coaching, you are free to do things your own way, but you would do well to consider the possibility that your well-intentioned efforts could turn out to have done the beginner player more harm than good.

The programme content in all of Croquet Australia's Coach-Training Programmes includes the most up-to-date methods for teaching croquet, but further changes can be expected in the future. As a player you may play the sport as you wish, but **please do not teach your own idiosyncrasies**; please teach as outlined in these National Coach-Training Programmes.

**Please circle your answers and add any comments you wish. If your comments are of a negative sort, you may wish to suggest how an improvement could be brought about. This small questionnaire is designed to help us improve our programmes in the future.**

### HOW DID YOU FIND THIS TRAINING PROGRAMME?

**Date of course** \_\_\_\_\_. **Venue** \_\_\_\_\_. **Duration** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Duration:**    Too short.                      About right.                      Too long.

**Content:**    Insufficient.                      Adequate.                      Too much.

**Manual:**    Poorly designed                      Adequate.                      Excellent.

**Diagrams:**    Insufficient.                      Adequate.                      Too complicated.

**Programme Presentation:**                      Poor                      Adequate                      Good.

**Any suggestions for improvement:**