

Croquet Practice Drills

Courtside Quick Reference

Compiled from Keith Aiton, Wylie, and FVCS Course Materials

Warm-Up Routines

🕒 5-Minute Quick

1. 10 practice swings (no ball)
2. 5 straight shots at 1m
3. 5 shots at 2m

🕒 10-Minute Full

1. 10 swings focusing on rhythm
2. Straight: 5 at 1m, 5 at 2m, 5 at 3m
3. Clock face: 1 shot each position
4. 3 roquets at 3m

Fundamental Drills

Drill	How To	Goal
Pendulum Swing	Swing without ball, smooth backswing & follow-through	Clean, repeatable motion
Stop and Stare	Hit ball, freeze, count to 3 before looking up	Train head stillness
1m Straight Shot	Through hoop from 1m, progress when 7/10	Build confidence
The Ladder	Hit to 1m, 2m, 3m, 4m, 5m markers and back	Distance control

Hoop Running

Clock Face Drill

- Place markers at 12, 3, 6, 9 o'clock
- 2 metres from hoop
- Shoot from each position
- 3 full rotations
- Track weak angles

Aiton's Approach

Ideal position: 1 yard in front, straight on

"Running hoops with control directs your ball to specific positions for advantageous rushes."

Roquet & Rush

Drill	Setup	Progression
Roquet Practice	Target ball 2m away, 10 attempts	2m → 3m → 4m
Straight Rush	Hit directly through centre	Short to long distance
Cut Rush	Angle to hit off-centre (like pool)	Gentle cuts → sharper
Roquet Rally	2 players, first to 10 roquets wins	Game format practice

Croquet Shot Types

Shot	Ratio	Technique
Takeoff	—	Object stays, striker travels (thin vs thick)
Stop Shot	1:5–1:10	Strike below centerline, no follow-through
Drive	1:3	Normal stroke—foundation of break play
Half Roll	1:2	Downward strike, hands lower, stand forward
Full Roll	1:1	Both balls equal distance, apply topspin
Pass Roll	1:1	Steep downward angle—difficult shot
Split Shot	varies	Aim halfway between destinations (90° max)

Break Play

Key Positions

- **Pilot/Reception:** Near current hoop
- **Pioneer:** At your NEXT hoop
- **Pivot:** Mid-court recovery ball

Triangle Drill (3-Ball)

1. Set balls in triangle near hoop
2. Roquet first, take croquet
3. Roquet second, take croquet
4. Position and run hoop

Goal: Minimum strokes

Aiton on Breaks

- Rush toward useful balls rather than directly to hoops
- Plan pioneer establishment before making first hoop
- Identify closest opponent ball to next hoop as intended pilot
- “Shoot at the back ball” when opponents cluster

Leaves

Leave	Setup	Notes
NSL	Opponent NE of H4 (wired), other as H3 pioneer	Bread and butter
DSL	Opponents diagonal, partner east as escape	Most forgiving
MSL	NSL variant, west ball on H2 wire	Superior pioneer
Bryant	One at H4, other 1cm north of H1	Ultra-aggressive
Summer	Ball between H3–4, wired by peg	Most forcing

Leave Golden Rules

1. Final roquet should be your **partner ball** (organize quality rush)
2. Complete final hoop off an **opponent's ball** (partner stays positioned)
3. Create **no short shots** for opponent

Openings (Turns 1–4)

First Ball

East Boundary	H4–H5 level (standard)
Supershot	Mid-court, aggressive
Anti-Duffer	H6 to peg, defensive

Second Ball (Tices)

Standard	West, 8–13yd from C1
Duffer	2ft N of penultimate
Micro	2–3yd from A baulk
Super Duper	Response to wide super

Triple Peel Practice

Standard TP (17 min)

Setup from NSL position
Full sequence: 4-back, penult, rover peels

Delayed TP (18 min)

Start from DSL
Opponent in Corner 4

Delayed Double Peel—ESSENTIAL

“The Penult peel after 3-back, followed by the Rover peel after Penult is one of the most important things for you to practise. Practise it regularly!”

Recovery Drills (Plan B)

Jawsed Peel	Recovery options; intentional jawsing for later completion
Peel Short	Options to continue break
Peel Too Far	Break adjustment techniques
Abandon Safely	Set up good leave when peels fail

Practice Games

Game	Players	Time	Focus
First to Five	2–4	15–20 min	Same hoop, first to 5 wins—hoop confidence
Roquet Rally	2	10 min	Take turns roqueting, first to 10—accuracy
Golf Croquet	2–4	20–30 min	First 6 hoops contested—game flow

Keith Aiton's Wisdom

*"The gifted amateur practices until he can do it,
whereas the professional practices until he cannot NOT do it."*

6-Week Schedule

Week	Focus	Key Drills
1	Fundamentals	Stance/Grip, 1m Straight Shot, Stop and Stare
2	Accuracy	Increase distance, Clock Face introduction
3	Distance & Roquet	The Ladder, Roquet Practice
4	Two-Ball Play	Two-Ball Sequence, Roquet Rally
5	Advanced	The Triangle, Croquet Shot Control
6	Strategy	Hoop and Position, Tactical Positioning

*Sources: Keith Aiton "The Basics", Keith Wylie "Expert Croquet Tactics",
Fraser Valley Croquet Society, Tame the Triple ePractice Pack*