

Practice Routines

As gleaned from Keith Aiton, David Magee, Chris Williams and James Mackay

In the Mind – “The Inner Game”

If you want to play better croquet try spending say 10 minutes per day, just before you go to bed, imagining what it would be like to play better croquet.

Imagine that you are on a croquet lawn, playing a game, and that every time you have to make a roquet you do, every rush goes exactly where you want it to go, every croquet stroke sends the balls to the right places, every hoop stroke works just as you would have wished.

Immerse yourself in the experience so that you can see what you would see, hear what you would hear and feel what you would feel just as though you are really there.

The more real you can make it the better. Feel the confidence growing.

Experience the joy of knowing that everything you want to do will work just as you want it to. If you want to, say to yourself "This is me. I am this good. This is how I play croquet."

On the Court

Keep practising and playing, always with the same degree of confidence.

If you play a bad stroke, dismiss it. Tell yourself that you are better than that.

If you are practising and you feel yourself becoming frustrated, stop. Spend some time recovering your confidence and then resume practising. This is a very important skill to acquire for playing competitive games, as you have to recover quickly from a bad stroke in order to approach the next one in the right frame of mind.

- Place two balls on a yard apart on the west boundary roughly level with hoop 1. With a third ball (as striker's ball) take-off from one of the balls, getting a rush on the other one to hoop 1. Rush to the hoop, approach it and run it so as to obtain a rush back to the ball remaining on the west boundary. Rush back to the west boundary and repeat the exercise.
- Place a ball in each corner and then with another ball as striker's ball play round the corners via roquet and take-off from each of the balls in turn, leaving the balls in the corners (not as easy as it might sound).
- Place a ball on the yard line and line up the other three balls, say, three yards into the lawn. If you can hit the ball on the yard line with all three balls in succession then move the three striker's balls back a yard. Otherwise repeat the exercise until you can roquet the ball on the yard line three times in succession. Continue moving back a yard each time you are successful. If you have two sets of balls you can aim for seven roquets in a row, and you can use bisques to mark off your starting points, removing them as you master each distance.
- To improve the accuracy of your rushing, place a ball a yard dead in front of a hoop. Then place a striker's ball a yard from that ball and try to rush the target ball (or cut rush it as you build up more confidence) through the hoop. As you improve you can try from further away or give yourself a bigger angle.
- Practise a three ball break, always keeping a ball at the peg.
- Set-up a four ball break but concentrate on making the striker's ball travel as short a distance as possible on each shot. This makes you concentrate on getting rushes.