

# CORNWALL CROQUET CLUB



## A CROQUET PRIMER FOR BEGINNERS



### Association Croquet with specific references to Golf Croquet.

A supplement to the club's coaching programme  
which follows Croquet Association guidelines.

- Session 1     **Court & Equipment, Mallets & Balls.  
Stance, Grip, Swing, Single ball shots.  
Running Straight Hoops, Running Angled Hoops.  
Push & Crush Shots. Yard-lines & Baulk-lines.  
Hoops-in-order. Introduction to Golf Croquet.**
- Session 2     **Roquet.  
Straight Croquet stroke - Drive, Stop & Roll.  
Split Croquet stroke – an introduction.**
- Session 3     **Split Croquet stroke – more detail.  
Hoop Approach.  
Thin Take-off.  
Three Hoop Break using takeoffs.  
Use of clips.**
- Session 4     **Four-ball break.  
Bisques.**
- Session 5     **Straight Rush.  
Cut Rush.  
Rush set-up from yard-line balls.  
Rush Lines.**
- Session 6     **Start of Game  
14-point game.**

## **Stance, Grip, Swing, Single-ball shots, Hoop running,**

### **STANCE**

Feet side by side, not too far apart, parallel to line-of-swing.  
Hips and Shoulders square to the line-of-swing.  
(Variation: One foot backward a bit but keep shoulders/hips square)

### **GRIP**

**Normal Shots** (i.e. roquets, not roll-shots) : -  
Hands close together better (all grips) - high up shaft.  
Upper hand - firm but not too tight.  
Lower hand - maybe less firm.

### **SWING**

Let the mallet do the work - Smooth and graceful !  
Mallet is extension of hands/arms - pendulum.  
Pivot at the shoulders - wrists flex naturally in swing but are not part of pivot.  
Smooth change from backswing to forward swing.  
Follow-through, arms extend naturally - do not ease off before impact but don't push.  
Keep body, head and shoulders as still as possible (but not rigid).  
Continuous swinging may be helpful? (Personal).

**STALK ALL SHOTS - DO NOT SHUFFLE (RE-STALK).**

### **SINGLE-BALL SHOTS**

Mallet-head parallel to ground on impact.  
Keep head down and shoulders still.  
Keep eyes on impact point when striking and during follow-through.

### **HOOP RUNNING**

Slow smooth action with follow-through.  
Do not stab or force.  
Maybe stand-forward a little.  
Angled hoops - aim to miss the near wire (bounce off far wire)  
Avoid Push and Crush shots.

## **Yard-Lines, Baulk-Lines, Hoops-in-order, Golf Croquet.**

### **YARD LINE**

Imaginary line 1 yard inside inner edge of boundary line

Place balls on yard-line with back to court – use mallet as guide measuring from inner edge of line.

Corner-balls are replaced on the corner-spot (check with mallet).

Touching corner-balls – one ball on corner-spot, other(s) on either yard-line.

GOLF CROQUET - yard lines not used (see below).

### **BAULK-LINES**

Two baulk-lines, one is western half of south yard-line (A-baulk); other is eastern half of north yard-line (B-baulk).

Each ball is struck from this line for its first stroke in an Association Croquet game.

GOLF CROQUET – baulk lines not used.

### **HOOPS IN ORDER**

Hoops must be run in the specified order.

GOLF CROQUET – Each hoop is scored only once (see below).

### **GOLF CROQUET**

A less complicated form of Croquet using single-ball shots and roquets but no croquet strokes (**Croquet strokes are dealt with in Session 2**).

Each turn consist of one stroke only - there are no extra strokes for running hoops or hitting another ball with the striker's ball (roquets).

Play proceeds in strict colour order (Blue, Red, Black and Yellow). The side which wins the toss may choose to play blue & black or red & yellow.

Play starts by playing each ball in turn from within one yard of corner-4.

Once a side has run a hoop it scores a hoop point and thereafter all players move on to the next hoop-in-order.

Clips may be used to indicate hoops scored (optional).

Various game lengths are possible (e.g. best of 13 points, best of 7 etc.).

## Session 2

# Roquet, Croquet Strokes

## THE ROQUET

Once stalked and aimed ignore target ball.  
On impact, mallet-head parallel to ground.  
Stance may be back a little.

## STRAIGHT CROQUET STROKES

Balls' line of centres point at target - Swing along this line.  
Both balls travel along this line.

**DRIVE**      Ratio 3:1 or 4:1 (personal).  
Normal grip & swing - like one-ball shot.  
Balls' line of centres point at target - Swing along this line.  
Stalk, keep head down, follow-through but don't push.

**STOP-SHOT**      Ratio 6:1 or 7:1 (up to 10:1).  
Stance backward by 2 - 6 inches (personal)  
- this raises toe of mallet (shaft tilts backwards).  
Normal grip (high) - grip may be looser (no swinging).  
Ball hit just below centre  
- (using just below centre of mallet face).  
No follow through (perhaps ground mallet head at impact).  
Timing difficult. Avoid stopping/grounding before impact,  
- remember stroke considered played if no impact - Law 5(d)(2).

**HALF-ROLL**      Ratio 2:1  
Stance forward (feet just behind balls),  
- this raises heel of mallet slightly (shaft tilts forwards a bit).  
Grip - hands 1/3 way down shaft.  
Ball hit just above centre, with centre of mallet face.  
Play centre-style or side-style (personal).  
Follow-through but don't push (accelerate).

**FULL-ROLL**      Ratio 1:1  
Stance forward (front foot beside balls),  
- this raises heel of mallet (shaft tilts forwards).  
Grip - hands 1/2 way down shaft.  
Ball hit above centre, with centre of mallet face.  
Follow-through but not too much and don't push.

## **Roquet, Split Croquet Strokes Two-ball Croquet**

### **SPLIT CROQUET SHOTS** (swing-angle up to 45°)

Balls' line of centres point at target for the croqueted ball.

Aim (swing) at point half way between final positions of both balls.

(Aim can be along either half the angle or half the distance - distance method better if one ball moves markedly further than other – BUT BOTH ARE APPROXIMATIONS).

Use of a distant aiming point can be helpful?

Straight line-of-aim (no shepherding).

Avoid wide angles of split if possible (more of this later - session 5).

### **ASSOCIATION CROQUET**

- Introduction**
- **More than one stroke in a turn.**
  - **Roquet, Croquet and Continuation sequence,**
  - **enables Break-building**

Practise the Roquet, Croquet, Continuation sequence.

Striker moves on to next hoop-in-order only when the hoop has been scored for the striker's ball (unlike GOLF CROQUET).

**(Next session will introduce a three hoop break)**

## **Split Croquet Strokes, Hoop approaches, Thin-Take-off, A Three Hoop break**

### **SPLIT CROQUET STROKES – more depth**

Alter the relative distance travelled by both balls using same technique as for stop shot and roll shots: -

Stance further back to make the strikers ball go less far relative to croqueted ball and vice versa.

The angle of split tends to be narrower than expected when using a normal drive action and even narrower than expected when using a roll action, but the stop shot action increases the split angle above that expected.

The above effects are very “personal” and therefore need to be learnt and allowed for by personal experience.

### **HOOP-APPROACH**

#### **Roquet – Croquet - Continuation**

1. Roquet ball in front of hoop.
2. Using the split croquet stroke already learnt, position the croqueted ball just beyond and maybe to the side of the hoop and the striker's ball (your ball) directly in front of the hoop (ready to run the hoop).
3. Run the hoop – gently with smooth follow-through– this is the Continuation stroke.
4. Roquet the other ball which should be nearby and start the Roquet, Croquet, Continuation sequence again.

### **THIN TAKE-OFF** (Swing-angle over 80°)

Striker's ball usually dominant consideration, moves furthest.

Croqueted ball moves short distance (but must move or shake).

Straight line-of-aim (no shepherding).

Strikers ball moves at 90° to line of centres (arrow-head)

### THREE HOOP BREAK

1. Place a ball about 5 feet in front of hoops 2 and another about 5 feet in front of hoop 3.  
Place a third ball about a yard in front of hoop 1.  
Place your (striker's) ball a short distance south of the third ball.  
Place all 4 clips on hoop 1
2. Roquet the ball in front of hoop 1 (Pick up your ball when it has stopped rolling and place it for the croquet stroke).
3. Approach the hoops using Croquet stroke as already learnt to place the croqueted ball beyond and to side of hoop 1 and your ball in front of hoop 1.
4. Run the hoop 1 gently. Remove the clip of same colour as your ball (clip it to your clothing or put it in your pocket)
5. Roquet the ball still near hoop1 (the reception ball).
6. Take croquet from this ball by doing a thin take-off so that your ball ends up close to the ball in front of hoop 2 (we call this ball a pioneer)
7. Roquet the ball (pioneer) in front of hoop 2
8. Repeat the hoop approach and run it as for hoop 1 (steps 2 & 3 above).
9. After running the hoop repeat the roquet and thin take-off sequence as before, this time taking-off to near the ball in front of hoop 3.
10. Repeat the Roquet, Croquet, Continuation sequence to run hoop 3. Place the clip which you have been carrying on top bar of hoop 4 (to indicate that this is the next hoop-in-order for that ball).

**(The next session will introduce the 4-ball break, which enables the break to become “continuous”, rather than just a 3 hoop break as illustrated here)**

## Session 4

### The Four Ball Break, Bisques.

#### FOUR-BALL BREAK

1. Place ball in front of hoop 2 and another near the peg.  
Place a ball near and in front of hoop one (The Pilot) and your ball (the Striker's Ball) near that.
2. Run hoop 1 using Roquet, Croquet, Continuation sequence.
3. Roquet the reception ball after running hoop 1 and croquet that ball to hoop 3 ("the next hoop but one"), this ball is then called a Pioneer and your ball close to the ball near the peg (we call this the Pivot).
4. Roquet Pivot and take-off to the Pilot (the ball "waiting") at hoop 2.
5. Roquet this ball then approach and run the hoop just like you did for hoop 1.
6. Roquet the reception ball behind hoop 2 and repeat the whole process from step 3-5 above only going from hoop 2 to hoop 3 this time and placing the croqueted ball near hoop 4 ("the next hoop but one" Pioneer) and your ball near to the hoop 3 Pivot (ex Pioneer).
7. And so on ....

#### BISQUES

The croquet handicapping system allows players of differing abilities to play together without the weaker players being at a distinct disadvantage.

The handicapping uses free turns so that when the striker with the weaker handicap would normally have to end a turn due to failure to maintain a break (e.g. failed to score a hoop or missed a roquet) the striker can take one of their free turns and continue playing.

Free turns are represented by Bisques which are small sticks of wood stuck into the turf, one for each free turn. When a free turn is used one bisque is removed.

Bisques are used to set up a 4-ball break as well as for continuing a failed break. They may also be used defensively.



## Session 5

# Straight Rushes, Cut Rushes, Rush-lines, Yard-line balls.

## STRAIGHT RUSHES

When the striker roquets a ball it is often helpful to move the roqueted ball to a more favourable position.

This is called rushing a ball to a new position.

The simplest form is where the rushed ball needs to travel along a line which is in line with the striker's ball i.e. straight.

**Remember:** where the striker's ball ends up after it roquets /rushes another ball does not matter because (when it has stopped rolling) it will be picked up ready for the croquet stroke (we call it a "ball-in-hand").

## CUT RUSHES

This is where the roqueted ball needs to be rushed at an angle (not in line with the striker's ball).

This requires that the striker's ball hits the other ball off centre (on the left to rush to the right and vice versa).

It can be helpful to imagine a ball in contact with the ball to be rushed as if that ball were to be croqueted in the direction required for the rush. The striker then aims so that their ball replaces the imaginary ball.

Again, remember, it does not matter where the strikers ball goes (it's a ball-in-hand)

## RUSH LINES

It is often useful to rush a ball towards a line where a take-off will be much easier, more accurate or less error prone.

An example is approaching a pivot ball. A rush preceding the take-off to the pivot ball can allow the pivot ball to be rushed to a new position which makes it easier to go from the pivot ball to the next pioneer (and may at the same time manoeuvre the pivot ball into a better position for its next use).

## Rush-lines, Yard-line balls.

### YARD-LINE BALLS

A common situation in games is where there are two balls (often the opponent's balls) close to each other, near to or on the yard-line.

#### **Practise:-**

1. Take off from another ball to end up close to this pair of balls.
2. Roquet one gently (replace on yard line if in yard-line area or off-court).
3. Take off behind the other of the pair of balls so as to give yourself a rush into the court (say towards a hoop).

Remember to take care that your ball does not go off the boundary.

Remember also that your ball does not get replaced on the yard line if it is in the yard line area (as it will be) after a croquet stroke – this is what this is all about!

4. Now Rush the other ball to its intended target position.

## Session 6.

## START OF GAMES

The winner of the toss can decide whether to start first or second, or which colours to play with. The loser of the toss then has the choice which the winner did not take

The first stroke of the game for each ball is to place it on one of the baulk lines and hit into the lawn. Sides alternate turns.

There is a conventional start to the game:-

1. From A-baulk, Player-1 sends ball off East boundary near corner 4.

2. From A-baulk, Player-2 sends his ball near to or off the West boundary a few yards north of corner-1.  
(This is known as Tice – intended to tempt Player-1 to shoot at it with his second ball).

3. Player-1 will

**either** - shoot at the tice so that if missed will end up in corner-1 or, if hit, move the tice ball further up the lawn halfway towards hoop-2 and then return to his partner ball on the East-boundary so as to leave a rush towards the tice ball.

**or** - ignore the tice and shoot close to partner ball on the East boundary (called joining-up).

4. Player-2 will:-

**either** - If Player-1 aimed at the tice and missed, shoot at the tice from A or B-baulk in such a way that if missed his ball will go off the boundary near to the tice ball (he will have joined up)

**or** - If Player-1 ignored or hit the tice, aim for the tice ball from A-baulk so that if missed he will end up in corner-2. If Player-2 hits the tice ball he will take off to Player-1's balls on the East boundary and croquet one a little way into the lawn, and get behind the other with a rush to hoop-1.

## 14-POINT GAME

Play a game of alternate stroke singles or doubles incorporating all of the above, including using bisques for all players (say 6).

## CROQUET SHOTS

<p><b>STOP SHOT</b></p>	<p><b>BACKWARD STANCE</b> <span style="float: right;">ratio &gt; 6:1</span></p> <p>Address ball about 1 inch behind the ball</p> <p>Finish with mallet shaft sloping slightly backwards</p> <p>Own ball stops short</p> <p><b>NO FOLLOW THROUGH</b></p>	
<p><b>DRIVE</b></p>	<p><b>NORMAL STANCE</b> <span style="float: right;">ratio 4:1</span></p> <p>Mallet shaft vertical</p> <p>Back ball travels further than in a Stop shot</p> <p><b>NORMAL SWING WITH FOLLOW THROUGH</b></p>	
<p><b>HALF ROLL</b></p>	<p><b>STANCE - SLIGHTLY FORWARD</b> <span style="float: right;">ratio 2:1</span></p> <p>Mallet shaft tilted forward and lifted slightly</p> <p>Back ball travels half the distance of the front ball</p> <p>Lower hand grasps shaft closer to mallet head</p>	
<p><b>FULL ROLL</b></p>	<p><b>STANCE - FURTHER FORWARD</b> <span style="float: right;">ratio 1:1</span></p> <p>Mallet head tilted further forward and heel lifted</p> <p>Both balls travel equal distance</p> <p>Mallet to address upper half of ball</p> <p>Lower hand grips even closer to mallet head</p> <p>Upper hand can be moved down</p> <p>Side stance also gives extra power</p>	
<p><b>FROM LEFT</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TAKE OFF</b></p> <p>If balls are correctly set the strikers ball will go in the right direction – all that is required is to concentrate on the correct strength of shot.</p> <p>Swing with ‘follow through’ aiming slightly into the croqueted ball.</p>	<p><b>FROM RIGHT</b></p>