



**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** (i.e. not rolls): -  
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).**

### **ONE-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.

### **HOOPS RUNNING**

Slow smooth action with follow-through.  
Do not stab or force.  
Angled hoops - aim to miss the near wire.

### **ROQUETS & RUSHES**

Once stalked ignore target ball.  
On impact, mallet-head parallel to ground  
(maybe even stand-back a little).

**Cut rushes** - take care, easy to over-cut or miss  
- remember 'imaginary' ball.

## STRAIGHT CROQUET SHOTS

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 (with 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.

## OVERTAKING-ROLL

Striker's ball travels up to 20% further than other ball.  
Mallet-head more inclined than for full roll (lower on face).  
Play stroke as a "chop", avoiding follow-through,  
or if using follow-through, don't push.

## **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.  
(Split either the angle or the distance - distance method better if one ball moves markedly further than other).

Use of a distant aiming point can be helpful?

Straight line-of-aim (no shepherding).

*Avoid wide angles if possible (precede with a rush so as to minimise the angle, preferably to provide a straight croquet shot)*

### **DRAG** - Striker's ball

The striker's ball is dragged towards the line-of-aim by the aim being into the croqueted ball.

Depends on swing-angle, stroke weight and follow-through.

Slower lawns produce more Drag.

### **PULL** - Croqueted ball

Friction between the two balls causes croqueted ball to spin on a vertical axis; then friction between the grass and the spinning & forward moving ball pulls croqueted balls towards the line of swing.

Increases with swing-angle up to about 25° and then decreases.

Increases with the degree of roll.

Slower lawns produce more Pull.

Effect is personal, to some extent.

Compensate for Drag and Pull by setting up a larger angle between the directions of the two balls - complex, but approximations are OK.

### **THICK TAKE-OFF** (Swing-angle 45° - 80°)

Striker's ball is usually dominant consideration.

Striker's ball moves greater distance.

Straight line-of-aim (no shepherding).

Striker's ball moves at 90° to line of centres (arrow-head).

Drag significant (may be up to 1 yard for every 20 yards run)

### **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).

Striker's ball moves at 90° to line of centres (arrow-head)

Little or no drag.

- RUSH-LINE** Hoop Rush-Line is line joining Hoop and Pioneer.
- PILOT** Ball used to "navigate" the hoop ('old' Pioneer).
- RECEPTION-BALL** Ball roqueted after hoop is run (i.e. usually Pilot).
- PIONEER** Rush reception-ball to a position to give a simple croquet shot to approach Pivot or Pilot ball on a useful Rush-line and place Pioneer accurately.

## **PIVOT**

- ◆ Pivot can be left in middle of lawn and use take-offs on to the Rush-line to Pioneer/Pilot.
- ◆ Alternatively, can Rush the Pivot around the court to maintain the break using less error-prone shots (i.e. minimise split angles and use shorter Stop-shots or Drives rather than Rolls).
- ◆ Remember you can swap current Pivot with Reception-ball and use old Pivot as Pioneer, if this makes shots easier.

## **HOOP-APPROACH**

- ◆ Anticipate position required for Pioneer bearing in mind position required for Reception-ball in order to provide a useful Rush.
- ◆ For example: if you want the Reception ball to be square in-line with the hoop, you need to place Pioneer slightly to one side of hoop so it can be croqueted behind the hoop at approach.
- ◆ Similarly, with the position of the Reception-ball, need to anticipate direction of any Rush required after running the hoop.

### **THREE-BALL BREAK**

1. Rush Reception-ball to boundary adjacent with hoop just run and the next hoop in order.
2. Stop-shot or Drive so as to send croqueted ball to next but one hoop as Pioneer and Striker's ball on to the Rush-line for next hoop Pioneer.

### **FOUR-BALL BREAK**

1. Rush Reception-ball towards Pivot
2. Stop-shot to place old Reception as Pioneer for next hoop but one and Striker's ball near to Pivot.
3. Roquet Pivot (or Rush Pivot to a more useful position) and take-off or stop-shot/drive to place striker's ball onto Rush-line for Pioneer at next hoop and Pivot in a more useful position after running the next hoop (swap Pivot with old Reception-ball if necessary).

## HALF-BISQUES

Use **half bisques early in the game** to set up a break with a full bisque to follow. Remember a half bisque cannot be used to score a point (i.e. run a hoop).

A half bisque may also be used to gain the innings if there is little prospect of scoring a point, but a general rule is to use the half bisque early, the earlier the better.

## OFFENSIVE BISQUES *"Bisques are for Breaks"!!!!!!*

1. The bisque deliberately anticipated while you have a stroke in hand is the most valuable. A bisque is least useful when it is one which you are forced to take after missing a roquet or a hoop.
2. The offensive bisque should be used after shooting at or up to the most distant ball on the court - going to a nearer ball rarely pays off.
3. It is better to use a half-bisque and bisque (or even two bisques in succession) to get all the balls placed well rather than take a single bisque to make a single hoop.
4. Remember - after you take a bisque *all the balls* become Live (available for roquet & croquet again) but you *must* strike the same ball.
5. The four-ball break is the one thing, above all others, which your opponent fears.
6. There are few, if any, positions on the court from which a four-ball break cannot be set up with the use of two bisques.
7. Aim to win the game in the easiest and quickest way possible.

## DEFENSIVE BISQUES

1. As mentioned above, a general rule is that "Bisques are for Breaks", however, the bisque or half-bisque can have defensive value also.
2. Before leaving the lawn, after you break down, consider your opponent's next move: -

Have you left him in a position from which he can easily make a break? Consider taking a bisque or a half-bisque to thwart him.

## **SIMPLE LEAVES.**

**It is better to leave your own two balls together near a boundary than at your next hoop**, so that if the opponent shoots at you and misses, his ball may be used to advantage with the first roquet of your next turn.

**Do not join up if your opponent is already joined up**, since this would allow your opponent to roquet his partner ball and take off to your two balls.

Rather than leaving your opponent's balls well separated and on or near a boundary, it is better to leave each of your opponent's balls near a different hoop in a way which is helpful to your break or difficult for your opponent.

Three common examples: -

Put one of the opponent's balls at your next hoop and the other opponent's ball where it can be used for your break.

Put one ball at each of your next hoops - and maybe yourself with a rush to either hoop.

If your opponent's balls are for different hoops, send each ball to its own hoop - in a position where it is impossible to run the hoop; this leaves things awkward for your opponent.



## **The WIDE JOIN.**

**If your opponent has set up a distant wide join** and you are left in a hoop-running position with your partner ball close-by, you must decide whether to set up the break by running the hoop before or after going to the widely-joined balls: -

**Choose the option which makes it easier to set up the break** (rather than automatically "grabbing" the hoop point first).

Taking off to the most distant ball is frequently better.

The wide join means you have more room to get both opponent balls further into the court (maybe using a bisque) and less need to leave one near the boundary than if they were close together.

**If you choose to end your turn with a wide join**, unless you are intending to take a bisque, do not place a ball near a corner. This is because if you subsequently shoot at the ball nearest the corner and miss, your striker's ball will end up in the corner and thus close to your partner ball, making it easier for your opponent to pick up the break in the next turn.

## Preparing for THE PEG-OUT

Generally, players will attempt to peg-out both their balls in the same turn, using a croquet-stroke to first peg-out the croqueted ball with a firm but gentle stop-shot and then the striker's ball with the continuation stroke.

*Remember, in handicap play, the striker may not peg-out the striker's ball unless the partner ball is also a Rover or an opponent's ball has already been pegged-out - Law 38.*

When you have one ball ready to peg-out (i.e. it has already run all its hoops in a previous turn and its clip is on the peg) leave it near the Peg (ideally after using it as the pilot for Penultimate). Then use an opponent's ball to pilot your other (striker's) ball through Rover. After running rover you can roquet this ball again and take off to your partner ball already waiting near the Peg and perform the peg-out. End of game - you win !

If you are forced use your partner ball to run rover, be sure to leave a rush back towards the peg after running rover, if you are to peg-out in the same turn.

A more reliable technique is to arrange to have one of the opponent's balls beyond Rover before you approach it and then use this as the Reception-ball after running the hoop. You would then take-off to your own ball to get a good Rush back towards the Peg and then peg-out. You win again!

You might also consider using your last bisque for the peg-out; either to provide a good Rush-line back to the Peg after running Rover or to get closer to the Peg before performing the final peg-out manoeuvre.

### The Actual Peg-out

For precise adjustment of the balls in the croquet stroke, the line of the Peg must bisect the crescent formed by viewing the further ball over the nearer.

The crescent must be such that an imaginary line joining the cusps is horizontal. This means stooping low to view.

(Some players find it helpful to view also from the side of the peg furthest from the two balls to be pegged-out.)

When rushing the croqueted ball nearer to the Peg take care to avoid rushing it on to the Peg, as this will be a peg-out. You will not then have a ball to take croquet from and therefore be unable to peg out in that turn (unless you have a bisque unused of course!).

**ERRORS** (laws 22-27) & **FAULTS** (law 28)

Errors are mistakes in play (breaches of the Laws of Croquet).

An **ERROR** is "discovered" when the striker announces it or the opponent forestalls\* play in respect of it

A **FAULT** is an Error committed during the striking period (the striker's turn always ends).

Some common Faults are: -

Crush Shots, Push Shots, Double (or Multiple) Taps.

Any part of the body or clothes touches any ball.

The mallet touches a ball other than your own.

The croqueted ball fails to move or shake after a croquet stroke.

\* Forstalling - see next page.

**FORESTALLING PLAY** - This means asking the striker to cease play when you think an error is about to be or has been committed (Law 23) - you are discharging your duty as referee of the game (Law 48).

**Forestalling must be done between strokes** otherwise it is interference with play under Law 34(a).

**YOU MUST NOT (unless an error has already occurred) :-**

Tell your opponent if they are about to strike the wrong ball.

Tell your opponent if they are about to run the wrong hoop.

Tell your opponent if they are about to take croquet from a dead ball.

**YOU MUST IMMEDIATELY: -**

Remind opponent to take their continuation shot if they have forgotten.

Tell opponent when they have misplaced a clip or are about to strike a ball from a double-banked game.

Tell opponent if a boundary mark has been displaced.

**Stop play if: -**

Your opponent is about to play a stroke which may result in a fault, without having it watched,

Your opponent is about to take croquet when not entitled or from the wrong but live ball,

Your opponent is about to play a single-ball stroke when they should be taking croquet,

Your opponent is about to play a stroke when not entitled to do so,

A ball is misplaced e.g.: -

a ball finishes within the yard line area and is not placed on the yard line when it should be and vice versa,

a double banker has marked and moved one of the balls of your game and your opponent is unaware of this.

## **ETIQUETTE**

As a rule, it is better to concentrate on the game and to speak to or interfere with your opponent as little as possible during its progress, especially in the case of a player who is unknown to you.

Congratulation or commiseration is best left until the game has ended.

### **Expedition in play** (Law 49)

Careful play need not mean slow play - take the maximum care in the minimum time. Watch your opponent play and be ready to play as soon as their turn ends, as far as possible - this will make you a more popular player and help make you a good one.

### **Players as Referees**

The players in Croquet are their own referees, therefore you should be familiar with the laws, conduct & etiquette of the game, particularly those referring to errors during the striking of the ball (faults). There may also be local "laws" for your club (or the club hosting a tournament) - Law 54.

### **Replacing Balls on Yard-line**

*(Note: This is not strictly etiquette as is required by the Law 12e)*

Generally, replace balls on the yard line with your back to the lawn (facing the court boundary) - Law 12(e). A common exception is where you are "arranging" balls for a cannon shot.

### **Practice at Tournaments**

Unless otherwise informed by the Manager, you may assume that you can practise during a few minutes prior to the advertised start of play on the court allocated for your first match, taking care not to loosen the hoops. (If practise has not been allowed and you are about to play your first game against a player who has already played a game in the tournament then the Manager will always allow you a few minutes practice if you ask) - Regulations for Tournaments, section P4.

## UMPIRE

An Umpire in a tournament should be nominated by the Tournament Referee - otherwise an umpire is "any suitable person".

An Umpire is called to the court by the Striker raising mallet aloft with shaft horizontal.

Umpires are restricted to deciding only whether: -

- one ball hits another, a ball is moved or shaken, a ball hits the peg,
- a ball has run a hoop-in-order or is in a position to do so,
- a ball is off the court.

## REFEREE

Remember that the Players are joint referees of the game. Remember also that if you do not watch the game when your opponent is in play you cease to be a referee of the game.

A Referee is called to the court by the Striker raising mallet aloft with shaft vertical and mallet-head uppermost.

Referees must forestall play as described earlier - Law 23.

Remember, unless the Striker has already called a Referee, it is the Striker's duty to consult the adversary if the Striker is about to play a questionable stroke and unless the Adversary agrees otherwise, a Referee should be called.

If the Striker does not do this, the Adversary should forestall\*.

A Referee has powers and duties to: -

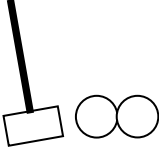
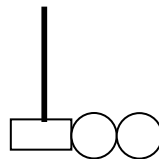
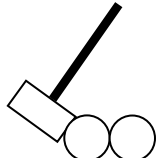
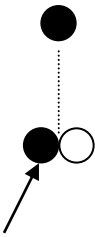
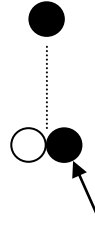
- ✓ Check court equipment and settings for compliance with the Laws and Regulations.
- ✓ Adjudicate, on court, over questionable strokes.
- ✓ Decide on all questions of fact and law.
- ✓ If requested, give information about the state of the game (wiring info given only if a player is claiming a lift at start of turn).
- ✓ State the law before an affected stroke is played (at referee's discretion or when asked) - but he may NOT give advice.
- ✓ He must NOT volunteer whether a ball has moved or shaken when a wiring lift may be claimed, unless asked specifically (otherwise it would constitute advice).

\* see Forestalling Play - page 11.

## Syd's Croquet Commandments

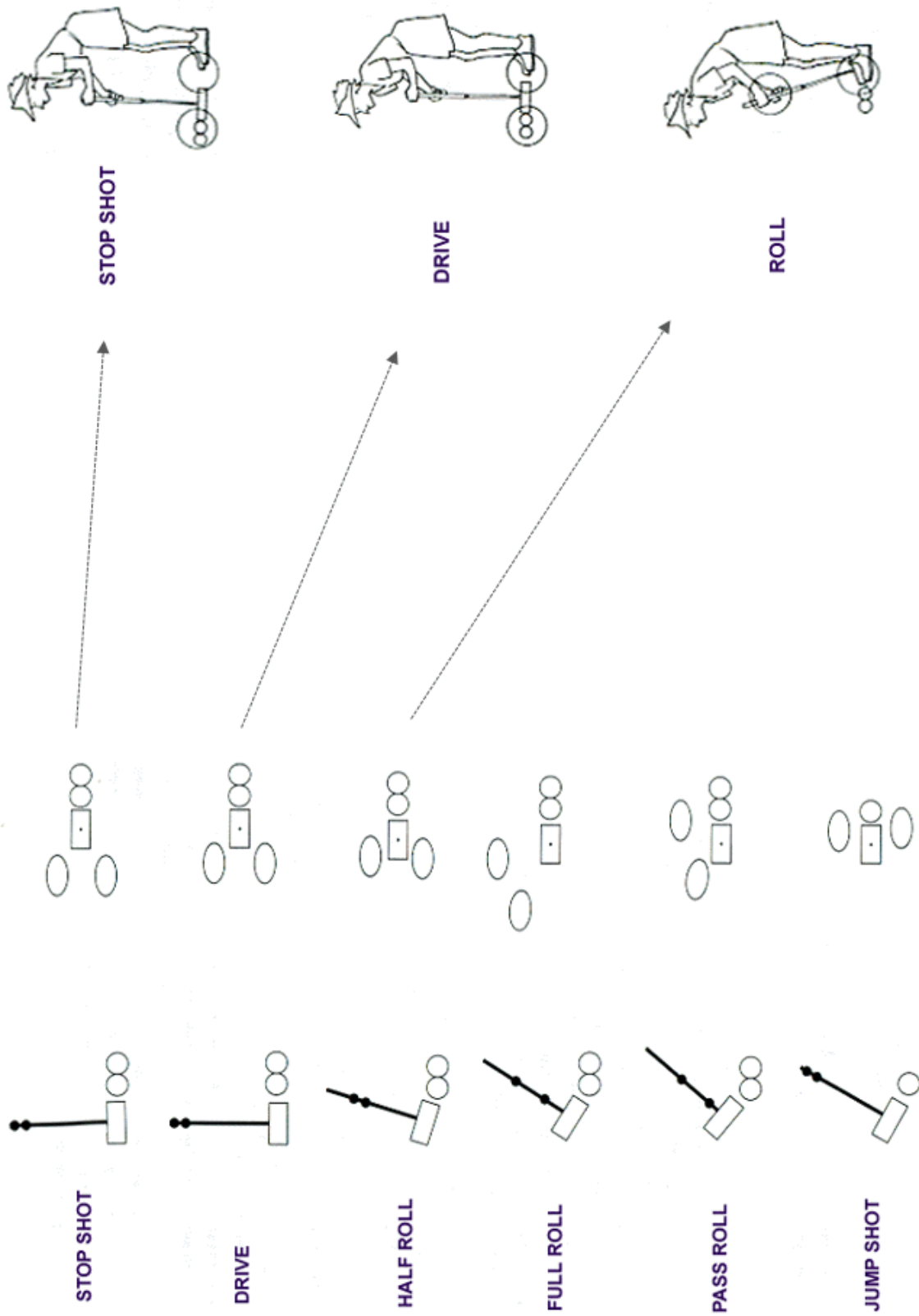
1. I must **keep my head down** when playing - especially when roqueting and running hoops.
2. I will **concentrate** all the time.  
**There is no easy shot** in Croquet so do not play casually.
3. I will watch the play of my opponent when I am sat out, and, prior to going on the lawn will **have some idea of my first stroke**.
4. When on the court, **I will expedite my play** especially when receiving a lot of bisques.
5. I cannot get a hoop every time I go on the lawn.
6. One of my aims must be to try to retain control of the game.
7. When playing doubles, I must remember to consider my partners ball and the hoop he/she needs.
8. When attempting a roquet or when running a hoop, I must swing my mallet on the correct line **and follow through on that line**.
9. I must plan a sequence of play but once the plan is made then I need to concentrate on the first stroke of that plan and forget everything else.
10. I must enjoy the game whatever the result. I can learn something from every match.

## CROQUET SHOTS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STOP SHOT</b></p> 	<p style="text-align: right;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><b>DRIVE</b></p> 	<p style="text-align: right;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><b>HALF ROLL</b></p> 	<p style="text-align: right;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><b>FULL ROLL</b></p> 	<p style="text-align: right;"><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 style="text-align: center;"><b>FROM LEFT</b></p> 	<p><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 style="text-align: center;"><b>FROM RIGHT</b></p> 



# CROQUET SHOTS



Artwork by John Prince from Play Better Croquet by Geoffrey Naylor.

HANDS & FEET POSITIONS