

CROQUET RULES

January 2023

1. IN A SINGLES GAME ONLY: Players may draw numbers to determine the order of play, with number one always playing the blue ball, two - red, three - black, four - yellow, five - green, and six - orange. This is the order or sequence of colors on the mallet handles and stakes in most croquet sets. Players may also draw the colored clips from a hat to assign colors.

2. IN A DOUBLES GAME: Team 1 plays the blue and black balls, and Team 2 plays the red and yellow balls. Doubles games can have four or two players. With four, the team members strategize and help each other progress through the wickets.

3. To begin play, each player (in turn) places their ball not closer than a 9" mallet-head length from the first wicket or hoop. The player may place it farther from the first wicket, but not closer to it.

4. If a player fails to make the first wicket on the first stroke, the player picks up the ball until the player's next turn.

(note: these rules guide tournament play - in recreational play, this rule is not enforced and all players may repeat this shot until made successfully.)

5. The mallet handle may be held with one or both hands, and any stance (center, side, or golf) may be used.

6. The ball must be hit cleanly (not shoved or pushed) with the head of the mallet (not the side).

7. A ball may not be moved by hitting a wicket or a stake. Wickets and stakes may not be moved or removed to make a shot.

8. A player may not strike any ball except their own.

9. After a player makes the third wicket, their ball is LIVE; until then that player's ball may not hit another ball or be hit by another ball. (See Rule 21).

10. When the player's ball passes through a wicket or hits the half-way stake, the player is entitled to only one additional stroke. If one or two wickets are made and the half-way stake is struck on the same stroke, the striker is entitled to only one continuing stroke for hitting the stake. There are no additional strokes for making the wickets just prior to hitting the stake.

11. When a player's ball passes through two wickets on one stroke of the ball, the player is entitled to two additional strokes, except in No. 10 above.

12. If a player plays out of turn, play stops, and the balls are replaced and the player loses the next turn.

13. If a player plays the wrong ball, the player's turn ends and the ball is replaced. The player loses that turn.

14. After a wicket is made, a player should place a clip on the next wicket the player is to make. The clips should be the same color as that player's ball. This is to indicate to that player and all other players how far the player has progressed and which wicket is their next one.

15. A ball is considered to be through a wicket when a straight edge, string, or rubber band placed behind the ball on the back (not the approach) side of the wicket does not touch the ball. If the ball is not through the wicket, the player may continue forward on the next stroke, and it is not necessary for the player to go back and start through the wicket again.

16. If a ball goes through a wicket in the wrong direction, it must go all the way through in that direction before it may be struck through in the right direction. A ball must have started to run the wicket from the approach side.

17. If a ball goes through a wicket, but rolls back into the wicket, it has not made the wicket.

18. When a ball is struck by another ball, the striker's ball is brought to the struck ball, where the striker may do one of the following, making sure not to touch the other ball at any time:

IN A SINGLES OR DOUBLES GAME: The player may place their ball a 9-inch mallet head length from the struck ball, and then take 2 shots.

IN A DOUBLES GAME: The player may place their ball against the struck ball, and roquet their ball so both balls move, after which the player has one more shot, or

IN A DOUBLES GAME: The player may place their ball against the struck ball, hold their ball with a hand and hit their ball, which must not move. If the player's ball slips or moves, this is considered to be the second shot, and the turn ends. If not, the player has one more shot.

19. If a ball hits another ball, it may not strike the same ball until that striking ball goes through its next wicket or hits the half-way stake. It is considered to be DEAD on the struck ball after the first hit and until the player makes the next wicket or hits the stake.

20. The deadness board (ball box with colored flip markers) is used to keep track of which ball(s) each player's balls are dead on. The referee or the players should keep the deadness board updated after each shot. When there is no referee, it is the responsibility of the player whose turn is next to make sure the deadness board is accurate before hitting their ball, but all players should help to ensure the accuracy of the board at all times.

21. If a ball hits a ball on which it is dead, the turn ends, and both balls are returned to their locations prior to the hit. Care should be taken prior to the shot to mark the locations of each ball. If the game has a referee, the referee should place the balls in their proper locations.

22. A ball which is dead on another ball may not put that ball through a wicket, either accidentally or intentionally. If it does, both balls are replaced to their prior locations and the turn ends.

23. If a ball strikes two or more balls on the same stroke, the first one struck is the only one which counts as a hit, and is played on. The others remain where stopped.

24. If a wicket is fully made, and then an opponent's ball is struck on the same stroke, the wicket is counted, but the hit doesn't count, and the opponent's ball must be hit again if the player chooses to do so in order to get an additional two strokes. The player may choose to take their continuation shot (for making the wicket) without hitting that ball.

25. If a player attempts to make a wicket, but their ball hits a dead ball before their ball gets all the way through the wicket, the wicket is not counted, the turn ends, and both balls are replaced to their original positions.

26. A player who hits an opponent's ball and then makes their wicket on the same shot may not count the wicket, but must continue play from the struck ball, and then make the wicket again.

27. If a ball is driven through a wicket by another ball on which it is alive, the wicket is counted.

28. When the half-way stake is hit, the ball stays where it stops, and the player gets another shot. The ball may not be moved by hand, but is hit from its stopping place.

29. A player may block a wicket once with their ball on which their opponent is dead, but the second time, the player must lift their ball to permit the opponent access to the wicket. After the opponent makes the wicket, the ball is replaced.

30. When a ball goes out of bounds, it is brought in from the boundary line a nine-inch mallet-head length at the point it went out. A ball is out of bounds if it is touching or past the boundary string when it stops.

31. If a ball stops at a point closer to the edge than a mallet-head length, it is also brought in a mallet-head length after every stroke, unless it is the striker's ball and their turn is continuing.

32. If a player makes a wicket, and the ball goes out of bounds on the same shot, the turn is over, and the ball is brought in a nine-inch mallet-head length from the out-of-bounds line. The wicket is counted as having been made.

33. When a ball is brought in from out of bounds, and the space is occupied by another ball, the ball is placed a nine-inch mallet-head length on either side of the other ball, at the discretion of the next striker.

34. If a ball being struck by another ball goes out of bounds, the turn ends, and the out-of-bounds ball is brought in a nine-inch mallet head length from the out-of-bounds line at the place it went out. The striker's ball remains alive on the struck ball, and is played from its stopping point on the player's next turn.

35. If a ball being struck by another ball stays in bounds, but the striker's ball goes out of bounds, the play continues, and the striker's ball is brought to the struck ball with two additional strokes.

36. A ball becomes a rover ball when all wickets have been made but the last stake has not been hit.

37. IN A SINGLES GAME ONLY: The game is won by the first player to become a rover, to strike each of the balls on the court once and then hit the last stake. There can be more than one rover. The rover gets two additional shots each time a ball is struck. Once a rover strikes a ball, the rover is dead on that ball until the end of the game. The rover's ball may be struck by other players (during their turns) who will receive two additional shots for doing so.

38. IN A SINGLES GAME ONLY: After the winner is out of the game, each player who was after the winner in the starting order gets one more turn.

39. IN A DOUBLES GAME ONLY: The rover ball is alive on all balls at the beginning of each turn, but it may hit the other balls only one time each in each turn. The game is won when both team members balls have struck the last stake.

40. A rover's ball may be driven into the final stake by any other ball. IN A SINGLES GAME ONLY: The striker's ball is then placed a nine-inch mallet head length from the stake and the striker gets two strokes. IN A DOUBLES GAME ONLY: The rover's staked ball is removed from the game. The striker's ball gets one additional shot from the point where their ball stopped after staking out the rover.

41. IN A SINGLES GAME: If a rover hits the last stake before hitting all the other balls, the player must start the game over with no points.

42. A mallet head may not exceed approximately nine or ten inches in length, but there are no restrictions on the shape of the mallet being used, nor in the material (woods metal, or plastic) of which it was made.

Note: These rules were taken from the Internet and the American Croquet Association, and were modified, reviewed and agreed upon by a committee of croquet club members in 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS (not rules)

- a. Players should be careful (in playing with beginners) to avoid making plays that would discourage the beginner (such as hitting the beginner's ball repeatedly out of position, or sending the ball to the far corners of the court). If the beginner desires help with strategy, rules, etc., the advice should of course be freely given.
- b. Unless advice is requested, players and spectators| should be careful in coaching players from the sidelines, Partners can and should be in constant communication with each other.
- c. In the absence of an official referee, one should be named prior to the start of the game. The referee might be one playing a certain colored ball, or it could be the next striker or someone else agreed to by all. It could be the person who is keeping the deadness board up to the minute.