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Croquet: A Manual for Beginning Instruction

Jackie Lynn Gregory

**A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Arts
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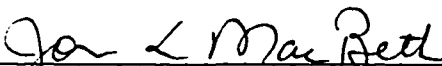
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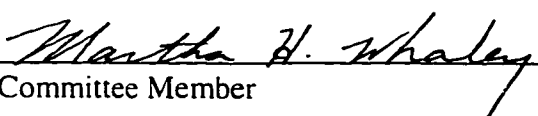
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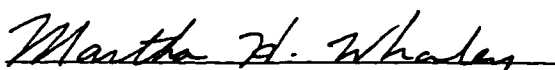
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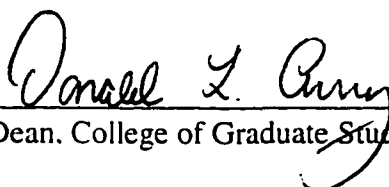
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ABSTRACT

Croquet: A Manual for Beginning Instruction

Jackie Lynn Gregory

The game of croquet has proliferated all levels of American society and is currently played by people from all walks of life. In fact, croquet has a professional, collegiate, as well as a layman following. Furthermore, croquet is played across many college campuses around the country on a club or sub-varsity level with some campuses even offering classes for college credit. Thus, a need exists for information instructing individuals on proper techniques, rules, and strategies in playing croquet, especially for a college course. Therefore, this project was undertaken to fill the need of providing a manual for teaching a college course in croquet.

The manual consists of four chapters. The first provides a brief introduction to croquet while the second describes the history. The third chapter is pedagogically oriented, and it depicts the basic stances, grips, swing, and shots of croquet. And, lastly, the final chapter provides a glossary of terms important to the game.

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throughout my graduate school experience. Steve's encouragement, suggestions, wit, and help made the journey through graduate school a pleasant and productive trip. Like the Greeks on their voyages, it was filled with excitement and promise.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Once thought to be an elite game for the “cucumber sandwich” crowd, croquet today has proliferated all levels of American society. Croquet is returning to its roots where it is played for recreation and enjoyment by people from all walks of life. In fact, croquet’s popularity is evident by its being the topic of some popular cartoons that appear in major newspapers throughout the country. In one instance, Dennis the Menace described the sport best as saying, “It’s called croquet. It’s something like golf only it’s fun” (Boga, 1995).

From its meager beginnings in France, croquet in its primitive form actually was played by French peasants in the thirteenth century and was termed *paille maille* from the Latin derivative *palla malleus* meaning ball and mallet (Reaske, 1988). One theory holds that the game was taken up by French nuns and transported to Ireland on some of their holy pilgrimages (Osborn, 1989). In Ireland, the still primitive game’s name and history were ambiguous. However, strong evidence suggests the actual word *croquet* seems to be born out of the French word *crochet* which means small hook and the Irish word *croche* which means “a shepherd’s crook.” Also, the Irish word “cluiche” which means play and is closely pronounced like croquet in Gallic possibly could be a root for the name croquet. The exact origin of the name, however, is not known.

The game is believed to have migrated from Ireland to England in the mid 1800s. During this period, the history of the sport became less ambiguous and many more detailed facts are known. Gill (1988) writes, “In fact, the origin of croquet is still obscure although it is certain that it was introduced to England from Ireland in about 1850 - albeit in a pretty undeveloped state” (p. 3).

After its introduction into England, croquet caught on quickly and moved fast through the privileged class. This was due primarily to John Jaques, the famous English toymaker, who started manufacturing croquet equipment. Furthermore, England is primarily responsible for the expansion of croquet throughout the world by its colonization efforts.

Croquet moved across the Atlantic from England to America in the mid-1800s where it was recognized by various artists and authors such as Winslow Homer, Louisa Alcott, and Lewis Carroll. By 1865, the first American croquet club, The Newport [Rhode Island] Croquet Club, was established (Boga, 1995). Soon thereafter, croquet was beginning to be played in cities and municipalities for the general public. And in 1882, The National American Croquet Association was formed.

However, the rapid American growth of croquet was not accepted by all. It met with resistance from the clergy because it was believed that there was too much fraternization with the players between the wickets during play in addition to wagering on the outcome of matches. The religious outcry became so strong in Boston, croquet was banned in the 1880s. However, the moral dilemma of croquet was abated, and the sport had a resurgence among those who wanted to play more seriously on the professional as well as the amateur levels. In fact, croquet was introduced as an exhibition sport in the 1904 Olympic games held in St. Louis where the United States team won the first and only gold medal of Olympic play.

Collegiate croquet began in the 1980s with Harvard University playing Yale University in the first collegiate croquet match. Today, many colleges and universities play croquet on a club or sub-varsity sport level (M. Charrier, personal communication, December 5, 1995). Additionally, the annual collegiate croquet championship is always played at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Importance of the Study

Croquet has proliferated American society in many realms. Today one can often find individuals playing croquet in the back yards of rural and suburban America to the most prestigious universities as well as on the amateur and professional levels. In fact, it would be very difficult to find someone who has not played “back yard croquet” at least once. Croquet is alive and growing in the United States with sales of croquet sets at over three hundred thousand annually (Reaske, 1988).

Furthermore, many colleges, such as Yale, Harvard, and St. Johns to name a few, field croquet teams in club or sub-varsity level of play. In addition, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst offers two courses in croquet for college credit. Thus, a need exists for information instructing individuals on proper techniques, rules, and strategies in playing croquet. Because collegiate croquet is having a resurgence and is rapidly growing, a manual and course outline is needed for the teaching of croquet on the college level. And, presently, no such manual exists. Therefore, this study was undertaken to fill the need of providing a manual for teaching a college course in croquet.

CHAPTER 2

Historical Review of Croquet

Croquet's Origin

Establishing the provenance of croquet is somewhat difficult because the exact origin of the game is unknown. However, most historians agree that croquet was probably started in France, but there is not conclusive evidence of the game beginning in that country.

The French have a love for lawn games in general, and some of their games date back to the thirteenth century. One game in particular was popular among the peasants and simply involved knocking balls around with sticks (Boga, 1995). Furthermore, in the sixteenth century, royalty used sticks to strike balls through bent wickets that were laid out in a straight line on fields, similar to a common day bowling alley. Both of these games are believed to be precursors to the modern day game of croquet.

Some suggested that croquet started in France, migrated to England and died out, and, then, re-migrated to France. In France, a game called *paille maille* was played and later, in England, *pall mall* was played, but they seemed to have few similarities. In fact, one historian believed the game in France had a stronger kinship with the game of golf rather than croquet; D. M. C. Prichard, states, “if Pall Mall were an ancestor of anything, it was golf” (as cited in Osborn, 1989, p. 17).

Not only can historians not agree on the exact origin of the game of croquet, they cannot agree on the origin of the name as well. Some believe the term “croquet” is French and is derived from “crochet,” meaning small hook. However, there really is no documented evidence that the game ever was called “croquet” in France, or that the present day form of croquet was played in France. Furthermore, the Irish believe

that the name came from the Gaelic word *cluiche*, pronounced “crooky,” meaning play.

One of the stranger elements is how croquet began in Ireland. There is documented evidence that croquet came from Ireland and was introduced in England during 1850 (Osborn, 1989). Some evidence exists that croquet was started in the 1830s in Ireland and was played by shepherds. Irish shepherds seemed to have picked up a game that involved hitting hardened balls with a long stick that had a curved end. Pilgrimages by French nuns into Ireland occurred during the early part of the 1830s, and it is thought that they transported the game with them (M. Charrier, personal communication, December 4, 1995). For the next twenty years, it seemed as if the Irish perfected the game without realizing their future contribution.

Croquet’s Irish history is ambiguous. More information on the French lawn game exists than on the Irish; however, when croquet made its leap to England in 1850, the game had a similar form of the present day croquet. When croquet was introduced in 1850 to England, it became very popular and started spreading at a rapid rate.

Croquet’s Influential Individuals

Although croquet came to England in a fairly underdeveloped state, it gained popularity rapidly. Croquet’s increased popularity was due to the famous toy maker, John Jaques II and his company. The Jaques Company was responsible for the growth of croquet in England during the late 1800s. The Jaques Company “was started by the twenty-one-year-old Thomas Jaques, a young man of Huguenot descent who had come down to London from the village of Grittleton near Chippenha, to seek his fortune” (Gill, 1988, p. 89). In 1816, his son, John Jaques I, joined the business as a partner and they called their business T & J Jaques, Wholesale Ivory Turners (Gill, 1988). It was not until John Jaques II came into the business that the Jaques

Company developed into one of the most successful makers of games in the world.

Osborn (1989) writes:

It is certainly fair to say that John Jaques II was the first man to rationalize the rules of the game and one must accord him a sense of altruism [since] he certainly didn't need to regulate the rules of the game to promote sales of croquet equipment-sales were booming despite the lack of any hard-and-fast rules. (p. 18)

The company recognized it had a winner with the game of croquet; and by 1852, the first "instruments" made by Jaques began to appear. (Jaques company is still in operation today, and makes some of the best croquet sets and custom made mallets in the world. There are several American companies such as Forester, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Brookstone that make fine equipment, but Jaques is considered the "gold standard".) Additionally, Jaques also was responsible for croquet's growth by encouraging play among both genders. Osborne (1988) writes, "Jaques was happy to sell croquet sets to women as he was to men, and so, by 1866, croquet had become a fashionable excuse for England's Victorian hostesses to give extravagant lawn parties" (p. 10). Whatever the reason, croquet was fast catching on and was beginning to move westward across the Atlantic.

In addition to building the first set of croquet equipment in 1852, Jaques helped to formulate the rules of croquet. Gill (1988) states, "It is certainly fair to say that John Jaques II was the first man to rationalize the rules of the game" (p. 6). This was very important to the development of the game. It gave the game structure and, most importantly, the guidelines for which to play.

In one interesting letter that was written in 1873, John Jaques II wrote to Arthur Lillie about the purported “fortune” he made in croquet reported by Dr. Prior in his book, *Notes on Croquet*. Jaques writes:

I made the implements and published directions (such as they were) before Mr. Spratte introduced the subject to me. The first I made were from patterns which I purchased in Ireland when traveling there on business. Dr. Prior is wrong in assuming that I made a fortune by croquet, though polite of him to think that I deserved to do. (as cited in Gill, 1988, p. 5)

One of the reasons that croquet was popular in England and spread so rapidly was because it had many prominent enthusiasts in very important positions in the community. These individuals made it a fashionable game to play.

Among these community leaders was Arthur Lillie. As an early devotee of the game, he wrote a book in 1870 titled, *Croquet: Its History, Rules and Secrets* (Gill, 1988). In his book, he cites evidence of croquet’s migration from Ireland to England by quoting a letter that discusses croquet’s migration as follows:

47 Hertford Street
Mayfair

My Dear Lady Antrim,

All the information I can give you about croquet is that originally it was much played in Northern France, and was introduced by some Irish family to Ireland a long time ago. My brother [sic] wrote out the rules about fifteen or twenty years ago, and gave them to Mr. Spratt, who very quickly spread their fame. Till the rules were written it had been played from tradition, and the mallets made by country carpenters; but the game existed long before my childhood, which is now in the remote ages. I have a vague idea that Mr. James Brownlow knows more about croquet but I am not sure. Is not the change in the weather delightful? How wretch the snow was!

Ever yours affectionately,
Octavia Helen Campbell (p. 4)

Furthermore, in 1872, Dr. Richard Poor, a prominent physician and Danish scholar, published a very important book, *Notes on Croquet*. He remarked, “Nothing but tobacco smoking has ever spread as quickly” (p. 5) as croquet.

One of the most important persons to the game of croquet was an eccentric by the name of Walter Jones Whitmore. He was the seventh of ten children and was considered clever in his youth. He studied at Oxford University, but never graduated, and he flirted with a legal career, but to no avail.

In 1868, Whitmore published his book, *Croquet Tactics*. The book was probably the most important book ever written on the game of croquet. Sure, Jaques established the game and wrote the first rules, but it was Whitmore who established croquet as “an organized game” (Gill, 1988). Basically, how croquet is played today is because of Whitmore’s work.

Being a romantic Victorian who had an equal interest for money, Whitmore decided to hold his own croquet tournament in Evesham. To his own amazement and good fortune, Whitmore won the tournament. With his winnings, he began the All-England Club, the first organized croquet club in the world.

However, Whitmore had a problem relating to others and had a way of making enemies at an alarming rate. Sports writers of the day were some of his biggest foes who held the power of the pen and had very long memories. Through their continued efforts, he was barred from the All-England Club. However, he soon established another club, the National Croquet Club. And, in 1871, Whitmore decided to have another tournament that would out perform all the ones that he had held before. Osborn (1988) writes:

As it turned out, Whitmore’s 1871 extravaganza was the most remarkable tournament that croquet has ever known. Seventeen thousand troops paraded around the courts. There was a full-dress ball. Bands played without pause, and the spectators were packed five deep. Whitmore placed second, but as Prichard tells us ‘it was croquet as Whitmore visualized it-the

pomp and splendor, the extravagance, the dazzling entertainment, the brilliant and aristocratic company and the martial music-and he, Walter Jones Whitmore, at the center, the cynosure of every eye. (p. 20)

Though the match was a triumph of great proportions, it was only short lived; the next year, it attracted only minimal participants. And, by the early 1870s, lawn tennis was being introduced in England and was taking hold everywhere. A year and a half after the world took notice of croquet, Whitmore died and lawn tennis was the preeminent game in England. Croquet was all but dead in England. However, it continued migrating across the Atlantic to America as well as other countries.

Due to British expansion and colonization efforts, croquet crossed the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. British officers, who were from the upper classes of British society, brought croquet with them on the foreign outposts to serve as a form of entertainment. As a result of their efforts to feed their own entertainment needs, the game caught on in India, The Netherlands, Australia, and South Africa. Even today, Australia and South Africa are some of the biggest croquet playing countries in the world.

Croquet's Development in America

The precise time that croquet crossed the Atlantic is ambiguous, but it is recognized that croquet was beginning to be played in America during the late 1850s and early 1860s (Osborn, 1988). During this same time, lawn tennis also was beginning to be played.

However, unlike in England, lawn tennis was not as popular as croquet in America. Lawn tennis did not gain popularity in America until the late 1800s. Thus, croquet was alive and growing in America during the late nineteenth century.

Croquet's proliferation in literature also was noticed during this time. The mathematician and author Lewis Carroll, who first published *Alice in Wonderland* in 1865, used croquet as a metaphor in his story. The inclusion of croquet in the book

was probably due to Carroll's longtime love for the game. In fact, Carroll was considered one of the most influential croquet players of his time (Gill, 1988).

In the United States, croquet was starting to appear in Connecticut, New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. The first organized croquet club, the Newport Croquet Club in Newport, Rhode Island, was established in 1865 (Boga, 1995). Before the establishment of the Newport Croquet Club, Mayne Reids published a guide to croquet in Boston as well as in England (Lewis, 1991). During this time, croquet's migration to the United States was considered by some complete, and many new clubs were beginning to emerge. The establishment of numerous clubs across the country was taking place, and even some clubs were started with only one family (Reaske, 1988). Furthermore, the establishment of croquet clubs brought about a need for more uniform rules. The New York Croquet Club, founded in 1867, held a meeting to establish uniform rules and a national organization. Osborn (1988) writes of the occasion, "On October 4, 1882, that convention, with twenty-five local clubs participating, for the National American Croquet Association, and the last stumbling block to croquet's ascendancy seemed to have been overcome" (p. 22). Americans were finally on their own. A new era for American croquet was beginning; however, it would not be without a few setbacks.

Since the 1860s and 1870s, the promotion of croquet through popular art and literature caused it to expand at a rapid pace. Croquet was gaining popularity; yet, some believed that it was immoral. The accusation of immorality mainly stemmed from the fact that men and women played the sport jointly on equal terms. In fact, some were very concerned about women playing the sport so actively. There were some accounts that women "purposely" knocked balls into edges so that they could lure men to help them in their hunt. The flirtation between the wickets during play was cited as one of the evils of the game, and Victorian moralists accused that it was "the work of the devil" (Bakoulis, 1986).

During the prim and proper age of the 1880s and 1890s, the fraternization of women and men was hard to handle. Many cities were noticing that croquet playing between men and women was becoming a little too enjoyable. In addition, the element of gambling also was being introduced into the game as well as alcohol. This sparked a negative outcry from religious leaders of the day. Ministers and “self-appointed guardians” spoke out against croquet as corrupt and immoral. Boga (1995) writes:

The combination of co-ed exercise and fresh air, they fretted, would cause young men to leer at women in decidedly Un-Christian ways. The sport also was frequently associated with drinking and gambling. In 1898, one bluenose publication railed that “the game is the gaping jaw of Hades. It would be well if the enthusiasm of the clergy and the laity were enlisted for suppressing the immoral practice of croquet.” (p. 3)

Among the cities where croquet was being played, none debated the playing more hotly than Boston. And, in Boston, the debate ended with croquet ultimately being banned. Several dates have been given as the actual year that croquet was banned, but it is evident that from 1888 through most of the 1890s, croquet was not played.

Susan Brouillette, in re-creating the game for the Ohio Historical Society, writes, “It was a sport in which women could leave their kitchens and their homes and play on equal footing with the men. Occasionally they might show a flash of ankle, and heaven forbid, they might even beat the men” (as cited in Edwards, 1992, p 38). One victorian moralist, who was giving a rationale for the ban on croquet, stated, “The male antagonist becomes a creature too vile for language, the decency of womanhood has disappeared by the third hoop” (Wolkomir, 1992, p. 106).

Croquet was not only popular during this time, it was receiving support by the popular press. Women’s magazines during the 1860s were promoting the game, especially the apparel. Lewis (1991) states, “By April 1865 Godey’s Lady’s Book

remarked that croquet was ‘now becoming very fashionable,’ and two years later, in almost identical language, Peterson’s pronounced decisively that it had ‘become so fashionable’” (p. 3).

The early 1860s took its toll on the country because of the Civil War. The artist Winslow Homer became famous because of his Civil War paintings of soldiers on the battlefield. After the war, Homer took up the game of croquet and was mesmerized by it. In the later half of the 1860s, he painted and published his engravings in the *Harper's Monthly*. Curry, in an article that he wrote for *Antiques* in 1984, writes:

The iconography of the game, recorded in illustrations in the popular literature of the 1860's, appears in its infance in Homer's work, and the subject was later taken up by artists on both sides of the Atlantic. Manet, Tissot, Sloan, Paxton, and others drew upon this aspect of popular culture and all respected the conventions first seen in Homer's series. The croquet pictures establish Homer as an artist who like his European counterparts, was concerned with painting themes from contemporary life. (p. 154)

In addition to using croquet as a muse for his paintings, Homer also became an avid player. Many viewed the game as primarily for the wealthy. However, Homer saw its appeal in much broader terms, and one that was attracting women and men together at what some might suggest an alarming rate. He was responsible for legitimizing the sport for both women and men. And, one must remember, this was a time when the game was still being played mainly in the Northeastern part of the United States, and Susan B. Anthony and her followers had just completed the Seneca Falls conference where concerns for women's issues and equality were just beginning to formulate. The idea of gender equality was not exactly popular at the time. Curry (1984) writes:

Defined as an appropriate place for corporal exertion conducted in mixed company, the croquet field became the legitimate--and eventually not so legitimate--meeting ground for flirtatious encounters. A Sheet-music cover of the period intimate that the principal sport to be found on the croquet field was

the game of love. In 1870 one popular journal noted, "It is misfortune of croquet as a mere game that has been found so admirably subservient to that higher game which all young men and women of good and natural impulses will play together wherever they have the chance." (p. 155)

As in England, the American game became popularized by game and toy makers. In 1871, the Massachusetts toy maker Milton Bradley published the first rules for croquet as well as produced game equipment. Milton Bradley was very romantic and adventurous in describing croquet; he suggested, "croquet . . . matched the spirit of a young, aggressive, achievement-minded nation. 'When we work or fight, we work and fight harder than any other people'" (Osborn, 1988, p. 21).

The game even caught the eye of an American president, Rutherford B. Hayes. He was an avid croquet player and went so far as to use his presidential budget to purchase a set of quality croquet balls so that he and his guests could play on the White House lawn (Boga, 1995). This act outraged his political opposition in Congress; nevertheless, it was an impetus to croquet.

In the 1880s and 1890s, croquet was starting to be played on municipal courts throughout national cities. Even country "springs" and "spas" started to have croquet available for patrons. The *Vermont Historical Society* published an account of Bradford S. Congdon returning to Clarendon Springs, a "country spa," where he had been reared by his grandparents twenty years earlier. Congdon states, "We visited the new ball alley [and] then went into the park and watched the fountain next we saw a nice croquet ground in the lane. . ." (Carter, 1980, p. 242). The *Ohio Historical Society* recreated the game of croquet that was played in Ohio in the 1880s as part of the society's reconstructed nineteenth-century Ohio Village (Edwards, 1992).

After a slump in the 1890s, the game of croquet experienced a revival in 1899. Croquet players met in Norwich, Connecticut, "to revitalized the game" (Boga, 1995, p. 3). This meeting was important for several reasons. First, it was the first time that a group of interested parties sat down and standardized the court and the rules for

play. And, second, the hoop size and the number of balls played (two) by each player also were standardized.

Croquet in the Twentieth Century

Until the 1900s, croquet on both sides of the Atlantic had the same standards of play and the same version of the game. Croquet was played as an exhibition sport in the 1900 Olympic games in Paris, France, but the Americans disagreed with 6-wicket game that the British were using, and British rules outlawed certain types of mallets as well (Osborn, 1989). Thus, because there were no international rules, the playing of croquet for Olympic play was defined by the host country. The 1904 Olympic games, held in St. Louis, was the last time that croquet appeared in the Olympics. The Americans won the first and only gold medal of official Olympic play by using the American 9-wicket game which is the “back yard” or “garden” croquet that most Americans are familiar with today.

Mark Twain, being one of the most avid players of the game, started a long line of American literary and diplomatic figures that played the game. The executive editor of the *New York World*, Herbert Bayard Swope, and author Alexander Woolcott are two literary figures who loved the game of croquet. Fortunately, for all concerned, Swope had a sprawling estate on Long Island where he installed a croquet court, and “it was here that Woolcott introduced dramatist George S. Kaufman and poet Dorothy Parker, as well as others of the Round Table set, to the glories of croquet” (Osborn, 1989, p. 25).

These figures seem to have a vigor for the game that was different from the Englishmen that played. Woolcott even exclaimed, “My doctor forbids me to play unless I win” (Osborn, 1989, p. 5; Boga, 1995, p. 4). So heated were some of the matches that, upon the outcome of one game, Woolcott went to his Vermont island and did not speak to Swope for seven years (Osborn, 1989).

The diplomatic and political world had their avid croquet players as well. Averell Harriman, former governor of New York, diplomat, and foreign ambassador to Russia, who implemented the Marshall Plan for rebuilding Europe after World War II, installed a croquet court at the American embassy in Moscow. Harriman was such a devoted fan of croquet that when “once during a Thanksgiving storm, snow threatened to curtail a match, he hired eight men with tools to keep the courts clean” (Boga, 1995, p 4). While he was governor of New York, Harriman once held up the work of the New York State legislature for twenty minutes when he refused to break his concentration in a croquet game (Reaske, 1988).

Another interesting figure was Harpo Marx of the “Three Marx Brothers.” Known as the silent Marx, he was nothing but silent when it came to playing croquet. Marx went as far as trying to establish a court on top of a New York apartment building until city officials prohibited its establishment (Reaske, 1988). Marx became an important figure in the western expansion of croquet to the movie moguls and actors on the west coast.

Many influential persons on the west coast were beginning to pick up croquet, but none were more dedicated than top executives from the movie industry. Movie industry moguls such as Daryl Zanuck and Samuel Goldwyn, and movie stars such as Harpo Marx, Tyrone Power, Gig Young, and others, were active and devoted players. Many of them established croquet courts on their lawns, and some gambled as much as \$10,000 on a game (Osborn, 1989). Samuel Goldwyn had one of the last great croquet lawns on the west coast that everyone fought to play on, but when Goldwyn became ill and “took to his deathbed, his wife turned off the water to the courts, effectively abolishing play. She feared Sam would become overexcited listening to his friends outside playing the game he loved” (Boga, 1995, p 5).

By the 1950s and the early 1960s, croquet truly had integrated itself into play of mainstream America. The economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s saw much

growth in single family dwellings, and croquet was beginning to be played in the back yards of many Americans. Unlike Harpo Marx, who reportedly kept a climate controlled room for \$20,000 worth of croquet equipment, average Americans were using wire hoops and rubber headed mallets to play croquet in their back yards.

Again in the 1960s, croquet experienced another revival that was launched by players from New York City who went to the Hamptons on Long Island to play. By 1967, several players from around the country met in New York to establish the New York Croquet Club. This was an important step in the development of professional play because the six-wicket game was played at the New York Club.

The United States Croquet Association (USCA) was founded in 1977 and established the 6- and 9-wicket game's rules. Jack Osborn (1989), who was the founder and first president of the United States Croquet Association, writes, "With the formation of the United States Croquet Association . . . the game reached a level where it was, at last, poised to make a serious assault on the American sporting scene (p 29). The USCA encouraged the forming of clubs around the country, and currently "more than three hundred croquet clubs are members of the USCA" (Boga, 1995, p. 6).

One of the more important elements established by the USCA was the development of professional tournaments throughout the country as well as the national croquet championships. In addition, with sponsorship from BMW and Rolex for various tournaments, croquet pole-vaulted into the American sports scene.

Although the USCA encourages 6-wicket professional play, there have been spin off effects of the game at every level. Reaske (1988), in his book, *Croquet, the Gentle but Wicket Game*, writes:

To a rapidly growing number of Americans, croquet is becoming as standard a part of back yard culture as barbecuing hamburgers and hot dogs. So it is with the various levels of sophistication on which croquet can be enjoyed. Croquet is now firmly established as a part of our emerging leisure lifestyle. (p. 12)

Since the inception of the USCA, croquet has grown considerably. Considerable publicity both in written and electronic media have helped the growth of croquet.

Croquet's Media Attention

Since 1983, *Sports Illustrated* has done seven articles on croquet (Brody, 1989; Gammon, 1988; Kamiya, 1988; Keteyian, 1983; Lidz, 1995; McCallum, 1989; and Sullivan, 1986). More so than not, the articles usually cover the personalities of croquet than the game itself. However, personalities do matter, and croquet has some very colorful people. In 1983, the Burchfields' upset win at the United States Association National Double Championship in New York City sent shock waves throughout the croquet world. What is interesting about the Burchfields is that they are a father and son team who did not learn croquet from the pristine lawns of the Hamptons, Newport, or Palm Beach, but from a packed mud field in Kentucky. Archie and Mark Burchfield are tobacco farmers who live at Stamping Ground, Kentucky. Archie caught the croquet bug from playing at his local church. After he had been beaten several times, he said, "I went home that night [and] . . . hunted up a mallet and practiced alone for two weeks. After I won the rematch, local folks didn't want to play me much anymore" (Keteyian, 1983, p. 126). The Burchfields showing up in blue jeans and a denim shirt at Palm Springs Croquet Club are a thing of the past, but the doors that use to slam shut are now wide open (Keteyian, 1983).

Some of the articles were concerned with human interest stories about the individuals who play croquet. One article discussed Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who often plays croquet with his law clerks for leisure (Sullivan, 1986). Other articles are about novelties of the sport, such as oversized croquet courts derived from one's fascination with the game (Kamiya, 1988).

Michael Brody wrote about croquet and the social aspect in the wine country of Northern California. Croquet is associated with several fund-raisers and social

activities in the area. Sonoma-Curter is a popular winery in Sonoma county that has its own croquet courts. Brody (1989) states, "Sonoma-Curter is celebrated for superb chardonnay, its striking architecture, and its croquet lawns, which may the best in the world" (p. 11).

Franz Lidz wrote about a new person exploding on the croquet scene, thirteen year-old Jacque Fournier. Fournier competed in the U. S. Nationals in Newport, Rhode Island where he came in fourth place. Fournier, however, is troubled with the conservative "all-white" clothing of croquet, especially since his black Nikes were blackballed at the National Championships. If the rule is not changed, Fournier's hopes for a sponsorship by Nike may be futile (Lidz, 1995).

Other articles that have appeared in the last ten years concerning croquet have come from a wide variety of magazines. Articles have appeared in the following: *The Economist*, *People*, *Life*, *Changing Times*, *Newsweek*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *New York Times Magazine*, *New Statesman Society*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Time*. The articles have been numerous and wide ranging. Some have talked about the court life, with an emphasis on the ambiance of croquet courts and clothing styles, and others include movie reviews that feature croquet as part of the plot of the movie. Others have used satire to explain croquet and its followers. Some international articles have talked about the civility of the game in general, such as:

Wherever it is held, nobody need worry about hooliganism or crowd control. Croquet is still a 'gentlemanly' game which incorporates 'Victorian values'. No rude jostling or rows with the officials here. Players act as their own referees, and altercations and bad language are virtually unknown. It is a game for all ages and all the family, but it also requires the tactical skill of a politician. Enthusiasts say world leaders would do well to consider it as an antidote to the pressures of political life." (Who's for croquet?, 1992, p. 114)

Croquet has found new forms of technology very useful. The *Internet* and *World Wide Web* are being used to advertise and market croquet information ranging

from championship calendar schedules, to locating and purchasing croquet equipment, to finding information on collegiate teams.

However, there is a paucity of scholarly works that address croquet. Only two doctoral dissertations even mention the word croquet. Of these, Meacham (1982) composed an opera with the opening scene being the croquet match in *Alice in Wonderland*, and Warner (1986) wrote on women's clothing for sports and physical education which included a section on the proper dress for croquet.

Collegiate Croquet

The introduction of croquet in collegiate play has added a new dimension to the game. Collegiate croquet began in 1980 with the first game between Harvard and Yale, and it is still played every year preceding the Harvard/Yale football game (M. Charrier, personal communication, December 4, 1995).

Official collegiate croquet is played with six wickets using USCA American Collegiate Six Wicket Game and Tournament Standards as their rule book (USCA, 1993). The basic difference in professional and collegiate play is that collegiate play allows coaching from the side and substitutions of players.

Collegiate croquet has continued to grow steadily, and the national collegiate croquet championships are played each spring at Smith College. It was announced in 1987 in the *New York Times* that Smith College would be the first collegiate school to have a croquet court. It was made possible by funding from Smith College alumnae, and it was the idea of one of the schools former English professors (Reaske, 1988).

Schools that have croquet teams and play on a club or sub-varsity level are as follows: Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth, Trinity, Wellesley, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Wesleyan, Columbia, Bernard, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Georgetown, St Johns-Annapolis, University of Virginia, William and Mary, United States Naval Academy, and the University of Washington (M. Charrier, personal communication, December 4, 1995).

Most recently the two schools that have gotten the most publicity from croquet playing are the United States Naval Academy and St. Johns College, which are both located in Annapolis, Maryland. It is a great rivalry between two very different schools that play the same game. The *American Way*, an in-flight American Airlines magazine, devoted a thirteen page article on the schools' annual spring ritual (Norman, 1996).

The 1996 croquet match between the "Johnnies" of St. Johns College and the "Middies" of the United States Naval Academy was one of the most popular and media-covered collegiate matches in history. Reporters from the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *CNN*, and a host of local newspapers and television stations were there to cover the match and to see the "Johnnies" walk away with the Annapolis Cup with a 4 games to 1 victory.

What is most interesting about the Johnnies vs. Middies match is that unlike other collegiate matches, they play the American nine-wicket game instead of the standard professional six-wicket game preferred by the USCA. James Knerr, the Imperial Wicket of St. Johns College (in layman's terms--the captain), and his teammate, Jonathon Spooner, prefer the nine-wicket version of croquet. In fact, Knerr states, "The nine-wicket game is more versatile in that one doesn't need an extremely well-groomed court to play. Also, it is a game with more panache" (personal communication, April 26, 1996). Likewise, Spooner believes that collegiate play should be converted to nine-wicket: "It is a better game that is more suited to collegiate play. It would encourage and attract more teams simply because more people are aware of this version and how it is played" (personal communication, April 26, 1996). However, the six-wicket version did not seem to hinder the "Johnnies"; they placed second in their first appearance at the 1996 Collegiate National Croquet Championships held at Smith College.

In summary, croquet, after being thought only a game for the culturally elite, has proliferated all realms of American society. It is played everywhere from the back yards of suburban America to the lawns of the most prestigious schools and universities of the nation. And, this all came from the meager beginnings of French peasants knocking wooden balls about hilly fields during the thirteenth century. Now, however, from these primitive beginnings in Europe, many individuals enjoy a “relaxing” game of croquet on many a summer afternoon.

CHAPTER 3

Croquet Equipment

Croquet equipment is available for play on many different levels. Complete sets can be purchased from a neighborhood sporting goods store for as low as fifty dollars, and sets can be ordered from prestigious croquet clubs that cost twenty times as much (see Figures 1 and 2). The disparity between the sets is huge. Both sets will include six mallets and balls, nine wickets, and two stakes; however, the “backyard” croquet sets will include short, light mallets with three inch balls and wide, easily accessible flexible wire hoops, whereas the championship croquet sets will have heavier mallets, larger, heavier, milled composite balls, and inflexible, narrow, iron wickets along with an assortment of colorful flags, pegs, and a wonderfully crafted wooden hammer aptly termed a “smasher.”

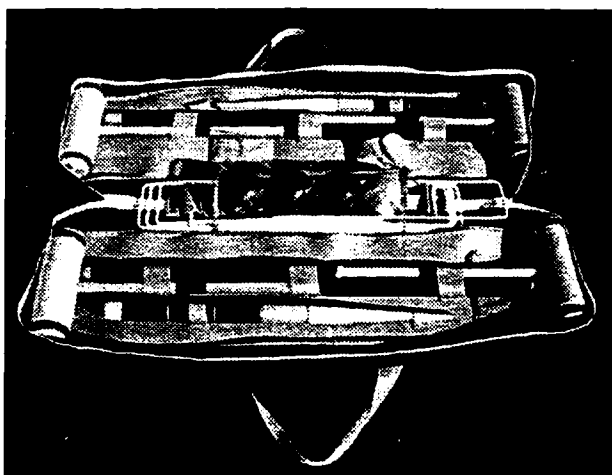
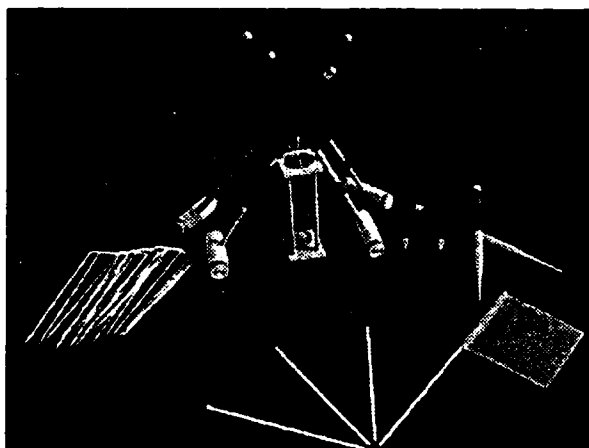


Figure 1. A basic Forster Challenge set.

Figure 2. A complete set of croquet equipment with corner flags.



Mallets

When playing croquet, a mallet is the single most important piece of equipment. Many times, it is personalized to each player since legally a mallet can be any length and weight desired (Boga, 1995). The details of the construction of a mallet are often dictated by the playing conditions (e.g., grass length and density) and the balls and wickets used. When playing in high, thick grass, one would want to use a heavier mallet to provide more power to the ball, thus improving accuracy and overall shot-making ability. However, caution must be applied since using heavier mallets can often damage or even destroy some balls. In fact, it is recommended that equipment not be mixed between classes (i.e., using a class A mallet with class D balls). Mallets differ in length, shape, size, and weight; nonetheless, most will conform to the following standards:

- Shaft length approximately 35 to 40 inches, depending upon the height of the player
- Head length from nine inches to one foot
- The two end-faces of the mallet parallel to one another and perpendicular to the bottom

Mallets are often made from many different materials (e.g., wood, metal, plastic); however, any material used should not have an advantage over wood. The head of the mallet can be either round or square, depending merely upon personal preference; but, there is no distinct advantage to either. The only advantage to a square head is that it will stand by itself and easily can be used to mark where balls went out of bounds.

Lastly, a group of people can play with the use of only one mallet by sharing it. However, it is much better for everyone to have a mallet because it will make the flow of the game smoother and reduce delays.

Balls

As with mallets, balls come in a variety of shapes and sizes (see Figure 3). Most backyard sets of croquet are outfitted with plastic or wooden balls that are three inches in diameter and weigh well under one pound. Championship (tournament or Association) and club balls are heavier (15 to 16 1/4 oz), have a large diameter (3 5/8 in.), and are made of a milled plastic cover encompassing a composite core. In addition, these balls are rated on their rebounding ability, that is, how much “bounce” they have.

The advantages to tournament balls are obvious. The heavier weight allows them to travel a truer, straighter course over imperfect terrain (i.e., high grass or uneven ground). And, the control over their liveliness by rating their “bounce” converts to more continuity. Thus, the tournament balls will allow individuals to improve their game through developing consistency with their shot-making ability through the use of a more diverse range of shots. In addition, the tournament balls are more attractive and simply give a more professional appearance. However, as stated earlier, caution must be used in that with heavier balls, heavier, sturdier mallets also must be used. Just as with using a heavy class A mallet with “backyard” balls will probably lead to the destruction of the balls, using tournament balls with backyard mallets will probably result in the mallet head splitting. Balls vary in size and weight, but they must be the following:

- colored solid blue, red, black, and yellow
NOTE: When playing with more than the four basic balls, the second set should be colored the same as the first but striped to denote the difference or an alternative color scheme of green, pink, brown, and white should be utilized.
- weigh evenly (between 15 and 16 1/4 oz) and roll smoothly
NOTE: Different class levels of balls react to temperature differently; thus, some swell in extreme heat causing them to have difficulty passing through the wicket while others' rebound characteristics change during play resulting in inconsistent rolls.

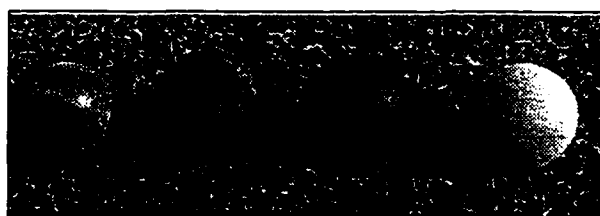


Figure 3. A set of Jaques Hampton double-milled balls.

Wickets

Wickets, like mallets and balls, are available in a variety of sizes (as depicted in Figure 4). The backyard croquet sets are equipped with thin, flexible, round wires that are bent to form hoops of various sizes and shapes to accommodate the skill level of beginning players. Conversely, tournament and club croquet sets have wickets constructed from heavy, hardened, rounded iron $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch thick that will not give. These wickets are constructed where the crown is at a right angle to the uprights. Furthermore, the uprights are much closer than the backyard “hoops” and allow only approximately $\frac{1}{16}$ to $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch clearance between the ball and wicket.

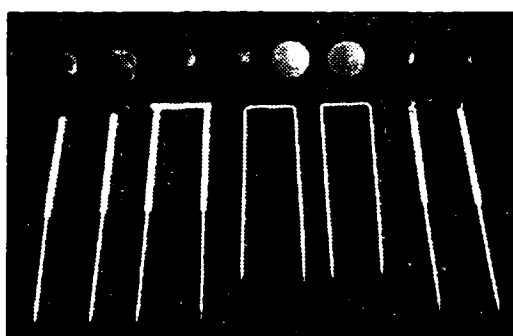


Figure 4. A variety of croquet wickets and balls.

Stakes

The finishing stake (shown in Figure 5), sometimes referred to as the winning peg, is constructed of wood, is 18 inches long and has a diameter of 1.5 inches; it is painted white with four colored bands in descending order of blue, red, black, and yellow that indicate the order of play. In addition, the stake has a removable black spire on its top where clips can be attached to indicate who is shooting for the stake. The end of the stake is pointed to allow it to be driven into the ground.

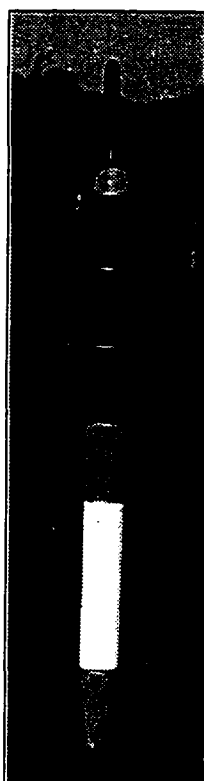


Figure 5. A stake.

Clips

Clips are very important to the game of croquet because they show the direction of play and indicate which wicket a ball must pass through next (Figure 6). These are especially important in croquet because a scoreboard is not used and the placement of the clips is the only indicator of who is actually ahead in the game.

The following are observed for clips:

- The color of the clip used by a player is denoted by the color of the ball being played by that particular player.
- Once a player has cleared a wicket, the player then moves the clip and attaches it on top of the next wicket to be cleared. (When playing six wicket croquet, the clip is placed on the side of the wicket the second time through.)
- When the stake is scored, the clip is removed from the court.

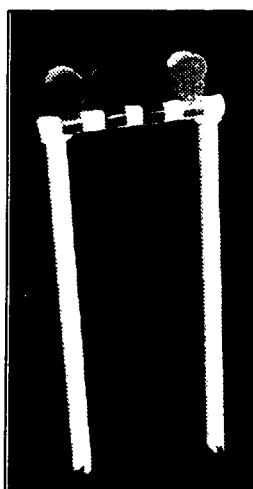


Figure 6. The first set of clips that corresponds with the color of the balls.

Flags and Corner Pegs

Four flags, colored blue, red, black, and yellow, are used to indicate the four corners of the court and are shown in Figure 7. Flags should adhere to the following:

- mounted on staffs at least 12 inches in length
- placed four inches from the boundary lines
- blue, red, black, and yellow indicating positions 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively

- positions 1, 2, 3, and 4 located in the southwest, northwest, northeast, and southeast corners, respectively

NOTE: Flags are not boundary lines, but instead are used for judging distance and the flow of the game.

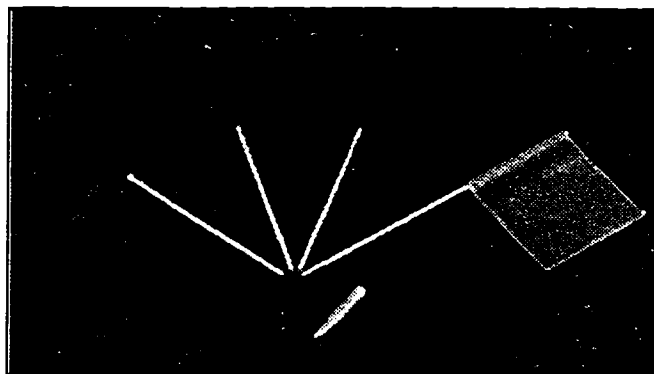


Figure 7. The four basic flags with corresponding corner pegs.

Clock

Although not necessary in all play, a game clock measures the time of a match. A match's time can vary from forty-five minutes to over two hours, depending on how many people are playing.

A striker is allowed 45 seconds to attempt a shot. This is governed by what is aptly named the shot clock. The timekeeper will call a 15-second warning, and if a striker does not make the shot in the allotted 45 seconds, the timekeeper will call time, thus ending the striker's turn.

Figure 8. The yellow flag and corner peg in court position.



Deadness Board

Once a player roquets a ball, that player becomes “dead” on that particular ball, meaning that the player cannot play off that ball until the next wicket is cleared. This is vital to the game and must be displayed because players tend to have a short memory about which balls they have roqueted and which ones they have not. Because many arguments tend to arise, a deadness board is important because it allows players and spectators alike to identify the balls on which each player is dead.

The Deadness Board is approximately two feet in height and three feet in width and is commercially available. A small, watch-like Velcro board also is available to be worn on the wrist.

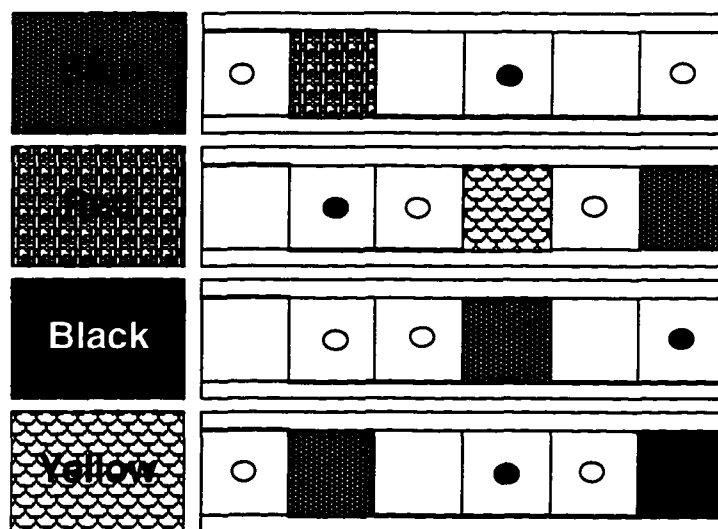


Figure 9. An illustration of a Deadness Board.

Apparel

The apparel of croquet is simple: Everything is white. Osborn (1989) writes, “In croquet you can ‘color yourself’ anything as long as it’s ‘WHITE.’ For although anything from bathing suits to blue jeans may go, in the privacy of one’s own backyard, the USCA dress code for all major tournament play is ‘white’” (pp. 76-77).

NOTE: The wearing of white extends to all apparel such as: shoes, socks, pants, shorts, skirts, blouses, shirts, and dresses.



Figure 10. An example of the appropriate apparel to be worn while playing croquet.

Professional Play

In all professional play and tournaments, white is the only color expected to be worn. However, exemptions to the all-white clothing rule can be made by the tournament chair or club president; however, this rarely, if ever, occurs.

Collegiate Play

Collegiate play is less formal than professional play, but during formal matches, the players are expected to wear all-white unless otherwise agreed upon. The coaches may determine the variances in clothing options, depending on whether or not the game is being played on the intramural or intercollegiate level.

Informal Play

Players are allowed to wear whatever clothing local customs permit.

Stances

The stance is very important to the beginning croquet player. Only when a proper stance is utilized will the individual be able to hit consistently and accurately. Thus, performing the proper stances correctly is imperative to becoming a skilled croquet player, and that is why this section precedes the grips and swings.

Three basic stances exist in croquet: (1) the golf stance, (2) the center stance, and (3) the side stance. Of these, the golf stance is considered the weakest and should be

scarcely, if even at all.

The Golf Stance

The golf stance often is employed by beginners because of their familiarity with golf. However, croquet and golf differ in that the swing need not be as powerful in making a croquet shot as in teeing off a golf ball. Thus, the golf stance is a powerful stance but provides very little accuracy and consistency compared to the center and side stances. In fact, the efficiency and accuracy of the center stance is demonstrated by it being made illegal in golf by the United States Golf Association to prevent players from shooting extremely low scores. Therefore, the golf stance should be used only when an individual's strength or lack thereof necessitates its use in long shots. Otherwise, the center or side stances should be used.

In performing the golf stance (again it is only used in making a long shot on a rough, uneven course with players who are physically weak), one would stand with the feet spread at shoulder width and at a 90-degree angle to the direction of the proposed path of the ball. The feet should be placed where the ball is several inches behind the front foot with both feet being approximately one foot from the ball and its proposed path.

The Center Stance

The center stance is the most common of all stances in croquet and the one that has been deemed the most effective. Furthermore, it is considered the best all-around stance in croquet. It not only allows the player to stand behind the ball allowing for optimal alignment, it also allows the player to perform a fluid, smooth swing in a pendulum fashion.

The center stance is where the player's legs are placed square, shoulder width apart, and approximately six inches from the ball (see Figures 11 and 12). Some players believe that one foot should be placed in front of the other to offer an advantage in power on this stance; however, for beginning players, it is recommended that the feet be placed

square. This stance enables the mallet to be swung through the legs while the knees are slightly bent. One advantage to this shot is that the striker can see directly where the shot will be going, making the alignment of the shot more accurate. In addition, the striker has more control over the shot because the body stays in alignment and perfectly square to the ball and its proposed path.

The Side Stance

The side stance is often used for individuals who have low back flexibility or who have just recently taken up the game after long periods of inactivity (see Figure 13). This stance will allow players the power of the golf stance and some of the control of the center stance. However, it is not as efficient as the center stance because it is difficult not to twist the body slightly during the swing.

In performing the side stance, one simply faces the ball and the direction it is intended to be hit while holding the mallet at the dominant side. The feet should be slightly staggered and placed approximately six inches apart with the lead foot in line with the ball.

Grips

As stated earlier, the mallet is the most important piece of equipment; thus gripping the mallet is also one of the most important skills to be learned in croquet. There are four basic grips with which a beginning croquet player must become accustomed: (1) the standard (America); (2) the British standard; (3) the Irish; and (4) the Solomon.

The Standard (American) Grip

The standard or American grip is one that many beginners find easy to use and very effective and is illustrated in Figures 15 and 16. This grip enables an individual to have good control and power over a shot because the hands are separated.

To use the standard grip, the first step is to grasp the top of the mallet handle with the non-dominant hand with the thumb up and the fingers curling around the handle. The



Figure 11. Front view of a center stance.



Figure 12. Side view of a center stance.

next step is to grasp the handle using the dominant hand, palm forward, fingers down with the index finger pointing down the mallet, six to ten inches below the other hand. The top hand should grip the mallet firmly while the lower hand uses a lighter grip that provides guidance and balance.

A modification to the standard grip is called the “pencil grip” and it involves the lower hand being placed palm down, and the index finger being wrapped around the mallet handle while the second finger is pointed down the shaft. Some believe that this variation helps with aiming and guidance; however, one should use the variation that feels most comfortable.

The British Standard Grip

The British standard grip is primarily the same as the American grip except that the hands are touching at the top of the handle of the mallet (see Figures 17 and 18). As players improve their play and begin to play on well-groomed courts, this grip becomes



Figure 13. Front view of side stance.



Figure 14. Side view of side stance.

more advantageous. This is because with better groomed courts, play is faster and less power is needed, yet accuracy becomes paramount. Accuracy improves with the British standard grip because the two hands are closer together, thus they become one, and start working in unison; no one hand dominates the shot and throws off the aim or power in the shot.

The Irish Grip

The Irish grip is similar to a grip one uses on a golf club, with the hands overlapping. The primary reason one would use this grip is to help reduce the effect of one hand having a greater influence on the stroke. When employing the Irish grip, the over-dominance of one hand is almost entirely and automatically eliminated.

When performing the Irish grip, the palms of the hands face toward the target and away from the body, with the thumbs resting on the front part of the handle of the mallet. This grip usually improves accuracy with close wicket shots because the two hands are

working in unison and a truer, straighter shot is produced.

The Solomon Grip

A grip named for its inventor, John Solomon, is unique in that both hands are in the same position, with the knuckles of both hands facing the target at the top of the mallet handle and the thumbs placed behind (see Figure 20). This grip often is used for increasing power because a long, strong backswing easily is accomplished with its use. Furthermore, Solomon believed that “each hand being held in the same position, each



Figure 15. Front view of the standard (American) grip.



Figure 16. Side view of the standard (American) grip.

works in a complementary way to the other. Neither hand has any predominance and the result is a perfect blend between the two” (Boga, 1995, p. 20).

The Stalk and Swing

The Stalk

Stalking a ball simply refers to how one lines up a shot. The easiest way to accomplish this is by standing well behind the ball about to be hit and sight over its top toward

the target. Doing this will allow one to see the direct path or line that the ball must travel. One should then approach the ball, place and square the feet and the shoulders.



Figure 17. Front view of the British standard grip.



Figure 18. Side view of the British standard grip.

Careful adjustments should be made so that the body is perfectly square to the target. Relaxation is key; so, one would want to bend the knees slightly, maintain eye contact with the target, then look at the ball and one final look at the target before an attempt is made. If the body position, grip, and line-up all feel comfortable, and the player feels confident, the swing should be initiated at this point. If there is any doubt in the player's mind, the player should back off and start the stalk again.

The Swing

The swing in croquet should be one natural, fluid, straight motion similar to a pendulum. However, this is sometimes difficult to do. Why? Frankly, people get nervous, and the human body is not a machine; it has joints that simply do not always stay in line

as well as having a mind that will often cause the body to do strange things. The solution: Each individual must picture the swing as being fluid and natural before any attempt is made at a shot. What must occur is that someone attempting a shot should first visualize the shot, stalk it, and then swing.

During the swing itself, it is important to initiate all movement from the shoulders so that the arms and the mallet move as a single unit, with the remainder of the body remaining motionless. The backswing should be smooth, slow, and deliberate, and its length will depend on how far the shot must travel (i.e., a longer backswing provides a

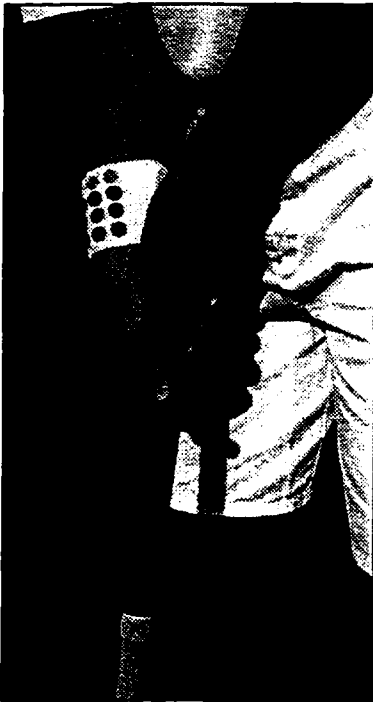


Figure 19. Side view of the Irish grip.



Figure 20. Front view of the Solomon grip.

stronger shot).

When initiating the swing, one must be careful to keep the head down and watch the ball. In fact, one should continue to look down and watch the grass where the ball has left in order to prevent a rising of the shoulders that could cause a poor hit. It is imperative that after contact is made with the ball, the striker must follow-through with the swing. And, even more important, one must be relaxed during the swing. In fact, Solomon stated, "A croquet swing should be a movement of the arms that is unconsciously performed and results in a perfect swing" (Boga, 1995, p.23). Proper swing techniques are shown in Figures 21-27.

Shots

There are two types of shots to be made in the game of croquet: single-ball shots and double-ball shots. Single-ball shots refer to just hitting one's own ball, while double-ball shots refer to hitting one's own ball while it is adjacent to another ball.

Single-ball Shots:

Roquet
Rush
Cut Rush
Straight Rush
Wicket Shot
Jump Shot

Double-ball Shots:

Drive Shot
Roll Shot
Stop Shot
Take-Off Shot
Split Shot

Single-ball Shots

Roquet

The roquet shot is fundamental to the game. It simply requires players to strike their own ball and make it travel to where it will hit another ball with which they are currently alive on in order to receive another stroke. Making a long shot and roqueting another ball is a tremendous advantage both psychologically and strategically to the game.

Rush

The rush shot, when performed correctly, will place both the striker's ball and the opponent's ball in strategic locations that would best benefit the striker. Simply put, the striker is knocking the opponent's ball out of the way. Two types of rushes exist: the straight rush and the cut rush.



Figure 21. The swing using a center stance and standard grip. Note the backswing.



Figure 22. Initiating the swing and striking the ball.



Figure 23. The follow-through.



Figure 24. Addressing the ball.

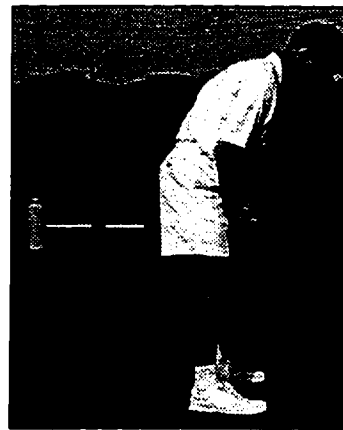


Figure 25. The swing using a center stance and Solomon grip. This is for a long shot. Note the long backswing.

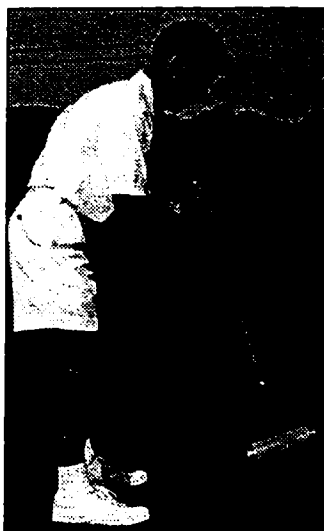


Figure 26. Making contact with the ball.

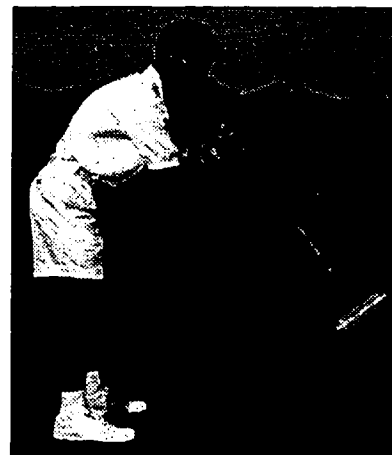


Figure 27. The follow-through.

Wicket Shot

A wicket shot is one of the most intimidating shots in croquet. It is the shot that earns both points and another stroke that allows one to proceed with the game. Wicket shots can be straight ahead or at an angle. How one approaches making a wicket shot is depicted below.

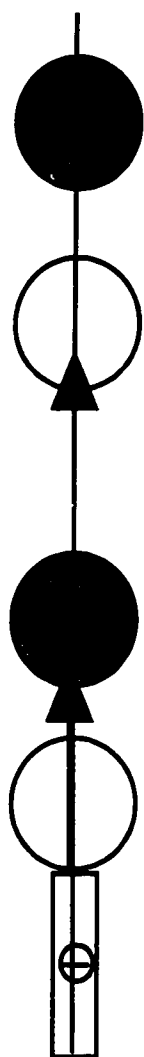


Figure 28. Straight Rush.

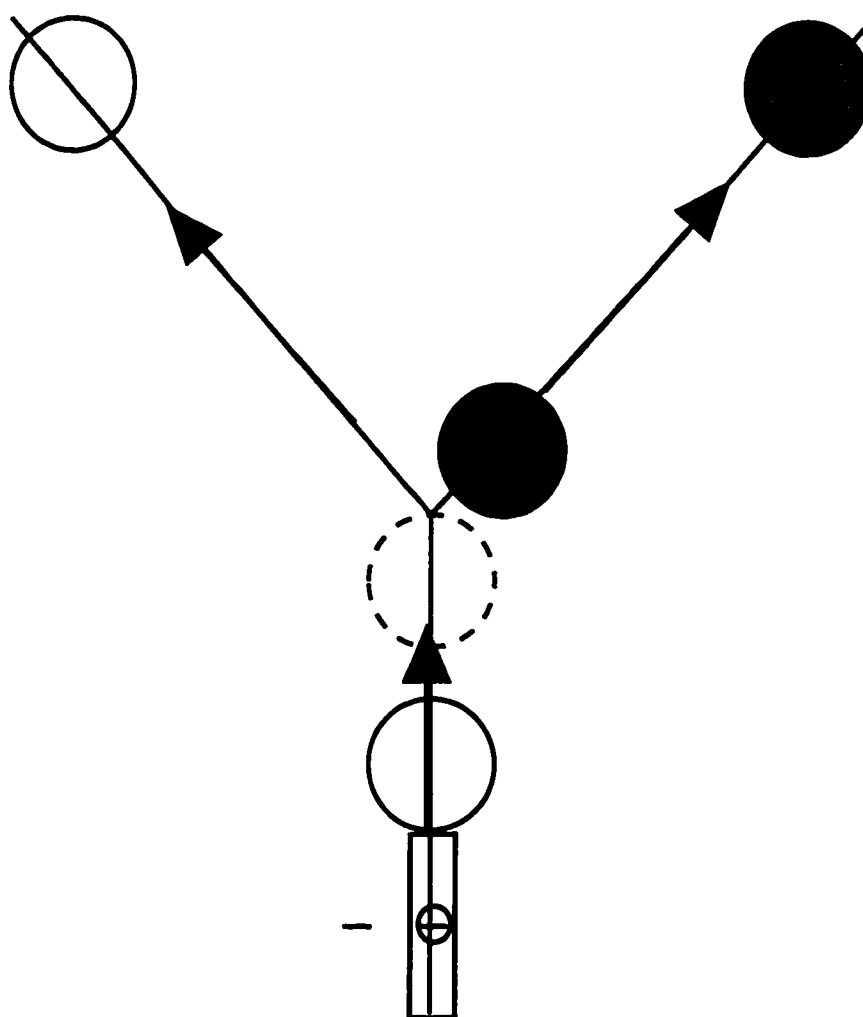


Figure 29. Cut Rush.

Jump Shots

Jump shots can be one of the trickiest yet most intimidating shots of the game. During a jump shot, the striker is simply trying to get one ball to aptly “jump” over another ball that is usually blocking passage through the wicket. In order to do this, the striker must hit the ball in a downward motion causing it to rebound off the ground and thus

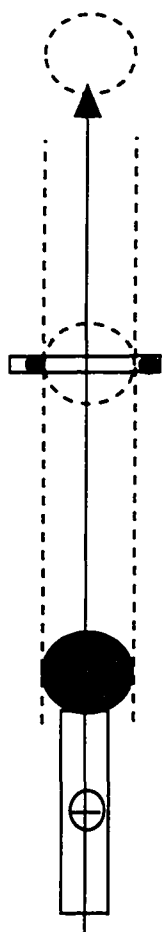


Figure 30. Straight wicket shot.

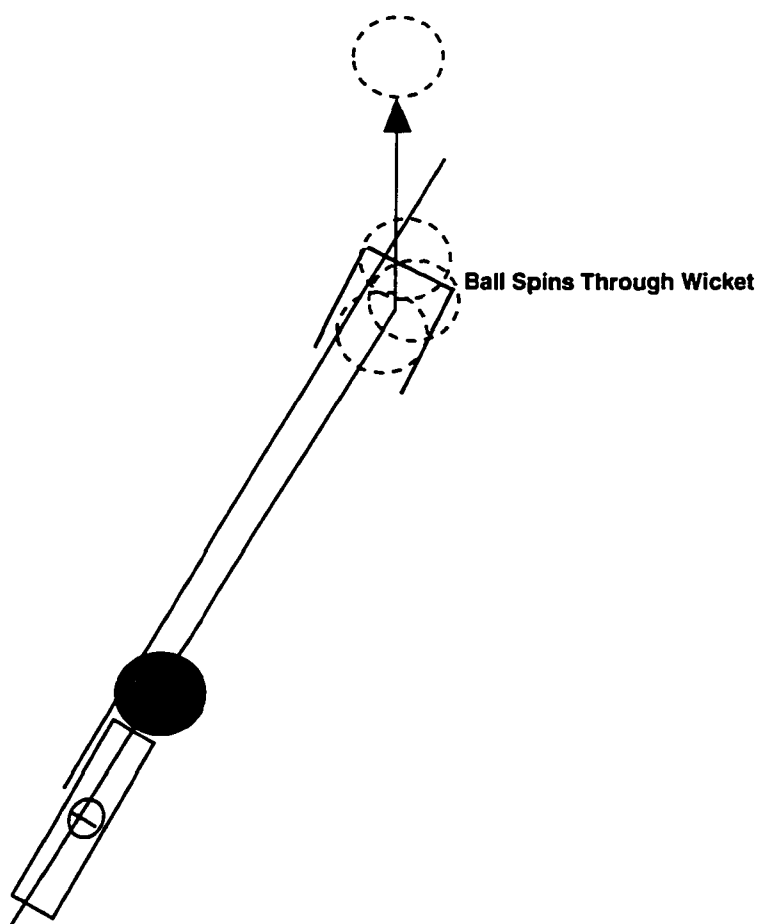


Figure 31. Angle wicket shot.

“jump” over the ball blocking the wicket. However, this shot may cause divots or dimples in the court. If so, one must immediately flatten them with a mallet.

Two-ball Shots

Drive Shot

The drive shot is the basic shot of the two-ball shots. Simply put, it is a shot where both balls involved travel in the same direction. However, when hit properly and squarely, the striker's ball will hit the second ball sending it about three times farther in distance and, hopefully, placing the opponent's ball in a disadvantaged position.

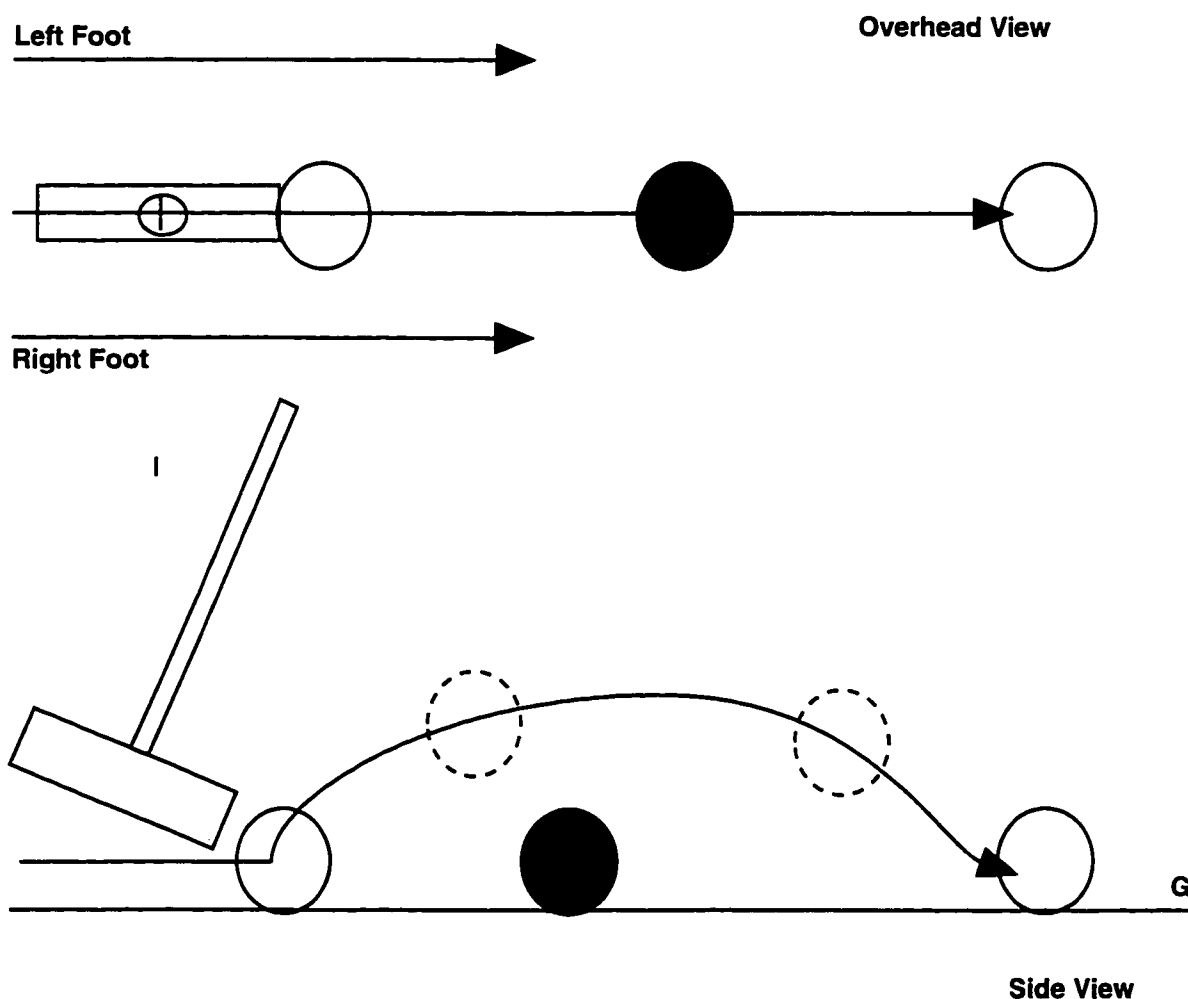


Figure 32. Jump Shot.

Roll Shot

The roll shot, when performed correctly, will have the striker's ball and the croqueted ball traveling various distances. There are three roll shots: (1) the half roll; (2) the full roll; and (3) the pass roll. The names define what the striker's ball will do; that is, during the half roll, the striker's ball will travel half the distance as the croqueted ball. During the full roll, the ball travels the same distance. And, the pass roll is where the striker's ball passes the croqueted ball.

Controlling how far each ball travels may at first seem difficult; however, with a little practice and technique, it is easy for an individual to learn these shots. In performing these shots, several key factors will affect how the balls roll. These include the direc

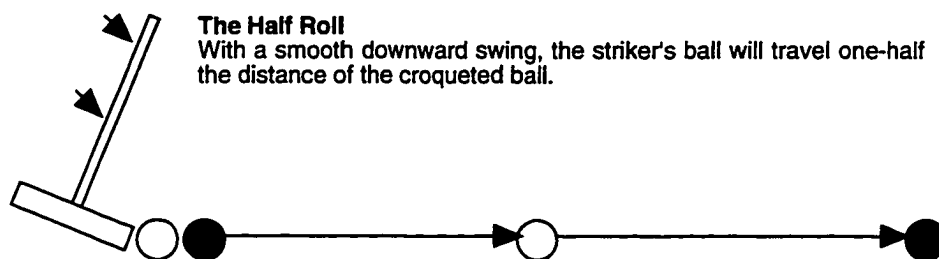


Figure 33. The Half Roll Shot.

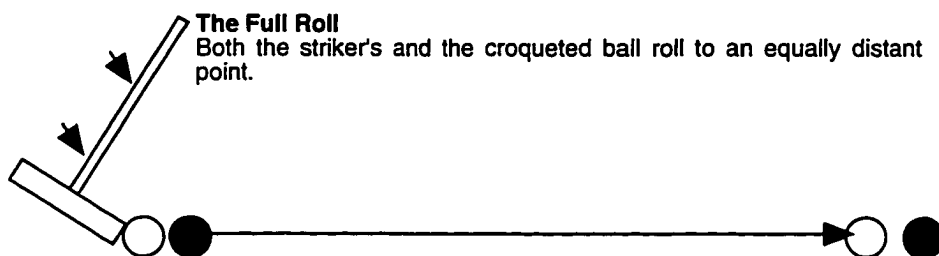


Figure 34. The Full Roll Shot.

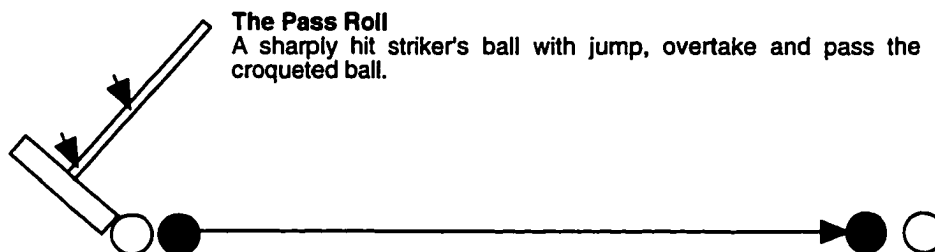


Figure 35. The Pass Roll Shot.

tion the mallet is swung and the angle the mallet strikes the ball with both affecting the spin placed on the balls. One must remember that as the mallet is swung more sharply downward and makes contact with the top of the ball, the striker's ball will travel farther; that is, more top spin is applied to the ball.

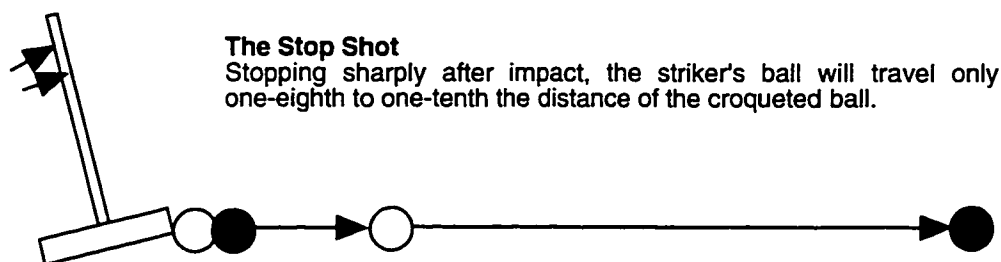


Figure 36. The Stop Shot.

Stop Shot

The stop shot is simply a ball hit with little or no top spin. This enables the striker's ball to travel a limited amount after croqueting another ball. This is accomplished by striking up on the ball with the mallet head inclined upward.

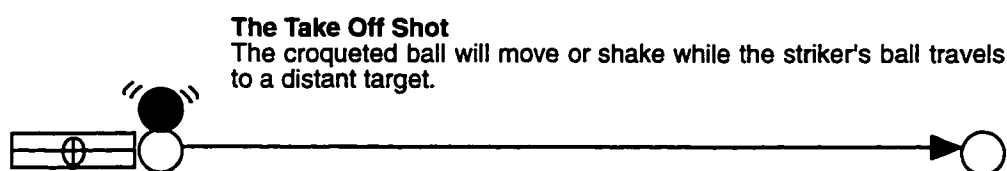


Figure 37. The Take-Off Shot

Take-off Shot

The take-off shot is the opposite of the stop shot. Here, the goal is to barely brush an adjacent ball, earning an extra shot for the roquet, and causing one's ball to travel down the court. This is performed by striking the ball squarely in the center and with the mallet head parallel with the ground. A full follow-through should be used.

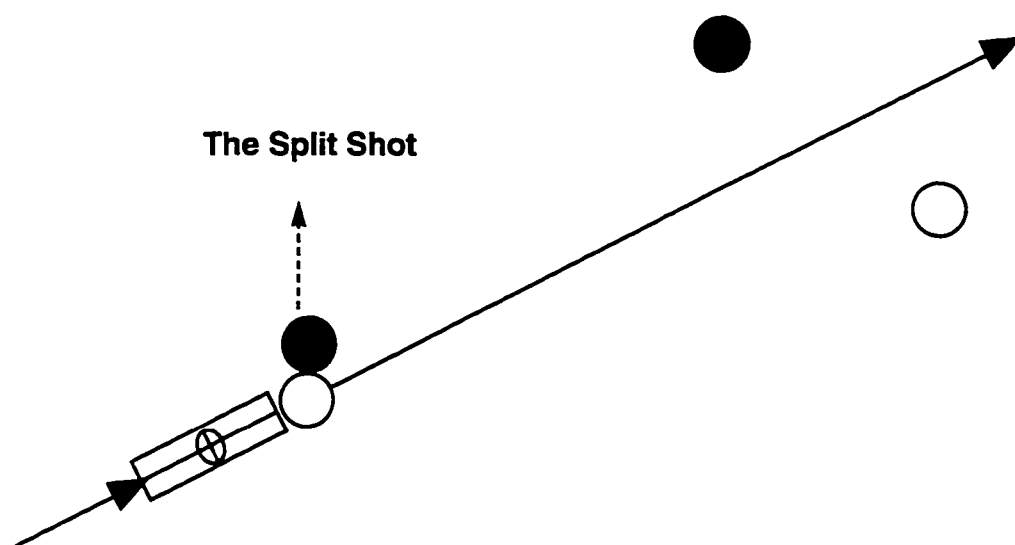


Figure 38. The Split Shot.

Split Shot

The split shot is similar to the cut rush shot in single-shot play except in this shot the balls are actually touching each other. The object of the shot is to send each ball off in different pathways. This is accomplished by striking the ball firmly and squarely applying no spin. The split shot is illustrated below.

*Requirements for Nine-Wicket Croquet**Court Dimensions and Layout:*

The court is 100 feet by 50 feet.

Wickets:

A total of nine wickets are used on the court.

NOTE: All wickets on the court should be of the same dimensions, and the top of the very first wicket should be painted blue.

Stakes:

Stakes must be firmly planted vertically in the ground with 18 inches showing above the ground and painted white with blue, red, black, and yellow bands in descending order.

NOTE: In nine-wicket croquet, two stakes are used with one each on both ends of the court.

Flags:

Four flags, colored blue, red, black, and yellow indicating positions 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively, are used to depict the corners. Flags should be mounted on staffs at least 12 inches in length and placed four inches from the boundary lines.

NOTE: Flags are not boundary lines, but, instead, they are used for judging distance and the flow of the game.

Outline and Dimensions of Nine-Wicket Croquet Court

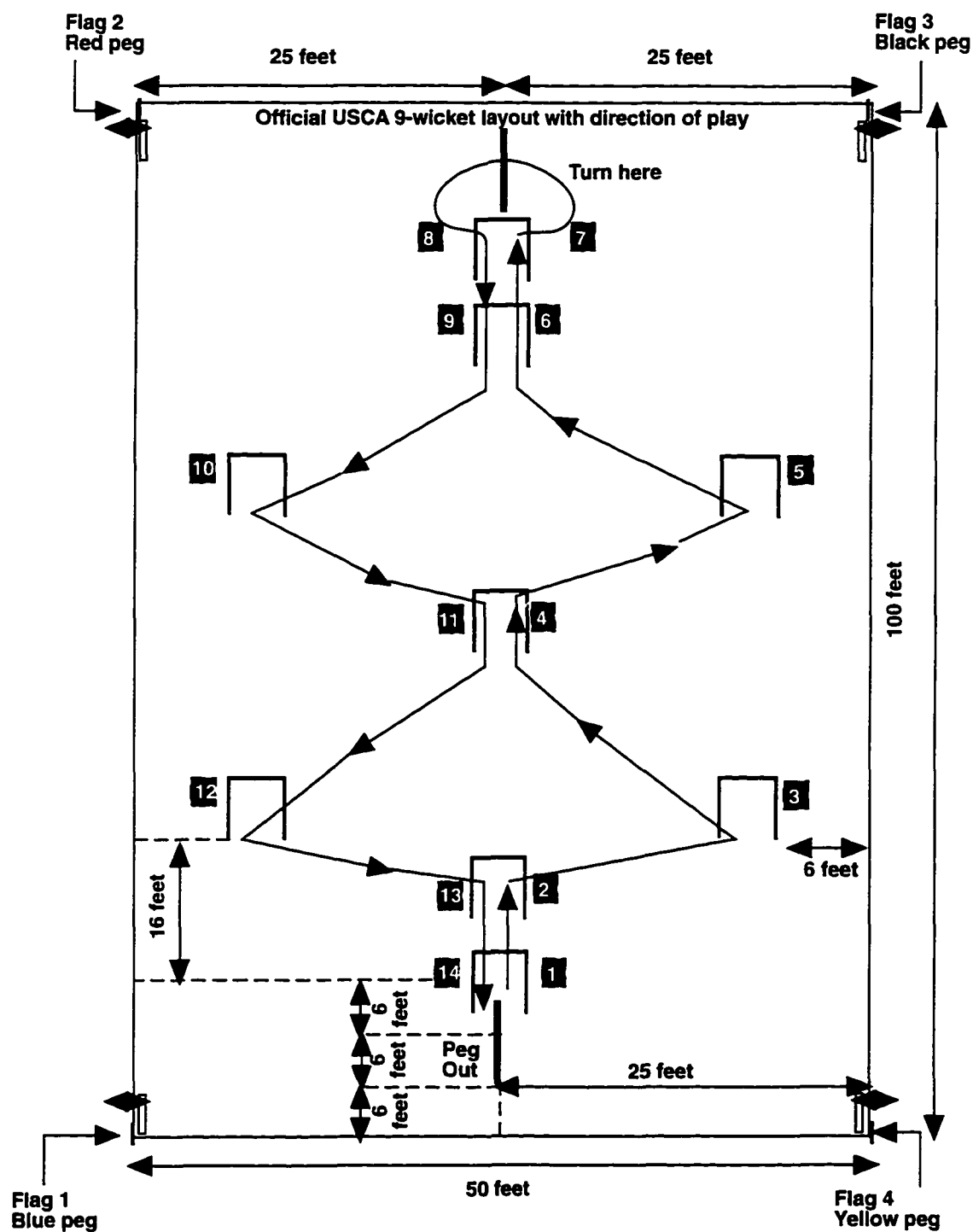


Figure 39. Nine-Wicket Course.

Requirements for Six-Wicket Croquet

Croquet Dimensions and Layout:

The court is 105 feet by 84 feet.

Wickets:

Six wickets are used on the court.

NOTE: All wickets on the court should be of the same dimensions, and the top of the very first wicket should be painted blue.

Stake:

The stake must be firmly planted vertically in the ground with 18 inches showing above the ground and painted white with blue, red, black, and yellow bands in descending order.

NOTE: In six-wicket croquet, one stake is used and is placed in the center of the court.

Flags:

Four flags, colored blue, red, black, and yellow indicating positions 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively, are used to depict the corners. Flags should be mounted on staffs at least 12 inches in length and placed four inches from the boundary lines.

NOTE: Flags are not boundary lines, but, instead, are used for judging distance and the flow of the game.

Outline and Dimensions of Six-Wicket Croquet Court

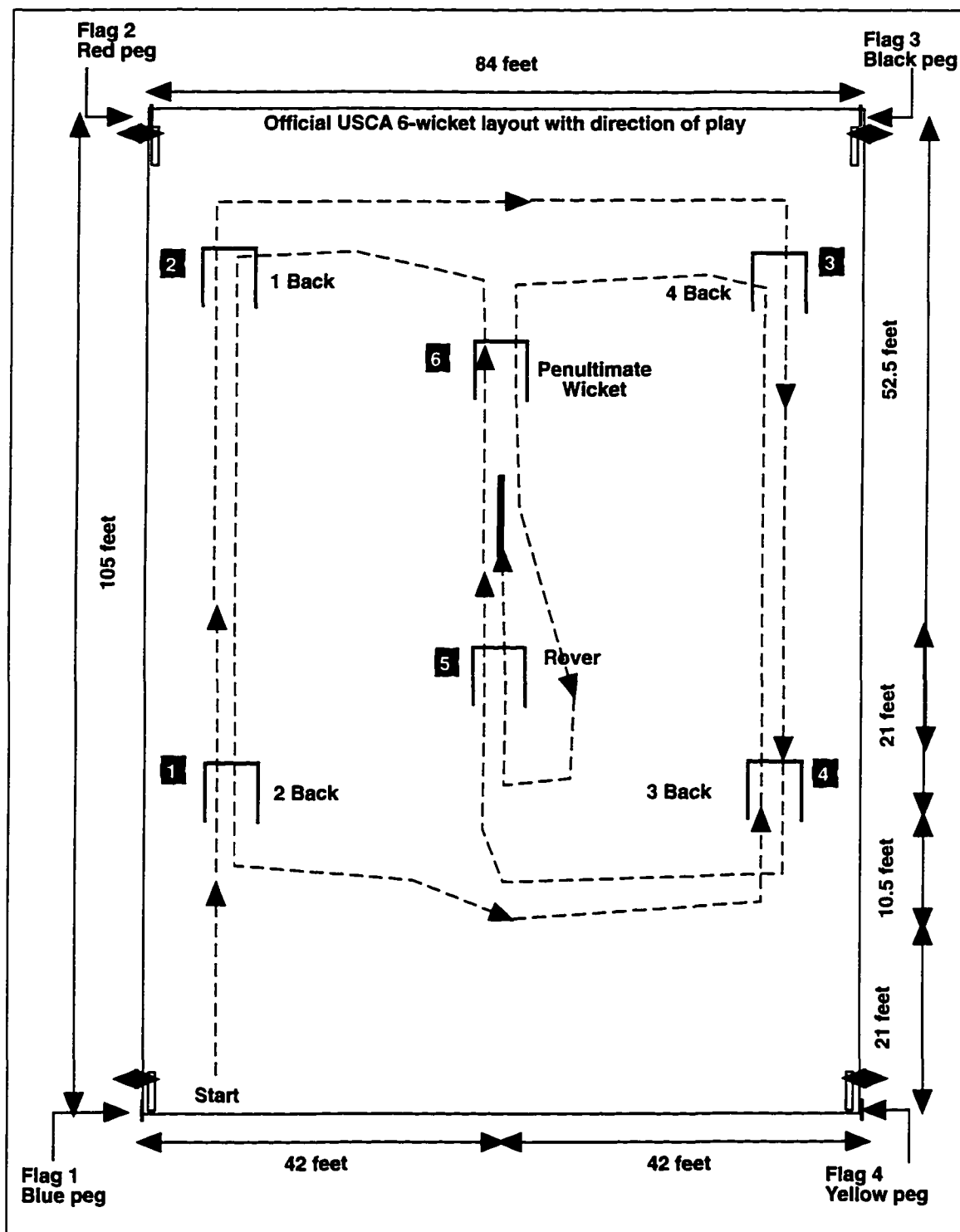


Figure 40. Six-Wicket Course.

Croquet Etiquette and General Rules

Etiquette

Croquet follows strict customs similar to other sophisticated games such as golf and tennis. One must always be courteous to other partners or opponents and respect others' abilities and knowledge of the game.

The following guidelines should always be followed:

- If a conflict arises among players, the rules stand as the final arbitrator.
- When players are on the court, they should **not** molest other players' croquet balls or equipment.
- A player must never interfere with another player when a shot is in progress.
- Players are not to interfere with any boundary lines or strings.
- The corner flags may be moved temporarily to make room for a swing as long as they are replaced promptly.
- Spectators should be quiet and respectful of the players. No comments should be made from the galley except gentle applause after an excellent shot.

General Rules

- Croquet can be played with two, four, or six players as individuals or teams.
- A game of croquet will usually last forty-five minutes to two hours depending on the time limit set.
- A coin toss is the usual method for deciding who initiates play.
- The order of play is usually blue, red, black, yellow.
- The official rule book for collegiate and professional croquet play is *The Official Rules of the United States Croquet Association 1995-1996*. This book is the reference for all American Nine-Wicket Croquet and Six-Wicket Croquet.

Out-of-Bounds

One of the biggest areas of confusion concerns when a ball is officially “out-of-bounds.” A ball is not out-of-bounds until its vertical axis has crossed the boundary line. The following diagram will illustrate if a ball is considered in our out of bounds.

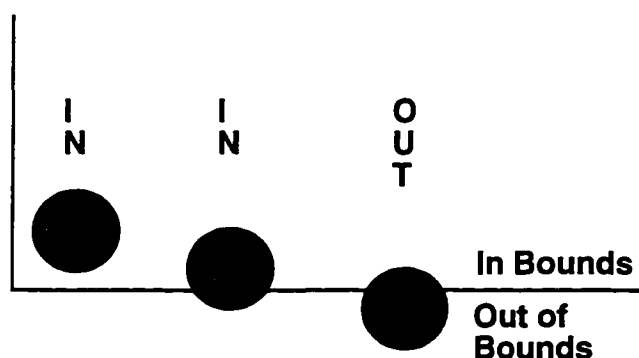


Figure 41. Out-of-Bounds.

Scoring a Wicket

A wicket is scored when a ball passes through the wicket in the proper direction and clears the plane of the non-playing side. The following is an example of a ball scoring a wicket.

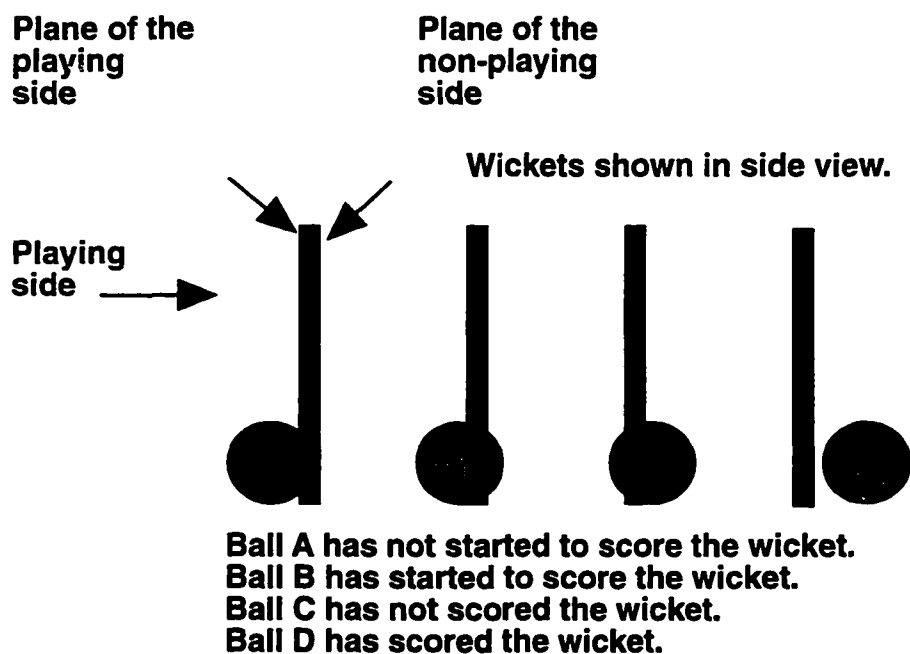


Figure 42. Scoring the Wicket.

CHAPTER 4

GLOSSARY

alive -- When a ball has cleared a wicket and has not roqueted a ball.

all-around break-- Running all the wickets on the court in a single turn.

approach shot -- The approach shot happens when one is trying to line up a shot to go through the wicket.

Aunt Emma -- A conservative and dull player who does not take many chances during the game.

ball-in-hand -- A ball which the striker is allowed to move after a ball has gone out of bounds or made a roquet.

bisque -- This has to do with the handicapping system given to a weaker player giving that player more turns.

break -- A break contains more than one strike using another ball to make several individual wickets.

breakdown -- Making an unusual shot or committing a fault whereby a turn comes to an end.

cannon shot -- A striker's ball drives one ball into another ball.

clearing -- Being alive on all balls by running a wicket.

clips -- Plastic clips the color of balls used to determine which wicket is the next wicket to run.

condoning -- An unclaimed opponent's foul with no penalty on the striker.

continuation shot -- Another shot one makes after running a wicket or after roqueting an opponent's ball.

corner -- The four points where the boundary lines join.

Croquet Association, The -- British governing body of croquet.

croquet stroke (or shot) -- The striker's ball is put into contact with a roqueted ball to make a shot, and, in effect, moving both balls.

cross wire (or peg) -- Putting the opposition ball on the other side of the wicket or peg, and preventing one from scoring.

crush shot -- When a striker's mallet and a striker's ball hit a wicket or stroke at the same time making contact.

cut rush -- A striker's ball roquets a ball whereby the roqueted ball travels off at a desired angle.

deadness -- When a striker has roqueted another ball, that ball cannot be roqueted again until the striker's ball clears the wicket. The player is dead on that ball.

deadness board -- A board to determine what balls are dead on other balls indicating which balls are dead.

double tap -- A striker hits the ball twice in the same stroke thereby committing a fault.

double target -- Two balls so close together that they become an easy target.

drive shot -- A straight drive shot is when the striker's ball and the other ball are hit moving them both in the same direction with the ball that was hit going a much farther distance.

fault -- An unacceptable stroke where penalties are awarded.

hoop -- The English term for a wicket.

jaws -- The entrance between the two uprights of the wicket.

join up -- Leaving your ball close to your partner's ball. This could be dangerous because you would be in line for a double shot by your opponent.

jump shot -- Using a downward motion of the mallet on the lower part of the ball and the ball struck will jump over the ball in front. Usually a jump shot is used to score a wicket.

leave -- The position of the ball after a turn has been completed.

limit of claims -- The amount of time allowed for a fault to be claimed.

nine-wicket croquet -- A popular version of croquet that is played mostly in America and at American colleges. The court is a double diamond with nine wickets and two stakes.

out-of-bounds -- This happens when a ball's vertical axis crosses the boundary line of the court.

pass -- To give up a turn.

pass roll -- The striker's ball will go farther than the croqueted ball.

peel -- A shot where one sends a ball through a wicket other than his own.

peg -- Another term for a stake.

peg out -- When a ball has hit the last peg on the court the ball is "pegged out" and removed from the court.

penultimate -- The last wicket to be scored in a full game.

pioneer ball -- A ball that was sent ahead of the next wicket in a three or four-ball break.

push -- A shot when after initial contact the mallet head still remains in contact with the ball.

roll shots -- A shot where both balls travel the same distance.

roquet -- A shot where the striker's ball hits a live ball, giving the striker another shot.

rover -- A ball that has cleared all the wickets and only needs to hit the final stake to finish the game.

running a wicket -- To make a wicket in the correct order and direction and the striker's ball comes to a rest after clearing the plane of the wicket.

rush -- A roquet shot that propels the roqueted ball to a desired position.

sight line -- A line on top of some mallets to help the striker line up the shot.

smasher -- A hammer-like device with a rubber head to drive wickets into the ground.

split shot -- A shot where both balls go in different directions.

stalking -- The process of lining-up a shot and preparing to swing.

sticky wicket -- A ball that is stuck in the jaws of the wicket or a ball that is having a tricky or difficult approach to the wicket.

stop-shot -- A shot where the striker's ball travels a shorter distance than the croqueted ball.

striker -- A player whose turn it is to hit the ball.

stroke -- Movement by a mallet that moves a ball.

stymie -- A ball that blocks a move by the striker's ball.

take-off shot -- A shot where the striker's ball travels a farther distance than the croqueted ball.

tice -- A shot whereby a ball is in a position for the striker to hit and miss.

time limit -- The amount of time allowed for the game.

USCA -- The United State Croquet Association. The governing body of croquet in America.

waive -- To pass up a turn.

wicket -- The American version of a hoop, which, in croquet, balls pass through.

winter wickets -- Wickets used in the winter time that have more flexible bend and can be used in hard or frozen ground.

wired ball -- A ball which is dead or obstructed by a wicket or stake that a striker cannot hit.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Course Syllabus

I. Course: *Introduction to Croquet*

Instructor: Dr. Mallet Head

Office Location: Croquet Field House

Office Hours: I live at the croquet court.

II. Objectives Of The Course:

A. To assist the player in developing the skills necessary to enjoy participating in the activity.

B. To increase the physical and mental level of the students and encourage them to continue playing croquet as a sport and recreational activity throughout life.

C. To provide the students with the basic knowledge of the rules, sportsmanlike qualities, and a sound foundation of all the beginning aspects of croquet so the game can be played with confidence and competence.

III. Required Text: Introductory Manual and Rule Book

IV. Topics to Be Covered:

A. Review of History of Croquet

B. Croquet Court Layout for Nine and Six Wicket Game

C. Mallets

D. Balls

E. Clips

F. Deadness Board

G. Time of Game

H. Apparel

I. Stances and Grips

J. Shots

K. Proper Court Etiquette and Rule

V. Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend all classes. It is understood that emergencies arise making attendance difficult. It is the instructor's policy that for each **unexcused absence**, after two free absences, you will lose 20 points (up to 200 points).

VI. Evaluation Procedure: The students will be evaluated on the following factors:

- A. Written Exam 100 points
- B. Skills Test 100 points
- C. Class Participation 200 points

VII. Grading Scale

360-400 points	=	A
320-359 points	=	B
280-319 points	=	C
240-279 points	=	D
< 239 points	=	F

*****Please Note: Make up tests will be given only to those who miss a scheduled test because of medically excused illness or university business.**

VII. Dress and Equipment:

- A. Clothing and shoes suitable for croquet should be worn.
- B. Croquet equipment will be provided, but you may bring your own mallet if desired.

Reasonable Accommodation For Students With Disabilities

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