



CORNWALL CROQUET CLUB



ASSOCIATION CROQUET

An introduction for players who already play Golf Croquet

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

- Session 1 Introduction - differences from Golf Croquet
Yard, Baulk and Boundary Lines
Ball Sequence and Start & End of Game
Stroke Sequence and Break play
Roquet, Croquet, Continuation Sequence
Straight Croquet stroke -
Drive,
Stop Shot
Roll Shots
- Split Croquet stroke – an introduction**
Ball Positions after a Croquet Stroke
Notes on “air shots” and accidental hits.
- Session 2 Split Croquet stroke – more detail.
Hoop Approach.
Thin Take-off.
Three Hoop Break using takeoffs.
Use of clips.
- Session 3 **Four-ball break.**
Bisques.
Straight Rush.
Cut Rush.
Rush set-up from yard-line balls.
Rush Lines.
Start of Game example
14-point Game.

Note: Sections in green print indicate exercises on the court.

Session 1

DIFFERENCES FROM GOLF CROQUET

YARD LINE

Imaginary line 1 yard inside inner edge of boundary line

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

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

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

BAULK-LINES

There are 2 baulk-lines, used for starting the game (see below), one is western half of south yard-line (A-baulk); other is eastern half of north yard-line (B-baulk).

BOUNDARY LINE

Out of court balls (see definition later) are replaced on the Yard Line adjacent to where they first crossed the boundary.

HOOPS IN ORDER

Hoops must be run in the specified order, by both balls of a side.

BALL SEQUENCE

There is no strict sequence of ball play.

Blue and Black (BB) always plays against Red and Yellow (RY).

At beginning of a turn (including the start of game) a side may play either ball (i.e. BB side may play either Blue or Black and RY side may play either Red or Yellow).

In doubles, an individual player always strikes the same colour ball.

START and END OF GAME (PEG OUT)

A game starts with a toss of coin.

The side winning the toss can choose either the colours to play with or whether to start first or second. The side losing the toss then chooses whichever option the winner did not.

The first 4 turns of the game must play all 4 balls on to the court from either of the Baulk lines.

The first player to run all hoops with both balls and then strike the Peg with both balls (Peg-out) wins the game.

Session 1

ROQUET, CROQUET and CONTINUATION SEQUENCE

At the beginning of a turn (or after a hoop in order is run), a sequence of strokes described below is attempted by the striker (the “in” player).

Step 1 Roquet – The striker hits his ball with the mallet to collide with one of the other “live” balls (described as a Roquet). When all balls have come to rest, the striker’s ball becomes a “ball in hand” and is picked up by the striker ready for step 2. The roqueted ball is now considered “dead” and cannot be used to take croquet from again until a hoop in order has been run. If the roqueted ball goes off court it is replaced on the yard line adjacent to where it went off.

Step 2 Croquet –The striker’s ball is placed touching the roqueted ball at any point the striker chooses (without changing the position of the roqueted ball) so that when the striker’s ball is hit with the mallet both balls are directed to an advantageous position to continue the break. When all balls have come to rest the striker proceeds with step 3.

Step 3 Continuation – The striker starts the 1, 2, 3 sequence again using one of the two remaining “live” balls (often the closest). *Alternatively*, the striker may run the next hoop in order (ignoring any remaining “live” balls) and all the balls become “live” again and the sequence restarts (after successfully running the hoop).

The 4-ball Break - When the third (and final) live ball has been roqueted & croqueted from, the next stroke (the continuation stroke) must be used to run the next hoop in order. After the next hoop in order has been run, all the other three balls become “live” again and the whole process starts afresh, this time placing the balls to enable the next hoop in order point to be scored.

In this way, it is possible to score all 12 hoops in one turn (a 12-hoop break). This is the essence of Association Croquet.

Remember More than one stroke in a turn.

The Roquet, Croquet, Continuation sequence enables break-building (typically the 4-ball break)

Striker moves on to next hoop-in-order only after that hoop has been run with the striker’s ball.

Practise the Roquet, Croquet, Continuation sequence.

Session 1

THE ROQUET Once stalked and aimed, ignore target ball.
On impact, mallet-head parallel to ground (with follow through).
Stance may be back a little.

CROQUET STROKES can be either **STRAIGHT** where both balls travel along the same line or **SPLIT** where each ball travels along a different line. We discuss straight croquet strokes first where the line of centres of both balls and the line of aim (swing) are all along the same line, before moving on to the extra complications of split shots.

TYPES OF CROQUET STROKE (shared by Straight and Split strokes)

DRIVE Ratio 3:1 or 4:1 (personal).

Normal grip & swing - like one-ball shot.

Balls' line of centres point at target - swing along this line (straight).

Stalk, keep head down, follow-through but don't push (i.e. don't accelerate mallet head after contact with ball).

STOP-SHOT Ratio 6:1 or 7:1 (up to 10:1).

Stance backward by 2 - 6 inches (personal)

- this raises toe of mallet slightly (shaft tilts backwards).

Normal grip (high) - grip may be looser (no swinging).

Ball hit just below centre (using just below centre of mallet face).

No follow through (perhaps ground mallet head at impact).

Timing difficult - avoid stopping/grounding before impact (a stroke).

HALF-ROLL Ratio 2:1

Stance forward (feet just behind balls),

- this raises heel of mallet slightly (shaft tilts forwards a bit).

Grip - hands 1/3 way down shaft.

Ball hit just above centre, with centre of mallet face.

Play centre-style or side-style (personal).

Follow-through but don't push.

FULL-ROLL Ratio 1:1

Stance forward (front foot beside balls),

- this raises heel of mallet (shaft tilts forwards).

Grip - hands 1/2 way down shaft.

Ball hit above centre, with centre of mallet face.

More follow through than half roll (don't push).

Session 1

SPLIT CROQUET STROKES (swing-angle up to 45°)

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

Aim (swing) at a point half way between the intended final positions of both balls (the distance method). If both balls move similar distances the aim is along half the angle but the distance method is required if one ball moves significantly further than the other.

REMEMBER BOTH ARE APPROXIMATIONS.

Use of a more distant aiming point may be helpful.

Straight line-of-aim (no 'shepherding motion').

Avoid wide angles of split if possible.

**Practise split croquet strokes
or perhaps, play Target Croquet, which is more fun 😊**

BALL POSITIONS AFTER A CROQUET STROKE.

If either ball ends up touching or crossing the Boundary Line this is a fault, both balls are replaced on the yard line and the turn ends.

If the croqueted ball ends up in the yard line area, it is replaced on the yard line and the turn continues.

If the striker's ball ends up in the yard line area it is played from where it comes to rest. This is a critical feature of Association Croquet and its use is illustrated in the Yard Line Balls exercise in Session 3.

OFF COURT BALLS *Note difference from Golf Croquet.*

A ball leaves the court as soon as any part of it would touch a straight edge raised vertically from the inside of the boundary line.

AIR SHOTS *Note difference from Golf Croquet.*

When a striker fails to strike a ball this counts as a stroke (unless the swing is not the intended final swing, the striker deliberately stops or diverts the mallet to avoid striking the ball). This is usually obvious to an observer.

ACCIDENTAL HITS *Note difference from Golf Croquet.*

If a striker accidentally hits a ball before a stroke has started the ball is replaced and the striker continues the turn; it is not a fault.

End of session 1

Session 2

SPLIT CROQUET STROKES – more depth

Alter the relative distance travelled by both balls using same technique as for stop shot and roll shots i.e. stand further back to make the strikers ball go less far relative to croqueted ball and vice versa.

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

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

HOOP APPROACH

Roquet – Croquet – Continuation again!

1. Roquet ball in front of hoop.
2. Using the split croquet stroke already learnt, position the croqueted ball just beyond and maybe to the one side of the hoop (to become the reception ball), and the striker's ball (your ball) directly in front of the hoop (ready to run the hoop).
3. Run the hoop – gently with smooth follow-through – this is the Continuation stroke.

If you are feeling playful you could have a little competition to see who can score the most hoops by Roqueting the receptions ball and continuing the process as many times as possible with the same hoop.

THIN TAKE-OFF CROQUET STROKE (Swing-angle over 80°)

Striker's ball usually dominant consideration, moves furthest.

Croqueted ball moves shorter distance or hardly at all (but must move or shake, so you must aim into the croqueted ball a little).

Straight line-of-aim (no ‘shepherding’).

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

Session 2

A THREE HOOP BREAK

1. Place a ball about 5 feet in front of hoop 2 and another about 5 feet in front of hoop 3 (these are called Pioneers).
Place a third ball about a yard in front of hoop 1.
Place your (striker's) ball a short distance south of the third ball.
Place all 4 clips on hoop 1.
2. Roquet the third ball (gently, you don't want the ball to go beyond or too close to the hoop) and, when both balls have stopped rolling, pick up your ball and place it for the croquet stroke as described next.
3. Approach the hoop using Stop-Shot Croquet stroke to place the croqueted ball a yard or two beyond hoop 1 and your ball in front of hoop 1.
4. Run the hoop 1 gently. Remove the clip of same colour as your ball (clip it to your clothing or put it in your pocket).
5. Roquet the ball still near hoop 1 (now called the Reception ball).
6. Take croquet from this ball by doing a thin take-off so that your ball ends up close to the Pioneer ball in front of hoop 2 (sometimes now called a Pilot ball).
7. Roquet the Pilot ball.
8. Repeat the hoop approach and run it as for hoop 1 (steps 2, 3 & 4 above).
9. After running the hoop repeat the roquet and thin take-off sequence as before, this time taking-off to near the pioneer ball in front of hoop 3.
10. Repeat the Roquet, Croquet, Continuation sequence to run hoop 3. Place the clip which you have been carrying on top bar of hoop 4 (to indicate that this is the next hoop-in-order for that ball).

The next session will introduce the 4-ball break, which enables the break to become “continuous”, rather than just a break of 3 hoops as illustrated here. *A continuous 3-ball break is possible but technically more difficult to accomplish.*

End of Session 2

Session 3

THE FOUR-BALL BREAK

1. Place a ball in front of hoop 2 and another near the peg.
Place a ball near and in front of hoop one (the ball at the next hoop in order is often called the Pilot ball) and your ball (the Striker's Ball) near that.
2. Run hoop 1 using Roquet, Croquet, Continuation sequence.
3. Roquet the reception ball after running hoop 1 and croquet that ball to hoop 3 ("the next hoop but one" and this ball is often called a Pioneer) and your ball close to the ball near the peg (we call this the Pivot).
4. Roquet the Pivot gently and take-off to the Pilot ball waiting at hoop 2.
5. Roquet this ball and then approach and run the hoop just like you did for hoop 1.
6. Roquet the reception ball behind hoop 2, repeating the whole process in steps 3-5 above, only going from hoop 2 to hoop 3 this time.
i.e. to place the croqueted ball near hoop 4 (to become the pioneer for "the next hoop but one") and your ball near the pivot, roquet the pivot and proceed via a thin take-off from the Pivot to the Pilot waiting at hoop 3, and then run hoop 3.
7. And so on, from one hoop to the next....

HANDICAPPING and BISQUES

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

The handicapping uses free turns so that when the striker would normally have to end a turn due to failure to maintain the break (e.g. due to fault being committed, failure to score a hoop or a missed a roquet) the striker may then take one of their free turns and continue playing (with the same ball).

Free turns are represented by Bisques (and half bisques) which are sticks of wood stuck into the turf, one for each free turn. When a free turn is used one bisque is removed. Bisques are used to set up a 4-ball break as well as for continuing a failed break. They may also be used defensively.

Session 3

RUSHES

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

Such a stroke is called a “rush”

STRAIGHT RUSHES

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

Remember: where the striker's ball ends up after a roquet does not matter because (when all balls have stopped rolling) it will be picked up ready for the croquet stroke (it is a “ball-in-hand”).

CUT RUSHES

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

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

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

When you aim the centre of your ball at the edge of another ball, the angle of cut will be approximately 30-degrees (This is sometime described as a ‘half-ball’ shot and may act as a point of reference for you).

Again, remember, it does not matter where the strikers ball goes (it becomes a ball-in-hand when the roquet is made and all balls have come to rest).

RUSH LINES

It is often useful to rush a ball towards a position where subsequent shots will be less error prone (easier) and therefore more accurate.

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

Session 3

YARD-LINE BALLS

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

Practise: -

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

Remember to take care that your ball does not touch (or go off) the boundary.

Remember also that your ball does not get replaced on the yard line after the croquet stroke – *this is what this is all about!*

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

14-POINT GAME

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

There are a variety of fun games available which your coach may introduce, to make your practice more interesting.

Session 3 A conventional START OF GAME

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

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

There is a conventional start to the game: -

1. From A-baulk, Player-1 sends ball off East boundary near corner 4.
2. From A-baulk, Player-2 sends his ball near to or off the West boundary a few yards north of corner-1.
(This is known as Tice – intended to tempt Player-1 to shoot at it with his second ball).
3. Player-1 will: -

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

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

4. Player-2 will: -

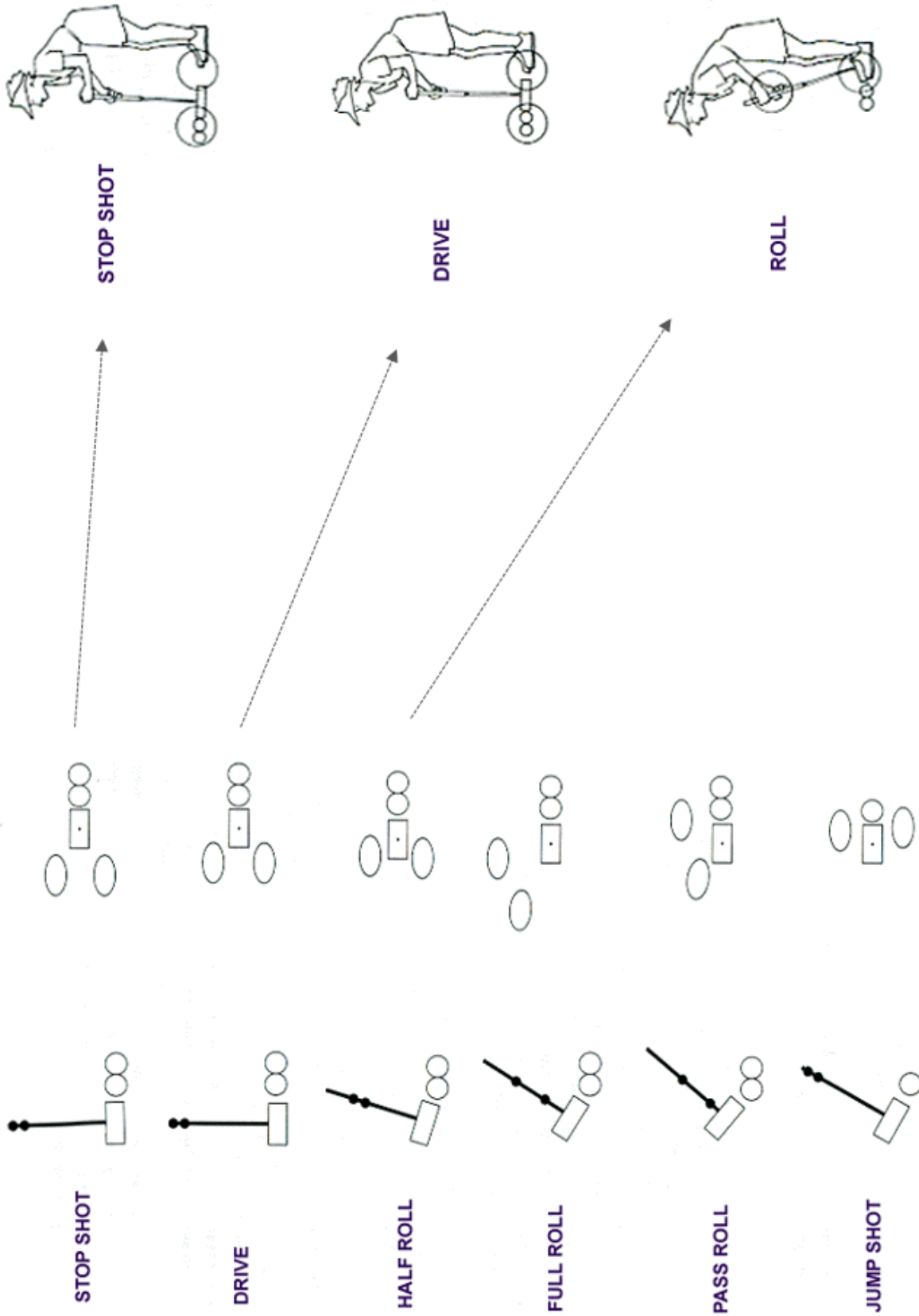
either - If Player-1 aimed at the tice and missed, shoot at the tice from A or B-baulk in such a way that if missed his ball will go off the boundary near to the tice ball (he will have joined up)

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

End of Session 3

CROQUET STROKES

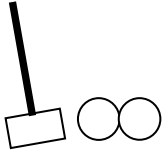
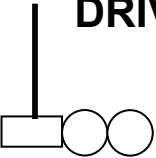
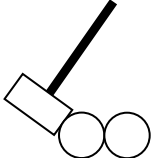
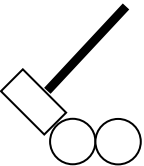
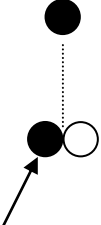
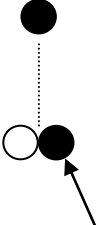
CROQUET SHOTS



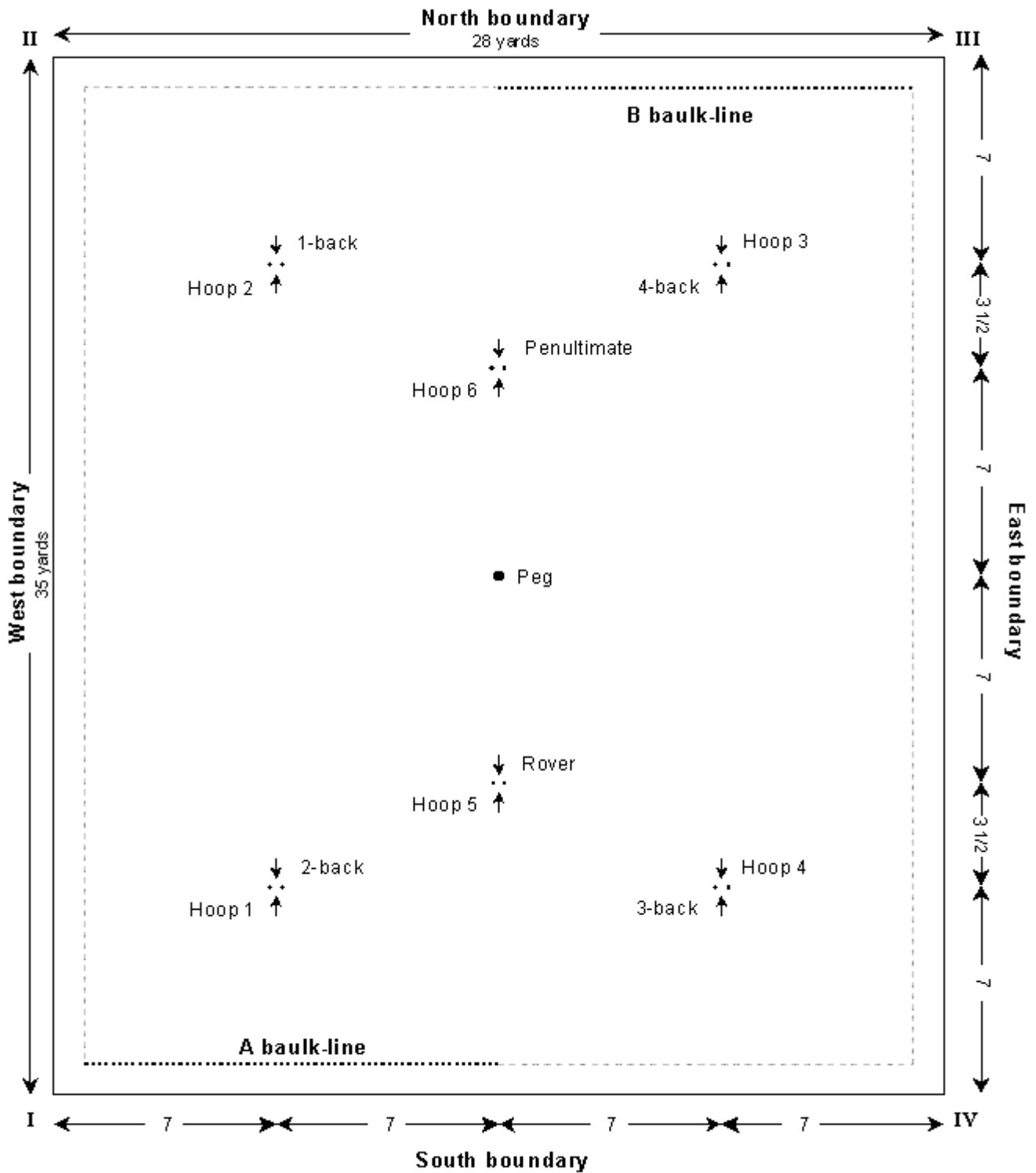
Artwork by John Prince from Play Better Croquet by Geoffrey Naylor.

HANDS & FEET POSITIONS

CROQUET STROKES

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

THE STANDARD COURT



- The corners are depicted by roman numerals.
- The yard-line, indicated by the thin line, and the baulk-lines are not marked on the court.
- All distances are in yards.