

Beginner Croquet Coaching: LESSON 1:

This lesson covers:

Choosing a mallet

The grip

The 5 “S’s”

Running a hoop

CHOOSING A Mallet

Choose a mallet of the right length. When you stand upright, the top of the mallet should reach your wrist bone.

THE GRIP:

photo from www.oxfordcroquet.com



Standard Grip: The shaft is grasped near its top with the knuckles of the upper hand pointing forward and the thumb up. The lower hand supports the back of the shaft with the knuckles pointing backwards and the thumb down.

Hold the mallet gently, not tightly, with the hands touching each other.

The 5 “S’s” of Successful Croquet

STALK

Before you play your shot, start two or three metres behind the ball, and walk forward to it, keeping your eye on the line you want the ball to go. Do this before each shot. This is called ‘stalking’.

STANCE:

Place the mallet just behind the ball. Put your feet behind the back of the mallet, one on each side, with the right foot slightly behind the left. Have your feet pointing in the direction you want the ball to go.

SWING SLOWLY BACK:

Swing the mallet slowly back between the legs and let the mallet start its downward swing without any manual force. Swing from the shoulders.

STAY DOWN:

Keep your head still, and your eyes fixed on the back of the ball until you make contact.

SWEEP THROUGH:

As you sweep the mallet through, try to keep the mallet head parallel to the ground for some 8-10 cms. To do this, you have to allow the arms to swing from the shoulder.

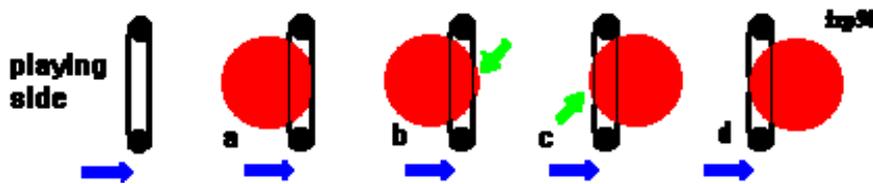
CONTROLLING DISTANCE

In croquet you want to control the direction *and* the distance of your shot. To play a short shot, you use a short backswing. To play a long shot you use a long backswing. Never try to **force** the ball - always use a smooth swing.

RUNNING A HOOP:

Remember the 5 "S's": Stalk, Stance, Swing slowly back, Stay down, Sweep through.

A smooth steady stroke with plenty of sweep through is needed for successful hoop running. A hoop is starting to be run when the front of the ball can be touched by a straight edge raised vertically against the non-playing side of the hoop. A ball completes the running of a hoop when the back of the ball cannot be touched by a straight edge raised vertically against the playing side of the hoop. The diagram below illustrates this.



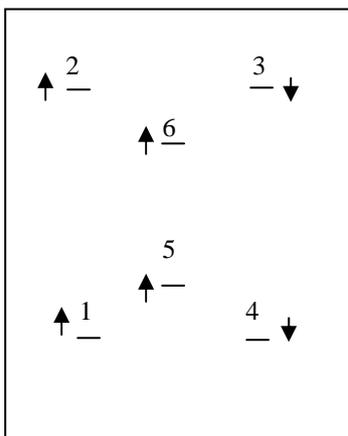
When a hoop is run:

a) the ball has not started running the hoop. b) the ball has started running the hoop. c) the ball has not completed running the hoop, and d) the ball has finished running the hoop.

diagram from www.oxfordcroquet.com

PLAYING CROQUET

The aim of croquet is to go through a series of hoops in the right direction, and in the right order. The diagram below shows the correct order for scoring the first six hoops. The arrows show the direction you must go through the hoop. The first hoop always has a blue top.

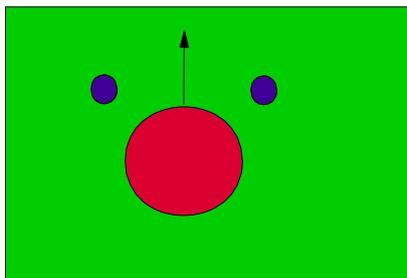


Association Croquet has a rule that if the ball you hit strikes another ball, you get two more strokes. You also get another shot if you go through a hoop. This means that one turn can consist of several shots, and a good player can do several hoops in one turn. Tactics are an important part of croquet, as you plan a sequence of shots.

WARNING:

Croquet in Australia is often played in hot weather. It is important to wear a shady hat, use sun-tan lotion, and drink plenty of water.

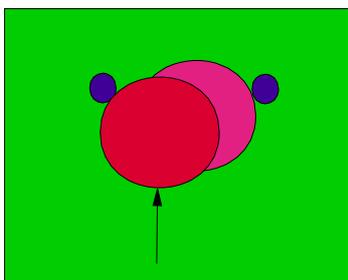
HOW TO MAKE HOOPS



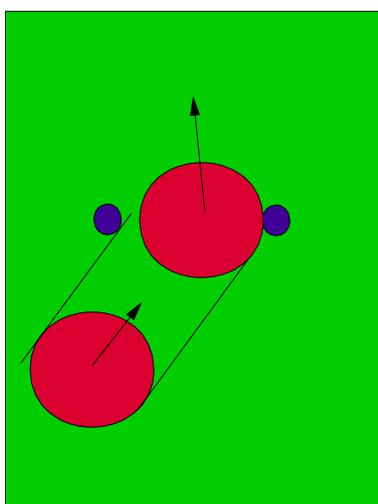
The hoop is only slightly wider than the ball. You need to be accurate to get the ball through.

Always stalk the shot first.

In this diagram, the ball is hit cleanly through the centre of the hoop.



If the ball hits one of the legs, it will only go through if it just glances the leg. In this diagram the ball rebounds onto the other leg and is unlikely to go through the hoop.



If you have to run the hoop at an angle, the main requirement is to miss the near hoop leg. The technique is to bounce off the far leg and go through the hoop.

If the ball is rolling along the ground, it will have forward spin which will help it go through a hoop. If it is skidding along the ground with no forward spin, the shot needs to be much more accurate. This means that you are more likely to make the hoop with a smooth, controlled swing with a good follow-through, than with a hard shot.

