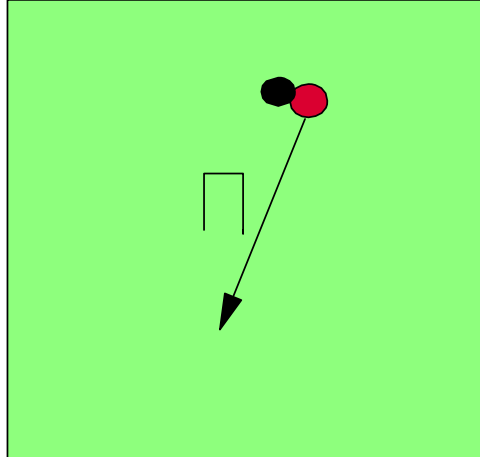
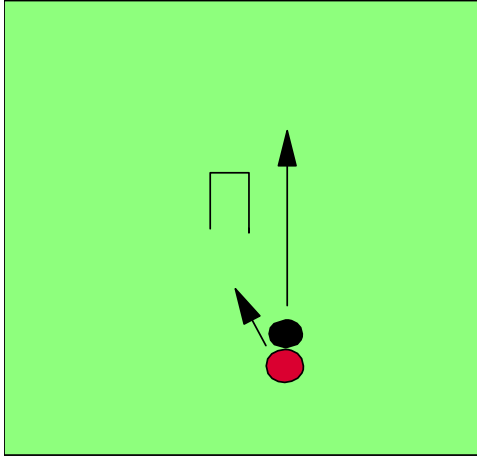


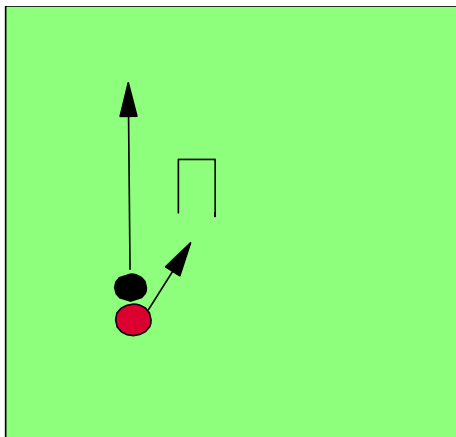
ASSOCIATION CROQUET - BRONZE TACTICS AND PLAY

FIRST LESSON: MAKING HOOPS:

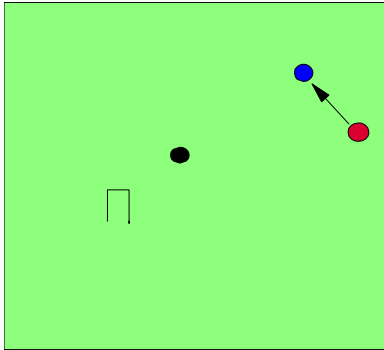
The ideal position to be in when you play your croquet shot is one foot in front of the hoop, and a few inches to one side. Your aim should always be to try and get as close as possible to this point. Another good position is one foot behind the hoop, and a few inches to one side.



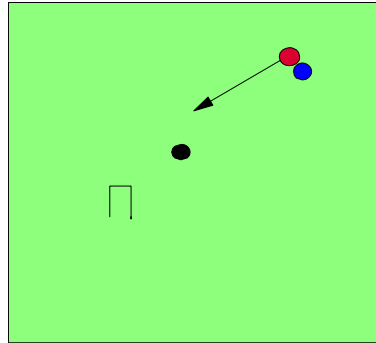
If your next shot is going to be to the left side of the hoop after you have run the hoop, it is better to have your croquet ball on the left side. You can often rush this ball to a more useful place. If you want the croquet ball to go to the left, then the ideal place to play the hoop approach is a foot in front and a few inches to the left. So before you rush the other ball in front of the hoop, you need to think which side you want to play next.



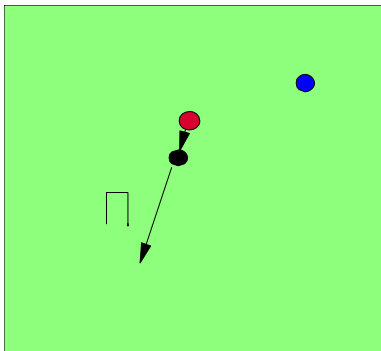
THE THREE-BALL SEQUENCE FOR MAKING A HOOP:



Shot 1: roquet the nearest ball



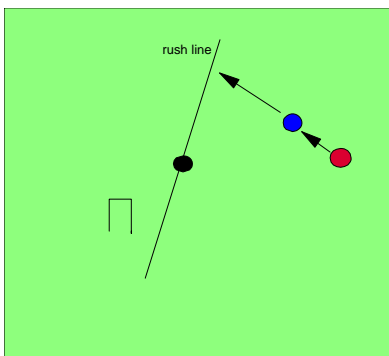
Shot 2: do a take-off to get a good rush on the ball near the hoop



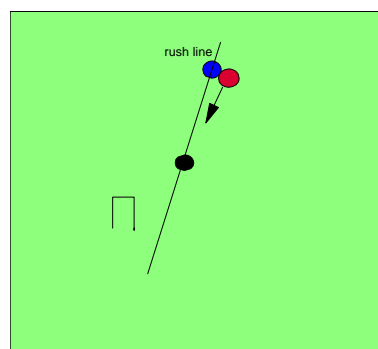
Shot 3: rush the ball to the ideal position in front of the hoop

USING THE RUSH-LINE:

It is easier to get a good rush if you start off in line with the rush you want to make. If you hit the ball a little too short, or a little too long, you still have a straight shot. However, if you do not start in line with the rush, a shot that is too strong or too weak will give you an angled rush, or no rush at all. So it is good tactics to try and put the ball you will take off from in line with the rush. You can often do this by rushing this ball.

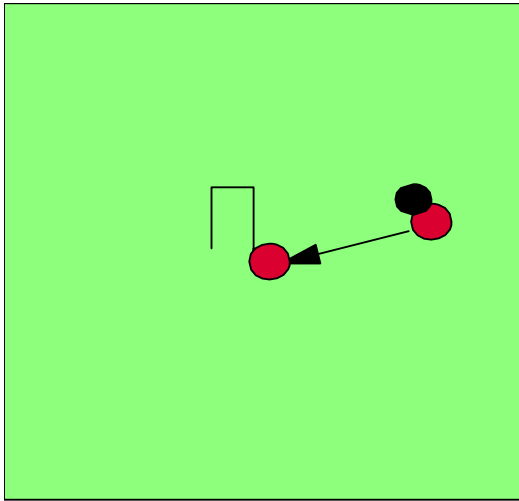


red rushes the blue ball to the rush line of black to the hoop

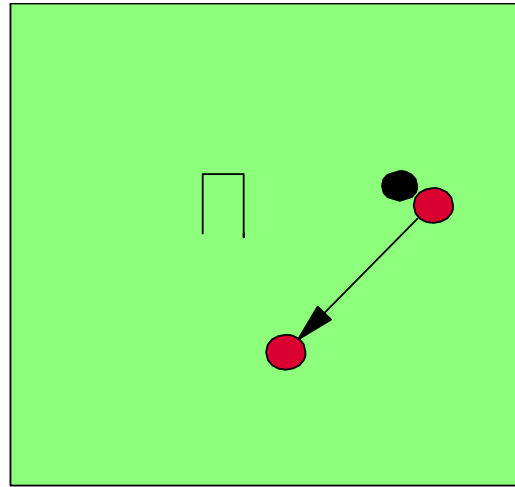


the take-off from blue to get the rush on black is much easier

It is a mistake to try and get your striker's ball too close to the hoop with the croquet shot. If you make a small error, you won't be able to make the hoop. Aim for at least a foot away from the hoop – more if you are playing the shot some distance from the hoop.



In this case you have aimed too close, and you cannot make the hoop with your next shot.



Here, although your shot is not very accurate, you can still make the hoop.

STOP SHOTS

Stop shots are when you play a croquet shot, and you want the croquet ball to go a long way and the striker's ball to go only a short distance. It is one of the most difficult to learn (which is why we don't teach it in the beginner lessons). The key to playing this shot is to avoid following through with the mallet. It is the mallet continuing after hitting the striker's ball which gives impetus to the striker's ball; if we can restrict the follow-through this is minimised. Two techniques are:

1. Tilt the mallet up, and try to ground the back of the mallet head as you hit the ball.
2. Hold the mallet very loosely indeed, so that when it hits the other ball it stops, and is not carried through by the hands.

HAMPERED SHOTS

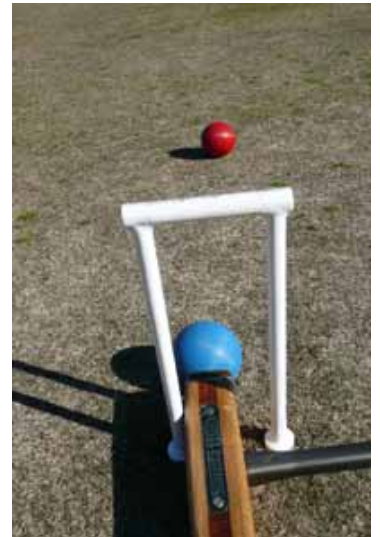
Hampered shots around the hoop (Stephen Howes)

If your ball only just gets through the hoop, making a roquet can be difficult.

If you use an upright mallet, (1), it may twist as it strikes your ball because it hits the ball off centre. Adjust the Line of Swing to allow for that.

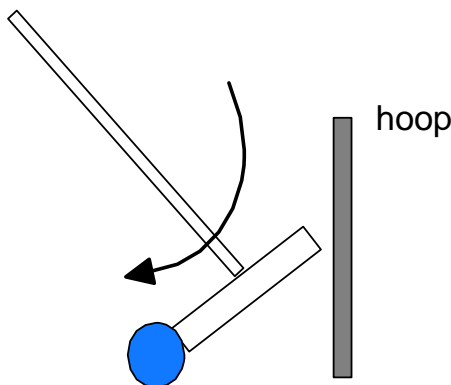
Playing the stroke with the mallet handle horizontal, (2) & (3), can be useful as you can use the leg of the hoop as a guide. Don't let your arm rest on the ground or your knee as that would be a foul shot. And always get the referee to watch a hampered stroke.

As in all aspects of croquet, it only takes practice!

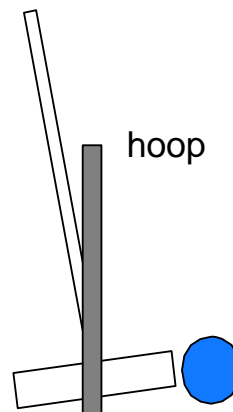


Swivel Shot

If there is little room to swing, one option is to hold the mallet very close to the head (but not touching it – that is a fault), and rotate the head down onto the ball.



swivel shot



hitting through the hoop

Hitting through the hoop

Often the ball is just too far through the hoop for the mallet face to reach it. This can be overcome by tilting the mallet slightly. However, you must ensure that you do not tilt the mallet too much and hit with the bottom edge – that is a fault.