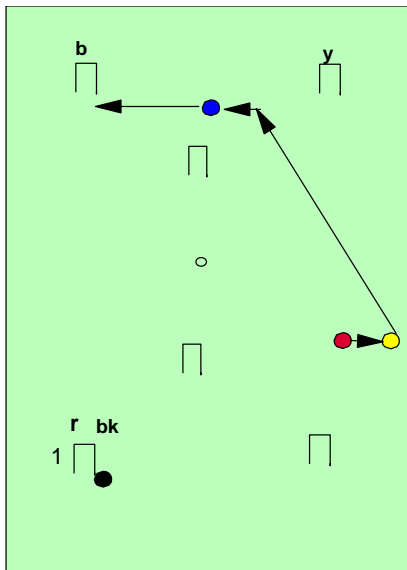


BRONZE TACTICS

LESSON 3

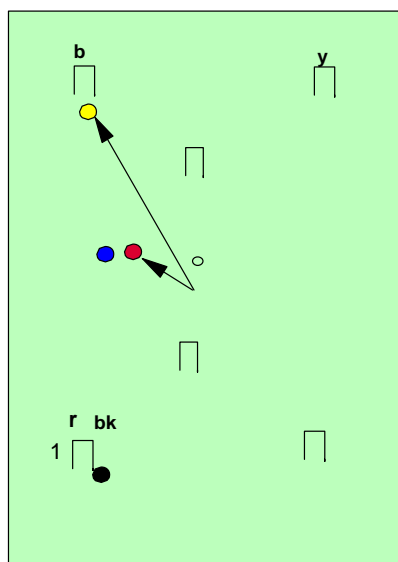
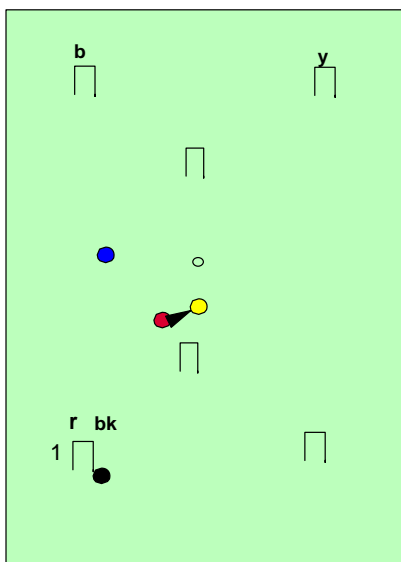
The key to making several hoops is to have a ball at the hoop you are going for, and a ball at the following hoop. It does not matter so much if you don't have a ball in the centre – that can be set up later if required. So the main problem is how to set up balls at the two hoops.

If there is already a ball at the hoop you are aiming for, it is usually easy to organise a ball at the following hoop, providing you can make a roquet, and the other ball is not on the boundary. One way is to make the roquet, then go behind the spare ball and rush it to the required hoop, and then take off to the ball by your current hoop.



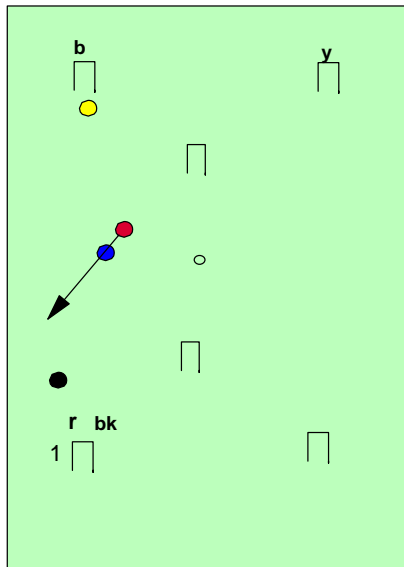
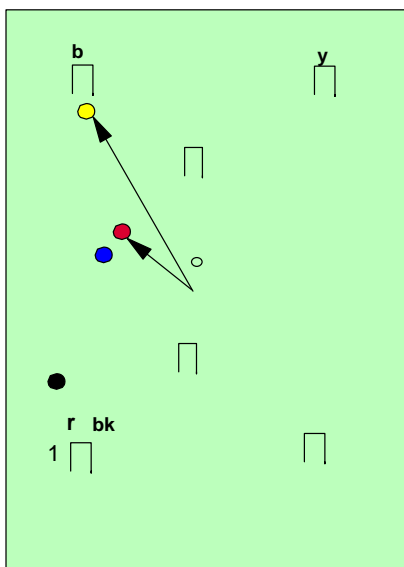
Here, it is the turn of R-Y, and there is an opponent ball beside red's hoop. The aim is to load hoop 2 before making hoop 1 off black. So, roquet yellow, take-off to the right of blue, rush blue to in front of hoop 2, then take off down to the black ball to make hoop 1.

It is usually better to load a hoop using a croquet shot, as this is more accurate, and is more flexible.



Here, red roquets yellow, then plays a croquet shot to load hoop2 while going near blue. It then roquets blue, then takes off to black to make hoop1.

It is more difficult when you do not have a ball at the current hoop, but it is still usually possible to load the following hoop and rush a ball to the current hoop. The art is to organise the croquet shot which loads the following hoop so it gives a rush onto the rush-line of the ball nearest the hoop. In the following diagram, we have a similar situation to the previous example, but the black ball is not at hoop 1. After roqueting yellow with red, we play a croquet shot which loads hoop 2 with yellow and gets a rush on blue towards the black ball.



We now take off from blue (or play a croquet shot putting blue near hoop 5, where it is more useful as a pivot), to get a rush on black to put it behind hoop 1. When we have made hoop 1, we are in a good position to make several more hoops.

RUSHES

The rush is a roquet which sends the roqueted ball to a better position. A good rush is a key requirement of good croquet, and should be practised until it can be done reasonably well.

Some guidelines:

Stalk the line that you are going to swing. Once you have set up the line, ignore the other ball, and play as though you were sending the striker's ball along the swing line.

When the two balls are close, stand a couple of inches further back than normal, and tilt the mallet up slightly. This reduces the chance of hitting down on the ball – which may make it jump slightly, and hit the top of the other ball. The other ball is then likely to go only a short distance, while the striker's ball may go a long way.



(photo courtesy of Ian Plummer, Oxford Croquet Site)

Whenever possible try to set up a straight rush – they are much easier, and there is less chance of missing the ball completely. If you do have to do a 'cut-rush' (i.e. one which sends the roqueted ball off at an angle) you have to strike the other ball off-centre to make it go where you want it.

The diagram below shows the point at which you have to hit the toher ball in order to make it go off at a particular angle.

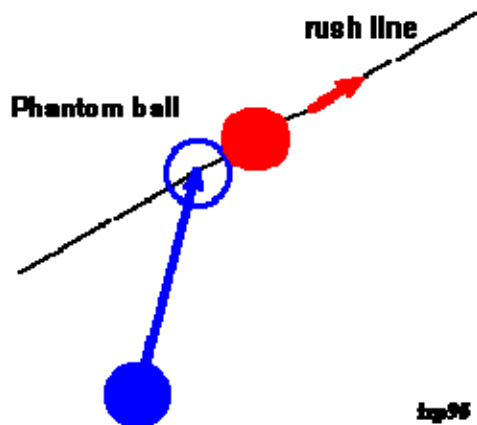
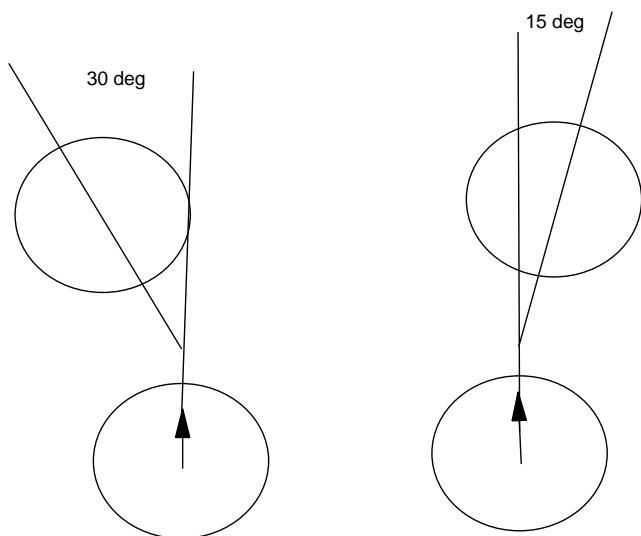


Fig 95 (diagram courtesy of Ian Plummer, Oxford Croquet Site)

It is a mistake to try and cut the other ball too fine – you are likely to miss the ball completely. A sensible approach is to restrict yourself to a few defined rushes, and make sure you can play these and know how far the ball goes with each, and what angle it travels.

I have three basic rushes: the straight rush, the 30 degree rush, and the 15 degree rush. By using one of these three angles, I can get the ball reasonably close to any point that I select.



For the 30 degree angle, aim the centre of the striker's ball at the side of the other ball. For a 15 degree angle, aim the centre of the striker's ball half-way between the centre of the other ball and the outside.