

World Croquet Federation
Rules of Golf Croquet
6th Edition
Detailed comparison with the 5th Edition

GLOSSARY

The following terms have been added for clarity and to save space in the main text.

Annulled

If a stroke is annulled, it is treated as if it had not been played (see Rule 6.3.6).

Body

References to touching or other contact with a player's body include touching or contact with any item worn or carried by the player, other than a mallet.

Hampered stroke

A stroke which requires special care because the swing of the mallet or the player's normal stance is impeded by a hoop or the peg or another ball.

Interference

An irregularity other than an error which need not involve playing a stroke (see Rule 9).

Irregularity

An error or an interference (see Rules 9 to 13).

Jaws

The jaws of a hoop is the space enclosed by and including the inner surfaces of the uprights, the surface created by raising a straight edge touching both hoop uprights on the playing side of the hoop from the ground to the crown of the hoop and the equivalent surface on the non-playing side of the hoop (see Rule 7).

Jump stroke

A stroke in which a player strikes down on a ball in order to make it rise from the court surface.

Match

A contest between two sides consisting of one or more games.

Offside ball

A ball which may be directed by an offside opponent to be next played from a penalty area (see Rule 8).

Outside agency

An agency that may not lawfully affect play (see Rule 4.1).

Partner ball

The ball of the striker's side that is not the striker's ball.

Replaced

A ball moved by a stroke that is directed to be "replaced" is replaced in the position it occupied before the stroke was played unless the relevant rule directs otherwise.

Start area

Any position on the court within one yard of corner IV or within an adjacent area determined by the organising body.

RULES – TEXTUAL AMENDMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

There is no change to the way GC is generally played. The text has been amended where appropriate to incorporate Official Rulings, to improve clarity and ease of use and, where appropriate, to increase alignment with the AC Laws. Rule 10 (Playing a wrong ball) has been simplified, shortened and re-organised to make it easier to use. Rules 19 (Time-limited games) and 21 (Advantage play) are new. There are a small number of minor changes of substance in relation to unusual events.

The text has been improved and shortened by deleting unnecessary words where possible. “By” has been substituted for “as a result of” and “replaced” (which is now a Glossary term) means “replaced in the positions they occupied at the end of the stroke” unless the relevant rule directs otherwise. “Valid” and “invalid” have been replaced by “lawful” and “unlawful”.

All references to “tournament and match play” have been replaced by “tournament and team play” to avoid confusion with the use of “match” in Rule 1.5 to mean a contest of a stated number of games.

Rule 1 (Outline of the game)

The reference in Rule 1.4.1 (5th) to playing to a two-point advantage has been replaced by a new Rule 1.4.3 which gives a more general authorisation for organising bodies to use alternative methods of ending a game.

Rule 1.5.2 has been added to cover “best of two” matches which are a popular format.

Rule 2 (The court)

No non-cosmetic change.

Rule 3 (Equipment)

No non-cosmetic change.

Rule 4 (Outside agencies and accessories)

Rule 4.1.3 has been replaced by a reference to Rule 6.4 instead of repeating Rule 6.4.1.

A new Rule 4.1.4 has been added to cover the treatment of a player’s body and mallet as an outside agency in certain circumstances.

Rule 5 (The start)

Rule 5.1 is the subject to a Consultation Question.

Rule 5.3 now refers only to faults in the first four turns of the game instead of more generally to errors because Rule 10 (Playing a wrong ball) no longer has special rules for playing a wrong ball in the first four turns.

Rule 5.4.3 recognises the popular “match of two games” format and permits the alternation of the toss.

Rule 6 (The turn, striking period and stroke)

Rule 6.1.4: the reference to Rule 8.4.5 has been deleted because it is not the only reason for a replay.

Rule 6.3.6 has been added to state the consequences of annulling a stroke.

Rules 6.4 and 6.5 have been exchanged so that the definition of a ball as an outside agency appears in Rule 6.4 before the term is used in the later sub-rules of Rule 6.

Rule 6.5 has been amended to incorporate OR 6.4.4 and provides a more comprehensive treatment of the positions of balls.

Rule 6.5.6 now requires a ball that is an outside agency and has been left on the court which is affected by subsequent play is to be replaced in its lawful position before it is next played. This is most likely to apply to a ball hit accidentally after it has been directed to a penalty area (but has not yet been removed from the court) or to a ball marked and temporarily moved to avoid interference with a double-banked game.

Rule 6.7 has been clarified to incorporate the effect of OR 6.7.

Rule 7 (Scoring a point)

Rules 7.2 to 7.7 adopt the approach used in AC Law 20 (Hoop point) and replace Rules 7.2 and 7.3 (5th). However, Rule 7.4 recognises that scoring a point in GC changes the hoop in order for all four balls.

Rule 7.9 (Hoop run or competed for out of order) amends Rule 7.5 (5th) by directing that play continues in sequence if a player discovers that the sides are competing for or have run a hoop out of order. If any hoops have been run out of order, the score is to be corrected. However, if a referee observes that the players are competing for a hoop out of order, Rule 15.4 allows them to intervene and save time.

Rule 8 (Offside balls)

Rule 8.1 has been amended to remove some minor logical errors.

Rule 8.2 has been amended to state when a ball becomes and ceases to be an offside ball and to deal with interference with a ball on or close to a half-way line.

Rule 8.3 has been amended to explain more clearly when a ball that is beyond the half-way line is not subject to a direction to a penalty area. This involves separating:

- (1) a ball already directed to a penalty area; and
- (2) a ball that is exempt for reasons connected with how it reached its position.

The exceptions to the exemptions have been expanded to incorporate OR 8.3 and the commission of a fault.

Rule 8.4.1 (5th) has been replaced by Glossary entries.

Rule 8.4.1 (Rule 8.4.2 (5th)) has been amended by replacing “Before” by “Until” to clarify when the right to give a direction ends.

Rule 9 (Interference)

Rule 9.1.2(b) now treats lifting a ball to prevent interference (previously covered in Rule 9.2.2(b)) as a permitted form of deliberate interference.

Rule 9.2 has been re-organised to increase clarity and ease of use.

Rule 9.4.3 (maintaining distance between two balls after one has been moved to avoid interference) has been amended to permit the movement of another ball that might be affected by the stroke.

Rule 9.5 (Interference by defective equipment) has been re-organised and amended to incorporate OR 9.5.4 and OR 9.5.5.

Rule 10 (Playing a wrong ball)

Rule 10 has been shortened and re-organised with the intention of making it easier to understand and use. Rules 10.5.1 (5th) and 10.5.3 (5th) have been deleted as unnecessary so that there are now only three classes of wrong ball, namely:

- (a) playing when not entitled – this was previously “same side played successive strokes” covered by Rule 10.6 (5th). It is now Rule 10.3 which is simpler, shorter and more comprehensive.
- (b) previous stroke played with opponent ball: this was previously Rule 10.5.4 and is now Rule 10.4.
- (c) wrong ball played by striker’s side: this was previously covered by Rules 10.3 and 10.4 and is now covered by Rule 10.5 which deals with all aspects of what is the most common class of wrong ball. Rule 10.5 is subject to a Consultation Question.

Rule 10.1 has been shortened.

Rule 10.1.1 now defines a wrong ball as occurring whenever Rule 10.3 to 10.5 apply which is more succinct than the 10.1.1 (5th) wording which needs to be subject to the exceptions in 10.1.5 (5th). Rules 10.1.2 and 10.1.3 (5th) deal with forestalling which has been moved to Rule 10.2 and explained more comprehensively. Rule 10.1.4 (5th) has been deleted because the meaning of previous stroke is already explained in the Glossary. Rule 10.1.5 has been deleted completely because it is rendered unnecessary by the re-organisation.

Rule 10.1.2 is now the home for the special case of “exchange of colours in the first four turns of the game” previously covered by Rule 10.5.2 (5th).

Rule 10.2 (5th) (“status of earlier strokes”) is now Rule 10.6 and re-titled as “status of earlier strokes and points”. It now covers all three classes of wrong ball.

Rule 10.7 sets out the treatment of a stroke which involves both a wrong ball of any type and a fault.

Rule 11 (Faults)

Rule 11.1 has been simplified and made subject to Rule 6.3.6 (annulment).

Rule 11.4.4 is now subject to Rule 10.7. This means that, if the striker’s side plays a wrong ball and commits a fault in the same stroke, the fault is remedied and play continues by the non-offending side playing the ball next in sequence after the ball that should have been played in the last stroke.

Rule 12 (Overlapping play)

No non-cosmetic change.

Rule 13 (Playing when forestalled)

The remedy is now expressed as annulment.

Rule 14 (Information, advice and use of markers)

Rule 14.1: references in the text to the use of time-limited games and handicap play have been replaced by signposts.

Rule 15 (Refereeing)

Rule 15 has been re-organised to improve its logic and clarity.

Rule 15.1 (Referees involved in a game) now contains only Rule 15.1.1 (5th) and 15.1.2 (5th) which has been amended to refer to the WCF Refereeing Regulations and so removes the need for Rule 15.2 (5th).

Rules 15.1.3 and 15.1.4 have been moved to Rule 15.2 and Rule 15.1.5 to Rule 16.1.2.

Rule 15.2 (Observing strokes and testing ball positions) now contains Rules 15.1.3 (5th) and 15.1.4 (5th) and a new Rule 15.2.3 which requires a player to consult before conducting a test (other than an unaided ocular test) whether a ball has scored a point or is in position to do so).

Rule 15.3 (Impasses) is a new rule which reflects current practice.

Rule 15.4 (Hoop contested or run out of order) is a new rule that gives a referee the power to save time by intervening if they observe that the sides are contesting a hoop out of order. The remedy is a penalty area continuation.

Rule 15.5 (Overriding rule) replaces Rule 15.3 (5th).

Rule 16 (Behaviour)

Rule 16.1 has been divided into Rule 16.1.1 (which replaces Rule 16.1 (5th)) and Rule 16.1.2 which now accommodates the requirement to warn before playing a forceful stroke (previously in Rule 15.1.5 (5th)) which has been expanded to include other players and spectators.

Rule 16.3.3: the reference in the text to time-limited games has been replaced by a signpost.

Rule 16.4.4: a Referee in Charge can now refer a serious breach of Rule 16.1 to the Tournament Referee for possible disqualification.

Rule 16.5.3: this permits the Tournament Referee to intervene in a match without a Referee in Charge and disqualify a player for a serious breach of Rule 16.1.

Rule 17 (Penalty area and penalty area continuation)

Rule 17 replaces Rule 18 (5th). It has been moved ahead of Rule 17 (5th) in the Rules so that Rules 1 to 17 now deal with the standard game of single-banked, untimed level play and Rules 18 to 21 deal with the major variants of double-banking, time-limit, handicap play and advantage play.

Rule 17.1.2 is a new rule which confirms that if a ball is played from a penalty area under Rule 8.4 and then is replaced because of an irregularity, it may be played from any point in the penalty area when it is next played.

Rule 18 (Alternative colours and double-banking)

Rule 18.1 replaces Rule 17.1 (5th) and confirms that a single-banked game played with alternative colours is lawful.

Rule 18.2 replaces Rule 17.2 (5th) with improved wording.

Rule 17.3 (5th) (relief when one double-banked timed game is held up by the other game) is replaced with a signpost to Rule 19.4.5.

Rule 19 (Time-limited games)

Rule 19 is a new rule which reflects the incorporation of the equivalent Law 61 in the new AC Laws. It reflects standard practice and will apply in all WCF Events if needed. It provides a default approach for all other events but is not obligatory and can be varied or replaced by organising bodies.

Rule 20 (Handicap play)

Rule 20 replaces Rule 19 (5th).

Rules 20.1 to 20.3 replace Rules 19.1 (5th) to 19.3 (5th) with only cosmetic amendment.

Rules 20.4 to 20.6 replace Rule 19.6 (5th), 19.4 (5th) and 19.5 (5th) respectively to achieve a more logical order.

Rule 20.5 (When an extra stroke may be played)

Rule 20.5.1 combines Rule 19.4.1 (5th) and 19.4.3 (5th).

Rule 20.5.2 replaces Rule 19.4.2 (5th).

Rule 20.5.3 is new and deals with the case when a player plays an extra stroke when they do not have one. The unlawful stroke is annulled if discovered before the opposing side plays a stroke and treated as lawful if it is not so discovered.

Rule 20.6 (Communication with the opposing side)

Rule 20.6.1 replaces Rule 19.6.1 (5th) and has been amended to give more practical guidance by deleting “immediately” and adding a requirement that the warning must be given before the opposing side plays a stroke.

Rule 20.6.2 now deals with the case where the receiver’s opponent ignores a warning under Rule 20.6.1 and plays a stroke. The stroke is annulled rather than being referred to Rule 13 which has the same effect.

Rule 20.7 (After a wrong ball)

Rule 20.7.1 replaces Rule 19.7.1 (5th) and has been amended to make it clearer that the ability to play an extra stroke after playing a wrong ball depends on Replace and Replay first being chosen or applied.

Rule 20.7.2 replaces Rules 19.7.2 (5th) and 19.7.3 (5th) with improved wording and using annulment as the remedy when an extra stroke is played unlawfully.

Rule 20.8 (After a fault)

Rule 20.8 has been aligned with AC Law 42.8 so that Rule 11 applies in full when a receiver commits a fault. This removes any incentive for a receiver to admit a fault untruthfully after scoring a point for the opposing side. However, in consequence, a receiver is now entitled to wait until after the non-offender has decided whether or not the balls should be replaced before deciding whether or not to play an extra stroke

Rule 20.9 (Hoop contested or run out of order) replaces Rule 7.5.4 (5th) and confirms that an extra stroke played when contesting a hoop out of order is restored.

Rule 20.10 (Information requested by the opposing side) is a signpost target of Rule 14.1.1 and replaces the text in Rule 14.1.1 (5th) so that the number of extra strokes remaining in a game is a legitimate subject of enquiry under Rule 14.1.1.

Rule 20.11 (After incorrect information) replaces Rule 19.9 (5th). This permits the restoration of extra strokes played during play which is subsequently cancelled under Rule 14.1.2.

Rule 20.12 (Time-limited games). This explains when extra strokes may be played after time has expired and refers to the relevant sub-rules of Rule 19.

Rule 21

Rule 21 is a new rule which adds Advantage GC as an official variant of Golf Croquet. Advantage play serves the same purpose as handicap play, namely to enable players of different playing abilities to compete against each other with more equal chances of winning, but achieves this object by altering the starting scores for each player. Extra strokes are not used and the tactics of the game are the same as for level Golf Croquet. Advantage GC has been officially trialled in 2021 and received sufficiently positive reviews to indicate that it should have a future as an authorised variant. However, the trial has also shown a need to make adjustments to the starting scores for large handicap or grade differences and to provide improvements in the means of recording the score. The present Rule 21 should therefore be regarded primarily as a placeholder in the Consultation Draft.

Appendices

Appendix 1

This is new and summarises the rulings to be given in uncertain situations, thereby serving the same function as Table 1 of the AC Laws 7th Edition.

Appendix 2 (tolerances and metric equivalents) replaces Appendix 1 (5th) without amendment.

Appendix 3 (tables of extra strokes in handicap play) replaces Appendix 2 (5th) without amendment.

Appendix 4 is new and will provide a table of starting scores for all handicap or grade combinations in advantage play.