



Croquet Matters

June 2013

This month in Croquet Matters

This month we announce players for the inaugural Golf Croquet Selectors' A v B match, introduce the expanded Tier classification for CNZ tournaments, and catch up with Chris Clarke who has been introducing Golf Croquet players to Association Croquet. We have a go at the high-speed game of One-Ball Croquet, and we catch up with Super-Advanced Association croquet in England. The coaches' corner has key tips and cues for playing full rolls. Looking ahead, we preview a MAGAK event.

From the Exec

There was no Executive meeting in June, however the Executive members have been working on projects in their areas of responsibility.

For example:

Brian Monckton has been working with Australia on recognition of umpiring and refereeing qualifications between the two countries.

Bill Dyall is working on the upgrading of the green prescription pamphlet to help it "jump out at people".

Baubre Murray is working with the Executive Director to finalise Croquet New Zealand's

financial accounts as at 30 June 2013 and get ready for the auditor's visit in August.

Lester O'Brien is updating the tournament regulations after some wording changes were agreed at the recent Tournament Committee meeting.

Phillip Drew has been involved in the organisation of the GC A vs B match in September. Players selected for the inaugural A vs B match are: Chris Clarke, Duncan Dixon, Hamish McIntosh, Phillip Drew, Jared Keeman, Tony Stephens, Sean Foster, Jarrod Coutts, Jenny Clarke, Erica Stephens, Dallas Cooke, Laura Whittaker, Phyllis Young, Ashley Cooke, Sonya Sedgwick and Kathie Grant. This event will be played over the weekend of the 21st and 22nd September at Mt Maunganui and should be a great event for spectators.

Thanks to all the clubs and associations who have sent in information for the yearbook and the AGM - keep it coming!

Remember to send in your nominations for the AGM awards (Player of the Year, Most improved AC and GC player, Volunteer of the Year). Please reward those who deserve recognition by nominating them.

The nomination deadline is 31st July.

Sport Development Officer - A Southern Visit

Keeping warm in winter is always a challenge, and between snow storms your SDO has been out and about in Canterbury and Timaru meeting with Sports Coordinators, Green Prescription providers and even fit in a bit of coaching, challenging players to achieve Bronze and Silver merit awards.

Green Prescription programs are administered by the Regional Sports Trusts (excluding Sport Wellington's Wairarapa branch and Sport Tasman). The program is funded by the Ministry of Health and it supports people to lead active healthy lives. Most sports trusts provide Green Prescription 'have-a-go' programs for referrals - usually from a local GP or health provider - which your club or association can get involved in. Green Prescription Have-A-Go programs are usually concurrent with 'school terms' which means croquet is an ideal option for Trusts to add to their term 4 and term 1 programs. Two or three clubs within your association, running one Green Prescription session each per term is an ideal proposal for your Regional Sports Trust and is not too onerous for the club to run.

The CNZ green Prescription brochure can be updated to suit your local requirements, so if you are talking to your Regional Sports Trust about Green Prescription, please give me a call.

Three targeted regions for youth development in the next season have become four with the addition of the Auckland Association and a meeting with Auckland's School Sports Coordinators in August. Our four confirmed regions for the 2013/14 season are South Canterbury, Manawatu, Taranaki and Auckland.

The regional youth development program includes school-age croquet workshops, self-nominated development squads and regional

competition, providing school sports coordinators with opportunities for increased student participation and school representation. Many thanks to everyone who has assisted in bringing this extensive program together, and for providing these opportunities for school students.

Our junior Youth Squad will meet at the United Croquet Club in Christchurch on 3rd - 7th October. Most squad members will also be playing in the CNZ Gold and Silver Stars event during that period. The opportunity to 'talent scout' at last season's secondary schools event means a potential increase of squad members this season and I am very keen to hear from anyone in Christchurch that would be willing to billet a young squad member... or even two!

Attached to this month's Croquet matters is a 'Sportsground' pamphlet. As was mentioned last month, Sportsground is a well-designed, easy to use, free website facility. If you don't already have one, logon to [Sportsground.co.nz](http://www.sportsground.co.nz) and have some fun building a website over the winter months. The South Canterbury Association has an informative Sportsground website which is a good example...

<http://www.sportsground.co.nz/sccroquet>

I would appreciate hearing of any news or developments taking place, and if any assistance is required, please ask. I can be contacted at the CNZ office by email, admin@croquet.org.nz or by phone (04) 916 0258.

CNZ AC and GC Tournament Tier Classification Extended

A tier system was introduced for the 2012-2013 season to provide a standard measurement of lawn speed that would assist hosts and CNZ to

deliver tournament playing conditions that are appropriate for the event.

A description of how to test lawn speed is available in Appendix 4 of the CNZ Yearbook.

The classification system has been reviewed in the break and upgraded to include specifications for hoop setting.

The tiers of tournaments are:

Association Croquet	Golf Croquet
Tier 1: NZ Open Selector's A vs B CA Silver Tray Invitation	Tier 1: GC Nationals Selector's A vs B North Island/South Island Grade Champs YY/DD/GS invites
Tier 2: North Island/South Island Champs Premier Silver Badge Women's Invitation Men's and Women's Championships Edwina Thompson Invitation Roger Murfitt Invitation	Tier 2: Gold & Silver Stars Veterans NZ Sec Schools
Tier 3: Gold & Silver Mallets Veterans 0-3/4+ Silver & Bronze Medals Arthur Ross Final Copper Tray Invitation Gold Cup Invitation	

Conditions for both codes for each tier are:

AC Tier 1:	Requirement for host clubs to reliably provide lawn speed of 11+ seconds, rigid hoops set in new holes at the commencement of the tournament and provide sufficient lawns to host the event(s).
AC Tier 2:	Requirement for clubs to reliably provide lawn speed of 10+ seconds, rigid hoops set in new holes at the commencement of the tournament and provide sufficient lawns to host the event(s).

AC Tier 3:	Requirement for clubs to reliably provide lawn speed of 9+ seconds, rigid hoops set in new holes at the commencement of the tournament and provide sufficient lawns to host the event(s).
GC Tier 1:	Requirement for clubs to reliably provide lawn speed of 10+ seconds, rigid hoops set in new holes at the commencement of the tournament and provide sufficient lawns to host the event(s).
GC Tier 2:	Requirement for clubs to reliably provide lawn speed of 9+ seconds, rigid hoops set in new holes at the commencement of the tournament and provide sufficient lawns to host the event(s).

Hoop dimensions for each tier are:

Tier 1: Nominal hoop dimensions will be set to the widest axis of any ball to be used on the lawn plus 1/32nd of an inch, with an upwards tolerance of 0, and a downwards tolerance of 1/64th of an inch.

Tier 2: Unless otherwise advertised in the yearbook, nominal hoop dimensions will be set to the widest axis of any ball to be used on the lawn plus 1/32nd of an inch, with an upwards tolerance of 0, and a downwards tolerance of 1/64th of an inch.

Tier 3: Hoop dimensions shall be those advertised in the yearbook for the specific event.

The CNZ Sport Development Officer, Greg Bryant, is available to assist all clubs holding CNZ Tiered tournaments with understanding and implementing the specifications for those tournaments.

Coaching Corner – How to Play Full Rolls

Aim: Visualise the spot where the striker's ball will

end up, and visualise the spot where the croqueted ball will end up. Find the half-way point between these two spots – this is your aiming point.

Grip: For a full roll, hold the mallet near the bottom of the shaft with your bottom hand. Your hand must not touch the mallet head at any point during the stroke, but it should be close to it. Your other hand should be part-way up the shaft, well away from the other hand – the power of the stroke comes from the bottom hand and the top hand stabilises the mallet throughout the stroke.

Stalk: Aiming takes place from several yards back. Then stalk the aiming point (described above) along a straight line like any other stroke.

Stance: Take a stance where you are well-balanced, eyes over the striker's ball, and with your front toe just level with the back of the striker's ball. Your weight should be balanced either over your front foot, or evenly over both feet if you have a level-footed stance.



2012 NZ Men's Champion David Wickham shows a balanced, stable stance for a full roll. Note the hand positions.

Stroke: Keep your body still throughout stroke – swing through the striker's ball, accelerating downwards into the contact, with your forearm coming through along the line of aim – this will provide the greatest power and will minimise chances of wrist injury. Follow through in the direction of your aiming point, but do not shepherd the ball. The power of a full roll comes from

“punching” into the striker's ball. To complete a successful stroke, you must see your mallet strike the ball.

Follow-through: Keep your eyes on the striker's ball throughout the stroke and you should remain balanced. After a well-played stroke you should still be perfectly balanced and able to quit your stance under full control.

And of course, practice, practice, practice!!!



2013 NZ Men's Champion Greg Bryant executes a full roll with excellent balance throughout. Before (above) and after (below).



Introducing AC – a coaching course for Golf Croquet players

By Chris Clarke, United Croquet Club

During May and June, Chris Clarke ran a course at United Croquet club to introduce Association Croquet to Golf Croquet players. The course was open to all players in Canterbury. 17 players, ranging from very new beginners to experienced GC players, braved some challenging conditions to learn a new form of croquet. We spoke to Chris to find out about his experiences in running this course.

Why did you run an “Association Croquet for Golf Croquet players” course?

Historically when people came to a croquet club, they were either gradually taught to play AC, or they were told “there’s an AC course starting in a few months – go to that”. Nowadays when people arrive at a club they are told “right – we’ve got this game you can be playing in 5 minutes. It’s called golf croquet.” It’s a good game, and gets people into croquet quickly, but it’s also the easy option. If that’s all we ever do, we will end up losing a proportion of the players who want a more complicated, tactical, intellectual game. Therefore I think it’s important to run courses like this so that those people who have come into the game in the past few years and are enjoying their golf croquet but think “well, maybe there’s a different challenge available to me” can have the opportunity to learn association croquet, and hopefully some of them will find it the wonderfully deep exciting game that thousands of people around the world enjoy.

What was the structure of the course?

At the start of the course the 17 participants were given a handout with notes on all of the material to be covered. There were three coaches – Chris Clarke was lead coach, and was aided by two club coaches, Geoffrey Naylor and Gary Annakin. Ideally the ratio for

this sort of course would be 1 coach to 4 players.

Course duration: 6 weeks. It was originally scheduled as 4 weeks, but weeks 3 and 5 ended up being indoor sessions due to bad weather – these looked more at tactics and strategy. Week 5 also included an “about the game” quiz working in pairs. This generated some excellent discussions and consolidated knowledge gained in the first few weeks. When the weather was reasonable, as much time as possible was spent on the lawn with the time split with 50% of time learning new things – e.g. the range of croquet strokes. Equally, or possibly more important, was the other 50% where we tried to get the participants playing real competitive games. These games were:

- Weeks 1 & 2: One-ball
- Week 4: Doubles
- Week 6: Singles

The sessions were planned to last 1.5 hours, though they tended to last 2 hours in the end. Play took place on 4/7th sized lawns which:

- Make shots smaller
- Make the game more interactive by discouraging “Aunt Emma” 2-ball play.

In these sessions the odd player made a 2-hoop break.

Over the first few weeks the rules were kept to a minimum, to keep the game as basic as possible, with a focus on stroke play. The first shot of a game at this time was simply to line a ball a yard in and shoot at hoop 1. Ideas like wiring lifts, opening tactics, etc were introduced in the second half of the course, which introduced more options/complexity.

What were the key things you learnt as a coach of this course?

Week 6: The session started with a refresher course on croquet strokes. This was very useful

in improving play and in showing the coaches, and the players themselves, a substantial improvement in the ability of the players.

Most people's physical stroke play was better than their knowledge of what shot they should be playing. Players struggled with tactical choices, and once they had made the decision of what to do they struggled with what shot to play to achieve their goals. If they were told "play a half roll" and what to do, they could do it quite well.

Where to next for these players?

The next obvious step for these players, other than just playing more, is to play handicap doubles with a better player. The better player can tell them what to do and help them – that way they can gradually learn a bit more about *why* a certain line of play is better (or is obvious), and hopefully that will feed back into their singles play.

Were there any elements of the course that you feel weren't really needed?

Week 5: openings – we learned about standard openings. This was not really needed. We did cover this, however, to avoid the new player turning up at a club day, shooting at hoop 1, and being told they were doing something "wrong".

As a 20+ handicapper, simply shooting at hoop 1 is not clearly the wrong thing to do – just because we did Standard Openings 100 years ago and it's an excellent choice at mid-handicap level, doesn't make it the right thing to do for a very high handicapper, or even for a minus-4 player.

What sort of experience do you think the players had with the course?

Varied. Some people enjoyed it. Some people found it quite difficult.

Is this course suitable as a shortened one day CNZ "roadie"?

No. There is too much to take in. People need time to absorb, and go away and think about all the various information and practice the new skills that they've been taught.

Let's let the players have the last word on the AC for GC players course:

Which part of the course did you find most difficult/complicated?

"Tactics. Making the right decisions"

What did you find most useful about the course?

"The discussions followed by the practice which is needed to reinforce what we have learnt"

Do you have any further comments you would like to make?

"Appreciate the skill of our coaches, their patience with us all"

"It was great to have the support of the extra coaches with such a large group"

Would you recommend this course to your clubmates?

"Yes, it was amazing"

One-Ball – a winter quickie

Here's an excellent alternative to the regular game of Association Croquet (AC) for all levels to improve association croquet skills. It is also a great introduction to AC for Golf Croquet players. One-Ball uses the roquet-croquet-continuation shot sequence of AC but with less balls in play, it's a much simpler game.

One-Ball can be played in about half an hour. It's interactive, with lots of turns, challenges & tactical options.

New players can have lots of fun on a half-sized lawn as this encourages much more interaction. A 7-point game of one-ball (one circuit then pegout), can be played by relative beginners in around 20 minutes.

In 'One-Ball' croquet, the players have only one ball each, and otherwise use all the normal AC laws. Unlike GC, there is no "off-side" rule.

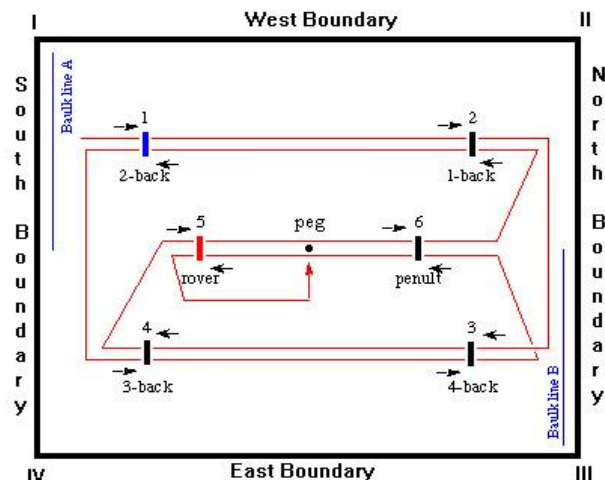
AC players can now get straight into a game, but we'll give some more tips for GC players.

Starting a game

The game of One-Ball starts with a coin toss where the toss winner either gets the first choice of colours, or gets to decide whether to go first or second. The loser of the toss gets the remaining choice.

Each player takes their 1st shot of the game from any point on either 'Baulk line'. The unmarked 'Baulk lines' run from corners 1 & 3 to halfway along the North and South Boundaries (see the lawn layout image).

Consider this: If you choose to go first, would it



be wise to play for position at the 1st hoop as you would in a game of GC?

Turns and Scoring

Players take alternate turns during which they can strike only their own ball. At the start of each turn, a player has one stroke to play. They may earn further strokes, and build up a "break" (a turn consisting of several strokes) by either running a hoop - thereby earning an extra stroke - or by causing their ball to hit the opponent's ball, known as making a "roquet" - and thereby earning TWO extra strokes (which

Lawn layout showing starting Baulk lines for One-Ball croquet are described below).

One-ball uses the same circuit for the first 12 hoops as AC and GC. Both players start needing to make hoop 1, and coloured clips are placed on the top of hoop 1. When a hoop is run in order, the player removes his or her clip, and when their turn ends, they place their clip on the hoop that they are due to run next. When a player runs a hoop, only that player's clip advances - the opponent must run each of their own hoops to advance their clip. The 13th, and final, point for a player is scored by hitting your ball onto the centre peg (as opposed to running hoop 13 in GC).

For the first 6 hoops, your clip is placed on the top of the hoop. For the second 6 hoops, your clip is placed on the side of the hoop.

Further reading:

http://tunbridgewellscroquet.org.uk/downloads/one_ball.pdf

Breaks: Roquet - Croquet - Continuation

When you run a hoop in the correct order you earn an extra stroke. When you strike your ball causing it to hit your opponent's ball, you have made a "roquet", and you earn TWO extra strokes. The first is the key stroke to AC. It is called a "croquet" stroke. In a croquet stroke you pick up your ball and place it in contact with the opponent's ball. Now strike your ball with your mallet in a direction that causes both balls to move. Following the croquet shot, you play a normal shot called a "continuation" stroke. If your ball is in front of your next hoop you can use your continuation stroke to run your hoop, earning another stroke.

At the start of a new turn, and after running each hoop in the correct order, you can "roquet" your opponent's ball, take "croquet" from it, and play another "continuation" stroke. By using the roquet, croquet, continuation sequence, you can make a 'break' of several hoops in a turn.

Balls leaving the lawn

When a ball leaves the lawn, it is replaced 1 yard infield from where it crossed the boundary line. When a turn ends, any ball that is not on the lawn, or is less than 1 yard from the boundary line, is measured in a yard. If either ball leaves the lawn in the two-ball "croquet" stroke, your turn ends immediately.

Wiring "lifts" are awarded at the start of a turn if you cannot roquet either side of the other ball AND your opponent is responsible for the position of your ball. If you are entitled to a wiring lift, you may start your turn by placing your ball in any position on either baulk line.

Coming events...

...something MAGAK is coming

In Labour weekend (25-28 October) the Wellington Croquet Association hosts the MAGAK event featuring a one-day Level 2-3 Association Croquet coaching day and the three-day Wellington Men's and Women's Open Championship Singles.

The Inaugural MAGAK event was held in 2007 when Malcolm and Kathie Grant (both players who were at the time relative beginners) sponsored a Flexible Swiss tournament in Auckland and invited Chris Clarke to provide a day's top-level coaching to precede the event. A huge success, the event has recently been hosted by the WCA and retains the format of a day's top-level coaching, followed by an Open tournament to provide players the opportunity to put their new skills into practice and bed in their new knowledge.

This year's coaching event will be open to players of handicaps 8 to -2.5. The coaches will be Greg Bryant and Jenny Clarke. The tournament will be open to all players.

Topics for this year include peeling, openings and leaves, rushing, mental techniques and practice routines. Depending on numbers some sessions may be split by handicap.

The Wellington Men's and Women's tournament will follow the coaching day and is once again very generously sponsored by Malcolm and Kathie Grant.

Entries to both or either events are welcome. These events have been very popular in the past, so get in quick and make MAGAK one of your season opening tournaments.

Super-Advanced AC

Introduction:

The intention of Super Advanced Rules is to make association croquet at the top level more interactive. The rules basically discourage super-shot openings, and introduce a further lift at hoop 4.

The English Croquet Association introduced Super Advanced variations in Great Britain in approximately 2009. The Super Advanced rules were initially made available as an option at Official Tournaments, and are now a compulsory part of many top competitions.

Some elite NZ players are becoming concerned that GB will 'get the jump' on us as Super Advanced Rules become more popular... A NZ competitor in the British Open and other major CA tournaments is already at a distinct disadvantage.

Several top NZ players have expressed an interest in trying out Super Advanced rules as an option at some CNZ events.

Proposal:

That 'Super Advanced Rules' are adopted by the CNZ Tournament Committee for the 2013/14 season and that Super Advanced Rules become an option by mutual agreement of both players competing in;

- North and South Island Plate events
- NZ Open Heenan Plate
- Premier Silver Badge Competitions

The super-advanced rules follow, and players are encouraged to try them out in club and friendly games and provide feedback to CNZ at croquet@croquet.org.nz

Super-Advanced Variations to the Laws of Association Croquet

INTRODUCTION

1. The first will introduce an optional extension of Advanced Play, called the Three Lift Variation, with the intention of making the games between top class players more interactive.
2. The second is an attempt to reduce the dominance of the super-shot opening at the top level with a view to restoring the variety that existed before it became prevalent.
3. TV1 or TV2 may be used individually, or both, referred to as TV3, may be applied together.

TV1 - THREE LIFT VARIATION - When a game is played under this variation, Law 36 is modified by inserting:

Law 36(f) LIFT, CONTACT OR FREE PLACEMENT:

1. A lift as specified in Law 36(a) is also available if the striker's ball of the preceding turn scored hoop 4 for itself in that turn.
2. A lift or contact as specified in Law 36(b) is also available if the striker's ball of the preceding turn scored both hoops 4 and 1-back for itself in that turn and its partner ball had not scored hoop 4 before that turn.
3. If the striker's ball of the preceding turn scored hoops 4 and 4-back in that turn and its partner ball had not scored hoop 4 before that turn, the striker may start his turn:
 - a. as in Laws 36(a)(1), 36(a)(2) or 36(b)(2); or
 - b. subject to (4) below, by lifting either ball of his side that can

lawfully be played, even if it is in contact with one or more balls, and playing it from any unoccupied position on the court (including a position within the yard-line area). This is known as a free placement.

4. Neither player is entitled to a free placement if any ball has been pegged out in the game.
5. Law 36(e) and other Laws applicable to Law 36 (e.g. Laws 6(c)(2)(A), 8(b), 9(b)(1), 14(d)(4)(B), 27(g)), also apply to this variation, with the addition of a free placement as one of the striker's options when available.

TV2 - RESTRICTED OPENING

1. Under this variation, if, in the first stroke of the game, the striker's ball does not leave the court, hit or pass through a hoop, or hit the peg, then the adversary may elect either:
 - A. to leave the ball where it lies; or
 - B. to have the ball placed on any point on either baulk-line as the striker chooses.

After this is done, the turn ends.

Next Edition of Croquet Matters

1. Croquet on the web
2. Coaches corner - the corner 1 cannon
3. Shooting practice - tips and tricks
4. Preview of the WCF AC World Champs

We welcome your news!

Please send in your match reports, letters and other information which may be published in Croquet Matters newsletter.

Croquet Matters was prepared by the Executive Director and Sport Development Officer with considerable voluntary contribution from Jenny Clarke.