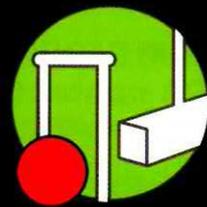


# the croquet gazette



issue 277 - january 2002

中	盤	戦
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## 陣取りVS陣取りの対応型(5

5巡目、赤は第4ラインぎわ、白は第2ラインぎわからの展開

第2ゲート 3G=第3ゲート GP=ゴールボール PT=通過タッチ  
スライドタッチ LT=ロングタッチ WT=ダブルタッチ

しっか〜し!!

基本がなくて  
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ボールを  
コントロールすることは  
できないよ!!

図3のようなホ  
赤5を3G通過さ  
チームのWTの

gateball : the japanese phenomenon

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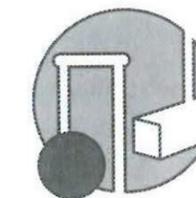
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the  
**croquet**  
gazette



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**contents**

<b>editorial</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>chairman's column</b> <i>the CA's plans for the coming year</i>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>news &amp; information</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CA merit awards</b> <i>performance awards from the coaching committee</i>	<b>7</b>
<b>letters</b>	<b>8 - 9</b>
<b>golf croquet review of 2001</b>	<b>10 - 11</b>
<b>report from tournament committee</b>	<b>11 - 12</b>
<b>obituary</b> <i>chester croquet club chairman, malcolm fletton</i>	<b>13</b>
<b>equipment</b> <i>of balls, hoops and regulations</i> <i>ball testing</i>	<b>14</b> <b>15 - 16</b>
<b>coaching</b> <i>setting up the perfect break</i>	<b>17</b>
<b>gateball : croquet's missing link?</b> <i>the phenomenon of japanese five-a-side speed croquet</i>	<b>18 - 21</b>
<b>international committee</b> <i>stop press news on future international events</i>	<b>21</b>
<b>ranking lists 2001</b>	<b>22 - 23</b>

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Both black and white or colour prints of photographs can be used. Slides are no longer accepted. Photocopies of pictures or print-outs of digital images cannot be used. If using digital photography please send in jpeg or tif format files. Resolution of scanned images must be at least 300 dpi. Please detail on the reverse of all photos the subject of the picture, and, if you require the photographs to be returned, please include your address on the reverse.

**tournament results and reports**

Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or any other PC-based word processor. Hand written reports are no longer accepted.

**delivery queries**

Queries regarding delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Secretary of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor.

**disclaimer**

The opinions expressed in the Croquet Gazette are those of the editor and contributors. The Croquet Association is not responsible from statements other than those clearly defined as being made on behalf of the Croquet Association.

Wherever I went last season, one topic was sure to provoke a reaction. As everyone knows, or seems to, the new Omega hoop is too easy to run.



For those not in the know, a conventional hoop has two uprights fixed into the carrots which sit in the ground. Manufacturers weld the uprights a specific distance apart, usually giving a clearance on the ball of 1/8". Hoop-setters can tweak this clearance only by chiselling out soil around the carrots, in the hope of forcing the uprights inwards or outwards. Sounds clumsy and unsatisfactory, and so it is.

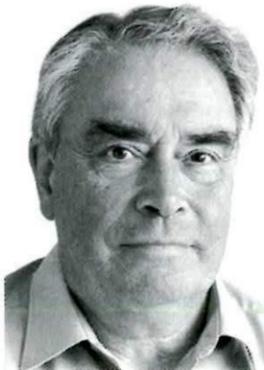
The Omega has the uprights welded to the crossbar as normal, but the carrots are fixed by an eccentric screw. Twist the carrot with a spanner, and the gap between the uprights is adjusted quickly and precisely.

That everyone has had time to formulate an opinion on the shortcomings of the Omega is curious. To the best of my knowledge, only seven lawns in the country are set with them (three at each of Roehampton and Bristol, and one at Cheltenham). I strongly suspect that not all of my informants are as qualified to comment as they claim to be.

Talking to Tal Golsworthy, the Cheltenham-based engineer

## chairman's column

It's the time of year when clubs have their AGMs and treasurers try to explain the more unlikely figures in the accounts. But there is one item that usually doesn't attract much attention: "CA Subscription". Perhaps you wonder, but don't like to ask, just what will you get for the £6 per member that your club pays to the CA in 2002?



The South West Federation invited me to their AGM last autumn and it was good to meet so many enthusiasts working to help players - whatever their standard - get more from the game. In a Q & A session I reminded the representatives from clubs (not all of them members of the CA) just what the Association is and what it does.

In practice "The CA" is more than 60 members of clubs who are elected, or have agreed to be co-opted, on to Council and the committees that run the show. Just the Secretary and his assistant splendidly support us.

Here is an outline of what our committees are charged with doing that benefits those croquet players (the majority) who don't enter CA tournaments - that is beginners, improvers, golf croquet players and those who enter Federation events:

who conceived the Omega, and to Alan Pidcock, the CA's equipment tester, it's puzzling why the Omega has this (supposed) property.

Experiments show that the Omega is neither harder nor easier than a brand new conventional hoop with a similar clearance. Comparison with a rusty, warped and battered old hoop is more surprising. Balls that would sail through a new hoop stick firmly in the jaws of an old one.

I could argue that using old hoops, with their worn surfaces and unreliable clearances, makes the game harder, and therefore better. Having the world's worst record at losing 26-0 in handicap play, I could further argue that new hoops of whatever design should be outlawed, in order to give me a fighting chance of getting just a couple of points on the scoreboard.

I've spent many weekends kneeling on a wet lawn at 8am, trying vainly to set a legal hoop. Let's not deceive ourselves - an 80-year old hoop which can't be fixed to the setting required by the Regulations for Tournaments is a *bad piece of equipment*.

Croquet has enough elements to make it a difficult game. If adjustable hoops make play too easy for some of us, we can either keep complaining, or else rectify the matter with the twist of a spanner.

*Development:* makes grants and loans from the CA to Federations and clubs to improve playing facilities. Advises clubs that apply for grants to Sport England. A lot of its work is done via Federation Development Officers.

*Coaching:* sets standards for coaches, including training and examining them. Publishes manuals and operates the CA Merit Award Scheme. Works closely with Federation Coaching Officers.

*Golf Croquet:* responsible for the laws of this variation of the game that has equal status with association croquet. Appoints referees and organizes national events.

*Equipment:* sets standards and gives approval of balls and hoops. It also works with manufacturers on research and development of all types of equipment.

*Handicapping:* responsible for policy and the appointment of handicappers.

*Laws (Association Croquet):* amends the laws and regulations for tournaments. Examines and appoints referees.

*Marketing:* advises member clubs how best to promote the game locally and increase their membership. Publicizes

croquet in all the media. Oversees CA sales, including discounts to CA members.

*Publishing:* responsible for The Croquet Gazette and the CA's website that gives all the latest croquet news.

You may agree that if the CA didn't exist, clubs would soon have to invent it - and that the £6 p.a. contribution you make is quite a bargain. When you meet players from clubs that are not part of the CA do please tell them how much they already benefit from what we do - and that we would all welcome their clubs as members. More information is a phone call away from the CA Secretary, Nigel Graves, 020 7736 3148.

Elsewhere you can read about the specific tasks that the CA's committees have set themselves for 2002. We will report to you at the end of the year how well we have succeeded.

There is one way you may be able to help our Marketing committee. We are sending questionnaires to a random sample of players: the results should help us to convince Sport England that more lottery grants should be made to croquet clubs, and potential sponsors that they should invest in our sport. If you receive one of these questionnaires, please spend the few minutes it takes to complete it and post it back to us. It's essential we get a good response so we know that the profile of players we build up is an accurate one. Thank you.

## what's the CA up to in 2002?

Council has approved specific objectives for our committees and I am highlighting some that are of general interest. They are, of course, in addition to the routine work that committees continuously carry out.

### coaching

- ♦ Run qualifying courses with the aim of getting at least one person in each small club qualified as a club coach.
- ♦ Revise the Coaching Manual, which will include golf croquet.
- ♦ Investigate the possibility of publishing a coaching video (or DVD).

### development

- ♦ Identify member clubs wishing to build an extra court, or upgrade the quality of existing courts, so that we can offer assistance.
- ♦ Check on the frequency and extent to which Federations and clubs use CA-owned equipment and take initiatives to increase the usage.
- ♦ Monitor grants and tighten budgetary control.

### golf croquet

- ♦ Increase number of entries to the many competitions now being organized.
- ♦ Work towards establishing one laws book for golf

croquet that can be used at all events and is accepted worldwide.

- ♦ Train and qualify more referees.

### international

- ♦ Increase the CA's influence on the WCF and develop stronger links with the NZCC, ACA and USCA.
- ♦ Develop our strength at the top level and specifically develop players (including juniors) with the potential to play in the MacRobertson Shield in 2003.
- ♦ Plan for association croquet World Championships to be held in England in 2005.
- ♦ Arrange association croquet matches with Canada and Egypt, and offer help to emerging associations.

### laws

- ♦ Publish in print the Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet (ORLC) to replace the existing Commentary by Prichard/Lamb.
- ♦ Prepare and publish material about referees training.
- ♦ Publish a new edition of the Basic Laws of Croquet.

### management

- ♦ Improve inter-committee communications.
- ♦ Put more emphasis on reviewing long-term policy issues.

### marketing and membership

- ♦ Create a membership canvassing kit for clubs to help with their recruitment campaigns.
- ♦ Investigate improving the benefits that the CA offers to its members.
- ♦ Implement a strategy for attracting legacies.
- ♦ Create more awareness of what the CA does and what it achieves on behalf of its members.
- ♦ Canvass non-member clubs to join the CA.

### publishing

- ♦ Define the target audiences of the CA's website and develop it accordingly.

Quiller Barrett

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Tel: 01449760480  
Email: mike@croquetmallets.com

news and information

inter county organisers for association and golf croquet championships

The list below give the contact names for the organisers of the two Inter Counties Championships. If any player is eligible for the county and would like to be considered for the county team, they should contact the nominated organiser. Entries for the Association Inter Counties are already made and only counties listed below will have teams in the 2002 event. Entries for the Golf Croquet Inter Counties Championship will not be finalised until early next season. The teams entered for the event will therefore depend on the responses received by the county organisers.

association croquet inter counties championship

COUNTY	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
Avon	Ray Ransom	0117 9682255	rransom@cablenet.co.uk
Bedfordshire	Howard Bottomley	01525 374697 07880781666 (M)	hjbot1@abbeynational.co.uk
Berkshire	Joe King	0118 948 1004 (H) 01628 587000 (W)	jwking@lgc.com
Channel Islands	Mrs Sarah Burrow	01534 732167	burrow@itl.net
Cheshire	Colin Irwin	01565 722556	Colin@irwin-ce.freemove.co.uk
Devon	Brian Smith	01395 516652	brsmith@onetel.net.uk
Dorset	Peter Trimmer	01935 425255	pete.trimmer@engage-gkn.com
Essex	Michael Heap	01708 728136	michael@roundhouse38.fnet.co.uk
Glamorgan	Chris Williams	01633 400853	chris@butedock.demon.co.uk
Gloucestershire	David Foulser	01242 580295	df@cldlaw.co.uk
Hertfordshire	Nigel Gray	01462 436430	woolhouse@zoom.co.uk
Kent	David Collins	020 8467 8589	davidcollins@beeb.net
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Middlesex	Tom Brown	020 8337 4629 (H) 020 7759 0357 (W)	thomasnbrowne@aol.com
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Surrey	George Noble	020 8940 1427	karin.n@netcomuk.co.uk
Sussex	Roger Wood	01424 210632	RogerWood1@ntlworld.com
Warwickshire	Andrew Gregory	1223 573560	akgregory@talk21.com
Yorkshire	Peter Thompson	01296 630927	peter.thompson@skanska.co.uk

golf croquet inter counties championship

COUNTY	NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
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Dorset	Tom Weston	01202 513064	
Essex	Chris Sheen	01206 271429	chris.sheen@lineone.net
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Kent	Don Beck	01634 407266	dbeck@iee.org
Lancashire	Alan Pidcock	01772 743859	pidcock@manorh.u-net.com
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Oxfordshire	John Munro	01491 651709	
Sussex	Bill Arliss	01273 728204	arliss@mistral.co.uk
Yorkshire	Sam Curry	01765 602172	spahotel@bronco.co.uk

refereeing courses

Details of Refereeing Courses in 2002 have been announced. They are as follows:

Referees Courses:  
2/3 March 2002 at Ramsgate;  
9/10 March 2002 at Compton;  
9/10 March 2002 at Woking.

Assistant Referees Qualification Examination:  
23 or 24 March 2002 at Compton.

Applications for each should be made to Dennis Shaw,  
Tel: 01323 646242, except for the Woking course, which is  
being handled by Jeff Dawson, Tel: 01483 770400.

measure your progress with CA merit awards

improve your play using CA coaching courses

By Bruce Rannie, Chairman CA Coaching Committee

One of the benefits of your being a full member of the CA is the chance to obtain a Merit Award Badge as a tangible indicator of your progress towards becoming an A-class player.

The Awards Scheme works as follows. There are three Badges that can be obtained; each one is a signal of measurable improvement in competitive play. The match has to be in one of the recognised CA Calendar Tournaments or competitions, or in a representative event, with hoops set correctly. You also have to win the match to qualify for any of the Awards.

The Bronze Badge is awarded for making a ten-hoop break, using bisques if necessary. This is your target once you have grasped the idea of using your bisques to build and continue a break, therefore starting to attack opponents positively and confidently. 26 were awarded in 2001.

The Silver Badge comes at the point in your development where you are conceding bisques most of the time, or are taking the first steps into the Advanced game. This award is given for achieving a twelve hoop-point break, sometimes with one or two peels, without using bisques either to set up the break or to continue it, while winning the game. 29 were awarded in 2001.

The Gold Badge is for your first Triple Peel in qualifying competitions. The manoeuvre is by definition a winning one, as it comprises peeling your first ball through four-back, penult and rover, while playing the appropriate break with the second ball, and pegging both out for the victory. It is more often seen in Advanced Play, as one of the standard tactics to avoid giving one of the lifts or contact, but it is also one of the weapons in the armoury of the experienced player faced with a fence-ful of bisques in a Handicap Tournament. Naturally bisques cannot be used to hit in, or to set up the break, or to carry it out, but that does not preclude qualification in a game in which the player has previously used bisques.

10 Gold Badges were awarded in 2001, to Jed Allen, Ken Cooper, T C Dutton, Paul Harbord, Jonathan Kirby, Ailsa Lines, David Mundy, Austin Sherlaw-Johnson, Charlotte Townsend and Jenny Williams. Both Jed and Jenny won their Gold within a few months of achieving the Silver Award, showing the rate of progress that you can achieve once your break-building and shot-making are tightly controlled.

The aim of the CA Coaching Committee is always to

encourage enterprising play. Many members have won their first badge after attending one of the Regional Bronze or Improvers Courses - both concentrate on setting up and maintaining breaks, and positive use of bisques. The National Silver Course and the Silver-Gilt (Introduction to Advanced Play) Course both concentrate on the kind of break management and tactics that naturally lead the player to win the Silver Badge.

The National Gold Course is designed to prepare players to achieve the Triple Peel and therefore obtain the Gold Badge. It suggests tactics for the standard triple and the delayed triple, and covers the attacking leaves after the first ball has reached four-back, in order to make the lift shot as difficult as possible for the opponent.

Details of all of the courses on offer in 2002 are in the Fixture Calendar, are listed in newsletters to Clubs, and can be found on the CA website. So why not get your new season off to a winning start by seeing what the CA Coaching Courses can do for you?



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letters

croquet in antiquity

Dear Editor,

I recently saw a piece of furniture in Glynde Place (below) in Sussex. It is a cabinet described as "1600 or thereabouts" and has on it a frieze clearly depicting a game in progress which I take to be croquet, although the dress code in those days would not go down well at Hurlingham.



Is this the earliest representation of the game? It could possibly be pall-mall, which was popular in Stuart times, but this was, I believe, usually played indoors and the equipment was different.

The cabinet is English, and the representation is much earlier than I would have expected.

Collin Southern  
Woking

world team championships

Dear Editor,

In July 2000, the Italian CA took the initiative of hosting the first World (14-point) Team Championship, which, as was well reported in The Gazette, was won by Wales, with Ireland second and Switzerland third (an England side also participated).

I might be wrong (in which case no doubt I will soon hear about it), but I am not aware of any other World Team Championships, except the one mentioned below in the summer of 1970.

I happened to be visiting friends, members of Hurlingham, in August 2001 at the end of Hurlingham Week, when I was greatly honoured to be asked to present the prizes, a wide variety of magnificent pieces of silverware.

I took the opportunity to mention what

happened on my first visit to the club: On home leave from Geneva in the summer of 1970, having little idea of what the game was about, I called at Wimbledon, to be told: 'We have only one, three-quarter size lawn and three members; what you want is Hurlingham'. They phoned Hurlingham to ensure I would be admitted.

Imagine my astonishment when arriving at the gate to see a huge banner proclaiming 'World Team Championship'. The astonishment grew as I set eyes on my first immaculate lawns, and grew even more when I saw the crowd, three deep all round lawn 3, where the New Zealand champion was playing the Irish champion. I had to crawl on hands and knees to see anything of the match! Sadly a far cry from today's scene.

Do I hear any historians rushing out of their burrows?

Norman Eatough,  
President, Swiss Croquet Association

anyone for croquet?

Dear Editor,

As the retiring Secretary/Treasurer of the Urchfont Croquet Association 1993 (60 members) playing on two irregular sized lawns in the mediaeval gardens of Urchfont Manor near Devizes, Chairman John Blunden graciously presented me with a glass beer mug inscribed: "John Pocock from the Urchfont Croquet Association, 2001".

I am now the possessor of two mugs - "Croquet" and "Croquet"!

John Pocock  
Devizes

editorial balance

Dear Editor,

With a new Editor and a new Chairman it was with great interest that I read their comments.

Having been part owner of a newspaper for four years I fully understand the problems of finding a balance and provide editorial that is going to be right for all the readers. The sport section of all national newspapers concentrate on the premier league when it comes to football and the lower leagues take a back seat, but this is money talking.

It would be interesting to know the



percentage of CA members who are interested in blow by blow accounts of the World Championships and those who'd rather have more general topics and coaching clinics.

Lets remember that there are far more players around the country with handicaps above 5 than below. Surely it is part of the C.A.s function to encourage these players and as one of our members said, "if this is concentrating on the smaller clubs then the Gazette as far as I am concerned is a waste of time".

Having worked with Quiller on the S.E.Federation a few years back I am sure he will contribute 100 % effort into his new role. I do not feel that he should worry about having an 8 handicap. In fact it may help him to associate himself with the majority of players around the country.

Roy Ware  
Ramsgate

While I, as Editor, try to ensure a broad range of articles in the Gazette, I remain constrained by the content which is submitted to me for inclusion for each edition. I said back in September that I was unrepentant for the extent of the coverage of the World Championship, being England's largest ever croquet event. My attitude remains undimmed. This being the official journal of record of the CA, posterity obliges me to record in detail what I'm sure history will reveal as a turning point in the development of the game at the top level.

My duties oblige me to include details of CA Events. Many (but not all) of these are top-class championships. I shall continue to feature reports on these and CA-run handicap, golf and short events, but can't guarantee inclusion of all club tournaments.

I'm sorry that this disappoints some readers. I don't intend for the Gazette to remain a newsletter devoted to slavishly reporting minor advanced-level weekend events of limited appeal, and have a number of features of more general interest in the pipeline. As for my throwaway remark that inclusion of a couple of items about smaller clubs should qualify as just representation of all small clubs, I shall have to exert more self discipline on my editorial comments - Ed.

assistant referees

Dear Editor,

Three or so seasons have passed since the CA adopted the idea imported from New Zealand of the qualification of Assistant Referee. The duties of an Assistant Referee are defined in R6 of Tournament Regulations for Refereeing. They embrace the powers of an Umpire plus Wiring Lifts and Faults (Law 28) and in practice deal with 95% of calls or appeals to referees. It was, I am told, intended that only one day of training would be required for the new grade; it would make it easier for players to progress to the full qualification. Perhaps now is a good time to review whether or not the new arrangement for training and

qualifying referees has been a step in the right direction.

I was one of the very first to be so qualified and offer my own impressions as part of the debate. The assessment consisted of a 25 minute written examination and a rigorous 2 hour practical test. I had prepared believing I would be examined for a full qualification. This turned out to be fortunate as 25% of the written exam tested knowledge of laws well beyond the requirement for the laid down duties of an Assistant on the grounds that a referee of any capacity should have a general understanding of the laws. So be it but I would doubt that a one day course could realistically cover the groundwork required.

I soon found that being an Assistant Referee had its drawbacks. Tournament managers only nominated assistants if they were really short of the fully qualified; there were occasions when one had to back off the court apologising as the issue to be refereed was not within the prescribed powers of an assistant; on realising one's (lowly) status, players' eyes would glance furtively around seeking a "real" referee and on one occasion I was asked if I would mind if a second opinion were sought! To become fully qualified, I now have to go on a refresher course and set aside yet another day for a separate assessment (aspirant referees should not be assessed at the end of their referee course nor by its instructors). All this to referee just 5% of problems of law for which even the most experienced usually refer to the Laws book anyway. Is it all really worth it?

Michael Hague  
Woking

Assistant Referees were introduced because a significant number of aspiring referees found that the full referees course and exam contained more theory than they could cope with in one go, which led to a shortage of referees. As Michael Hague points out, a large proportion of a referee's work is to observe strokes, or measure positions, where the law is straightforward, so this more practically based qualification meets most of the requirement and has certainly helped to increase the number of referees.

As one of the first Assistant Referees, it was perhaps inevitable that some players were uncertain about his status. Hopefully the qualification is better understood now, though I suspect that newly qualified referees in any sport are at risk from occasional aspersions on their competence!

Upgrade courses could provide a useful occasion for referees who have now had some experience to discuss any problems they may have encountered, as well as to learn new material. Although most situations are straightforward, referees who are fully conversant with the laws are still required to handle the ones that are not, so I hope that he and others will take this further step. The subsequent examination should be much shorter, because the practical part is not repeated.

- Ian Vincent, Chairman, Laws Committee

## the croquet gazette - issue 277 january 2002

### golf croquet review 2001

by Bill Arliss, Chairman CA Golf Croquet Committee

I think one of the best features of Golf Croquet is that you can make a bad mistake but do not have to spend then next half hour sitting out while you opponent goes all the way round. It is possibly the loss of one hoop and then straight back into the fray. This has a good knock-on effect in that the ordinary club player can still get a very good game against the very top players even when playing level. At Ramsgate earlier this year there were some late withdrawals and several high handicappers were cajoled into replacing them. Talking to them afterwards, they were all of the same view; they had not felt at all overawed; they had really enjoyed themselves and had learnt a lot from the better players. The message must therefore be that if you play golf croquet regularly, why not have a go in some of our major competitions. Of course the better player nearly always win in a level game but there are many cases of giant killings as number two in our rankings, Derek Old, found out when tipped out of the Yorkshire Open by his wife Jaqui.

Another pleasing aspect of golf croquet is that when there is an audience present there is usually applause throughout the game and it is not reserved only for the finish as in Association Croquet. Any long distance hoop or long distance clearance always looks spectacular to the layman and keeps the interest. Those who are experienced in croquet generally will, I have no doubt, say that the skills required to complete sextuples and other similar feats are far greater than a bit of long distance hitting. I fully agree but to the uninitiated all round breaks with even numerous peels simply does not look spectacular even when performed by our best players; they make it look too easy. To attract new players into the game of croquet generally we must keep the layman's interest.

If we talk of spectacular shots, then I feel John Moore's final winning shot in the Belgian Open must rank very highly as the 'Shot of the Year'. John managed to jump an opponent's ball in hoop 11 (that's penultimate for the association buffs) starting from B baulk with just the odd bounce on the way. I am told he practices jumping through hoop 1 from the baulk.

No new open competitions were introduced last year and our intention was simply to consolidate those already in the calendar. I am pleased to say the entries for the Open Championship, held at Budleigh this year, increased considerably over the first year. Stephen Mulliner won the singles title for the second year running, whilst overseas visitors Tony Hall and Trevor Bassett from Australia won the doubles. We are back at Budleigh next year and hope to increase the entries again. Doubles are on the Thursday and the singles Friday to Sunday. Singles are usually best of three so there is plenty of play.

Lancashire were the winners of Inter Counties Golf which was unfortunately down to six teams this last year due to a

clash of date with the Yorkshire Open. Last year we introduced a CA Select Team for those who wanted to play but had no county team. This may be repeated if there is space. On the present format we can probably increase to ten teams. We have also introduced the concept of County Organiser for this competition which copies the Association Inter Counties and provides a contact for all those who want to play in this event. The organisers names are published in this issue.

We had two very good finals days for the All England Handicap played at Wrest Park the Ascot and Ranelagh Cups played at Colchester. The larger number of competitors in recent years appears to give these finals a much better profile. In the Ascot Cup we were treated to a fine display from Robert Fulford who beat Derek Old in the final to win the singles. The Sheen brothers again took the doubles title with a last hoop win against runners up Bill Arliss and Daphne Gaitley. In the All England handicap we had a full range of handicaps from -3 to +6. The title was taken by the youngest player, 16 years old Marcus Oliver, from Nailsea, playing off scratch.

The Inter Club Golf Croquet tournament was won by Sussex County who pulled off a last hoop victory, 4-3 against Southport. Unfortunately the entries for this competition were rather low. As the arrangements for this competition ensure that all initial rounds are played in the Federation areas, so why not give it a try next year.

A new innovation in the golf croquet camp was our challenge to the European Federation. England took on a team from the Rest of Europe at Southwick in September. These were two teams of eight playing over two days. After the singles on the Saturday, England were 19-13 in the lead but the doubles on the Sunday proved our undoing and we went down 33-31 to the Europeans. England's Captain, Chris Sheen provided and presented a new trophy to the Europeans. The FEC have promised to host the event next year.

This last season saw the introduction of a new handicap system which includes the concept of minus handicaps. This may seem rather complicated but it does follow the same principles as the association handicap system, so in most clubs there will be quite a number of players who can give guidance. To ensure we obtain a consistent standard throughout the country the new system has been designed to respond to games played level in the same manner as Association Croquet. It is therefore vitally important that all who play golf croquet participate in the system and keep a handicap record card even if you only play level games.

I will be the first to admit that we may not have got the system exactly right at present but if we do not try it out

## the croquet gazette - issue 277 january 2002

### tournament committee

by Derek Trotman, Chair CA Tournament Committee

A busy year's work for the Tournament Committee culminated in the October meeting, at which the following were discussed:

1) Lawn & Ball Hire. Alongside other initiatives directed at support for clubs hosting CA events, a financial review of this matter has been undertaken. Council have now approved that from 2002 the rate will be increased to £20 per lawn per day. This will be a fixed fee paid regardless of the number of sets of balls used.

2) Hoops & Balls. You will all be aware of the general impression that the new adjustable 'Omega' hoops are easier to run than the conventional type. While the Equipment Committee investigated the matter, the Committee decided that the two types of hoop should not yet be used in the same tournament.

The results of the preliminary investigations have confirmed what has long been suspected, that the type of sub-soil into which the hoops are set can have a large effect on the ease of running. It has also been found that brand new powder coated hoops behave in a similar manner to 'Omega' hoops and are easier to run under the test conditions used than old, cast iron, hand painted hoops. It has not so far been possible to correlate the reduction of hoop/ball clearance necessary to compensate for this

properly; then we will not know how it should be changed. I have been asked on many occasions what games should go on the handicap cards. I feel there is a very simple rule. Any game which is played under tournament conditions be it actually in a tournament, a federation competition, inter club game or a club internal competition game should go on the card. Many apologies for the typos on the CA handicap cards. These will be corrected and new copies will be available from the CA office, free to registered clubs.

The training and qualification of referees specifically for Golf Croquet continued during this last year. If there are other groups around the country who would like to become qualified referees please contact me and I will try to arrange a course in your area. Just one point I would make if you would like to become a referee; really learn your laws before you come on the course. Whilst the tuition you receive will review each and every law and how it should be interpreted, you must know it in the first case. Although the average rate of failure in the written tests has exceeded 75%, we now have 31 CA qualified golf croquet referees.

Results have been collected from all our level competitions during the last three years and there now appears to be sufficient results to run a ranking system similar to the Association Croquet rankings. At present it only includes UK players and will have to remain as such until a full world-wide reporting system can be established. The first actual listing was published on the CA website in October and the latest list follows in this edition of the Gazette. Tournament Secretaries please remember that if you run a level golf croquet competition as part of your event, please send the results to me.

As well as the increase in competitive Golf Croquet, there is also quite a noticeable increase in what I would describe as social Golf Croquet players. The social players never want to play outside their clubs, they are usually retired and always like to be organised, thus they only turn up on specific club afternoons. Generally they like to play doubles and the mid afternoon cuppa is an integral part of the visit to the club. Unfortunately I have heard a number of derogatory remarks about the social players during this last year. Yes it may tie up some lawns for one or two afternoons a week but it does meet a very good social need and at the same time the social players are giving a big boost to the finances of the croquet infrastructure in this country. In the case of my own club there are several competitive players emerging from the social group.

One final reference to next year's programme. The Golf Croquet World championships will be held next February in the new croquet centre in Florida. Our entrants will be Robert Fulford, John Moore, Stephen Mulliner, Derek Old and Chris Sheen. We are also hoping that there will be some wild cards available and more of our senior players will be able to take part.

#### Croquet Festival II

National Croquet Center, West Palm Beach, Florida, Feb 17-24, 2002

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are hoop-setters meeting the requirements of the CA's own laws? asks don guban

Croquet is a game where the difference between success and failure is often only a fraction of an inch. Nowhere is this more true than at hoops, where the standard clearance (between the diameter of the ball and the width of the hoop) is specified by the Regulations to be 1/8" for normal play. There is more to running hoops than the clearance alone of course, otherwise most angled hoops would be impossible, but it is the best indicator we have of the relative ease of running different hoops. Moreover, the only way that the game is made harder for the best players is that, for Championships, the Regulations specify a clearance of 1/16". In practice, balls are not perfectly round, so Regulations specify that the hoops be set with the largest ball used on a court. Barlow GT balls vary by nearly 1/32" (1/40" in fact), so for perfectly set hoops the clearance for different balls in normal play varies between 1/8" and nearly 5/32", which means that the difficulty presented by different hoops during a game should vary by only about 20%. Players can have confidence in their hoop-running.

But hoops can't be set to exactly 1/8", and the Regulations therefore allow a tolerance of +/- 1/32" on the clearance. Setting is made with the aid of feeler gauges which allow clearances to be tested in increments of 1/32". For ordinary solid hoops the clearance is set to 1/8" by scraping earth out of the carrot holes as necessary, banging the hoop in, and hoping that by trial and error the upright has now been forced into the right position. With a recalcitrant stone in the carrot hole and time and patience running out, one settles for something a bit less or a bit more, between 3/32" and 5/32". So, the biggest ball may clear the narrowest hoop by 3/32", but for the smallest ball through the widest hoop the gap may be (using the variation found for the Barlow GTs) 5/32" + 1/40", i.e. almost 3/16". Here the relative variation between hoop clearances has risen to a factor of two: no wonder some hoops are "barn doors", while others give unpleasant surprises. With adjustable hoops, however, such as the recently developed "Omegas", the setting can always be made easily and quickly to 1/8" +/- about 1/200", giving a relative variation between hoops never more than around 30%, comparable to the ideal case.

Balls aren't round, hoops aren't exact, but worst of all, hoop-setters don't always abide by the Regulations. I have measured the hoops at several tournaments during the 2001 season, and only once out of many dozens of tests have I found a hoop which conformed to the regulation 1/8". That was probably by accident, because the other hoops on the lawn were all systematically tight. Usually hoops have had about 3/32" clearance, though very often on the 'tight' side, because considerable force had been used to insert the feeler gauges into the gap between the ball and the upright when setting the hoop (this can compress a ball by up to 1/64"). A hoop nominally set to 3/32" may in fact be closer to 1/16". Some setters call this a "snug" fit. My personal worst experience was at a recent CA handicap event when all four players on a lawn had problems; when I checked

the hoops afterwards, four were well under 1/16", one was 1/16", and one just over. To put this in perspective, the tightest hoops were about three times as difficult to run as they should have been, and one will stick in them three times as often as one might expect. The most extreme example of mis-setting I came across was in a Tournament where 90% of the hoops were set at well under 1/32" (probably only about 1/64") despite a Managerial notice that they were set to 1/16". Devious? Or what?

When one asks why hoops are not set properly, one hears a variety of specious excuses, e.g. -

- "it's the same for everybody" (doesn't answer the question; anyway, not true since tight hoops penalise higher bisquers more - they don't hit so straight);
- "a clearance of 3/32" is allowed in the Regulations" (this may be genuine misunderstanding of what the +/- 1/32" tolerance means - it does *not* mean that a systematic variation to the lower limit of 3/32" is allowed);
- "the hoops are too easy, and it spoils the game" (some players feel this, but they have no right to impose their views on the rest of us - failed hoops cause breaks to collapse, which often leads to negative play and slow, boring games which go to time);
- "players like them tight" (well, some do, though I have never known all the players to be asked - and my conversations tell me that most think that the rules should be obeyed);
- "the best players ought to win" (does this imply that bending the rules is not the same as cheating?);
- "they have to be set tight, as they get wider during play" (hardly ever true - and if a hoop does become too wide, then it can be officially narrowed).

Other replies, too fatuous to need comment, have included; "make them suffer"; "the size of the hoops makes no difference to the game"; "I got here two hours early to set them". Finally, one often hears the resigned "you can't do anything about it". It is true that extensive resetting of hoops at a Tournament is impracticable, and perhaps some setters volunteer their services knowing this, but while any sort of disciplinary action is unpleasant, has the CA no sanctions against blatant disregard of its Regulations? It takes action against people who upset Tournament schedules - they get barred from entry to CA events for a period - so can we also expect some action on this issue of hoop setting?

Some people have been surprised by the suggestion that the Regulations should be obeyed. They evidently take the arrogant attitude that rules are for other people. Surely I am not alone in thinking that Regulations should either be obeyed, or if croquet players as a body think change beneficial, they should be altered. By condoning the disregard of its own Regulations, the CA is in danger of bringing croquet into disrepute as a serious sport. What do other members think?

ball testing

alan pidcock tells james hawkins about the work of the CA equipment committee

The CA first formed an equipment committee to deal with issues on production standards of balls. The specification for testing was drawn up by Bernard Neal in consultation with Tim Haste, to form a protocol which has since become universally accepted both here and by the World Croquet Federation.

The testing of equipment was never intended to be something done by one specialist body in isolation. One of the main criteria for the tests was that they should be straightforward and able to be conducted singlehandedly and without the need for expensive apparatus. More recently, Alan Pidcock has been appointed Chairman of the CA's Equipment Committee. Better known as a mallet maker, Alan is a retired professor of chemistry at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston. Tests on equipment are now carried out by him, in conjunction with the Sports Science Department at the University.

The official test for balls to meet approval for championship use comprises four areas : size, weight, resilience and milling.

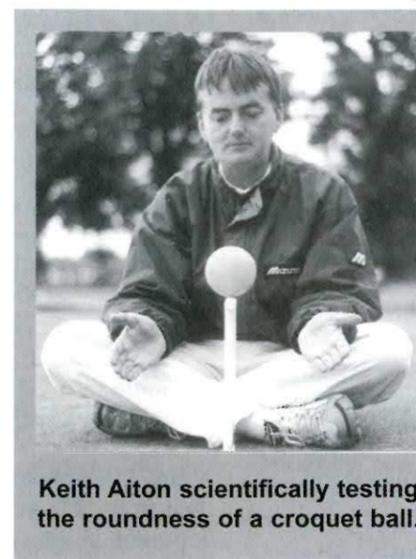
size

The maximum diameter of a ball must not exceed 3 21/32" (92.9 mm) and the minimum diameter must not be less than 3 19/32" (91.3 mm). The maximum and minimum diameters of a ball must not differ by more than 1/32" (0.8 mm).

The maximum and minimum diameters of balls in a set must not differ by more than 3/64" (1.2 mm).

For referees and club officials, it is normally sufficient to check that a ball falls between the lower and upper tolerances, and that all balls of a set are uniform. For this, three metal rings with the required inner diameter (standard diameter plus or minus 1/32") are used. For more rigorous testing, a tapered trough is used, down which balls are rolled. Diameter is measured at the point at which the ball sticks. Various readings are taken along each axis of the ball to check uniformity.

In theory, it's possible for a ball to pass this test without being round. Shapes such as a 50 pence piece and the curved equilateral triangle (below) have constant width without being circular. It would be possible (though pointless) to



Keith Aiton scientifically testing the roundness of a croquet ball.

construct a puffed-out tetrahedron in three dimensions which has the constant breadth of a ball. Common sense would normally disqualify this from the test.

weight

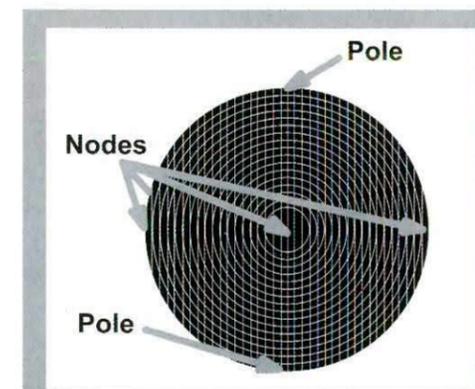
Weight is the most straightforward of the tests to perform. The weight of balls must be within the range 15 3/4 ounces (446.5 g) to 16 1/4 ounces (460.7 g). Balls are weighed on a simple set of scales. Each ball must be comparable to others in the same set.

milling

All balls must be milled with an identical pattern. The pattern must consist of two orthogonal sets of grooves and the width of the grooves must be less than the width of the upstands left after grooving.

No specific hi-tech test has been devised for this. If a set of balls have been produced from the same mould, they will inevitably have the same milling pattern. To test whether the upstands are wider than the grooved pattern, it is usually sufficient to judge this by sight. No ball presented to the Equipment Committee for testing has yet failed this requirement.

As a point of terminology, the points at which the grooves start and stop in each direction are termed the *nodes*. The other two apex points (where the milling crosses at right angles) are the *poles*.



Milling gives two sets of grooves : front to back and left to right. Milling is least at the four nodes, and heaviest at the two poles top and bottom.

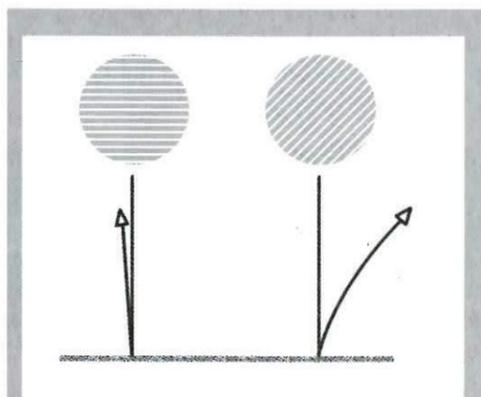
resilience

When dropped from a height of 60 inches (1524 mm) from the bottom of the ball onto a steel plate 1 inch (25.4 mm) thick and set rigidly in concrete, a ball must rebound to a height from the bottom of the ball of not less than 37 inches (940 mm).

The rebound height is the average of 18 measurements: each ball is dropped three times onto each of the two poles and four nodes in the milling pattern.

The rebound heights of a set of balls to be used together must not differ by more than 2 inches (50.8 mm).

This test is more complex than it appears. To begin with, a ball may not bounce consistently. Some balls tested can ricochet sideways (see diagram), either by accidentally dropping a spinning ball, by irregularities in the milling, or by bias in the ball itself. It's important therefore to take an average of the 18 readings.



The Bounce Test : Balls should bounce consistently, though spin or faulty milling could cause a ball to rebound askew.

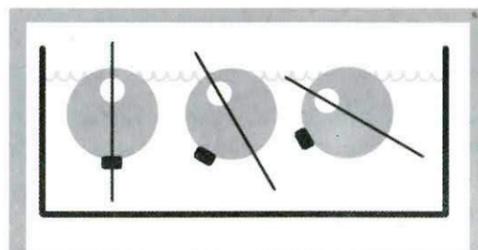
Balls dropped by hand will almost inevitably start spinning in their descent. The current test uses a piece of apparatus devised by Dick Le Maitre in South Africa, which resolves this problem. The ball is placed over a quick-release trap

door in a rig 60 inches above the surface. If the ball is released more slowly than the pull of gravity, it will catch on the door and start spinning. Dick's rig causes the ball to be dropped faster than the pull of gravity. In effect, the floor is removed from under the ball before the ball has realised it's falling.

bias

The bias test is not currently included in the official test for balls. The modern ball is made by pouring plastic into a mould. Some balls are solid throughout. Some have an air bubble in the centre (this is centralised by spinning the ball at speed). In principle, a ball could be biased if this bubble is not central, if the plastic has somehow settled before hardening, or if the ball is not round (such as the tetrahedron mentioned earlier).

A tank is filled with salt solution, dense enough for a ball to float in it. When a ball is spun in the water, bias may be apparent if one point consistently floats to the surface. Using Blu-Tak and lead weights, the apex is weighted. In a homogeneous, unbiased ball, the weight should always sink to the bottom wherever it is placed on the surface. Several readings should reveal any bias, and its extent.

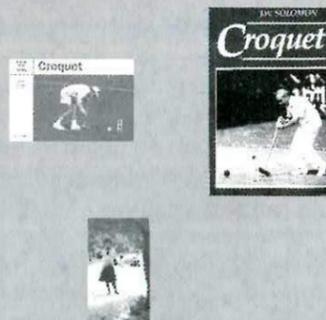


The Flotation Test : Even a biased ball can float normally if the weight is aligned with an air pocket (left). Several readings need to be taken.

The ultimate test of any ball is done outside the lab, and that is to see how it plays. No balls are expected to be put forward for testing for the next three years, by which time a new protocol, incorporating the new bias test, will be drawn up.

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coaching  
break builder 5

The fifth Break Builder tip, also written by Keith Aiton and first published in the Gazette in the summer of 1987, set this puzzle. Again you are playing Yellow in the fourth turn, and you are prepared to use two bisques to get the break started. Red is again on the West Boundary south of Corner II, but this time the opponent balls have Blue in the middle just west of the peg, and Black a short distance south of Red also on the West Boundary. What do you do?

As always, before constructing a break using bisques, you should picture where you need the other three balls. In this case, we need a pioneer for Hoop 1, a pioneer for Hoop 2 (next-but-one, thinking ahead), and a pivot. Of these the most immediately important is a good placing for the pioneer at Hoop 1.

solution

1 Shoot at Red from B-baulk. If you miss, take a bisque and rush Red into Corner II. Play a little stopshot on Red towards Hoop 2, ensuring that you have a rush on Black into the court. Rush Black into the middle so that it is near to Blue. If you have hit Red without the bisque, you push it into the court whilst setting up the rush on Black - this is more important than the position of Red.

2 If Black has finished north of Blue, croquet it to Hoop 1, roquet Blue and croquet it to Hoop 2, setting up both pioneers. Then go off behind Red, take the second bisque, and rush Red to the pivot position between Black and Blue, nearer the centre line. Take off from there to Black to run Hoop 1.

3 If Black has finished south of Blue, croquet it to Hoop 2, roquet Blue and croquet it to Hoop 1, setting up both pioneers again. As before go off behind Red, and use the second bisque to get the rush to create the pivot.

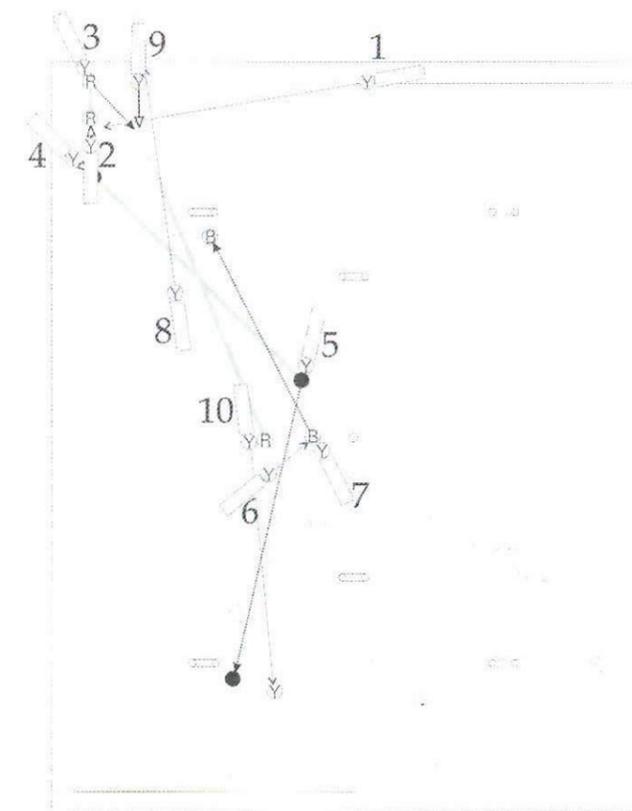
summary

- 1 Yellow shoots at Red.
  - 2 Take the bisque if necessary, stopshot Red a little way getting the rush on Black.
  - 3 Yellow rushes Black towards Blue.
  - 4 If north of Blue, croquet Black to Hoop 1, staying near to Blue.
  - 5 Yellow roquets Blue.
  - 6 Croquet Blue to Hoop 2.
  - 7 If south of Blue, croquet Black to Hoop 2, staying near to Blue.
  - 8 Yellow roquets Blue.
  - 9 Croquet Blue to Hoop 1.
  - 10 In either case shoot off BEHIND Red and take a bisque.
  - 11 Yellow rushes Red into pivot position.
  - 12 Take off to the Hoop 1 pioneer.
- The four-ball break exists for at most two bisques.

You may wonder how you can guarantee a rush on the Red

on the West Boundary - it's all about the angles. Shooting from B-baulk at a ball on the West Boundary that is not in the corner will nearly always result in your ball being replaced on the yard line further south, because of the Law that says the striker's ball comes onto the lawn at 90 degrees from the boundary line at the point it touched that line. Pythagoras will show that you have got to miss by a long way on the right of the Red ball for the resulting angle still to be nearer the corner! However, differently from Break Builder 4, you are now shooting at a ball where there is another one further from the corner, and there are two other possibilities (apart from you hitting Black when you aimed at Red!). The first is that your ball is replaced in such a position where you cannot hit it towards Red, either because Black is in between, or the shot is hampered. The second is that your ball is replaced in contact with Black. In either case all you can do is to roquet Black, push it into the court some way, but get your rush onto Red towards Blue, and take it from there.

Similarly when shooting from the middle of the lawn back to the Red outside Corner II, you have to miss a long way left before the ball is replaced with the rush towards the Corner rather than down the line. Under these circumstances however, the rush is important, so the aim is into the corner rather than to hit the ball, using the bisque deliberately on that shot rather than saving it.



Miss with 1 and north of blue

Roquet Rush Croquet Rushed path Mallet Stroke No. 2

## gateball : croquet's missing link?

James Hawkins reports on the phenomenal growth of Asia's new team game

The aftermath of the Second World War saw Japan rebuilding itself as a nation, not just in the bricks and mortar of Hiroshima, but in every aspect of its economic, industrial and cultural life.

In 1947, Eiji Suzuki came up with the idea of a sport for the young people of Hokkaido. Toys were scarce, and he set about finding a team game with the meagre facilities on offer. His surprising model was Croquet, and the result was to become Gateball.

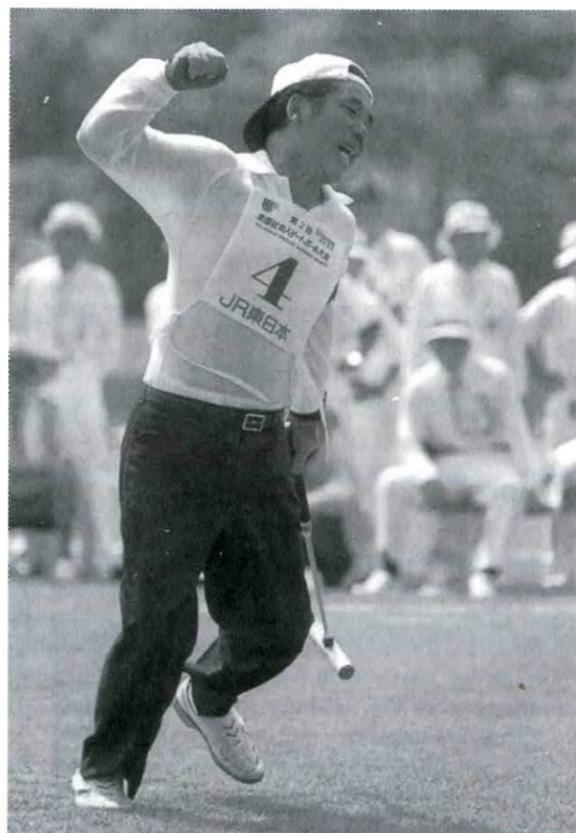
Half a century on, Gateball's spread has been impressive. Figures vary according to sources, though the most reliable indicate two million players in Japan, and a further five million in China. The arithmetic is easy for putting this in perspective with the West : Japan's population is almost exactly double that of the UK, and half that of the USA. Bearing in mind that Gateball only really took hold in 1964 (post Tokyo Olympics), and the governing body, the Japan Gateball Union, was formed as recently as 1984, this rate of growth is very impressive indeed.

### the game

Gateball's roots seem to be in some sort of version of 19th century 'tight croquet'. The main point of departure from Croquet is in the fact that there are ten numbered balls. Players wear bibs numbered 1 to 10, and Evens (white) play Odds (red). Play is in numerical sequence.

The playing area is about half the size of a croquet lawn. Dimensions are not rigidly specified, and nor is the surface itself. An all-weather gravelled surface seems to be more common than grass. There are only three hoops, called gates, though their appearance would alarm even the most undemanding croquet player. Balls are 7.5 cm in diameter, but each gate is 22 cm wide (that's getting on for a six inch clearance). Balls do not come into play until they've successfully passed through Gate 1, a shot of four metres. This is akin to the American Rules version of croquet, where Hoop 1 must be run from a foot in order to start. (The US game also involves playing in sequence, and has several other minor similarities to Gateball.) With only three gates needed, the first of which can be taken as read, this makes the game sound pointlessly simple. Not so.

Most aspects of Gateball are the exact opposite of their counterparts in Croquet. When the striker's ball touches another (the term "touch" is used rather than "roquet" - a great improvement), it is the touched ball that is brought back and placed in contact. The rush stroke does not exist. A key skill for the Gateballer, alien to the (Association) Croquet player, is the "slide touch". Ball 4 hits Ball 1 at an angle and glances (slides) off it, towards

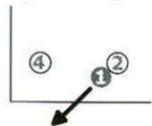


a specific spot. This replaces what would be the cut rush in Croquet, and corresponds to the more sophisticated scatter shots which a Golf Croquet player might use.

The croquet stroke is obsolete. It is replaced with the evocatively named "spark". A foot is placed on the striker's ball, with the sparked ball in contact. The striker's ball is struck so that the object ball moves, but the striker's must remain under the foot. The variety of the croquet stroke, with splits and stops and rolls, has no place in Gateball.

In Croquet, the striker's turn ends only if a croqueted ball is sent off. In Gateball, the turn ends if a ball goes off in any stroke *except* a spark. Sending the opponents off the lawn is a positive bonus.

When a ball is sent out of play, it may be played back on to the lawn, but it can't score, and it can't touch another ball. A team which can get all five of its opponents over the line has a big advantage.



The change with the largest impact concerns continuation shots. Run a croquet hoop and roquet the ball beyond in the same stroke, and the bonus stroke for the hoop is forfeited. In Gateball, all continuation shots may be saved up and taken together.

Hit two balls on the same stroke and the striker plays two sparks. Then the striker can play two extra shots, one after the other. Score a gate and hit another ball in the same stroke and a similar bonus is awarded.

This is where the game becomes tactical. 2, knowing that 4 plays before 1, puts 1 just beyond 4's gate. The gates are so wide that the extra bonus is always achievable if set up by a teammate. 2 places his own ball just beyond 1, on the line of 4's ricochet. 4 scores the gate and earns a bonus stroke. The ball hits 1 on the same stroke, earning a second bonus, and hits 2 earning a third. Moreover, 2 has taken position in the exact spot which will allow 4 to come to rest close to 4's next-but-one gate.



Throughout the game, the sequence of the balls is a constant consideration in tactics. 2 can shoot at 1 with impunity, knowing there are another nine turns before 1 can fight back. For the same reason, there is little point in 2 sparking 1 off the lawn. Experienced players would normally spark 1 towards 4, 6, 8 or 10, or construct a leave for 4 as above.

A significant difference between Croquet and Gateball is the time limit. All Gateball games have a time imposed, set strictly to 30 minutes. Every stroke is limited by a maximum of just ten seconds. These punitive limits mean that almost every game is decided on time. Tactics change by the minute. A team will adopt a totally different strategy at the start, at half-time, and towards the end of the 30 minutes. The perfect 25 point game (three hoops per ball plus two for the peg) is almost unheard of. Despite the presence of ten players, there is surprisingly little waiting around, with an average of just two minutes between a player's successive turns.

### the ethos of gateball

It may be an uncomfortable thought to Croquet players, but Gateball seems to have been conceived as a variant of Croquet, deliberately stripped of much of its technical skill. And it's painful to see the illegitimate child of Croquet growing up to be more successful than its parent.

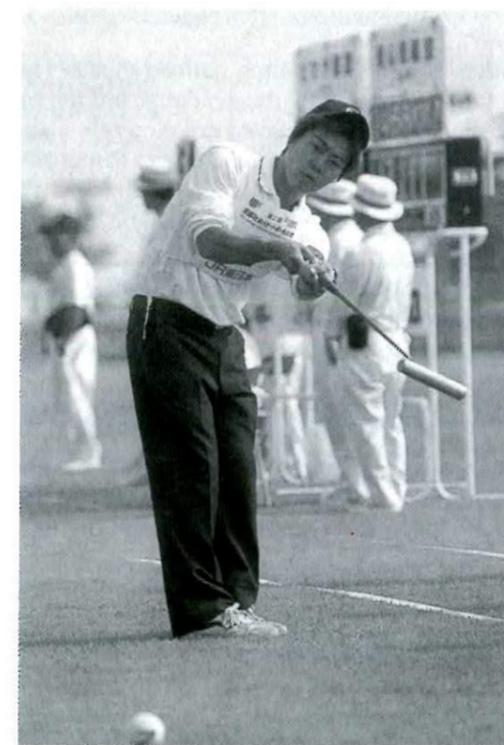
But this is doing the game a great disservice. If anything, it's more of a game of angles and distances than croquet. A bad situation can be recovered in Croquet with a couple of good shots, or a *bisque* or two. Gateball relies on balls being placed on an exact blade of grass. What's more, it's well nigh impossible to judge which blade of grass is the correct one.

Tactics are profound, and with only ten seconds to execute each shot, it's a struggle to keep up with the play. Enter the Team Manager.

The way a Gateball court is laid out, nine players sit on benches, while the striker plays. With the outplayers sit the two Managers. These may or may not be playing captains, but act as tactical overlords. However they choose to fulfil the role, theirs is not a silent one. In the UK experiments with the game, the role of the outplayers has been a key to the essence of the game. It's rowdy.

Critics might gripe at a game which sets ten players on the lawn, whose only task is to follow orders. That's nonsense. The Manager serves a useful purpose in instructing those who've perhaps not played before. With the positioning of the balls being so crucial, it is not possible for the Manager to give anything but the most rudimentary of instructions to more experienced members of the team. The duties of the Manager seem to lie, therefore, somewhere between football manager and theatrical prompt.

What is remarkable is the sort of people who play the game. Designed for children to play anywhere, it seems to have found a firm place among Japan's retired community. In a society whose Confucian ideals venerate the elderly, an activity which provides moderate exercise and, moreover, social interaction seems to have struck a chord. Daily Gateball sessions are packed, taking place in Tokyo's parks between 7.00 and 8.30 am. Like croquet, Gateball seems to have arrived at some form of coexistence with itself, where youngsters play competitively in championships, allowing senior members their leisurely morning game.



outside japan

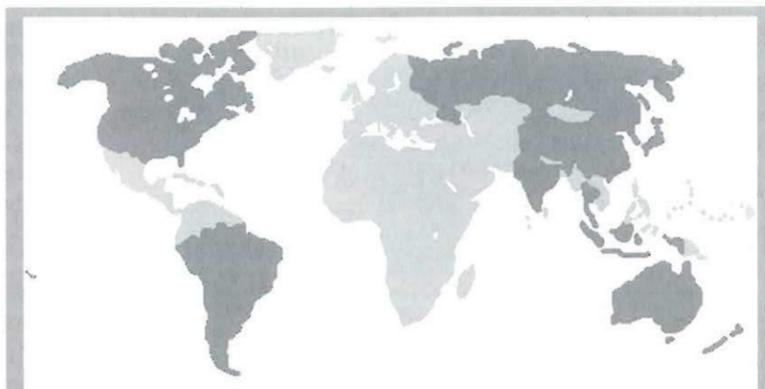
Colin Fletcher from Beverley Croquet Club travelled to Tokyo last year to visit family. Acting as an unofficial emissary of the Croquet Association, he called in at the Japan Gateball Union offices in the city centre. Yes, offices. Gateball seems to be big business. The JGU premises even include a rooftop carpet for outdoor play.

The evangelical zeal with which the JGU promote the game seems to be paying off. The five million Chinese players seem to be drawn from rural provinces, where Gateball has taken on the role of an inter-village Sunday cricket league. This is not to say that the Chinese don't set their sights further. The 3rd Asian Gateball Championship last year saw China take every single one of the last eight places.

Even the Japanese are in awe of the Chinese. The style of play seems to be akin to Croquet (the stick swung centre-style, unlike the Japanese golf stance). Remarkable is the unconventional, and uncomfortable, sparking style (below right), which gives the Chinese a great advantage in judging direction.

Australia sent three teams to the World Championships in Hawaii in the previous year. Fifteen of their top Croquet players took part, and even with a squad of Test veterans, they took each of the bottom three places (typically the field for such an event comprises around 700 teams).

The current tally of Gateballing nations makes surprising reading. Official figures are not available, but the countries where the sport is widely played are Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, China (including Taipei and Hong Kong), India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Russia, Singapore, Thailand, Uruguay, and



Gateball is played widely in 18 countries (shown dark). Newer countries where the game is just starting (including Mexico and Cuba) are not indicated.

the USA. The World Gateball Union has development in progress in several other nations. Demonstrations of the game have been staged in Mexico and Cuba. Europe is a barren land for the spread of the game so far, though it's rumoured that the next World Championships will take place in, of all places, Germany.

gateball in britain

The CA has been looking at several ways of introducing young people to Croquet. A number of clubs have experimented successfully with Kiwi Croquet, a New Zealand import which provides an abridged form of Croquet for schoolchildren. The CA's Development Committee has set up a Working Party to investigate the introduction of Gateball to the UK. The Group comprises Bill Sidebottom (Chairman of Development), Alan Pidcock (Chairman of Equipment), John Haslam (Southport Croquet Club Chairman), and me, as some sort of (supposed) playing expert. Alan, John and I are based at Southport, and the long term plan is to use Gateball as means of expanding the Club and widening its membership across age groups.



The backbreaking stance adopted by Chinese players when sparking.

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This is not to say that we see Gateball as a simplified Croquet game, and a key to promote Croquet. Gateball is not that. These are two separate games, which happen to look similar. Clubs, particularly larger clubs like Southport, have difficulty in getting full use out of their facilities without intensive recruitment. Gaining new members to the Gateball wing of the Club may permit future cross-pollination between the two sports. How or whether that works has yet to be seen.

What is clear is that the Club is not yet ready to open its doors to new Gateballers. The game is easy to learn, but the hardest starting point is to come from a croquet-playing background, and to have to unlearn all one's habits. No-one is going to become a Grandmaster of Gateball after five games. And until we as members have found out what we're supposed to be doing, recruitment of newcomers is futile.

In terms of technique, what is a surprise is how shockingly difficult the game is. The balls are resin, and behave very much like snooker balls. The mallets (or sticks) are like golf putters, with solid metal heads. There is so much bounce in a ball that it's very difficult to hit anything without sending

the striker's ball off. The Australians have reverted from centre-style croquet stances to side-on softball grips, in order to control the pace. Hitting straight with such a small striking face on the stick is a further challenge. Having said that, Gateball has some desirable features for club play.



It's such a great leveller, relying even less than Croquet on strength. Our first session saw two mixed teams, handicapped from 0 to 24. It was the 24 who held the key to success. A year of very occasional play seems to have made the Club into a much more socially cohesive unit. You can play indoors (the Japanese use carpets in sports halls), and you can play over the winter (witness the Southport frost-bound New Year's Day gathering).

Is it a good game? Possibly; it's sort of grown on me over the season. Will it take off in the West? I just don't know. But with seven million more of them than us, I don't expect we've heard the last of them.

international committee

By David Openshaw, Chair, CA International Committee  
**world championship 2002**

The next WCF Association Croquet World Championships will be held in Wellington, New Zealand, from 2 - 8 December 2002 with 64 competitors taking part.

England are likely to get around six or seven places and some wild cards will also be available. There will also be a qualifying event from 29 November to 1 December with around four places in the main event available.

macrobertson shield 2003

The next MacRobertson Shield will take place at the National Croquet Center, West Palm Beach, Florida USA, in November 2003. The International Committee are responsible for ensuring our team are as thoroughly prepared as possible. We are facing increasing competition particularly from New Zealand. Therefore we need to ensure that the standard of our team is better than our team which won in 2000. To achieve this we need at least two more players to reach the standards of our best four players. The CA intends to give as much help as possible to players who are committed to such an improvement. It is intended to select the team in early January 2003. During the coming season 2002 we will hold a number of training events for potential members of the team. In addition we will develop individual coaching programmes for a number of players. Anyone interested in participating in this programme should contact David Openshaw.

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## 2001 rankings

### how the rankings work

The CA and World Ranking Systems are governed by the principle that points are allocated between players according to the probabilities of each of them winning. So, a highly ranked player beating a lower one would receive few points for victory, but lose many more if suffering a defeat.

Notionally, this is similar to the Automatic Handicapping System. Without the need for portability, though, the Rankings may be calculated centrally by computer (by Chris Williams), and can provide a more accurate picture of the pecking order than the AHS ever could.

The System uses two figures: Grade and Index. For calculations, the Index is the more important. It changes according to the formula:

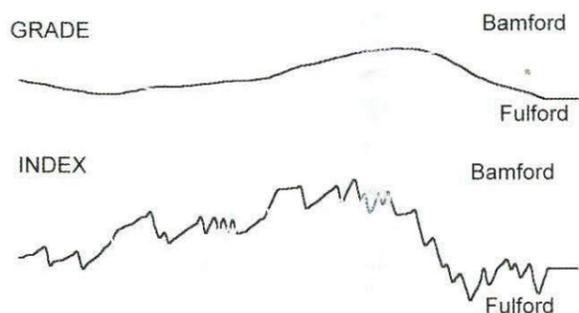
$$\text{Change} = F / (1 + 10^{(idiff/50)})$$

where *idiff* is the difference between the two players' indices. *F* is a constant which reflects the level of an event. It's normally set to 5, but a major championship would merit a value of 6, and for a consolation event it would be 4. If *idiff* is huge and positive (the very strong player wins), *Change* will be virtually zero. If the underdog wins, *Change* will be almost as large as *F*.

This works fine for a single game. Sorting the list of games by Index presents a major problem, however. *Index* is such a volatile function that two players might swap places repeatedly within a single day's play. The smoothing function *Grade* is introduced to calm the system down. As

the system is ongoing, Grade and Index need to be recalculated after every single game between any two players. Broadly speaking, Grade is calculated as 90% of a player's old Grade plus 10% of the current Index. To visualise this, one can imagine Index changing rapidly throughout a season, and Grade fluctuating around ten times more slowly. It's for this reason that Grade is used as the more reliable indicator, and the one on which the Ranking System is sorted.

To interpret this in the Ranking tables here, the general rule is as follows. If Index is larger than Grade, short term performance has improved, and vice versa. The graph below illustrates this, with the relative performances of the two top players, Fulford and Bamford. Their play had been matched all season, until the World Championship Final (shaded), at which Bamford's Index overtook Fulford's. Note that the Grades did not cross until some time later. Bamford's form has remained the more constant since, with an impressive 85% win rate.



### world association rankings

	Grade	Index	Games	Wins	%age		Grade	Index	Games	Wins	%age		
1	Reg Bamford [SA]	2845	2873	111	88	79.3	21	Peter Couch [NZ]	2465	2463	23	20	87.0
2	Robert Fulford [E]	2724	2665	117	89	76.1	22	Mark Suter [SA]	2464	2476	48	40	83.3
3	David Maugham [E]	2666	2623	127	95	74.8	23	Ronan McInerney [I]	2460	2430	59	39	66.1
4	Toby Garrison [NZ]	2622	2488	53	40	75.5	24	Ian Dumergue [A]	2457	2562	36	28	77.8
5	Bob Jackson [NZ]	2593	2598	136	112	82.4	25	Matthew Burrow [Jer]	2455	2398	74	50	67.6
6	Chris Clarke [E]	2565	2609	119	84	70.6	26	Colin Irwin [E]	2450	2475	70	42	60.0
7	Mark McInerney [I]	2539	2495	57	40	70.2	27	Patrick Hort [E]	2450	2450	75	49	65.3
8	John Prince [NZ]	2537	2482	59	41	69.5	28	Mark Avery [E]	2440	2473	69	39	56.5
9	Simon Williams [I]	2530	2552	78	51	65.4	29	Jeff Dawson [E]	2432	2480	53	36	67.9
10	Dennis Bulloch [NZ]	2529	2575	109	76	69.7	30	Mik Mehas [USA]	2429	2374	13	7	53.8
11	Steve Comish [E]	2512	2540	30	21	70.0	31	David Harrison-Wood [E]	2416	2423	130	91	70.0
12	Stephen Mulliner [E]	2506	2467	104	64	61.5	32	Peter Parkinson [NZ]	2412	2397	124	90	72.6
13	Jacques Fournier [USA]	2501	2504	48	32	66.7	33	Leo McBride [C]	2410	2435	63	49	77.8
14	Graham Beale [NZ]	2500	2608	52	39	75.0	34	Ed Cunningham [I]	2408	2397	83	48	57.8
15	Brian Wislang [NZ]	2500	2560	50	33	66.0	35	Bruce Fleming [A]	2405	2478	68	47	69.1
16	Martin Clarke [A]	2495	2520	81	60	74.1	36	David Openshaw [E]	2401	2449	38	21	55.3
17	David Goacher [E]	2485	2504	72	45	62.5	37	John Taves [USA]	2394	2430	19	17	89.5
18	Robin Brown [E]	2478	2414	38	19	50.0	38	Jeremy Dyer [E]	2389	2423	97	59	60.8
19	Harley Watts [A]	2478	2460	12	9	75.0	39	Debbie Cornelius [E]	2389	2313	22	13	59.1
20	Wynand Louw [SA]	2467	2466	28	19	67.9	40	Terry Burge [E]	2389	2368	28	18	64.3

### apology

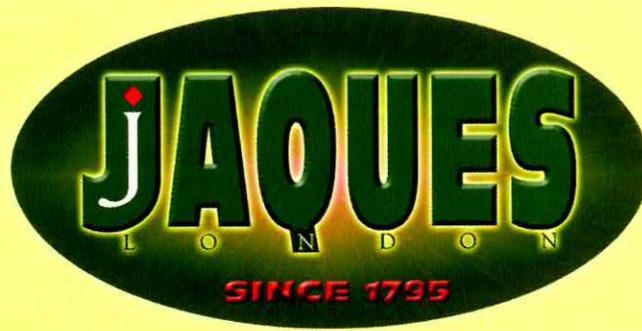
In the last edition of the Gazette, a Handicap Ranking Table was promised. As too few responses have been received at the time of going to press, this has had to be postponed. Sorry for any disappointment this causes - Ed.

### UK and Ireland association rankings

	Grade	Index	Games	Wins	%age		Grade	Index	Games	Wins	%age		
1	Reg Bamford [SA]*	2846	2874	111	88	79.3	51	Alex Leggate [E]	2203	2129	10	3	30.0
2	Robert Fulford [E]	2725	2665	117	89	76.1	52	Jonathan Kirby [S]	2202	2317	61	33	54.1
3	David Maugham [E]	2667	2623	127	95	74.8	53	Sam Tudor [W]	2199	2211	80	42	52.5
4	Chris Clarke [E]	2565	2609	119	84	70.6	54	Brian Hallam [E]	2197	2214	42	23	54.8
5	Mark McInerney [I]	2539	2495	57	40	70.2	55	Jon Watson [E]	2186	2244	10	9	90.0
6	Simon Williams [I]	2530	2552	78	51	65.4	56	Fred Rogerson [I]	2179	2077	22	7	31.8
7	Steve Comish [E]	2513	2541	30	21	70.0	57	Tony Mrozinski [W]	2168	2126	41	21	51.2
8	Stephen Mulliner [E]	2506	2467	104	64	61.5	58	Ben Elwell [E]	2166	2210	17	12	70.6
9	David Goacher [E]	2485	2505	72	45	62.5	59	Ian Lines [E]	2161	2160	65	37	56.9
10	Robin Brown [E]	2478	2415	38	19	50.0	60	William Prichard [W]	2155	2067	14	6	42.9
11	Ronan McInerney [I]	2457	2429	59	39	66.1	61	Paul Castell [E]	2155	2163	70	35	50.0
12	Matthew Burrow [Jer]	2456	2398	74	50	67.6	62	George Noble [E]	2155	2183	40	21	52.5
13	Colin Irwin [E]	2450	2476	70	42	60.0	63	Ian Burridge [W]	2154	2193	38	13	34.2
14	Patrick Hort [E]	2450	2450	75	49	65.3	64	David Magee [S]	2140	2186	88	45	51.1
15	Mark Avery [E]	2440	2474	69	39	56.5	65	Alan Linton [E]	2123	2139	41	24	58.5
16	Jeff Dawson [E]	2432	2480	53	36	67.9	66	John Davis [Lux]*	2122	2158	41	20	48.8
17	David Harrison-Wood [E]	2416	2423	130	91	70.0	67	Peter Nash [E]	2121	2167	16	11	68.8
18	Ed Cunningham [I]	2407	2397	83	48	57.8	68	Paul Smith [E]	2119	2138	52	27	51.9
19	David Openshaw [E]	2401	2449	38	21	55.3	69	Lewis Palmer [W]	2118	2103	14	8	57.1
20	Jeremy Dyer [E]	2390	2423	97	59	60.8	70	James Dixon [E]	2117	2071	11	5	45.5
21	Terry Burge [E]	2387	2368	28	18	64.3	71	Paul Duckworth [Jer]	2108	2128	24	14	58.3
22	Ed Duckworth [E]	2387	2399	29	18	62.1	72	Ian Vincent [E]	2104	2043	51	23	45.1
23	Phil Cordingley [E]	2382	2352	123	75	61.0	73	Howard Bottomley [E]	2091	2113	21	13	61.9
24	Debbie Cornelius [E]	2381	2307	22	13	59.1	74	Patsy Fitzgerald [I]	2091	2129	35	13	37.1
25	Dave Kibble [E]	2374	2422	123	72	58.5	75	Ailsa Lines [E]	2083	2039	45	24	53.3
26	Michael Heap [E]	2374	2356	30	16	53.3	76	William Ormerod [E]	2082	2063	12	8	66.7
27	Peter Trimmer [E]	2361	2317	41	21	51.2	77	Malcolm O'Connell [S]	2077	2030	37	17	45.9
28	Tim Wilkins [E]	2360	2414	98	61	62.2	78	Jenny Williams [NZ]*	2070	2126	102	54	52.9
29	Shane Davis [NZ]*	2354	2235	47	21	44.7	79	Jerry Guest [E]	2067	2215	93	45	48.4
30	Chris Farthing [E]	2345	2294	71	38	53.5	80	Nick Evans [E]	2064	2027	31	12	38.7
31	Andrew Johnson [NZ]*	2341	2336	37	25	67.6	81	Tom Browne [I]	2062	2079	27	15	55.6
32	John Gibbons [E]	2334	2351	103	59	57.3	82	Ian Plummer [E]	2062	2047	31	15	48.4
33	Ian Bond [S]	2324	2331	23	13	56.5	83	Roger Jenkins [E]	2050	2041	61	28	45.9
34	Don Gaunt [E]	2316	2270	57	30	52.6	84	Paul Stephenson [E]	2045	2088	33	16	48.5
35	Chris Patmore [S]	2315	2285	60	30	50.0	85	Kevin Carter [E]	2045	2033	45	25	55.6
36	Keith Aiton [S]	2314	2326	95	52	54.7	86	Paul Harbord [E]	2041	2039	30	19	63.3
37	Lionel Tibble [E]	2293	2242	89	57	64.0	87	Samir Patel [E]	2030	2083	60	31	51.7
38	David Foulser [E]	2292	2316	68	47	69.1	88	John Low [E]	2027	2063	37	19	51.4
39	Richard White [E]	2289	2314	30	23	76.7	89	John Surgenor [S]	2019	2031	37	19	51.4
40	John Evans [W]	2282	2291	20	13	65.0	90	Lawrence Whittaker [E]	2018	1972	48	17	35.4
41	Gail Curry [E]	2272	2192	78	51	65.4	91	Alan Pidcock [E]	2017	1996	34	22	64.7
42	Tony Le Moignan [Jer]	2264	2224	71	40	56.3	92	Tom Weston [E]	2014	2013	64	29	45.3
43	Alan McInerney [I]	2253	2308	30	17	56.7	93	Evan Newell [I]	2013	1923	30	12	40.0
44	Dave Mundy [E]	2248	2264	124	86	69.4	94	Peter Payne [CH]*	2011	1925	54	28	51.9
45	James Death [E]	2243	2334	38	20	52.6	95	Beatrice McGlen [E]	2010	2037	19	13	68.4
46	Kristian Chambers [E]	2237	2268	15	10	66.7	96	Sarah Burrow [Jer]	2009	2108	50	29	58.0
47	Peter Taylor [E]	2234	2205	67	40	59.7	97	Andrew Cowing [E]	2008	1996	24	13	54.2
48	David J Nicholson [E]	2221	2238	40	26	65.0	98	Bernard Neal [E]	1988	2022	25	12	48.0
49	John Toye [E]	2209	2276	22	16	72.7	99	Jack Davies [E]	1987	2067	52	26	50.0
50	Chris Williams [W]	2207	2262	106	59	55.7	100	Nelson Morrow [NZ]	1986	1982	58	26	44.8

### UK golf rankings

	Grade	Index	Games	Wins	%age		Grade	Index	Games	Wins	%age		
1	Stephen Mulliner	156.52	161.97	21	20	95.2	11	Bill Arliss	113.04	115.51	49	26	53.1
2	Derek Old	143.13	144.69	60	47	78.3	12	David Hopkins	112.26	105.37	47	26	55.3
3	Chris Sheen	139.81	142.71	44	33	75.0	13	Samantha Curry	110.11	115.97	29	16	55.2
4	Robert Fulford	133.86	147.08	11	10	90.9	14	Alan Pidcock	109.96	111.21	15	8	53.3
5	John Moore	130.62	128.32	49	34	69.4	15	Bryan Judson	109.73	109.59	6	2	33.3
6	Ivor Brand	126.28	126.23	32	23	71.9	16	Ken Mason	109.59	110.37	45	25	55.6
7	Roy Ware	120.73	120.29	25	19	76.0	17	Ian Price	108.43	109.24	30	16	53.3
8	Tom Weston	120.19	123.48	47	31	66.0	18	Ivor Nunn	107.16	111.7	6	4	66.7
9	Don Beck	119.69	130.81	31	23	74.2	19	Jeremy Hackett	105.86	101.84	40	20	50.0
10	James Hawkins	116.48	111.79	27	15	55.6	20	G Mitchell	104.77	102.56	16	7	43.8



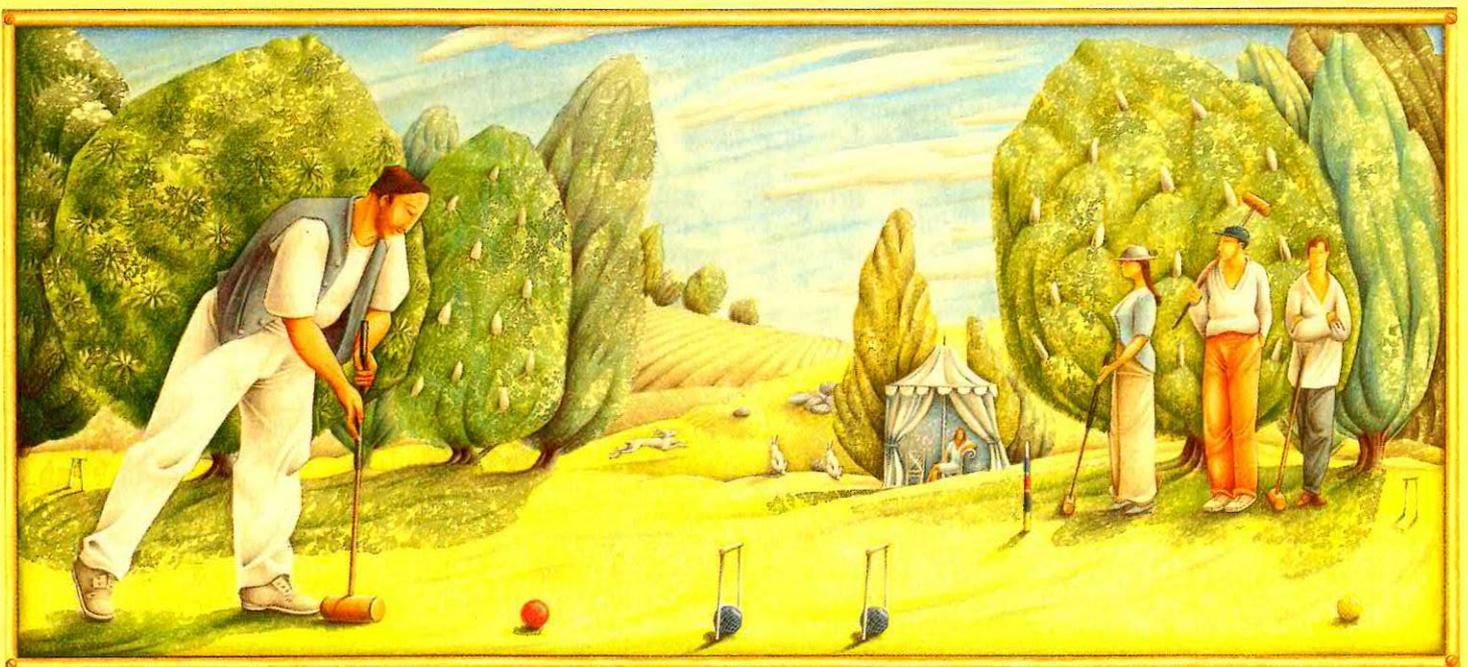
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