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ISSUE 293 - OCTOBER 2004



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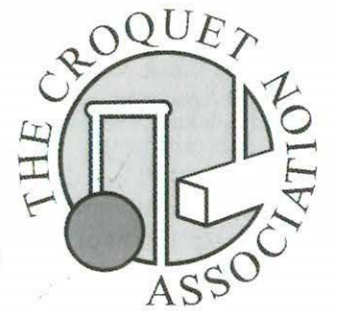


MITSUBISHI MOTORS

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

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Cover photograph by Johnny Mitchell:

David Maugham, winner of this year's President's Cup, in play in the 2003 MacRobertson Shield Test Series at Florida's National Croquet Center.

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Editorial

I've had what someone with a coarser turn of phrase than mine might describe as "a bitch of a month".

You'll recall that I signed off the last edition of the *Gazette* by forewarning all contributors of my impending change of address in August. Such timescales are, of course, elastic, and here I am, still waiting for the move.

By rights, I should be unpacking teacups and painting the walls in my new house by now. The reason why I'm not is largely because my cash-rich buyers proved not to be, and pulled out within a week of completion. At that stage, I'd already put my furniture into storage. So now, I'm having to finish off the *Gazette* in a house with no furniture.

Always a delicate and sickly child, I never developed a taste for sleeping rough. But my years of croquet have taught me great resourcefulness and adaptability. So here I sit on a pile of bubble-wrap, stirring my tea with a door-key. I've developed a strange stooping posture and a bleary gaze. Needless to say, I plan never, ever to move house again.

Things should improve once the removal men return my possessions tomorrow - and not before time, as I'm down to my last pair of socks.

*

It's not the moving I object to, but the waiting. Plan A was for me to have upped and left by July. That would have left me with a good couple of months of croquet in a season where I've been largely off the scene. As it is, the last five months have seen me giving (in total) one day's Golf Croquet coaching in Chester and six days fruitlessly pulling bisques at Bowdon. There's nothing more disrupting than the threat of imminent disruption.

Being isolated from the tournament circuit, I've not been keeping fully abreast of current thinking. So I'm grateful for the returns of the Readers' Survey, the results of which are just starting to percolate through. I dare say there'll be some comment on the findings in the next edition. In the meantime, I've good news for those who want to see more reporting of the 'majors', as this edition features reports on the Opens, the Eights, and some of the top Golf Croquet events. Apologies, as ever, for not being able to squeeze in more reports for those of you who want them. It's the same old problem of balancing diversity with production costs, under the usual time constraints.

Keep your contributions coming. You know the address to send stuff to. It's the same as ever.

Chairman's Column

Although I expect the CA AGM and dinner to mark the retirement of John Solomon as its long serving President to have taken place before you read this, the publication schedule is such that news of these events must wait until the next issue (though I hope that there will be information on the CA web site, <http://www.croquet.org.uk>, for those who want it before then).

I can, however, take this opportunity to thank Bob Whitaker and Jolyon Kay, who are retiring as representatives of the South-West and Southern regions, and as Chairmen of the Coaching and International committees respectively. Although remaining on Council, Jonathan Isaacs steps down after four years as Chairman of the Marketing committee, with a welcome upturn in sponsorship and publicity to show for his efforts.

Members of Council and others co-opted onto its committees contribute much in specific areas, but it is the Secretary who coordinates their activities and translates their ideas into practice, as well as being main point of contact with the CA, for members and the public alike. Nigel Graves, who took on this role while the office was still at Hurlingham and oversaw its move to Cheltenham, has indicated that he wishes to retire next year, so we are now looking to appoint someone to take over from him. Whilst knowledge of the sport and its players would no doubt be helpful in getting started, the essential requirement is for someone who is able to work largely on their own initiative and with volunteers, who has experience of general and financial administration and who is proficient in the use of office equipment and productivity software. Please see the notice on page 9 and get in touch if you are interested, or know someone who may be.

Finally, I hope that you have had an enjoyable season, despite most areas having had a lot more rain, and hence grass on their lawns, than in recent years, and that you winter well.

Ian Vincent

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Publication Schedule

Copy should reach the Editor BEFORE the 15th of the month before publication is due, unless otherwise informed.

Advertising

Full details of all advertising rates and data are available at all clubs as well as via the CA Shop and the Secretary of the CA.

Specific Questions and Queries

Specific questions or queries should be sent direct to the Editor. Email contributions, including tournament reports, should be sent direct to the Editor, or copied to the Editor if they are being posted to the Nottingham List.

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

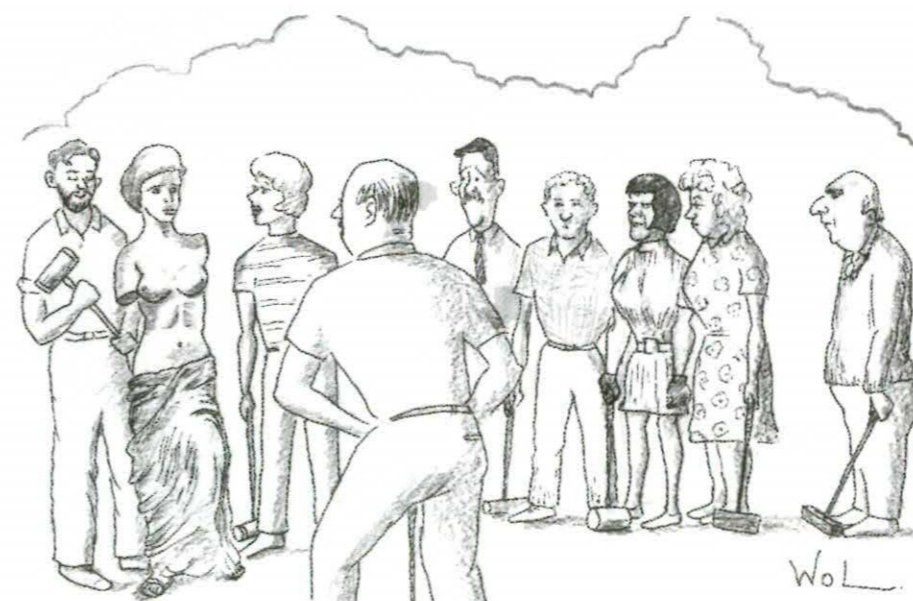
Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or any other PC-based word processor. Hand written reports are no longer accepted.

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.

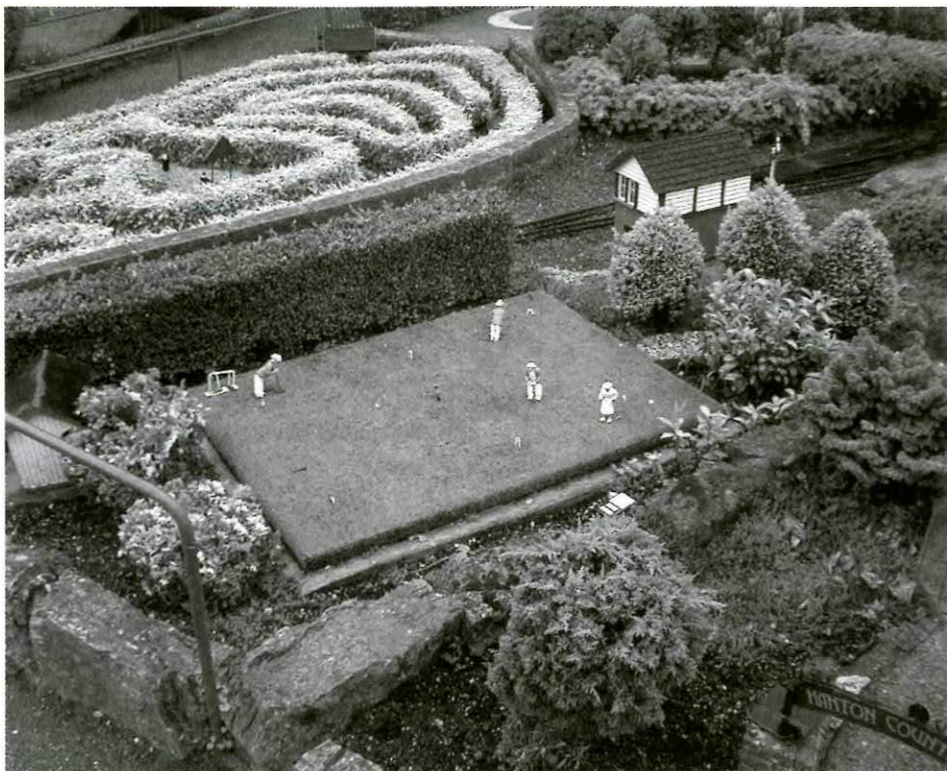
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The opinions expressed in the Croquet Gazette are those of the editor and contributors. The Croquet Association is not responsible from statements other than those clearly defined as being made on behalf of the Croquet Association.



"-AND THIS IS THE IRISH GRIP. ER - I'LL COME TO YOU LATER, LOVE."

Letters



Short Croquet?

I discovered this undersized lawn (above) while taking my granddaughter around Beckonscot model village in Beaconsfield - no triple peels here but they do play in all weathers!

Roger Staples
Middlesbrough

Cornish Croquet

After nine years of effort, sometimes busy, sometimes frantic and sometimes despairingly lethargic, Cornwall Croquet Club is now almost in operation. We have, at Porthpean, on the seaward side of St Austell, one lawn in working order and one levelled and seeded but not playable before next season. Our organisation is still in the process of getting sorted and we lack playing equipment, due on loan from the South West Federation. But at last we have a lawn, a pavilion of sorts, one set of hoops, peg and clips and three of second-hand balls. And we have a substantial

grant from the CA (much appreciated) to help us with insurance, publicity, security, line-marking, etc. Visitors will be welcome. Try our website at cornwall-croquet.org.uk.

We now have the hard work in front of us, the recruiting, coaching and retention of potential subscribers. Our qualified coach is *hors de combat*, our one A-class player lives a good hour away and others suitable for coaching recruits are few and far between. Any help from eager visitors to this delightful county would be most welcome.

As far as recruits and their encouragement are concerned, I believe the badges awarded to qualified coaches have value in lending authority to their endeavours. I have tried for some years through the correspondence columns of the *Gazette* and the good offices of the CA Secretary to obtain the same privilege for the same reasons to referees. I understand that my efforts have been met by the upper echelons (details not available to me) with apathy, procrastination and lack of interest. My letters to the *Gazette* and to the CA Chairman have remained uncommented on and unanswered respectively. A reasoned

refusal I could understand (perhaps!) but the refusal to make any decision except the decision not to make a decision I find extremely upsetting. Too bad. It is time to stop moaning and get on with the organisation of open days, advertising, sending out leaflets, contacting local TV, radio and press and the encouragement of the extremely co-operative and constructive owner and grounds staff of Porthpean Farm and Golf Club.

Wish us luck and come and see us if you can.

Tony Backhouse
Chairman, Cornwall Croquet Club.

Golf handicaps

As an active coach of golf croquet both in the West Midlands and in South Africa, I make the following points:

1. 90% of golf croquet is played by club members who have little interest in competitive play and value it because it is more social and interactive than association.
2. On both continents it is the fact that the high bisquers (3 - 6) have little interest (or insufficient skill) to cope with the bisque system.
3. The growth of golf croquet means that there is frequently pressure on lawn space outside the larger clubs.

Now the confession:

In all but official competitive play, i.e. CA events in England, provincial and national events in South Africa, I adopt a different form of handicapping and the only reason I bring this to your attention is that (a) the middle and high bisquers like it and (b) it speeds up games and eliminates the need for ghastly time limits which are invariably imposed just as games get interesting.

Given that it is highly unlikely that the really good players will ever be present at such informal events, what I do is to translate the difference in the standard of the players into hoops, i.e.

if a 4 plays a 2, the 4 starts the game two hoops up. The game proceeds as normal from corner 4 to hoop 1. The lesser player knows exactly what he/she has to do, and the better player is on his/her mettle to get seven points on the board first.

Recently in Johannesburg I managed a weekend tournament from 9.30 to 4.30 on two lawns over two days, and 134 games were completed with no time limits.

What was interesting was that it enabled me to assess inaccuracies in handicaps which could be easily adjusted in the course of the weekend's play.

This system is also being used in the West Midlands for play at the social level.

Am I a heretic and will I be excommunicated?

Chris Bennett
Edgbaston

Practical Gamesmanship

This scene from the Yorkshire 2004 Open Golf Championship, held at Ripon Spa in September, shows Gamesmanship in action.



On the left is David Hopkins (All England Singles and Doubles Champion 2004). His is the "omnipotent / intimidating" ploy - note the

England socks and sweater. Being the gentleman he is, he succumbed to the "sympathy" ploy, in company with other England players!

On the right is a newcomer to Golf Croquet, Dick Strover, who had a knee operation two days before the Championship began.

His is the "sympathy" counterploy - note the battered golfing cap and crutch. This worked like magic, and he reached the semi-finals to be beaten by an ex-World Champion.

Paul Strover
Sudbury

Anyone for Crochet?

In the course of recent correspondence with our local authority over lease renewal, we were addressed as Middlesbrough Crochet Club. One can only fear that this further reflects the old-fashioned image of our sport?

Charles Waterfield
Middlesbrough

Not for the first time, I fear. I recall an amusing letter to the Gazette around 15 years ago, in which the correspondent asked the then Editor (Chris Hudson) for advice on patterns for making lace doilies.
- Ed.

Golf Croquet Rules

It has come to my notice that some players are being told that if a ball is placed in the hoop in order during an additional stroke in handicap play and the ball does not complete the running of the hoop within that stroke, the ball cannot score a hoop point for itself in any subsequent strokes unless it first exits from the hoop and starts to run the hoop afresh.

This is not the correct interpretation of the law 16 which states in 16(d) "No point may be scored for the striker's side with the additional stroke". The act of starting to run the hoop is not mentioned anywhere in law 16.

Bill Arliss
Chairman, Golf Croquet Rules
Committee

Apology

In the last edition of the *Croquet Gazette*, it was claimed that the terminology of the "Tealady" shot derives from a game played by New Zealand Internationals John Prince and Roger Murfitt. In fact, those responsible were fellow NZ players Bob Jackson and Joe Hogan.

The Editor apologises, both for this confusion, and for the incorrect spelling of Roger Murfitt's name in the item.

Applications are invited for the post of Secretary of the Croquet Association, to take over from Nigel Graves who plans to retire next year. The duties involve managing the office, which is in the grounds of Cheltenham Croquet Club; servicing meetings of Council and the Management Committee; administering membership applications and renewals; liaising with member clubs and handling enquiries by the public and other bodies. The post is a substantial part-time commitment and remunerated accordingly.

Please contact Ian Vincent (e-mail: Ian.Vincent@nottingham.ac.uk, tel: 0115-925-3664), or Nigel Graves at the CA Office, for further information. Applications, in the form of a CV with a covering letter, should be sent by e-mail or post to the CA Office to arrive no later than 15th November.

Talent, Time or Tentative Help What can you offer the Skills Register?

Hamish Hall initiated the question above during his time as Development Chairman in 2002-3. Later he sent his survey to clubs asking members to list their skills that might be useful to the CA, Federations or clubs.

Over two-dozen of you replied and the committee is grateful to those who volunteered. However we were looking for more than coaching and refereeing skills for which provision is already available (although we did ask for these skills too). Called a Skills Register, what we were looking for was meant to be far ranging.

Ideas for Fun Days and Corporate Events were appropriate offers, as were Target Marketing and Promoting New Clubs. Also offered were Management Expertise, Finance Advice, Ground maintenance, Hoop setting, Recruitment and General



development ideas.

Is there anyone with experience of applying for lottery grants or someone full of ideas for fundraising at all levels whether for small or large amounts? Are there any Legal advisors who could advise on a course of action if a club needed it? Are there any Archivists willing to advise? Is there

something else you can do that might benefit the game and its players?

The idea was to build a register for clubs to seek help from the CA office who in turn would direct the question to an understanding helper/advisor/expert. The advice would not necessarily be sought or given free of charge.

So, if you think you could help a fellow member or club please contact me, the current Development Chairman, either directly or through the CA office.

You do not need a survey form to join the list.

Patricia Duke-Cox
Development Committee Chairman
0794 4487880

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The Croquet Association Report from Council to the 2004 AGM

1. General

Council met twice during the year, in October and March; the December meeting was cancelled due to lack of business. This reflects the fact that most decisions are now delegated to committees, but concern about this and the workload of chairmen who also sit on the Management Committee has resulted in a working party to review the three-tier structure introduced in 1999.

The President, John Solomon, is retiring at the start of this AGM and a dinner has been organised to thank him for his long service. Bernard Neal has been nominated as his successor. The Secretary, Nigel Graves, has also indicated his wish to retire and the opportunity is being taken to review the role of this post.

Individual membership is essentially static, but eleven clubs have (re-)joined the CA to obtain the benefit of the Civil Liability Insurance scheme that was introduced this year. Individual subscription rates are to be slightly increased.

The strategic plan drafted last year was adopted. Terms of reference for the Major Grants Committee and Investment Sub-Committee were approved.

2. Administration

Packaged membership administration systems are being investigated to replace the current bespoke database, to meet the needs of the office, shop, website, Treasurer and membership.

3. Coaching

A workshop on sextuple peeling was run following the introduction of the platinum award for this feat.

4. Development

The grant application form is being revised and procedures for considering applications streamlined. Grants have been made to Medway, Pendle and Ramsgate clubs and the South and South-West federations. Information about Sportsmatch has been circulated but no applications have yet been made.

5. Equipment

Balls from three suppliers have been tested for approval and their colours measured. Further investigations have been made into the playing characteristics of hoops and encouragement given for the production of a new cast-iron hoop. Advice is being given on the construction of a proposed artificial court, using the experience gained at Bury St. Edmunds.

6. Golf Croquet

The Open Championship was this year subsumed into the 6th World Golf Croquet Championship and successfully run at Southwick June 20-27 for the World Croquet Federation. Sponsorship by MGM Assurance, Bellingham Wines and others, the provision of facilities by the Sussex County and Compton clubs and the assistance given by members of these clubs and other clubs in the neighbourhood is gratefully acknowledged.

Clubs report increased membership of Golf Croquet players and the Grass Roots and CentreStage competitions were relaunched. Standards of play have improved at the top level, a coaching course run and a number of new referees trained. We continue to be heavily involved in the WCF Rules revision, with the aim of ensuring that the result is suitable for club as well as championship play; meanwhile, the CA's interim Laws were revised to track this process.

7. Handicap

The operation of the revised guidelines issued last year is being monitored.

8. International

We successfully defended the MacRobertson Shield and the Solomon Trophy, played at Heaton Park, but cannot rest on our laurels. Plans are well under way to host the Association Croquet World Championship at Cheltenham and other clubs next August, taking into account experience gained from the Golf Croquet one this year.

9. Laws

An examiner's handbook is in its final revision, with the intention of making some of the material available online. Additional Examiners have been appointed.

10. Marketing

A significant amount of sponsorship has been achieved, both by the Committee and various enthusiastic groups and individuals around the country. Apart from the World Championships, Bellingham Wines were the principal sponsor, donating prizes for several events, holding wine tastings and wine for sale by clubs. Several promotional leaflets and posters were published and the profile of the game raised through increased PR activity, resulting in significant TV, Radio and press coverage. Commercial sales are at an all-time high.

11. Publishing

The Gazette has reached its centenary and the results of a readership survey are being analysed; publication has changed to even-numbered months. The website continues to be developed, with an interactive fixtures calendar, but facilities for on-line entry and payment would require serious consideration. Advice for Clubs and the Basic Laws have also been added. A compendium of many variations of Croquet has been written by Don Gaunt.

12. Tournament

In general, CA tournaments are being well supported, but the entry to the Women's Championship and Mixed Doubles (held separately for the first time) was poor and there were insufficient entries to hold either of the Ladies Invitation events. Qualification for the Inter Counties is being reviewed to encourage the optimum number of 22 teams whilst ensuring that players have a close allegiance to the county they are representing.

Tournament Round-up

Open Championship 2004 Cheltenham 4-11 July by Chris Williams

World Champion Robert Fulford won his sixth Open Championship title, one year after his fifth, when he defeated Pete Trimmer by three games to two in their best of five final on lawn eight at Cheltenham. Trimmer who had defeated former World champions, Chris Clarke and Reg Bamford, in the previous two rounds was presented with a golden opportunity to take the title in the fourth game of the final, whilst leading 2-1, when Fulford failed at rover leaving Trimmer an eight yard roquet with his hoop 2 ball, compared with a two yarder for his 4 back ball. Trimmer missed; Fulford made no more mistakes and won the fifth game with a convincing fifth turn triple.

The Opens was held at Cheltenham for the second year in a row and the format used was, once again, large all-play-all blocks, followed by a best of three knockout for all those players who had achieved at least 50% wins in the blocks. There were very few surprises in the blocks, with all the leading contenders achieving the required number of wins.

Robert Fulford did not have all his own way on his march to the final. Aaron Westerby, Matthew Burrow and Robin Brown all took a game off him, with Westerby failing at rover on a tpo in the third. Both of Fulford's wins against Brown followed a similar pattern with Brown hitting the 'tea lady' long shot of Fulford's sextuple leave, in both games. However Fulford then hit the lift with the backward ball in both games and promptly tpo'ed Brown, whilst performing a few peels on his own 1 back ball, and peeled Brown through hoop 1 to prevent a squeeze after the contact.

Other matches of note in the knockout phase included Pete Trimmer beating Chris Clarke +1 in the third after Clarke had missed a short peg out; James Death performing two tpos on David Maugham, but losing the second. The triples statistics show that

pegging out Maugham with a tpo is not necessarily a winning tactic. He has one of the best records for winning when pegged out. Stephen Mulliner had his customary wrong ball episode in his defeat by Chris Clarke; this time no one could remember when the wrong ball was played and the resolution of the incident took quite some time.

The big surprise in the best of five semi finals was Peter Trimmer's straight games defeat of Reg Bamford. Trimmer had been seen the previous evening spending a lot of time practising jump shots over hoop one on the basis that Bamford would be setting up for sextuples. In the first game Trimmer was first round, but failed a hampered shot after one. Sure enough Bamford went to 1 back and laid for a sextuple, cross-wiring Trimmer's balls at hoop 1, with the hoop 2 ball towards south west of the hoop and the 4 back ball north east of the hoop. Trimmer played his hoop 2 ball, jumped the hoop and landed on top of the 4 back ball rushing it two thirds of the way to 4 back. After this the triple was quite straightforward.

In the doubles final Chris Clarke and Robert Fulford defeated Reg Bamford and Stephen Mulliner in straight games. Earlier in the competition there was the unusual situation of Bamford and Mulliner playing the first game of their quarter final, and losing it, against Goacher and Heap, before Goacher and Heap had completed their previous round against Noble and Vincent. If Goacher and Heap had not won against Noble and Vincent - which for the manager they fortunately did - the game would have been declared a friendly. This unusual situation occurred, because Mulliner and Vincent both required leave that afternoon and Heap could not play on Friday.

Clarke and Fulford's quarter final against Pete Trimmer and Chris Williams saw a tpo ending that lasted three and a quarter hours when the rest of the match lasted little over an hour. In the first game Fulford went to 4 back third turn and Clarke did a fifth

turn triple. In the second game Williams went to 4 back third turn and Fulford did a fourth turn tpo, peeling Trimmer to hoop 2 in the process. The tpo ending lasted so long because Trimmer was unwilling to give Clarke all the balls and was waiting for the lift after 1 back. Clarke however had other ideas and decided to set up an impasse when for 1 back with Trimmer still for hoop 2, partly to find out what the impasse rules for the event were. Eventually the Tournament Referee, Ian Vincent, decided that, since the match was time limited, then the game's time would be allowed to expire. This ruling did speed things up slightly and Clarke did get peeled through one back by Fulford, thus saving the lift. Later, however in trying to finish Clarke did manage to give a lift after 4 back. Unfortunately Trimmer was unable to make much progress, partly because he had got quite chilled on what local weather records showed was the coldest July day on record.

Jonathan Kirby took the Association Plate, defeating Samir Patel in the final.

It was good to see quite a few new overseas faces at the Opens this year. Four of the American Solomon Trophy team played: Bob Cherry, Mik Mehas, Kenster Rosenberry and Jeff Soo, as well as Tony Hall, Ross Marshall and Liz Fleming from Australia, and Dennis Bulloch and Aaron Westerby from New Zealand.

The lawns at Cheltenham have been improving over the season so far, after the ravages caused by last year's dry summer, though the quality varies from excellent, with very even pace on the new lawns, to pretty rough with bald patches and thick green grass on the old top lawns. Unfortunately the weather was not as kind as last year's baking hot weather. This week saw everything weather wise, apart from snow, though it felt at times on the Thursday that it might not be far away. That day some local weather watchers recorded their coldest ever July day.

Golf Croquet Inter Counties Southwick 7 - 8 August by Bill Arliss

The 2004 Golf Croquet Inter Counties Championship was played out at Southwick over the weekend of 7/8 August under two days of perfect sunshine with the hot and dry conditions accentuating every slight imperfection in the Southwick lawns.

Six counties entered the event, Dorset, Durham, Kent, Oxford, Sussex and Tyneside. The format of play followed previous years with an all play all initially. Each match between teams consisting of two doubles and four singles, all players participating in both single and doubles and all games being single 13 points with a time limit, ties being acceptable. The first round of matches was completed by Sunday lunch with Dorset in the lead with four wins, Sussex were second with three, Kent with two and the others with one each. In the final rounds, the leaders played the second team, the third place played fourth etc. The pairing were reversed for the afternoon so players did not meet for a second time and games were increased to 19 points.

Dorset established an early lead with Tom Weston and Cath Burt winning both their singles against David Hopkins and Alan Cottle but William Ormerod and Julie Hudson lost their doubles to Bill Arliss and Daphne Gaitley. In the second session Bill Arliss beat William Ormerod but Daphne Gaitley lost to Julie Hudson. The doubles between Weston/Burt and Hopkins/Cottle went to time with scores equal and declared a tie giving the title to Dorset 3fi to 2fi

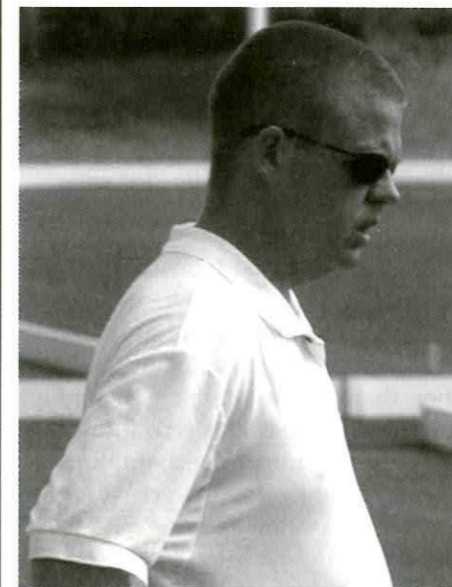
After completion of the playoffs, the final placings were:

- 1st Dorset
- 2nd Sussex
- 3rd Oxford
- 4th Kent
- 5th Northumberland
- 6th Durham

It was pleasing to see yet another established association player taking to the lawns for competitive golf croquet. However in William Ormerod's case this was not a new venture but a return. His previous competitive game was the final of the Delves Broughton Golf Croquet Doubles; just a mere 50 years ago. His distinctive grip appeared ideal for executing jump shots but would have been very little use in previous years when all jump shots were banned.

John Moore who slipped very badly in the rankings in 2003 appears to be making a return to form with the aid of a light weight Egyptian mallet. He managed several of his spectacular jumps and his shooting accuracy has dramatically improved.

President's Cup Hurlingham 9 - 12 September by Stephen Mulliner



David Maugham (above) was a worthy winner of the 2004 President's Cup. He shot well but not remarkably so and the foundation of his success was keeping great concentration, making very few errors and finishing almost every peeling break he began. Unlike Fulford and Mulliner, who attempted 12 sextuples between them, Maugham stuck to triples until the trophy was won and then celebrated with

his own sextuple in Round 14.

Day 1 ended with Avery, Fulford and Maugham leading with 3 wins but the event rapidly became a two horse race in Day 2 as Avery fell back and the other two recorded clean sweeps.

Kirby inflicted a Round 1 defeat on Fulford by hitting the tea-lady and completing a tidy TP, but Robert responded with a 9 game winning streak, including a crushing win over Maugham in Round 4 with an "ultimate" +24 sextuple (i.e. peeling both enemy balls to hoop 2 in the opening break and leaving the forward ball in the jaws of hoop 3 so that the opponent's break chances are minimised if he happens to hit the tea-lady).

Most of the games were pretty quick although Avery, unusually, gained the soubriquet as the tournament's slowest player, perhaps helped by his fascinating marathon against Fulford in Round 9 on Saturday morning. Fulford laid for a sextuple, broke down and got back in after Avery went to 4-b and failed at 4. He TPO'd with two balls off, leaving 4 against 2-back but Avery overtook him with a 2-ball break to 3-back and eventually ran penult with Fulford in front of 4-b. However, this went through by not much and the lag down to rover was short and angled. Fulford ran 4-b and took good position at penult. Avery hit the lift from B-baulk to 8 yards NW of rover but over-cooked the approach and failed an angled hoop, bouncing off to the W boundary. Fulford now took good position at penult and, when Avery deemed (not daring to take pos at rover), began to advance his ball through penult by millimetres at a time. Eventually, enough was showing on the south side of penult for Avery to have a shot at but he missed and Fulford ran penult to good position at rover, ran that and then lagged to the peg, wired from Avery on the E boundary by 4-back. This left Mark with a do-or-die shot at rover which didn't.

The pivotal game was the return between Fulford and Maugham in Round 11. Robert laid again for the sextuple but was hampered after hoop

1 in the second break. David went to 4-back, Robert missed the lift but, despite what seemed like half-a-dozen attempts to get the 4-back peel, David had to settle for 4-b and peg with a good DSL. Robert missed the peg ball from B-baulk and that was shortly that. This put Maugham in the handy position of one up with two to play.

Round 13 decided matters. Fulford laid for a sextuple against Clarke but Chris hit the tea-lady and won in three turns. Maugham had the first break against Mulliner, who hit the lift and also laid for a sextuple. This progressed well until the 4-back peel refused (same hoop where Maugham had the problems the previous day). However, all was not lost because he already had peeled Maugham's forward ball through 4-back before hoop 3 (for insurance purposes) and now attempted to complete the TPO instead. A straight DPO was needed but, although the new peelee went nicely down to rover, the striker's ball misbehaved. An impossible hoop was failed and Maugham completed the single peel to take the game and the trophy.

Round 14 was exhibition time. Fulford and Maugham completed sextuples and Mulliner would have made it three if a half-jump at rover had succeeded.

The Hurlingham lawns were in as good condition as any of the more experienced players could remember. They were surprisingly quick (especially Lawn 1) and the hoops were very firm for the first two days. The standard of play was generally high (Mulliner v Clarke in Round 4 a notable exception) as would be expected from an eight in which no-one was outclassed. Kirby and Trimmer confirmed their positions as the best of the "new" top players with 8 and 7 wins each. Avery won all his 6 games with immaculate TPs and was a little unlucky to have so many lifts hit against him. Mulliner was determined to develop his sextupling ability and, with 5 wins being his lowest score in 27 consecutive appearances, was prepared to sacrifice some current success

in the hope of greater things in 2005. Clarke and Bulloch brought up the rear and, while perhaps more prone to error than the others, played plenty of respectable croquet as well.

	Games	TPs
David Maugham	13	8; 1sxp
Robert Fulford	11	4; 1qp; 4sxp
Jonathan Kirby	8	6
Pete Trimmer	7	5
Mark Avery	6	6
Stephen Mulliner	5	1; 1qp
Dennis Bulloch	3	3
Chris Clarke	3	1

Chairman's Salver
Hunstanton 9-12 September
By Jeff Dawson

The late breaking news as the Chairman's Salver was about to start, was the David Harrison-Wood had to withdraw at the last possible moment, due to a death in his family. This led to Ian Lines being promoted from the Ell, although he was only second in line for promotion. Chris Williams, the prime candidate, declined the change, as the CA was only able to contact him once he had already arrived in Southport ready for play the following day.

The conditions at Hunstanton were reasonably easy, with a sunny first day, followed by some cloudy and at times windy weather, but no rain other than a few spots. The hoops were firm, but perhaps erring towards the generous side of the championship tolerances until they were reset on Saturday morning.

From the outset, Ian made it quite clear that he was the underdog, with no expectations of winning, although he hoped to pick up enough points (2 clear wins required) to take him to -2. However, while the competition progressed, his position as underdog looked more and more untenable, as he led the competition throughout. Ian played solidly, shooting very consistently and making very few errors. The same could not be said for the rest of the field, as no-one else appeared to

be playing up to their best form, with errors more common than might have been expected.

Nevertheless, there was also some excellent play to be seen, not the least of which was Keith Aiton's sextuple against Jeff Dawson on day 2. Keith laid for a delayed sextuple, but succeeded in rushing partner to peeling position and peeling 1-back before he made hoop one, and maintained the peels well ahead of schedule, peeling 2-back before 4, 3-back before 6, and jawsing 4-back before 1-back. Nevertheless, the break was not without its interesting moments, which included failing to get the rush to 1-back and having to approach from some 8 yards away. Several more sextuples were attempted by Keith and others, but no-one else succeeded, although Rutger Beijderwellen achieved a quad in some style, peeling 3-back before making hoop 2. In all there was 1 sxp, 1 qp, and 24 tps, slightly down on the number last year.

Going into the final day, Ian was on 10 wins with David Goacher on 8, leaving the chance of a tie. However, round 13 saw both another victory for Ian and a loss for David, so that the winner was already clear going into the final round. Ian's victory was well deserved, and was accompanied by his well-earned reduction in handicap to -2.

	Games	TPs
Ian Lines	12	4
David Goacher	9	4
Rutger Beijderwellen	7	5 + qp
Keith Aiton	6	3 + sxp
Robin Brown	6	3
Tim Wilkins	6	1
Jeff Dawson	5	2
Jenny Williams	5	2

Spencer Ell Cup
Southport 8-12 September
By Chris Williams

Duncan Hector, at 64, now becomes the first and second oldest winner of the Spencer Ell Cup. He last won in 1992. The players dubbed

this the Pensioners' Eight, with 5 of the players over 60 and none under 40. At least one of the lunchtime discussions centred on which medications they were all on.

Southport's John Haslam stepped in to replace Ian Lines who was promoted to the Chairman's Salver at the last minute.

Conditions were getting quite difficult by the end of the five days, with strong wind and driving rain. Tying on wins, Chris Williams and Duncan Hector embarked on a play-off, the start of which coincided with an excellent display from the Red Arrows, the RAF's display team. Duncan won +9 in a fairly tense encounter. Chris Williams clipped the peg and ended up cross-wired from his hoop 5 pioneer having done one peel of a standard 7th turn tp, and never really got going after that.

	Games	TPs
Duncan Hector	9	0
Chris Williams	9	1
Dave Mundy	8	0
Chris Daniels	7	0
Roger Jenkins	7	0
David Magee	6	0
Dave Nick	6	0
John Haslam	4	0

Treasurer's Tankard
Surbiton 8-12 September
By George Noble

Paul Smith won the Smith and Weston play-off (or should that be shoot-out?) to win the Treasurer's Tankard at Surbiton.

The final saw straightforward balls round to peg and four back by both players. Tom pegged out Paul's peg ball and then ran penultimate with the wrong ball. Paul chose that moment to hit in so all the players could go home. It was very impressive that all the players stayed on to watch the play-off, although most of them had long journeys.

	Games	TPs
Paul Smith	10	0
Tom Weston	10	0
Michael Heap	8	4
Louise Bradforth	7	2
Nick Harris	6	0
Paul Castell	5	0
Andy Davies	5	0
Cliff Jones	5	0

Golf Croquet Selector's Weekend
Wrest Park 21 - 22 August
by Chris Sheen

Wrest Park hosted the Golf Croquet Selector's Weekend for

the top eight available players. In the spectacular setting the participants played an 'all-play-all' best of three games format. At the start, players drew lots for their position in the block and the scene was set.

David Hopkins, who has been in top form all summer, was a lot of people's favourite to win but he lost in the second round in three close games to Ivor Brand. At the other end of the group Tom Weston maintained his form and, as luck would have it, the draw produced a meaningful final match between Brand & Weston to decide the tournament. In the end it was Brand's persistence which prevailed in another three game match and a worthy winner was crowned. The final order was: Ivor Brand, Tom Weston, David Hopkins, Chris Sheen, Roy Ware, Nelson Morrow, Richard Brand and Don Beck.

Golf Croquet Holiday
Ripon Spa 19 - 21 July
by Jane Pringle

On Monday 19th July, 47 people arrived at the Ripon Spa Hotel to participate in a three day holiday dedicated to playing Golf Croquet. Most of the guests were there for the fourth time having played each year since 2001 when Jane and Irene first organ-

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ised a "Friendly Croquet and Bridge Holiday" for the members of Auckland (Castle) Croquet Club.

Each year has seen the guest numbers increase as word got round about how well the hotel looked after everyone and what good fun it was. This year players from Auckland, Brodsworth Hall and Pendle Clubs were to battle on the croquet lawns.

On Monday a form of progressive doubles was played, followed on Tuesday with a singles competition and then on Wednesday doubles again. All the croquet competitions were very well managed by the unflappable Abdul Ahmad. Each evening the guests had a choice of a Bridge competition, "fun croquet" or doing their own thing!

The sun shone each day adding to the pleasure of being in the picturesque grounds of the Spa Hotel. Indeed Monday saw horticultural judges (from Britain in Bloom?) surveying the gardens and the immaculate lawns. The ambience was fantastic, smiling faces, friendly banter, stiff competition and even some coaching, all in a beautiful setting.

Each day ended with a final and some superb croquet shots, the competitors battling it out for prizes donated by Jane and Irene, the organisers, Samantha Curry from Ripon Spa Hotel, Mickey and Sheila Glenn and Cecil and Toni McTague.

A brilliant time was had by all. Roll on next year. Golf Croquet is certainly alive and thriving in the North of England

CA v Scottish CA

Crake Valley 4 - 5 September

by Dave Nick (aka Dave Nicholson)

At what must be one of the most picturesque venues anywhere in England, battle was joined in the annual challenge match between the English and Scottish Croquet Associations. On a grey misty Saturday morning, early start, the three doubles games got underway. By 11.30, with blue sky breaking through and the lawns drying out, Scotland's first pair Surgenor & Williams were one up on Burnett & Wardle and England's Nick & Whitehouse one up on Murdoch & McInnes at 3rd pair. At second pair Rannie & Foster (S) and Haslam & Miller (E) had a rare old ding-dong, with the Scots hitting in from almost anywhere and snatching victory at the death in both games to win 2-0. The English third pair then levelled, also winning 2-0. As teatime approached the top English pair fought back to level and then went on to win by 2 games to 1.

With Sunday morning red hot, and most of the twelve a little tender from the after effects of Saturday night's organised meal at a local hostelry, play began. Rannie made short work of Burnett to win 2-0 before lunch; Miller beat Foster 2-0 after having a ball pegged out in each game; and in the battle of the oldies Williams beat Haslam 2-1 with many pauses for water. Nick overcame Surgenor with a TP

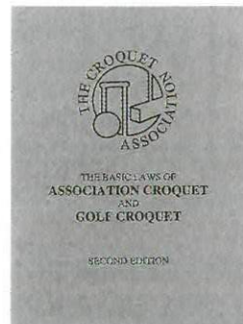


Crake Valley Croquet Club, near Ulverston in the South Lakes

to win 2-1 and take the match score to 4-3.

Wardle & Murdoch and Whitehouse & McInnes were each poised with both matches at 1-1. Double banking on the same lawn, they fought out an exciting climax, with their team mates, spectators and club members all watching intently. The home side went on to win both matches as the Scots wilted. The final result saw a 6-3 win to the CA over the SCA.

The Basic Laws of Association Croquet and Golf Croquet



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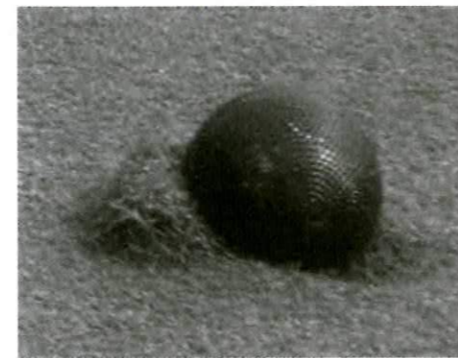
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News

Extreme Lawn Damage

Bowdon Croquet Club is famed for its rock-hard playing surface. A soaking wet August left its lawns in an unexpectedly soft condition, give led to what must be one of the season's strangest spectacles.

Barry Keen was playing on Lawn 3 during the Northern Week tournament when he slipped and landed with his full weight on one of the balls in the game. He fell with such force that the ball was driven three inches deep into the surface of the court.



The Black ball, after partial excavation

Phil Eardley, the manager, had to fetch a screwdriver from the clubhouse to prise the ball out of its hole. Remarkably, neither Barry nor the court suffered any permanent damage.

The Simon Carter Challenge Cup

Sponsorship of Croquet continues to enjoy success, with Mitsubishi Cars poised to sponsor the 2005 WCF Association World Championship.

Earlier this year, Simon Carter



marked the first year of a five-year deal to sponsor the Men's Championship. As well as receiving the traditional winner's trophy, Reg Bamford was awarded a £500 prize (pictured above, left, with Simon Carter). All players received a new shirt, designed by Simon Carter, and featuring a picture of Gervaise the dog (the company's logo) hitting a croquet ball through a hoop.

Simon Carter, himself a croquet player (he reached this year's All England Handicap Finals in Colchester), has been dubbed the 'King of Cufflinks'. He's renowned for

creating classic designs with a dash of tongue-in-cheek humour. Founded in 1985, Simon Carter has been a pioneer in the development of men's accessories, which now include watches, cufflinks, ties and luggage.

Simon Carter accessories are now stocked worldwide at House of Fraser, Selfridges, John Lewis, Fred Segal, Takashimaya (New York and Japan) and David Jones in Australia, as well as being available online at the company's website, www.simoncarter.net.

Ashley Heenan OBE

Ashley Heenan, the first ever President of the World Croquet Federation, died on 6th September this year. He had had a distinguished career in the New Zealand Broadcasting Service, as both a conductor and composer. He played with some success on New Zealand's MacRobertson Shield Test Team, and later became President of the NZ Croquet Association. A full obituary will appear in the December edition of the Gazette.

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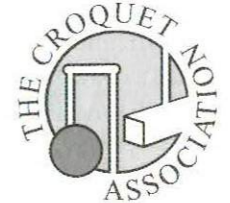
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The Bogchester Chronicles - A Game of Croquet

Reprinted from Punch magazine, May 27, 1936

What a gay scene greets my eyes as I approach the grounds of Stagnant Percy Hall! Mrs. Gloop's croquet and tennis party is now in full swing; the guests are seated in long rows, one behind the other, round the edge of the lawn, waiting their turn to be escorted by Mrs. Gloop in small detachments round the garden. In the meantime they are being entertained by the excellent games in progress on the courts.

Though people like myself are of course frequent and welcome visitors to Stagnant Percy Hall at all seasons of the year, this great annual party is of a somewhat special order. The whole neighbourhood is invited and it is well recognised that none but the most valid excuse will be accepted. Consequently the number of players is rather larger than is usual. Nevertheless such is the organisation that few of them leave without having had a game of some sort.

When I arrive the tennis court is temporarily deserted owing to the fact that by now all the balls - several brand-new ones among them - have been lost in the adjacent shrubberies, for Mrs. Gloop does not believe in disfiguring her grounds with the exten-

sive use of stop-netting. Here and there white-clad figures may be seen crawling about in the rhododendron bushes, while Mrs. Gloop explains considerably that the loss is quite trifling. If the balls have not been found within, say, half-an-hour she will willingly replace them with some old ones. Nevertheless the more experienced know that the quota for Mrs. Gloop's party has already been exceeded and the search is being hotly pursued.

Indeed as Mrs. Gloop comes forward to greet me she confides in an undertone that careless play alone has been responsible for the loss, and she feels that the present pause will have a salutary effect in teaching the younger players to use more restraint on the tennis court.

THE GAME OF GAMES.

These activities, however, are of purely secondary importance. Tennis is no doubt an excellent exercise for the very young, but most of the leading figures of the Bogchester district prefer a game calling for skill and subtlety rather than mere brute force. Hence round Bogchester at least the summer months are pre-eminently the season of croquet, a game which demands not only perfect physical condition but also those other qualities of self-control and coolness in an emergency that have made British sport the wonder of uncivilised races throughout the world.

I shall never forget those words of the late General Crackthorpe. "A man who can keep his temper on the croquet lawn," he would say, "will always be able to make his hoops on the larger lawn of life, however often he may find himself 'wired' by adversity." And the General was himself an outstanding example of the essential truth of this maxim, for it was seldom indeed that he flew into a rage on the croquet lawn in any but the most aggravating of circumstances.

Not unnaturally, therefore, most of the interest to-day centres on that part

of the lawn on which the croquet court has been marked out. Unfortunately the players at present performing are not of a very high standard, and Mrs. Gloop asks them if they would be good enough to finish their game as quickly as possible as she would like her guests to see some real croquet. Shortly afterwards a hush comes over the audience as they realise that Mrs. Gloop herself, with me as her partner, is about to take the field against Sir George Gorge and Miss Stiggins.

SOME POWERFUL PLAY.

The contest is perhaps scarcely an equal one. Mrs. Gloop, as is well known, once had a trial for the county, and my own style has on occasions been described as a classic example of croquetship; whereas our opponents, though capable enough performers, are obviously not quite up to our standard.



"SIR GEORGE IS RAPIDLY LOSING ALL SELF-CONTROL."

Consequently in a very short time our blue-and-black clips show that we already have a lead of several hoops, while the powerful sledge-hammer blows of Mrs. Gloop's mallet are sending our opponents' balls in all direc-

tions whenever they get into a favourable position. More important still, this treatment is giving us a useful lead in what I might term the psychological aspect of the game. As he retrieves his ball from the herbaceous border I notice that Sir George is already breathing heavily and that he wilfully stamps on several plants in passing. If we can maintain these tactics for a little longer, success is certain.

Following one of these magnificent drives, which once again sends Sir George's ball off the court, Mrs. Gloop skilfully places her own ball directly in front of mine near our hoop. I see that I shall be able to demonstrate to the audience a very pretty run of several hoops in succession, and I await with satisfaction Sir George's stroke on his red ball from a hopeless position at the far end of the court.

A LOSS OF SELF-CONTROL.

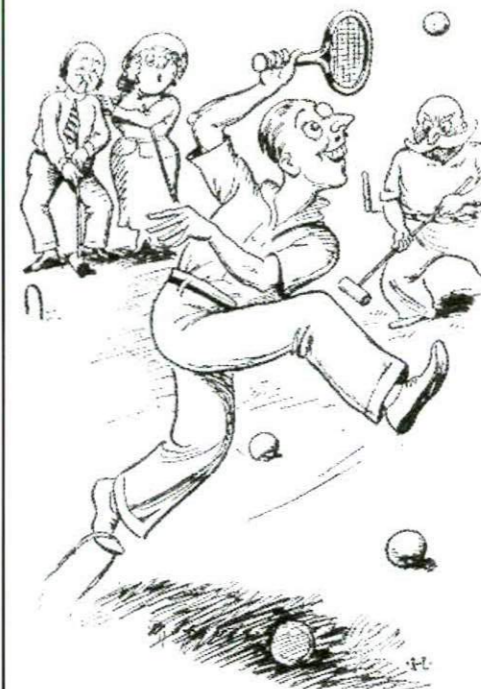
His obvious play, from the most elementary standard of croquetship, should be to send his ball to rejoin that of his partner. But it is now plain that Sir George is rapidly losing all self-control. He raises his mallet, closes his eyes and delivers at his ball a savage blow which sends it careering across the court towards us.

It strikes one of the central hoops, bending it backwards, and from there it rebounds with undiminished velocity into our midst, scattering our balls like a high-explosive shell and striking me a painful blow on the ankle. The next minute, with a triumphant sneer on his face, Sir George has sent my ball crashing through the rhododendrons.

Even a set-back such as this - due not to skill but to blind good fortune on the part of our opponents - would leave me entirely unmoved; but when I reflect that as a result the spectators have been deprived of a particularly fine piece of play, I am filled with the

deepest indignation. I point out to Sir George that his stroke is a deplorable example of the game at its worst; that it is not in accordance with the traditions of British sport; that, in a phrase, it is not croquet.

"Ha, ha!" says Sir George, rubbing his hands in satisfaction. "So you



"ONE OF THE FINEST STROKES SEEN IN BOGCHESTER IS ENTIRELY THROWN AWAY."

don't like it either, don't you?"

Trembling with rage, I am about to suggest to Sir George that it would be better if he showed more self-control on the croquet court, when I reflect that in his present frame of mind he is unlikely to appreciate the spirit in which the advice is offered, and I set off to retrieve my ball in silence.

Mrs. Gloop advises me to play a safe but unenterprising shot which will bring our balls together again, but I have already decided on bolder and more unorthodox measures. Although the whole court separates me from Sir George's ball, I am resolved to show him that his unsportsmanlike methods will avail him nothing in the long run, and I take careful aim at my minute target.

But I have reckoned without the

handicap under which we are playing to-day. I have already noticed casually that the tennis-players have resumed their antics on the adjoining court. But beyond remarking that Captain Featherstonehaugh - a singularly inefficient player even by tennis standards - has twice brought the net down with his wild rushes, I have paid no further attention to them. At the moment, however, that my ball is despatched with unerring aim towards that of my opponents, I am distracted by a shout of warning from the spectators.

AN OUTRAGEOUS INTERRUPTION.

Captain Featherstonehaugh, uttering ridiculous cries, is leaping across the croquet court, his eyes fixed glassily on a bounding tennis ball. Just then he springs into the air, catches his foot on the top of a hoop and crashes to the ground in front of my advancing ball. One of the finest strokes seen in Bogchester for many years is entirely thrown away.

As he rises to his feet even the Captain realises the full horror of what he has done. For a moment he stands transfixed, and then, as the players start to converge on him indignantly swinging their mallets, he turns and runs blindly for refuge in the vegetable garden. Mrs. Gloop orders one of the under-gardeners to evict him before he can do any further damage, and we resume our game in hot but cordial agreement over the outrageous nature of this incident.

For it is one of the pleasantest features of the Great Game that any liberties taken by a non-player at once turn all exponents of the art into a happy band of brothers. Perhaps that is why it can be played without those outbursts of ill-feeling which mar so many other sports.



"HE WILFULLY STAMPS ON SEVERAL PLANTS IN PASSING."

Beating Better Players

2003 Men's Champion Pete Trimmer reveals some secrets of success

I hope this article may help a few of you when playing tough matches. It is pitched primarily at scratch/minus players for a change, though other readers may find parts interesting.

First, a summary of why I'm qualified to write on the topic. My four most significant matches so far have been the finals of the British Men's in 03 & 04 and the semi and final of the British Opens this year. I found myself having to play the two 'Gods of the game', Rob Fulford and Reg Bamford, but to the surprise of spectators, managed to give them a run for their money, with 3-0 wins and 2-3 losses to each of them.

Given my aggregate of 10-6 in games (which might have been 11-4 if I'd hit a 7-yarder), a reader could naturally mistake me for their equal. At present, I am not. Every good player knows that Rob and Reg are currently in a league above mine, as likely to complete 6 peels in a turn as I am to complete 4. Given that I am basically equipped with good shooting and a standard triple peel, the simplest theory for my wins is that I've just been lucky.

To an extent, it is true - I have been lucky. They have happened to miss a few shots and I've managed to hit a few tricky ones. But never underestimate luck - be ready for it; I have seen many players play a distracted, terrible stroke just after some luck!

The two most significant changes in my game over the last couple of years have been in my improved shooting and my state of mind when playing a tough match.

On shooting, I have little to say other than:

1 Wait for your mallet on the back-swing. Under pressure, many players seem to hurry moving their hands forward before the mallet is close to its natural-high point in the back-swing. Trust your body to play the shot.

2 Be lucky... Knowing you could be lucky enough to hit the long shot seems to allow your body to do it



more often. Well, the thought seems to help me, anyway.

Live with your limitations

Prior to my win last year, my record against Rob had been 0-15. I was fine against other players but, the wheels just seemed to come off and I had started to develop a mental block when playing Rob. In a couple of matches I had reached a potentially winning position before throwing it away, and have seen other players break down in similar positions.

I believe the key to overcoming such blocks is to break the task down into manageable chunks. Entering a best-of-five match, trying to visualise winning 3 of the games is likely to undermine you. Each game stands in its own right, so I try to take one game at a time without thinking about the

errors I made to lose the previous game, or wondering how I'm going to win the next two games.

The next step is to bear in mind how easy it is for a moderately good player to beat a great player in a single game. If you can hit one shot at some stage and take a four-ball break round, even without control of the leave you'll be able to get a ropey old standard leave out and give them a 13 yd shot, which is roughly their 50/50 range. If they miss and you take your other ball round to the peg, even without any peeling, they can simply miss their second 13 yard shot to lose. So hitting in only once in a match and playing 4-ball breaks, a player has a 25% chance of beating a great player, so long as they don't break down. The pressure is really on the top player - they don't want to lose to a scratch!

With that knowledge in the back of

my mind, I know it's OK to win; then it's just a question of likelihood.

The matter in hand

Focus on one shot at a time. Many times that I've broken down, it has been because I'm thinking about the next shot I'm about to play or what leave to have at the end of a turn. When you need to think, stop playing. When you have decided what to attempt, then play it whole-heartedly.

Trying to assess a player's potential, many go by what his/her swing looks like or by how close together their feet are. I have known players with an elegant style who rarely win and others with a seemingly awkward style (such as William Ormerod) who have made it to the top, so I now prefer to assess players by how they respond to something going wrong. Those that are ready to stop and think, re-planning if necessary, will tend to go far.

A couple of years ago, I had trouble with the pace of approach shots from the side of a hoop. I knew that if I hit too hard, the ball would skate across the face of the hoop, and too softly, I'd never get in front. So I found myself battling to stay on the tight-rope between the two disaster scenarios - and it was all the worse if I felt under pressure. The right approach is to first decide where you are going to aim to land, given your starting distance from the hoop, and then simply play the shot to try to stop your ball there; trust your body to play the stroke. It sounds trivially simple, and it is.

I believe other people have similar problems with take-offs to balls on a boundary; worrying about going off the lawn or not getting within range - these thoughts make you tense. Instead, decide where to try to stop (e.g. two yards short of the ball) and then aim to land on that spot. Don't be suckered into thinking it would be nice to be a little closer than that as you play it - pick the right spot to aim for first.

Stretch yourself in practising

On the subject of TPs, my first advice is, perhaps, wacky. If you've managed a few TPs but can't get very consistent with them, try practicing them with a different grip. I play with a standard grip but I once spent a few hours trying to do a TP with left- and right-handed Solomon grip, Irish grip and left-handed standard (which was the most difficult of all for me). Since then, a tp with my usual grip has seemed much easier. The process got me to think much harder about what I was trying to achieve with each stroke, the importance of controlled hoops and which the most important ball was in each croquet stroke, along with the forced realisation of how easy a standard TP is. It is also made me concentrate very hard throughout a turn. (It also then made me notice things about other people's styles, such as how players will often switch to a standard grip for rolls.)

My next piece of TP improvement advice is to watch really good players play TPs and try to predict where they'll send the balls before each stroke. I expect many minus players will ignore this. "I've read Wylie, seen lots of TPs and know what I'm trying to do." I reckon most players think too vaguely when they are playing. After making Hoop 4, they rush toward Corner 3 and put the ball to Hoop 6 whilst getting a rush on partner. What if partner is still in the hoop, only half-peeled? They do the same, then doing the rush peel. (Is that what *you* do?) And it's all fine, usually.

To me, having broken down so often and having studied the likes of Fulford and Clarke easing their TPs round, now there's a difference in the Hoop 6 pioneer positions depending on whether the 4-back peel has completed after 3. If it has, and is rushable, I aim to put the pioneer between 6 and the peg (and slightly west), as I'll be going to that before making 6 off partner. If not, I aim to put the ball

a couple of feet east of 6, in case I don't get a rush on partner (behind 4-back) after hoop 5. It's 4 yards difference in this case, and in many others it will only be a couple of yards difference, but the differences add up a lot when you're trying to become a consistent triple-peeler. Playing 'Predict Rob' is a good method of bringing Wylie's book to life.

Don't talk yourself out of it

Delayed TPs are currently at the limit of what I can reasonably consistently achieve, so I will conclude by saying that thinking of it as a 'Delayed TP!!' makes it sound difficult. It would be like trying to climb Mt Everest, where every step of the way, you tell yourself, "this is the most difficult thing I could attempt, I'm probably not going to manage it." It is an unnecessary mental mill-stone and is liable to distract you from concentrating on each stroke in turn. These days, I prefer to approach delayed tps thinking "I'm going to take this break round and hopefully have a go at some peels, as though I'm doing a delayed tp." And it often seems to finish - but if not, at least they have a final 17 yard shot to hit rather than a 2 yarder due to breaking down...

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Association Tactics for Beginners and High Bisquers

No 8 - Establishing a Four Ball Break using Bisques

by Michael Hague

Definition

We have discussed the five Principles of Play - Foresight, Use the Line of Rush, Exploit the Rush, Use Straight Shots and Accuracy. Now we must put them to work by establishing a 4BB with bisques. A bisque of course permits striker to extend an innings when a turn ends with another completely new turn but using the same ball. A half bisque is exactly the same except that no ball including those of the opponent may score a point. Once again, it will be much easier for the reader to follow the discussion below if a diagram of the court and markers for the balls are used.

Use

First and foremost a bisque is used to create a 4BB or to improve and continue it once set up. It is not used wisely or efficiently to score just one or two hoops or to prevent the adversary from doing the same. A full bisque should, I suggest, be used defensively as rarely as possible and only then when not to do so would mean almost certain defeat. A half bisque is sometimes used defensively but it can be invested profitably in an offensive role as the first bisque where two are needed to start a break (thus saving a full bisque) or to set up a tactically advantageous position e.g. leaving opponent's balls well separated on the next hoops in order for each of striker's balls (SB) so that a break is virtually guaranteed for one or the other of them in the next turn.

Strategy

When to use a bisque depends on a number of factors; the strategic approach - e.g. use them early on or wait for good opportunities to occur or hang on to them as long as possible - will depend on how many bisques one has and the strengths and weaknesses of oneself and of the opponent.

Playing a handicap game with full bisques, a High Bisquer will probably draw on the plentiful supply very early on. The in-player would aim to get to rover or peg in a minimum number of innings, keeping the opponent off the court at the same time. Playing to a base of say 6, an 18 handicap player has fewer bisques (e.g. handicap 18 - 6 base = 12 bisques) when playing opponents with handicaps equal to or above the base. More commonly the game will be played on handicap difference that will reduce the number of bisques available other than when playing a scratch or below opponent and may require a more conservative strategy for using bisques (e.g. 18 - 12 handicap of opponent = 6 bisques).

Although it may be possible to set up a 4BB using two bisques from almost any initial layout of the balls, a High Bisquer may not feel keen to do so too often as he knows that he will need a reserve to keep his break going when he makes a poor hoop approach, blobs a hoop or misses a short roquet in a lapse of concentration. He may be weak at hitting in and want to have one or two bisques up his sleeve for the final stages of the game so that his superior opponent cannot prevent him from getting back in the game by keep-

ing him well separated.

Against a minus handicap player (e.g. -1), the High Bisquer must be prepared to invest one and a half or two bisques to set up a break straight away in an all or nothing approach. However apart from in a club handicap competition, the High Bisquer does not normally expect to meet such illustrious opposition. Other High Bisquers and those with handicaps down to single figures are more likely. Such adversaries may be able to make long breaks but not all the time. They will break down sooner or later which is why they themselves have handicaps above scratch. So the High Bisquer may be able to adopt a more subtle approach and exercise a little patience (but not for too long!) to await a favourable situation where a break can be created with a single bisque. We will thus start by looking at the one bisque opportunity and we do so using a number of simple examples to bring out the elementary factors that the player should consider when looking to set up a break.

Two Balls in Place

In Figure 1, the opponent has broken the court as a stepping-stone, the journey to Red and Yellow becomes two hits half the original distance. Playing Blue to Black gives us a chance of hitting in and saving a bisque but we must approach Black with great care so that if we miss, we will only just over-run it for an easy roquet after taking the bisque. We are now not too far from two joined up balls which can normally be exploited and allow us a greater margin of error. Our aim is to take off from Black to north of Red, rush Red to the south boundary which will give plenty of space to croquet Red accurately with a straight drive to in front of Hoop 2 with SB dropping off close to Yellow. Should our take-off from Black end up between Red and Yellow, then we go to plan B and rush Yellow to the southern boundary. This time we will have to focus more on SB during the croquet shot to make

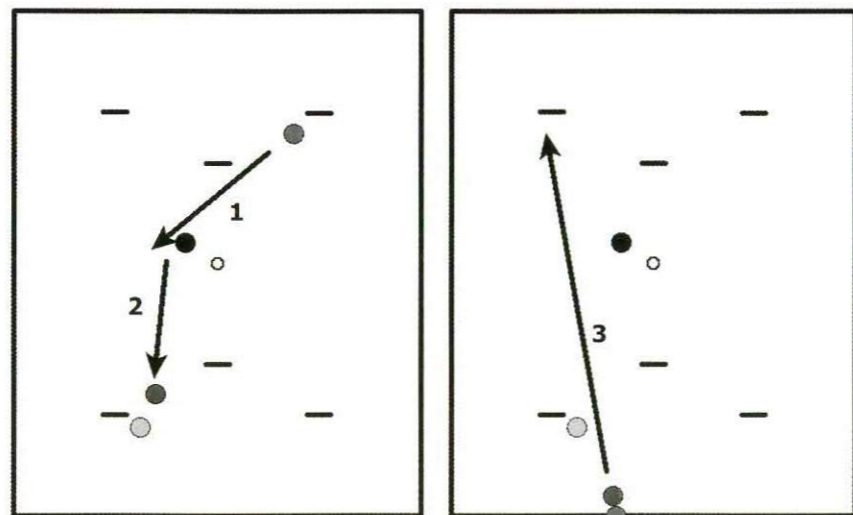


Figure 1. Too good an opportunity to ignore. Blue is near Hoop 3, but there are two balls at his hoop, and the fourth ball mid-lawn. To get to Hoop 1, and create a break for one bisque, Blue should shoot gently at Black (1). Take the bisque, and take off to Red and Yellow (2). Rush one of the balls south, and stop it to the next hoop (3). Balls at Hoop 1, Hoop 2 and the centre are now ideally placed.

sure that it ends up on the rush line of Red for a short rush to the on-side of Hoop 1. Should our take-off from Black end up south of Red and Yellow, then we will gently roquet Yellow, stop shot it towards Hoop 2 but concentrating on getting SB onto the rush line of Red to Hoop 1. Depending on our ability to stop shot, we may have to compromise on the distance Yellow travels towards Hoop 2 as SB is the important ball.

We have brought all five Principles of Play into action as well as identifying some essential factors to be considered in the thought process to set up the break:

- Do we have any balls already in place for the 4BB?
- Can we promote the back ball?
- What is needed to complete the layout of balls for the 4BB?
- How do we get the ball(s) to fill the missing component(s)?
- Can we use croquets to position missing pioneers?
- Can we create and make use of rushes, straight shots and rush lines?
- Can we reduce risk and use shorter and simpler shots?

If we use Black in the middle of the court as a stepping-stone, the journey to Red and Yellow becomes two hits half the original distance. Playing Blue to Black gives us a chance of hitting in and saving a bisque but we must approach Black with great care so that if we miss, we will only just over-run it for an easy roquet after taking the bisque. We are now not too far from two joined up balls which can normally be exploited and allow us a greater margin of error. Our aim is to take off from Black to north of Red, rush Red to the south boundary which will give plenty of space to croquet Red accurately with a straight drive to in front of Hoop 2 with SB dropping off close to Yellow. Should our take-off from Black end up between Red and Yellow, then we go to plan B and rush Yellow to the southern boundary. This time we will have to focus more on SB during the croquet shot to make

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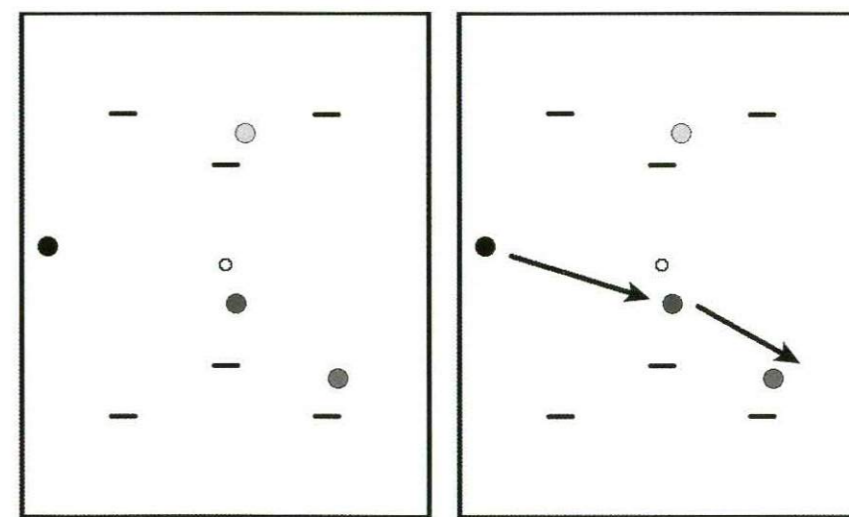


Figure 2. Black at Blue or Blue at Black? Black is for 3-back, with Blue as a useful pioneer. Blue is for 3, but the tidy break is less obvious. For one bisque, Black could go gently to Red (at the peg), take a bisque, and take off to Blue at its hoop. Blue & Black's optimum outcome is to leave the clips on 3 and Peg, for one bisque. Is there a better option?

It might seem a lot to think about but soon a memory bank of similar situations will build up to help to speed up and simplify the mental process.

One Ball in Place

If your opponent is considerate enough to leave a ball at or near to a hoop you want to run, you should not miss the opportunity to set up a 4BB and exploit such generosity.

In Figure 2, Black near the western boundary is for 3-back which has Blue close to it. Do we therefore play Black? If we are going to use a bisque, we have the potential to get a better return on our investment by playing our back ball, Blue, which is going for Hoop 3. The Yellow ball just north-east of Hoop 6 is not too far from Hoop 3 and can be used to attack the hoop but it will need to be re-positioned closer for a reasonably certain hoop approach. We know that the odds are against our hitting in with our first stroke so we will have to reserve the bisque to ensure that we make a roquet to start building the break. Thus we will somehow have to get a rush on Yellow to Hoop 3 before using it as a pilot to

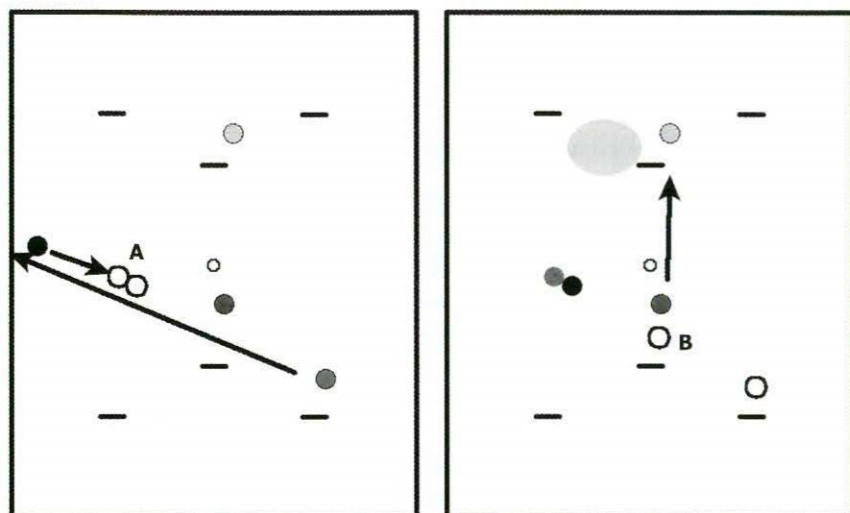


Figure 3. A better prospect
 Play Blue and shoot at Black. A miss allows the bisque to be used to rush Black short of Red (position A). Now a straight stop-shot puts Black in position at Hoop 4, and brings Blue close to Red (position B). Blue can now rush Red somewhere up the lawn. From this new position it should be easy enough for Blue to take off accurately to the shaded area. Blue gets a dolly rush on Yellow to Hoop 3, Red is in the middle, and Black is at 4. The break is laid for one bisque. Blue & Black now have an optimum position of 3-back and Peg at the end of the turn - a surer way to secure a quick win.

negotiate the hoop. A dolly rush is the safest method if we cannot position it with a croquet.

It is often a good idea when setting up a 4BB to go for the most awkward ball before taking the bisque. Black is the one out on a limb. It is a couple of feet inside the yard line on the western boundary. This gives Blue the oppor-

tunity to go off the court behind Black, thereby creating a rush back towards Red after taking the bisque. It is worth striker's while to go over to Black and identify a precise spot on the boundary to aim at in order to ensure a straight rush in the desired direction. The rush should get Black short of Red so that it can be croqueted a shorter

distance to become the pioneer at Hoop 4, at the same time dropping off SB within easy croquet distance of Red and hopefully with a rush to get Red nearer to Yellow. The short take off from Red should put SB on the rush line of Yellow to rush it closer to Hoop 3 to an easier position for the final hoop approach. Red will probably have ended up in the vicinity of Hoop 6, not a perfectly placed pivot but pivot's position is not critical; a good rush on Yellow is.

We can now add to our list of essential factors to consider if appropriate when thinking ahead to create a 4BB with a bisque:

- ♦ If there is no well positioned pioneer at the hoop being attacked, set up a rush (preferably a dolly rush) on the ball nearest to it.
- ♦ Go first for the most difficult or furthest away ball (alternately, all other things being equal, play with your furthest away ball) before taking the bisque.

No Ball in Place

In the examples given so far we have been forced to use our one bisque to enable us to hit in to start setting up a break. In Figure 4 we start with our two balls joined up on the southeast-

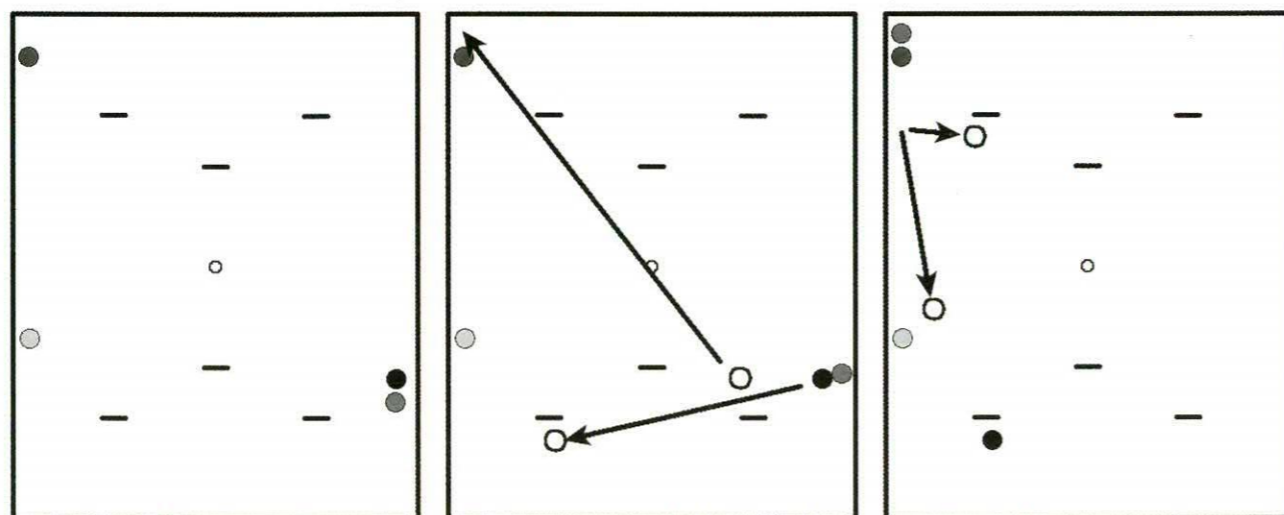


Figure 4. A one-bisque break from the starting position
 Blue and Black played first, and Red has missed the shot at Yellow. All balls are still for Hoop 1. The plan: (1) Blue hits Black, and sends it straight to Hoop 1. (2) Blue shoots into Corner 2, beyond Red, and takes a bisque. (3) Red is nudged a bit closer to Hoop 2, from where a take-off can put it in position. (4) Blue goes to Yellow, and can bring it slightly in, while going to Black. The break is ready to play, for one bisque.

ern boundary ready to play the fifth turn. The balls are on the western boundary in the classic opening layout where the opponent has played his second ball at the tice and missed. This situation is familiar to us and we have taken the trouble to practise setting up a break from it. We are confident of having to use only one bisque although we know that if we had started second and wanted to press on, we would have had to commit preferably a half or if not available a second bisque to continue the innings.

We roquet Black with our Blue ball. With great care we straight drive Black to pioneer position at Hoop 1. Once that ball is in position, we know that accidents apart, scoring that hoop is assured. Some High Bisquers are too greedy and try at the same time as positioning the pioneer, to get SB as far as possible in the direction of the next target, Red. In doing so they forget to concentrate on the important ball, fail to get a good pioneer and never get close enough to Red to save having to use a bisque anyway. Red in fact is not a corner ball but a

foot or so inside the yard line of the Western boundary. From the angle we are approaching it, we know that a shot into the corner will give us a rush south or southeast nearer to Hoop 2. We do not make the mistake of just hitting for the corner as we might end up disappointedly just to the east of Red and with a rush in the wrong direction. No, we aim at Red with the same concentration as if we were doing an important hit in. Missing narrowly and having taken a bisque, we are able to rush Red a little nearer to Hoop 2 and take off to Yellow while nudging Red closer still to our next but one hoop.

We have invested a bisque so our play is conservative in that we do not take any unnecessary risks that might waste it. Thus when taking off from Red to Yellow, we make quite sure that we aim not at Yellow on the yard line and risk going off the court but at a specific point level with and in court from Yellow. After all, we are only going to roquet Yellow, not try to rush it. After the roquet, we do a half or three quarter split roll sending Red to

the southwest of the peg as the pivot but more importantly SB to within easy roquet distance of our pioneer, Black, which is of course live having been sent to its pioneer position before the bisque was taken. This is the first split roll we have had to play in the examples given. Our partner ball incidentally will now be the pioneer if all goes well with our 4BB, at all the uneven numbered hoops and one of the opponent's balls, Yellow, will be pivot.

The additional guidelines from this example are:

- ♦ If possible position the pioneer at the hoop to be run first with a croquet shot before taking a bisque so that it is live when you return to it having taken a bisque.
- ♦ Play conservatively if investing a bisque (no risks; not greedily).
- ♦ To improve accuracy, pick specific aiming points for all shots no matter how unimportant they may seem.

The second half of this lesson will appear in the next edition.

Poet's Corner

Reminiscences of the game from the archive of Smokey Eades

SOUTHWICK - 1977

If Sheila were my croquet girl,
 I'd dance a triple peel.
 I'd run a hoop from thirty yards
 And play like Bernard Neal.
 I'd hit the post from corner IV
 And win by twenty two ...
 But Sheila's NOT my croquet girl -
 OH HELL I've missed the blue.

COLCHESTER - 2000

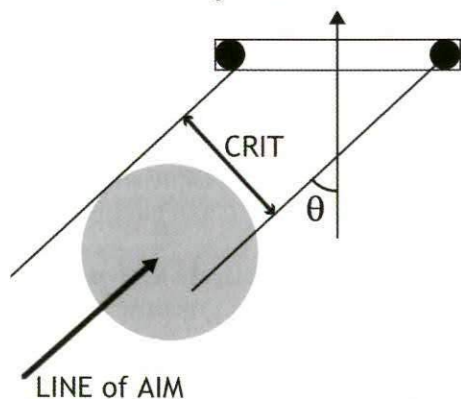
Is there a God, I wonder
 Now that I've stuck in 3?
 Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps,
 But it's not that clear to me.
 The devil exists for certain,
 Today he is the King.
 He's standing on my shoulder
 Interfering with my swing.
 He whispers "Oh be bolder
 You'll hit and win the prize ..."
 Now, fifteen seconds older,
 I know the devil lies!

'Impossible' Hoops

Don Guban calculates that surprisingly difficult hoops are technically still possible

So-called 'impossible' angled hoops are not uncommonly run - e.g. Hoop One from close to Corner One, an angle of 45°, and one can ask just how big an angle it is possible to run, - though whether the angle would be worth trying is quite another question.

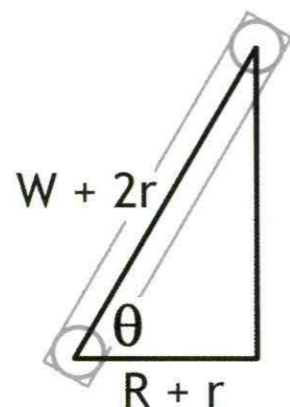
The necessary conditions are that, (i) the ball just misses the near wire, and, (ii) that the centre of the ball hits inside the centre of the far wire, as shown in the diagram.



Under these conditions, the ball rebounds from the impact with the wire with some transverse momentum towards the hoop, and may then run it. The probability that this will happen depends on details of the collision, nearly all of which are unknown, but one can calculate the limiting angle at which it can possibly happen. If the angle is such that the centre of the ball strikes the far wire outside its centre, the transverse momentum from impact will now take it away from the hoop.

The critical distance, labelled 'CRIT' in the figure, is

$$(W + 2r) \cos\theta - r$$



where W is the width of the hoop, and r is the radius of a wire. The condition that the hoop can be run is that this expression exceeds the radius of the ball, R . So,

$$(W + 2r) \cos\theta - r \geq R$$

and the limiting angle, θ_1 , is given by

$$\cos\theta_1 = (R + r) / (W + 2r)$$

R and r are known quantities, being half the diameter of a ball (3 5/8") and of a hoop (5/8") respectively. The width of a hoop depends on the clearance, c (i.e. the distance by which the width of the hoop exceeds the diameter of the ball).

The above expression can be conveniently rewritten as,

$$\cos\theta_1 = (1/2) \{1 + x\}$$

where x is the small ratio $c / (2R + 2r)$.

For different values of c , the limiting angle varies as follows:

Hoop clearance	Limiting angle
0	60.00°
1/32"	60.24°
1/16"	60.48°
3/32"	60.71°
1/8"	60.94°
1/4"	61.82°

With a clearance of zero, the limiting angle is *exactly* 60°; the angle increases for a clearance of 1/8" but only to ≈ 61°.

Such a large angle for the limiting hoop run is surprising, but it must be remembered that this is a calculation which assumes ideal geometrical behaviour; it does not deal with the physics of the impact at the far wire, which is crucial in determining the probability that the hoop will be run, and the way in which this depends on angle. All we know is that the probability will be high when the angle of the hoop, θ , is small, and that it will drop rapidly as θ increases. The limiting angle calculated here marks the boundary where the improbable becomes the impossible. Hoops are not infrequently run which are thought by onlookers to be 'impossible', but, while runs at ≈ 45° or more are rare, they are not impossible, since what this calculation shows is that the limiting angle for possibility is very close to 60°.

It is also perhaps surprising that the limiting angle is almost independent both of the clearance, c , and of the radius of the wires, r , but of course, this is not true of the *runnability*, which depends strongly on both these factors.

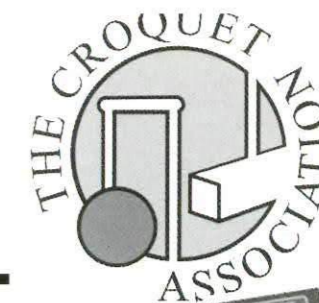
HOOPOTAMUS

by Victor



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	Fleece reversible windcheater jacket	£35.00
	Fleece reversible gilet	£23.50
	Roll-up sports windcheater	£29.00
	White trousers	£27.00
	Pullover	£25.50
	Ladies cardigan	£29.00

Odds and Ends

Timer	£8.00
Silver earrings, hoop and ball or mallets	£12.00
Hoop setting feeler gauge	£2.50
Canvas ball carrier bags.	£10.00
Croquet Girl cards - pack of 8, blank inside	£4.50
Croquet posters - b&w prints, 4 designs available	£6.00ea
Ball markers, pack of 10 assorted plastic markers	£1.00

For more information

Call Jeff Dawson on 01483 776971
 Email sales@croquet.org.uk
 Or visit our website www.croquet.org.uk/shop
 We are based at:
 112 Potters Lane, Send, Surrey GU23 7AL
 Callers welcome by appointment only, please

Books

A wide variety of croquet publications are available, including:	
Basic Laws of Association and Golf Croquet	£2.00
The Laws of Association Croquet	£4.00
Official rulings and commentary	£3.00
The Laws of Golf Croquet	£2.00
A Guide to Golf Croquet	£5.00
Know the game	£5.00
Croquet - The Skills of the Game by Bill Lamb	£10.00
Croquet by John Solomon	£9.00
Plus One on Time by Don Gaunt	£10.00
Expert Croquet Tactics by Keith Wylie	£14.00
Croquet Management by Gaunt & Wheeler	£11.50
Croquet Coaching Manual	£11.50
The Principles of Handicapping by Bill Lamb	£2.50
Challenge & Gilbey book by Alan Oldham	£3.00
Lawn Management by John Beech	£2.00
Croquet: Technique by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Error Correction by John Riches	£7.00
Croquet: Next Break Strategy by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: The Mental Approach by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: Lessons in Tactics by John Riches	£9.00
Croquet: Finer Points by John Riches	£10.50

Videos

Imported from Australia, these videos were made by Kevin Brereton in the 1990s	
Single ball strokes 30min	£12.00
Croquet strokes 30min	£12.00
Tactics parts 1 & 2 60min	£14.00
Tactics part 3 - Peeling 90min	£16.00
Using Bisques 30min	£12.00
Sports Sciences & Croquet 30min	£12.00

All book and video prices include P&P to UK addresses

Complete croquet sets

How about getting a set for the back garden? We sell a wide range of sets at rock bottom prices, and our voucher scheme entitles members to £20 discount on their first set!

Club Equipment

This is an ideal time to check over your club equipment, and replace anything necessary. As always, we sell all the equipment your club is likely to need, including:
Balls - Barlow GT, Dawson and Sunshiny
Hoops - Omega, Aldridge, Townsend and Jaques
 Corner flags, yardline markers, pegs, clips, gauges.



John Jaques II won a place in sporting history - and a Gold Medal- for introducing croquet into England at the Great Exhibition in 1851. His display there attracted such wide attention that the game speedily became the vogue and over the years has developed into the absorbing sport enjoyed by so many world-wide.

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of this event, the company has introduced a special Limited Edition 'Great Exhibition' set which includes Association Hoops, 16oz balls and fine quality mallets, all at a very competitive price. Only 150 of these sets are being produced!

The company also manufactures a complete range of sets and mallets for all standards of play, ranging from £60 upwards. View these on our website: www.jaques.co.uk



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