

THE CROQUET GAZETTE

ISSUE 312

FEBRUARY 2008



CHRIS CLARKE

WCF WORLD CHAMPION 2008

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COACHES TRAINING COURSE (CTC) FOR ASSOCIATION CROQUET

Arranged since the 2008 Fixtures Calendar went to press

For: Those wishing to become Association Croquet Coaches

Open to: Associates, and to any player who is a member of a Club affiliated to any Federation

Arranged by: The Croquet Association
Venue and date: Nottingham CC, 17-18 May

Manager: Michael Hague, Homewood House, Pond Road, Woking GU22 0JT
Tel: 01483 776190 Email: mj.hague@virgin.net

Entry fee: £10 for CA members, £16 for non-CA members.

Cheques made payable to "The Croquet Association".

It is hoped that clubs will pay the entry fee for prospective club coaches.

Please indicate if you will not be requiring lunches.

of the Croquet Association and not to the Editor:

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THE CROQUET GAZETTE



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Disclaimer

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

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Chairman's Column



The New Year starts with our top players travelling to New Zealand for the World Association Championships last month & the World Golf Championships in South Africa in March. I'm sure that you will join me in congratulating our representatives on their performances in the Association event, particularly, Stephen Mulliner, James Death, and of course, Chris Clarke for winning the event. I wish our representatives in the Golf Croquet event the best of fortune and look forward to the results with interest.

In my last column I mentioned that there were plans to re-structure a number of the paid positions in the Association. This work is now underway and I am very pleased to announce that Ian Vincent has been appointed Honorary Secretary of the Association. Many of you will know Ian and will no doubt share my view that the Secretarial function will be in very good hands under his experienced guidance. Ian will start to take over his responsibilities on a phased basis in March 2008.

Interviews for the post of Croquet Association Manager are commencing and I hope to be able to make an announcement in the next edition of the Gazette.

Our chance to start seriously thinking about this summer's croquet has been brought into focus by the publication of the 2008 Fixtures Calendar. Nigel Graves has, yet again, done a magnificent job in producing this detailed manual.

England's first Croquet Academy has now been officially launched at Southwick. A separate article appears in this edition of the Gazette and details can be seen on its website www.thecroquetacademy.com

One of the new innovations will be a Golf Croquet Summer School to complement the highly successful Association summer school that has been running at Southwick for many years. It will be held during the first weekend in July and

as we go to press I am told that applications are already pouring into the Academy Secretary!

New Association and Golf Croquet Laws are being implemented for this season. The changes to Association Croquet are relatively minor, however the Golf Croquet changes are larger. Council have agreed to adopt the World Croquet Federation Rules as our laws in this country. They will become operative from 15th March 2008. The major changes relate to the wrong ball law and to handicaps.

Having just got used to Golf Handicap play, we know it will be a little confusing to have to adopt a new handicap. We thought long and hard about it, but decided that having a uniform system for the world was a sensible idea and by holding back implementation it was only putting off the inevitable.

The changes will be explained in detail by our Golf Laws Committee in a separate article in the Gazette, on the CA Web site and at training courses around the country.

I hope to meet many of you on my travels round the tournament circuit this season - Have a good year and above all enjoy yourself.

Jonathan Isaacs

Publication details

The Croquet Gazette is published six times per year; in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Publication Schedule

Copy should reach the Editor before the 21st of the month before publication is due.

However if you have something that you think the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for please contact her direct before making any assumption.

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 and coloured prints or photographs can be used. Slides are no longer acceptable. Photocopies of pictures or print outs of digital images cannot be accepted. If using digital photography please send in jpeg or tiff format files. Please accompany all images with a description of the subject of the picture. If you require any material to be returned please enclose an SAE.

Tournament Reports & Results

Emailed reports are welcomed. Attachments may be sent in Microsoft Word format, or text format. Handwritten reports are no longer acceptable due to the illegibility of most. Queries regarding the delivery of the Gazette to members should be directed to the Secretary

HOPOPOTAMUS

by Victor



Editor's Column

Apologies for the slight lateness of this issue, but a virus for the editor and a loss of internet access slowed down the production significantly. However everything is back to normal now.

The new style for the Gazette is not quite complete, but will be unveiled in the next issue.

As some of you will already know, the English players at the World Championships in New Zealand had a very successful time. I would like to offer my congratulations to Chris Clarke for winning the Championship, Stephen Mulliner, who was runner-up, and to James Death for winning the Plate Event. I'm not sure but I think that results were slightly surprising, but then I think that's one of the good things about croquet, there are very few certainties. I would also like to offer my best wishes to Chris and Jenny (nee Williams) who were married on January 30th in New Zealand, with a certain amount of a croquet flavour.

On a slightly sadder note, it has been announced that Barlow Croquet Equipment is to cease trading, elsewhere in this edition you will find the story.

Whilst on the African continent, I would like to wish our players competing in the World Golf Croquet Championships well, maybe this is the year that Egypt won't prevail.

Inside this issue are a lot of official announcements and items for information, good for the start of the season.

Elsewhere you will find that Duncan Hector has put some good video footage on the internet. The details are in 'News & Information', but you will find that once you look at the first link there is a lot more to view, with a few fun surprises in there once you look. Thanks to Duncan for making that all available.

Gail Curry, Editor

Letters

Children and young people

We were interested to heartened to read Mary Smith's letter in the December issue referring to her club's efforts to involve children and young people in our sport.

For several years we unsuccessfully approached local schools offering to introduce pupils to croquet, feeling that it would appeal to youngsters for whom team games did not appeal or to those who, for one reason or another, needed something a little less physically demanding.

Eventually the right contacts were made and this will be the third season in which we shall be working with children at a middle school, in their lunch break, during the summer term. Considerable fun and enthusiasm have been engendered, it has been a particular joy to see the effect on children who reckoned they were "rubbish at sport Miss", and this was built on when we invited the players with their sports teacher to hold a mini-tournament on our 'proper' lawns - a revelation after their rough grass spaces.

Our volunteers, who are of course CRB checked, have also introduced the game to parents and children at the school's annual family evening. We plan this year, as part of the Leighton/Linsdale Sports Council project to offer some taster sessions to young people during the summer holiday as thus, we trust, reaching a wider range of beginners.

In order of work with the children we believe our members must follow our child protection policy and should have received enhanced CRB checks. So far the school have acted as our members 'sponsor' but we had hoped that, as with other sports associations the Croquet Association would be able to support us as we attempt to expand this programme. Disappointingly it seems that this is not presently possible or even considered necessary by the Association's Child Protection Officer.

Could I suggest that, if the Association seriously wishes to develop its involvement with younger members, this situation should be urgently addressed?

Margaret Brown, Chairwoman,
Leighton/Linsdale Croquet Club

Let's throw bisques away

Three cheers to you for your editorial in the December issue, let individuality reign. Your suggestion was an example of thinking 'outside of the box'. I have been doing something similar, so here goes. Let's throw the entire bisque handicap system out of the window and substitute a simple hoop start system.

Having come to croquet late in life and never been lower than 14, I am expecting the wrath of my betters to descend in frightening fashion. But why on earth do we give a weaker player one or more free turns when it would be much simpler, and in my view fairer, to allow the weaker player to place his clips at the beginning of a game, however many hoops ahead that represents the handicap difference, and then play proper Association Croquet - no bisques.

This cannot possibly be a new idea, but in the five years I have been playing the game I have never heard it discussed or even mentioned. So I have decided to put my head above the proverbial parapet and suggest it.

The big advantage is that we would all be playing genuine Association Croquet and not what is referred to in the laws as an 'other form of play' i.e. bisque handicap play. Since handicap play must constitute the overwhelming proportion of play here and presumably everywhere else in the world, why do we play predominately a variation of the game and not the real McCoy.

It must surely be a good idea to have a handicap system which endeavours to allow two players of different ability to have roughly equal chance of winning and several other sports do it. Golf allows the weaker player a stroke on prescribed holes. Polo is a team game, but they allow the weaker team a goal or goals on the board at the start.

Having played at Winchester and having discussed the idea with some of my friends there it seems that the start concept would work with high bisquers or where the handicaps are close. But having generally been on the receiving end of the bisques I have always known that if I make a hash of a particular line of play I can escape "by taking a bisque"; this knowledge distorts tactics, and likewise for the giver of the bisques.

No handicap system can ever really equalise two players who are widely different in ability, but even then I think the start system would be better. A good friend

in Winchester plays off 0.5 so I get 13.5 bisques whenever we meet! that's not proper croquet, but a wide distortion of the game. But if I put one of my clips on 1-back and the other on 2-back at the beginning he would have to play his socks off to win, and so would I - and no false strategies - better I think.

Winchester may well give the starter handicap idea a chance during some of our Monday mix-ins, so I will let you know what happens.

So how's that for thinking out of the box?

John Baker

I like the idea. I like the idea of using all the redundant bisques to pin down the Aunt Emmas of the world too. Or is that going too far? Ed.

Alternate stroke

I was managing and acting as referee at a tournament played to the laws of alternate stroke handicap doubles. The following scenario fortunately didn't take place, but something that did convinced me it might have.

Rob and Chris are playing against Gail and David. David puts Blue on the east boundary, Rob lays a Duffer tice with Red, Gail opts for the defensive option of Black in corner II and Chris misses the tice to the middle of the south boundary (this is after all fiction). Gail, out of habit and because she is still standing beside the Black, shoots from corner II at the tice. She misses, Rob hits Blue with Yellow and he and Chris go round to the peg with a crosswire at hoop 1.

Gail takes the long shot but misses again and Rob and Chris go round again but unaccountably miss the peg-out and lay up. Gail goes to take a shot but Rob forestalls play, as he should do under Appendix 4 section 3(a)(1)), and tells her that she played the previous stroke for her side. David and Gail agree, and David recalls that, in fact, the only stroke he has played so far was the first one of the game. That means, he says, that the first stroke out of sequence was the one Gail played on the fifth turn and that since the offending side has not yet played two further strokes, that error is the one to be rectified (Appendix 4 section 3(a)(2)). Therefore the two breaks that Rob and Chris have made don't count.

So the clips are replaced on hoop 1, David shoots, hits, he and Gail go round ... Well, I needn't go on.

Would the Chairman of the Laws Committee care to comment?

David Appleton

Change of image - Yes please

I am writing in response to The Chairman's column suggesting a new image for croquet. I agree wholeheartedly.

I took up croquet this summer and joined a club, where most of the members are retired. There is a distinct lack of members in my age range (forties), or younger and it would be so nice to encourage younger people into the game, but I do think the image needs updating - it seems to be associated only with older people, like bowls. I definitely think the white dress-code could be reviewed, it seems rather old-fashioned and rigid. I only play socially where there is no dress code. It would be so nice to have younger players come in to the game and discover what a great game it is, but they need to be actively sought out and encouraged.

Beth

There was some concern at the British Open Championships held at Hurlingham about the club's application of their whites only rule to competitors - particularly in regard to wet weather gear. It has become accepted that Tournaments are always played in whites and the tournament regulations specify:-P4 CONDITIONS OF PLAY d) ATTIRE. Flat-soled footwear must be worn on the courts and, unless otherwise permitted, predominantly white clothing should be worn.

Although I am quite happy to play in whites and agree that a lawn full of players in whites looks good, giving the impression that the game is being played seriously, I nevertheless find it impossible to think of any logical reason why croquet players should be required to wear white. The only possible reason might be that Croquet is supposed to be played in warm sunshine and that wearing white is a cooler form of dress for such activity - last June made a complete mockery of that idea.

The real reason I suspect is sheer snobbery to deter the hoi polloi from joining croquet clubs and install an additional financial barrier to them doing so. Even if that were not the reason, such a rule makes

potential croquet players see the game as one for the well heeled, expensive to play and subject to social prejudice. This is a rule that we could easily scrap, insisting only that people play in suitable attire. Tournament competitors should be encouraged to wear a club top and shorts or tracksuit type bottoms. Indeed in Team matches it makes much better sense for teams to wear distinctive coloured clothing so that spectators can distinguish who is playing who.

David Turner

New source to tap?

I am Chairman of Littlehampton Croquet Club and County Chairman (West Sussex) of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Currently, I am trying to interest our Gold Standard participants of the Award to adopt Croquet for one of their sections - either Physical Recreation or Skills. The unit leaders I have spoken to are very keen to introduce croquet as one of the options.

At Littlehampton, we are keen (as, it would seem are most clubs) to attract young people to join us. The advantages would be enormous and could spread to International level as the Award is delivered world wide. Parents of the young people, 40s age group might also be tempted to join.

Could I encourage all clubs who wish to attract youngsters to contact their local Duke of Edinburgh's Award office - details can be found on the DoE web site www.theaward.org

I will let you know our progress in due course.

Lilian Holdsworth

Nottingham List Correspondent

I am appealing for someone who is a regular viewer/reader of the Nottingham List croquet forum to summarise/report on items being discussed that would be of interest to the wider general croquet community. Anyone who wishes to take this task on should contact me either by email or telephone 07752356880. I would not require huge amounts of reportage, but some help would be greatly appreciated.

Gail Curry, Editor.

Publicity for croquet

By Jeff Dawson
Chairman of the Marketing Committee

Following the survey earlier in the year, one of the clear messages coming out was that the CA is thought to be poor at getting adequate media coverage for our sport. Several respondents asked that more coverage be obtained, especially for our larger events.

I believe there are at least two reasons why there is this perception. Firstly, it is difficult to get this type of coverage – from some of the comments raised, much more difficult than many realise. The media are concerned with what will attract the biggest audience for them, and in general a minority sport boasting only some 6000 club players throughout the country is not likely to push the right buttons. This makes getting publicity on a national level a constant uphill battle. Secondly, where we do have successes in the media, croquet players will often not realise it has happened, as it was not in the paper they read, or the radio/TV program they listen to.

So what does the CA do to promote the sport? Well, firstly we employ a PR agency called ENS to help push the message to the media. ENS are a sports specialist agency, and know most of the key people involved in the media. Of course, those of you involved in PR will know that employing an agency is an expensive business, but ENS work for a relatively low rate and have been helpful in getting our message across.

So what successes were there in the last year? The following coverage was obtained:

On the radio:

16th Nov BBC radio 2, 2 minute interview with Robert Fulford about the forthcoming MacRob

14th March BBC Radio 5 live, 2 minute interview with John Inverdale and two members of the winning MacRob team

On the TV:

14th June ITV West, 2 minutes on association croquet

In the Press:

11th Nov, Times, short column about the upcoming MacRob

5th Dec, Times, short column about our victory in the MacRob

7th Jan, Observer Sport Monthly, column about MacRob victory

1st Mar, Times, Short column about our Cheltenham racecourse initiative

14th March Daily Telegraph, short column about croquet at the Cheltenham racecourse meeting

9th July, Daily Express, 2 page spread about croquet and the open championships

11th July West London Guardian, half page on the opens

13th July Daily Telegraph, short column on opens quarter finals

16th July Daily Telegraph, short column about the finals.
11th – 16th Daily Telegraph, results of Opens KO posted each day

17th July, West London Guardian, column on the Opens results

July Cotswold Life, 3 page article on croquet

On-line

BBC Online, a lengthy piece on the young competitors at the Opens

Despite all of our efforts in pushing our message forward, the greatest successes often come out of the blue. Such was the case in 2006 with the (relatively) large amount of publicity we got following John Prescott playing croquet when perhaps he shouldn't have been. Similarly the best coverage in this last year was probably the Express double-page article, which was a direct result of our sponsorship deal with Tom Coles who runs Lawpack. The article was actually written by his cousin. If the initiative comes from the press themselves, it almost inevitably results in a much better quality of coverage than we can achieve otherwise. For this reason, we held two breakfast press briefing sessions this year. The first at Cheltenham during the Cheltenham Gold Cup racing week, and the second one morning at the Opens in July. These resulted in some immediate publicity, but also we hope will help to sow the seeds within the press to write more about us in the future.

Our coverage at the national level is aimed mostly at raising awareness of croquet as a sport, and trying to correct public perceptions of the game. However, coverage at a local level can often be more effective at actually getting people along to clubs. There is a limited amount we can do centrally from this point of view - approaches to the local media are best coming from locals themselves, i.e. from the clubs. I should emphasise also that it is much easier to obtain coverage at this level – it just needs the right kind of article to be submitted, and a degree of persistence (as much will depend on the space available in any one week). The CA has provided guidelines for writing articles, which are available on the website and in the 'Guide to recruitment and retention' pack sent to all clubs. If anyone would like any further assistance with this, please let us know. ENS are quite willing help with local press articles as long as they are given the relevant information. Please contact the CA office in the first instance.

I hope this goes to show that we have not been idle, and have indeed had more success than some of you may have realised. Nevertheless we must continue to push our message forward in whatever ways we can find. For this reason, the marketing committee are always open to suggestions. Even better, if you have any experience with the media, why not ask to join the committee? We are always looking for volunteers to co-opt onto the committee, and at the moment we are particularly lacking in Golf Croquet members who might be willing to help in that area. Please contact me with any ideas you may have or help you might be able to give – you know my contact details, just look at the advert for the CA shop!

England's first Croquet Academy is launched at Southwick

From the CA Coaching Committee

England's first Croquet Academy has been launched at the Sussex County Croquet Club at Southwick for the 2008 season. Whilst the initiative started at the Club it has been supported by the Croquet Association and the World Croquet Federation.

The main aim of the Academy is to develop a centre of excellence for Croquet training.

The initial concept was discussed at length with members of the Croquet Association. It was agreed that whilst Southwick is in the south of the CA's domain, which is not ideal for the northern clubs, the site offered the lawns and building required. In addition it is well served with good transport links both within the UK and abroad. The club is only 30 minutes from Gatwick, and less than 1 hour from Southampton Airport. The Channel Tunnel is less than 90 minutes drive and there is a frequent rail service to London and other parts of the UK.

Once established, The Academy plans give assistance to courses in other parts of the Country and even abroad if its expertise is required.

The Sussex County Croquet Club, usually referred to as Southwick, has had a long tradition as a training centre, hosting many South East Federation and Croquet Association courses. The Academy intends to build on this tradition by offering additional coaching initiatives.

It is planned to build the range of courses available on a gradual basis. This year they are going to introduce the first Weekend Summer School for Golf Croquet and one day course for Managers including computer programmes covering various tournament formats.

Another feature of the Academy will be to offer one-to-one coaching, subject to coach availability and a moderate fee.

The Academy is also planning to hold a series of Master Classes presented by leading International players.

The Academy has its own website www.thecroquetacademy.com which gives details of courses available and contact details for applications. Anyone without Web access can contact Frances Low, the academy administrator on 01273 388910.

A summary of the courses for 2008 is shown, but additional courses may well be introduced during the season and will be featured on the Academy website:

Tournament Management

Potential & existing Club & CA Event Managers
11 March 2008

Association Croquet – Improvers Coaching

Association players with a handicap of 18+
19 - 20 April 2008

Association Croquet – Bronze Coaching

AC players with a handicap of 12 - 18
19 – 20 April 2008

Association Croquet- Silver Gilt Coaching

AC Players with a handicap of 3 - 6
19 – 20 April 2008

New Golf Croquet Laws

Golf Croquet referees
23rd April 2008

Association Croquet-Silver Coaching

AC Players with a handicap of 3 - 6
26 - 27 April 2008

Association Croquet- Gold Coaching

AC Players with a handicap below 4
26 – 27 April 2008

Golf Croquet Weekend Summer School

GC Players with handicaps 0 - 6
5 – 6 July 2008

Association Croquet- Summer School

AC Players with handicap of 16 or over
22 -26 July 2008

Lawns Advisory Group

Lawns Advisory Group

The CA Development Committee has set up a group to advise clubs on matters associated with the care of existing lawns and the development of new lawns. Through its membership of the Sports Turf Research Institute it can arrange for their experts to deal with major developments.

The group consists of one member for each Federation area who will be the normal point of contact for any queries. They are listed below:

East Anglia: David Haslam, djhaslam99@btinternet.com.

East Midlands: Nigel Harding, croquet_uk@yahoo.com

London & South East:

George Noble, georgenoble@blueyonder.co.uk

North: Dave Turner, davidturner@blueyonder.co.uk

North West: Peter Taylor

South: Godfrey Nehring, juliavn@aol.com

South West: Bob Whitaker (Chairman),

dewhitacre2@btinternet.com

West Midlands: Paul Trafford, paul.trafford1@btinternet.com

Yorkshire: John Kennedy

Chairman of Development Committee

Barry Keen, barry.keen1@ntlworld.com

Please note that all applications for development grants involving lawns will have to be approved by the local member of the Lawns Advisory Group.

CA expands the lawns advisory group

For several years the CA had a small committee which offered advice to clubs on the care of lawns as well as the development of new lawns. However this group appeared to be

under used. The Development Committee decided that it would make the Group more accessible by appointing a member to each Federation.

The expansion of the group meant that it was necessary to provide training to the new members. The Development Committee therefore arranged a one day course at the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) in Bingley, Yorkshire for the expanded membership. The course was also attended by an additional 14 club members with responsibility for their lawns from around the UK.

The course was very comprehensive, covering advice on all aspects of lawn care including recognition and correction of problems such as weeds, fungi, drainage, and pests. The proper regular care of the lawn surface was comprehensively covered, including demonstrations of modern available machinery. The correct choice of grasses for different conditions was explained with advice on cutting heights, top dressing and irrigation.

As a result of this course the CA now has an active group who can help clubs deal with most problems and projects. In addition the CA will contribute towards the cost of using the STRI consultancy service for major projects and difficult problems beyond the expertise of the LAG.

If your club needs help in improving your lawns then please contact your local Lawns Advisory Group member. Details of your local member is given on the CA website.

Barry Keen, Chairman C/A Development Committee.
Bob Whitaker MBE, Chairman Lawns Advisory Group.

PITCHCARE

Pitchcare is a website for groundsmen and others involved in sports playing surfaces, it offers free membership, and can be accessed by its website, pitchcare.com, where on line registration will give free membership and access to information.

Joining the CA

Jeff Dawson
Chairman of Marketing Committee

We are always looking at new ways to attract more croquet players to become members of the CA, and to this end, I would like to draw your attention to some of our recent initiatives.

Last year we introduced an introduction bonus scheme, whereby the principal club named on a new application gets a £10 reward for helping to recruit the new member. As a result of the scheme, over £1,000 will be given back to clubs this year, so many of you will be seeing the benefits of this scheme soon (if you haven't already). The scheme is continuing for at least a further year, so please try to encourage as many of your club members to join as you can, and get some money back from the CA! The office has sent tri-fold membership application leaflets out to all club secretaries, so please make sure these are prominently displayed, and ask for more if you need them.

Development Committee

Lawns Advisory Group Terms of Reference

1 The LAG provides a service to member clubs giving advice on all matters dealing with the care of lawns as well as the preparation of new lawns.

2 The Lawns Advisory Group (LAG) is a sub-committee of the Development Committee.

3 The LAG consists of one member from each of the Federations.

4 The members of the LAG will elect a Chairman who will be a member of the Development Committee.

Development Committee

Lawns Advisory Group Method of Working

1 The LAG would not normally hold face to face meetings.

2 The initial contact for advice from the LAG will be via the local Federation member. Contacts may also be made via the Chairman of the LAG who would normally pass the request on to the relevant Federation member. If the local member is unable to provide full advice, then the other members of the LAG should be consulted via the Chairman.

3 All non-trivial queries should be reported by e-mail to the Chairman together with the advice made. Any follow up work and the results of this work should also be reported by e-mail to the Chairman.

4 The Chairman shall keep an ongoing record of the work of the LAG which can be used for future reference.

When the use of the STRI is recommended then a recommendation should be made to the Development Committee, including projected costs for approval.

This year we sent out car stickers with membership packs. Please display them prominently. We hope that by making membership of the CA a bit more visible it may encourage others to think about joining. Additional free car stickers are available from the CA office if required.

On a similar theme, we are now offering a free CA cap to new members when they join, as a thank you, and to help others see when someone has joined. Sadly, the cost would be too high to send all our members a cap, but they are available from the CA shop (cost £5.50 + postage). They are white with the CA logo embroidered above the peak.

If you would like to view the list of benefits available from joining the CA, they are given in the membership leaflet, and on the website (www.croquet.org.uk/ca/membership.asp). Please continue to help us find new members, and if you have any other bright ideas for increasing CA membership, please let me know!

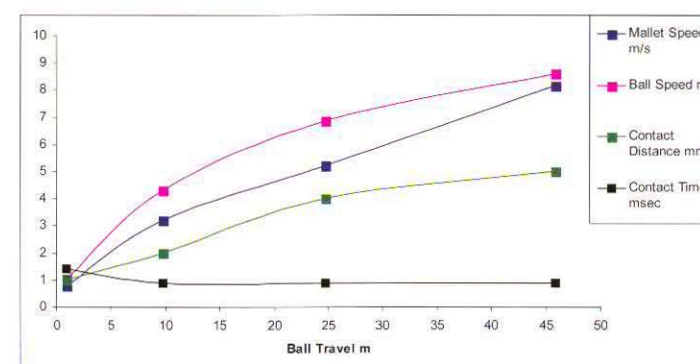
High speed filming of croquet shots

by Jeff Dawson

During October 2006, Bill Arliss and Alan Pidcock, on behalf of the Association and Golf Croquet Laws Committees and with assistance from various other players and referees conducted some high-speed filming of various types of croquet shot. This was combined with ordinary video of the same shots. The aim was to better understand the mechanics of the shots, and to see if there were any issues which may affect our interpretation of the laws.

Overall the committees considered that the tests had been quite successful and no unexpected results were obtained. Generally the films showed that croquet balls behaved in a manner one would expect from theoretical considerations, but with the technology used we were able to quantify the various distances and speeds and this should help future training of our referees.

The tests looked at the various types of shot listed below.



1. The first series of shots were simple shots of a mallet hitting a single ball. These simply put the times and distances of contacts between mallet and ball into a better perspective and if used can only help to give referees a better understanding of how long the mallet remains in contact with the ball. The resultant chart is shown here. The most useful information in practical terms is that the ball will leave the mallet after anything between 1 and 5mm, depending on how hard the shot was.

2. The second series of shots showed close straight rushes on a second ball, with varying separations between the balls. These proved what theoretical considerations would predict should happen. In particular, with balls only separated by very small distances, less than about 5mm, the balls collide before the striker's ball has left the mallet and thus only one contact is made between ball and mallet. Larger separations up to about 5 cm inevitably led to a double tap on the strikers ball, while above this distance the result depends heavily on the ability of the striker to play a good stop-shot. These films have stimulated considerable discussion in that it is impossible to tell from unaided observation whether balls very close together cause a double tap or not, and consequently the new revision of the golf croquet laws make the shot a fault even though a double tap may not have occurred

(association laws already prohibited prolonged contact caused by hitting another ball). With the larger separations, it is generally quite easy to tell if a double tap occurred, from the end positions of the balls. Where no double tap occurs, almost all of the energy of the back ball is transferred to the front ball, and consequently the back ball stops very quickly, leading to a large ratio between the distances travelled by the two balls. Where the mallet makes a second contact with the back ball, this ratio is significantly reduced.

3. The third series of shots showed various croquet strokes, including roll strokes. Contrary to some expectations, this series threw up no particular problems (there was no evidence of double taps or prolonged contact after the balls had parted). The shots were useful in that they quantified the much longer times of contact that we were already aware of.

4. The fourth series of shots showed angled hoop running attempts. The films quite clearly demonstrated how difficult it is to do a crush stroke (as opposed to a double tap) and if all the lessons are learned, it is likely to lead to fewer rather than more faults being called. However, the shots show considerable movement of the hoop even though the hoop had just been set in firm ground. The Bowdon lawn on the day of filming was fairly firm although recent rain had left it with more give than normal, and it is important to be aware that different results may have been obtained in other conditions.

The amount of movement that was produced in the hoops appeared so great that one member asked if the hoop had been firmly set (which it had). The results were in no way contentious but give some understanding to the mechanism of jumping through hoops from very oblique angles.

5. The fifth series of shots showed hammer strokes. These showed the difficulty in executing a clean hammer shot, and all shots where the downward angle of the mallet was steeper than 45 degrees were shown to have multiple contacts. Even those around 45 degrees which gave a little jump after leaving the mallet were shown to be multiple contacts although in the past the slight jump has been taken as evidence of a clean shot. As the number of films in this case were very small and as ground conditions were slightly soft, the committee felt that they should not jump to hasty conclusion on such limited evidence and further work should be done before any general conclusions were reached.

6. The sixth series of shots were jump shots. All the jump shots filmed which generally can be regarded as hammer shots but with a much less steep angle were found to be clean and there were no problems from this series.

Following on from this work, the Laws committees are planning to release guidance notes for referees based on the findings, but this is a lengthy process and is still in preparation. Unfortunately the sheer size of the films makes having them freely available on the website impracticable, but if anyone wants to have a copy of the full film on DVD, then it may be obtained from the CA office for a modest charge to cover reproduction and postage.

Amendments to the Laws of Association Croquet

by Ian Vincent, Chairman of the CA AC Laws Committee

The International Laws Committee (ILC), which consists of a representative from the governing bodies of Australia, New Zealand, the USA as well as our own, has proposed a set of amendments to the 6th Edition of the Laws of Association Croquet.

Council has approved these amendments, to come into effect within its Domain on 15th March, 2008, subject to them also being approved by the other three governing bodies represented on the ILC.

The full text of the amendments is available at http://www.croquet.org.uk/?section=association&page=6th/amendments/amendments_2008_01.pdf

It is hoped that laws books with the amendments incorporated will be available for the start of the season. Updates to the Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet (ORLC), which contains a commentary on Laws, and to the Laws published on the CA website, are also being prepared.

The main purpose of the amendments has been to implement the various rulings made since the laws were last revised in 2000. Many of the amendments are drafting improvements, such as a complete rewrite of the definition of a stroke (Law 5), without any intention to change the way the game is actually played. However, there are a few things that players should be aware of under the amended laws:

1. You commit a fault if you guide the mallet against your shoe (accidental contact will not be penalised).

2. If you commit a fault in a handicap game, your opponent has the choice of whether the balls should be replaced or not (whether or not you take a bisque, as in a level game). Once your opponent has decided that, you can then decide whether or not to take a bisque.

3. If you play a stroke that might have been a fault, you, or any referee watching, should declare it to be a fault if you believe it was *more likely than not* that it was a fault.

4. Whether or not you make a fault if you hit the striker's ball again with your mallet after the striker's ball has made a roquet and collided with a hoop, peg or another ball, depends on the order of events. If the roquet occurs after the collision, it is not a fault, but if the collision occurs after the roquet, it is.

5. If there is a collision with a double banked ball, you only replay the stroke if:

(a) the double-banked ball was not there when you took up your stance (otherwise you should have waited or moved it out of the way); and

(b) either a point might have been scored, a roquet made or a ball might have ended in a critical position (e.g. where it may or may not be wired from another ball).

Otherwise the balls are placed as near as can be judged to where they would have ended up but for the collision.

6. If taking croquet from touching balls, you can arrange them for a cannon even if none of them is a yard-line ball.

7. If advertised in the conditions for an event, you can replay a stroke if a ball is too big to go through a hoop, even if the ball does not end up jammed in the hoop.

8. Deeming a stroke played is now called "declaring" the stroke played. If you do this when both your balls are in play, you should say for which ball you are becoming responsible for the purposes of Law 13 (wiring).

Awards and Honours

Review by Executive Committee

The Croquet Association is always pleased to give recognition to achievers and has a range of awards and honours for that purpose. The list is now published so that members are more aware of what is available and can make recommendations to the CA or advise others to claim awards.

Generally speaking a recipient has to be a member of the CA, but there are exceptions. One such is the Diploma. Diplomas were first awarded in 2000 and have since been presented annually to club members at the CA's AGM. They are for exceptional services to a club and are intended primarily for the many volunteers who do so much "behind the scenes" work to allow a club to function smoothly. They are awarded on the recommendation of any CA member club.

Predominantly awards are made to individuals, but there are three for clubs. Further information on most of the awards can be found in the Fixtures Calendar, the Club Handbook or the CA website (www.croquet.org.uk). Some are claimed at a tournament, others are nominated for consideration by a CA committee.

Personal achievement in the sport:

· Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum Merit Awards for specified levels of break play in winning a tournament game.

· Silver Medal for reaching a specified level in a first class tournament.

· Apps Memorial Bowl for most improved male player

· Steel Memorial Bowl for most improved female player

Personal development in the sport

· Coaches' Badges – for Association Croquet at Club or Grades 1, 2 and 3 levels, or for Golf Croquet

· Coach of the Year Award

· Outstanding Lifetime Coaching Award (first awarded in 2007)

Club awards for development over two-year periods with monetary prize (currently £250)

· Townsend for clubs with one or two courts (cup presented 1987)

· Apps Heley for clubs with three or four courts (cup presented 1996)

· Millennium for clubs with five or more courts (first awarded in 2000)

Special recognition

· Benefactors – formally recorded in the Benefactors Book and cited at CA AGMs

· Council Medal – awarded for exceptional services to the CA through Council and its committees

· Honorary Life Membership – awarded for exceptional services to Croquet

There are, of course, awards given by other bodies at national, regional and local level. They are wide-ranging – from civic awards (from the Queen's to local authorities') to honours bestowed by sports organisations or the media. The CA would welcome suggestions for nominations it could actively promote, particularly at national level. It would also be pleased to support, where appropriate, nominations by federations and clubs for regional and local awards.

Coaching Committee

CA MERIT AWARDS 2007

Bruce Rannie, Organiser, Awards Scheme

Up to 16 October 2007, the Merit Award Badges claimed were as follows:

YEAR	PLATINUM	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
2007	4	13	27	27
2006	3	5	20	36
2005	2	11	20	30
2004	6	7	19	12
2003	-	5	21	15
2002	-	9	24	26
2001	-	10	29	27
2000	-	8	26	36

Note that 2004 was the first year for the Platinum award.

The CA congratulates all the winners. The Merit Award Scheme continues to recognise and reward enterprising play, and the CA Coaching programme, nationally and locally, is geared towards teaching players how to make the best of each and every opportunity within a match.

List of Merit Award Winners 2007 (Name, Event / Club, Month)

PLATINUM (4)

· Ian Burridge, Open Championship Plate, Hurlingham, July 2007

· Paul Castell, Southern Championship Plate, Compton, September 2007

· Ed Duckworth, Southern Championship Plate, Compton, September 2007

· Tony le Moignan, Jersey Week A-class, July 2007

GOLD (13)

· Gavin Carter, Jersey Week A-class, July 2007

· Alan Cottle, Spring Weekend Advanced Final – winner, Southwick, May 2007

· William Gee, August Week, Nottingham, August 2007

· Alain Giraud, July Advanced, Wrest Park, July 2007

· Michael Hann, Class Singles, Hurlingham, August 2007

· Jonathan Hills, Tompkinson Shield, Edgbaston, August 2007

· Mike Huxley, B-level Advanced, Sidmouth, August 2007

· Peter McDermott, CA v CAI, Nottingham, June 2007

· Mike Porter, B-level, Newport, June 2007

· Martin Stephenson, Scottish Open, Meadows, July 2007

· Mike Town, Open Weekend, Guildford and Godalming, June 2007

· Derek Watts, Southern Week, Compton, September 2007

· Andrew Winn, Edgbaston "B", Edgbaston, June 2007

SILVER (27)

· Nigel Amos, August Tournament, Budleigh Salterton, August 2007

· Mike Bottomley, South-east Area Final, Longman Cup, Medway, September 2007

· Les Bowker, Over-50s Handicap, Cheltenham, July 2007

· Alan Edwards, Jersey Week Egyptian, July 2007

· Michael Finnigan, Robin Hood, Summer Week, Nottingham, August 2007

· Tony Forbes, Cheltenham v Dyffryn, Longman Cup, July 2007

· Nicholas Furse, Weekend Handicap, Surbiton, July 2007

· Robert Halpin, Weekend Handicap, Norwich, June 2007

· Nigel Hames-Keward, Mid-Summer Handicap, Woking, June 2007

· Graham Harford, May Tournament, Budleigh Salterton, May 2007

· Lee Hartley, Summer Handicap, Pendle and Craven, August 2007

· Mick Haytack, Autumn Handicap, Nottingham, August 2007

· Neil Kellett, Over-50s Advanced, Cheltenham, September 2007

· James le Moignan, Jersey Week Egyptian, July 2007

· Mark Lloyd, Barbara Evans Trophy, Bristol, June 2007

· Tim Lloydlangston, Weekend Handicap, Budleigh Salterton, May 2007

· Ray Lowe, Scottish Open, Meadows, July 2007

· Richard Mills, August Tournament, Budleigh Salterton, August 2007

· Tony Mockett, Handicap Singles Weekend, Ramsgate, July 2007

· Callum Ringer, Handicap Weekend, Norwich, July 2007

· Jeffrey Rushby, Spring Weekend Handicap, Southwick, May 2007

· Richard Stevens, Bank Holiday Class Event, East Dorset, August 2007

· Tom Tibbits, All-England South-East Area Final, Surbiton, September 2007 (same game as Bronze, second ball)

· David Wedmore, August Advanced Handicap Weekend, Hurlingham, August 2007

· Andrew Willis, Millennium Cup, Bath, June 2007

· George Winder, Spring Weekend Handicap, Colchester, May 2007

· Richard Wood, Weekend Handicap, Budleigh Salterton, May 2007

BRONZE (27)

· Nigel Amos, August Tournament, Budleigh Salterton, August 2007

· Betty Bates, Summer Handicap, Pendle and Craven, August 2007

· Les Bowker, Weekend Handicap, Southport, May 2007

· Justin Brightmore, All-England North-West Area Final, Pendle and Craven, September 2007

· Allan Card, Handicap Singles Weekend, Ramsgate, July 2007

· Peter Cole, Weekend Handicap, Ryde, June 2007

· Rosemary Danby, Weekend Handicap, Nottingham, May 2007

· Tony Forbes, Easter Tournament, Cheltenham, April 2007

· Eileen Gallagher, Summer Handicap, Pendle and Craven, August 2007

· Francois Garcia, All-England North-West Area Final, Pendle and Craven, September 2007

· Mrs A. L. Jarman, Southern Week, Compton, September 2007

- James le Moignan, Jersey Week Handicap, July 2007
- Alan Morton, Summer Handicap, Pendle and Craven, August 2007
- Robert Moss, Weekend Handicap, Bristol, May 2007
- Andy Myers, July Tournament, Surbiton, July 2007
- Ray Percy, Handicap Tournament, Wrest Park, May 2007
- Steve Reynolds, Spring Weekend Handicap, Bowdon, May 2007
- Rachel Rowe, Summer Handicap, Pendle and Craven, August 2007
- Jeffrey Rushby, Spring Weekend Handicap, Southwick, May 2007
- Audrey Sherwin, Weekend Handicap, Surbiton, July 2007
- Geoff Strutt, Handicap Tournament, Wrest Park, May 2007
- Ian Telfer, Weekend Handicap, Budleigh Salterton, May 2007
- Tom Tibbits, All-England South-East Area Final, Surbiton, September 2007 (same game as Silver, first ball)
- Tony Vernazza, Fylde v Beverley, Longman Cup, July 2007
- Tony Whateley, Autumn Salver, Bath, September 2006
- Richard Williamson, Weekend Handicap, Nailsea, August 2007
- Marie Young, August Tournament, Sussex County, August 2007

News & Info

CORRECTIONS TO 2008 FIXTURES BOOK

pp 5, 12, 49 The Golf Croquet Coaching Course at Woodhall Spa is on 3 May, not 3 June.

p 6, 11, 96 The midweek tournament at Pendle & Craven on 15-18 July is no longer restricted to players over 50 years of age.

p 66 The Golf Croquet Tournament at Surbiton is on 5-6 April, not 6-7 April.

Ian Vincent appointed Honorary Secretary of the Croquet Association

Dr Ian Vincent, a former Chairman Of Council has been appointed Honorary Secretary of the Croquet Association.

His appointment comes as part of a re-structuring plan which is scheduled for implementation during 2008.

Dr Vincent will start taking on his responsibilities in March 2008. Details of changes that will effect CA members will be published on its web site in due course.

I'm sure you will all join me in congratulating Dr Vincent on his appointment.

Jonathan Isaacs, Chairman Of Council

CAI vs CA, Carrickmines 26-27th July 2008

This year's McWeeney (CAI vs CA friendly fixture) will be held at Carrickmines <http://www.carrickmines.com/> on 26-27th July. There are no specific handicap restrictions, players typically ranging from -2 to 10, however entries from improving players will be given priority.

If you're interested in representing the CA please send entries (email acceptable) to cpatmore@yahoo.co.uk, or Chris Patmore Flat 43, Galleon House, St George's Wharf, Vauxhall SW8 2LW, Tel 07796 098 799, quoting name, email, phone number and current handicap.

The following information may be useful to anyone considering applying.

Flights: London-Dublin (currently) from ~£60 with RyanAir or Aer Lingus, £100 BA East Midlands-Dublin from £50 RyanAir. Accommodation

Luxury: The Beacon Hotel

Bewley's Hotel, Leopardstown

Budget: Three Rock View, or search on sandyford.com

Super budget: you may be able to stay with an Irish player if skint.

Italian Golf Croquet Open Championships

The Italian Golf Croquet Open Championships 2008 will be played on the 10th-11th May.

The main information about the Open are:

- Date: 10th-11th May, 2008
- Location: "Cascina del Lupo", Busto Arsizio (VA)
- Prizes: winner 400,00 Euros – runner-up 150,00 Euros
- Entry fee: 130,00 Euros – players' companions 90,00 Euros
- Maximum number of entries: 16 – 2 places reserved for Italian players

- Entries closing date: 6th April, 2008

For any queries other than entries, please contact the Tournament Director, Andrea Pravettoni on info@croquetitalia.it

Jersey announce Championship manager

The Jersey Croquet Club is pleased to announce that Cliff Jones will be managing the Championship of Jersey from 14 - 20 July 2008.

2008, CA AGM Date and venue

The AGM will be held on the 11th October 2008 at the Hurlingham Club at 11:00AM

Individual Associates who wish to stand for Council should let the Hon.Sec. know no later than the 1st June 2008, in accordance with Clause 18(a)(ii). There is expected to be at least one vacancy. In addition it would be helpful if any notice of any motions to be put to the AGM could be given to the Hon.Sec. by that time.

Croquet Videos on line - www.croquetonfilm.com

Following the posting of some video on You Tube by Duncan Hector, and some subsequent problems with ten minute limitations, a new website www.croquetonfilm.com has been set up by Adrian Wadley. The aim is to make this the home for AC and GC film which would be of interest to croquet players and thus filter out the huge amount of irrelevant "croquet" footage on sites such as You Tube. At the moment the Bamford Sextuple and Fulford/Walters World championship Final of 1991 are available but others will be posted.

Adrian Wadley has set this up and is to be congratulated.

Congratulations to Mr & Mrs Clarke



Wednesday January 30 saw the outdoor wedding of Jenny Williams and Chris Clarke on the banks of the river Avon, Mona Vale, Christchurch, which not only was a beautiful occasion, but also now holds the record of the highest ranked wedding (grade 2597) and a congregation not far behind (especially if one includes the celebrant Charles Jones).

Despite the best efforts of Mother Nature (and the bride's decision to arrive by punt), the wedding went off without any hitches (other than the couple's) and I'm sure all readers will wish Mr and Mrs Clarke all the best for the future.

Chris and Jenny took advantage of the World Championship being in New Zealand so that many of their croquet friends would find it easier to attend their wedding.

Samir Patel

Golf Croquet Selection Committee changes

Stephen Mulliner, Dick Strover, John Spiers and Tim King have been selected by Council to serve on the Golf Croquet selection Committee, with Tim King as the Chairman. Tim has offered the following open communication.

Dear Members of the Golf Croquet Community,

Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Bill Arliss, who has worked tirelessly to establish a vibrant Golf Croquet tournament scene that a large community of players is actively supporting. Unfortunately, by coincidence and in quick succession, we have lost the participation in the Committee of John Moore, Derek Old and Chris Sheen, all of whom provided clear insight into the relative merits of players under consideration for selection. All four of these individuals have contributed to producing

selections of the highest quality for several years.

I welcome John and Dick as new members of the Committee. They have both been strong supporters of the GC tournament scene in recent years. I have great faith in their judgement and I am confident that they will provide wise and objective insight when considering the performances and talents of their peers.

The immediate major priority of the Committee is to produce a comprehensive selection policy. The Committee will liaise with the Association Croquet Selection Committee to ensure that the two committees have consistent fundamental principles for their policies. Once approved and published publicly, the policy will provide transparency to the selection process and ensure that all players will understand what they have to do to earn a place through selection.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me or my fellow Committee members with any questions or comments. We are here to serve you.

Tim King, CA GC Selection Committee

DOGMERSFIELD CROQUET CLUB

A short history

by Roger Barnacle

Three years ago The Four Seasons Hotel, Dogmersfield, Hampshire approached the Croquet Association with a request for help in setting up a croquet lawn. The Hotel had been created from a large country estate and wished to provide excellent recreational facilities to complement its five-star luxury accommodation. Consequently SECF Development Officer, Michael Hague, became involved and he in turn asked Martin Mander, a member of his club at Woking, to assist as he lives near to the Hotel.



Dogmersfield players, Rupert Catt, Anthony Cox, Nigel Beazley, Martin Mander (chairman), Jan Johnston, Ian Simpson, Jill Catt, Roger Barnacle and Christopher Berry.

The Hotel then agreed to a croquet club to increase local contacts. The challenge to establish it from scratch was met by placing articles in local parish magazines and notices in the local press and shop windows. Interested parties were asked to a meeting at Winchfield (an adjoining village) Village Hall on the 17th May 2005. Twenty one attended and a club was duly formed. Michael Hague was elected President, Martin Mander Chairman and Jill Catt became Secretary.

It joined both the CA and the SECF and was operative from mid June 2005 on two lawns, one 3/4 size, the other 1/2 size in a partly walled garden. The club has the right to use the lawns on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not at week-ends, due to the number of functions held. However other times can be arranged for special events subject to the Hotel's agreement. Only Golf Croquet is played and internal singles and doubles tournaments are held each year. The club plays in the SECF Handicap Golf Croquet League but, due to the size of the lawns, play all matches away - friendly matches are also played. This year it entered the Centre Stage Golf Croquet Competition and one of its members, Roger Barnacle, was runner up at the national final at Edgbaston Croquet Club. The club's first one day tournament was held in 2007 and, apart from the AGM, a yearly get together for dinner and skittles takes place as well as occasional "fun" evenings. It also responds to requests from the Hotel to assist their guests to play and enjoy croquet. The present membership stands at 41.

The clubs most notable visitors to date are 'The Scissor Sisters' band, who used the lawn for a photo shoot featured in the Times in August of 2006.

Take the headache out of Swiss event management

Help with the spreadsheet approach to running Swiss croquet tournaments

by Peter Fry

A Swiss tournament aims to progressively sort players so that stronger players drift to the top of the playing list over successive rounds, while weaker players drift to the bottom. The result is that, in later rounds, stronger players are playing each other, as are weaker players. At the same time, no two players should play each other more than once in the tournament. Typically, 6 rounds are enough to produce a plausible winner with up to 16 players, or 5 rounds with up to 8 players^{Ref 1}. A method for organising such a tournament is described by John Wall on the Oxford Croquet website.

At Littleton we have traditionally organised Swiss One-ball tournaments about twice a year, using paper charts. Later rounds can, however, become a chore to work out, as the number of players who have already played each other becomes significant.

There are programs on the market to organise Swiss tournaments, designed primarily for chess tournaments. Having looked briefly at what was on offer, I decided they were overkill for what we wanted, and I therefore designed an Excel spreadsheet to work out successive rounds automatically, keeping as far as possible to the same format as our paper charts, and following the scheme described by John Wall. For low numbers of players this scheme can break down in the later stages, when the majority of possible games have been played. I added an additional algorithm to deal with these cases, and the program copes reliably with 5 rounds of 4 games (8 players), or 6 rounds of 5 to 9 games. Tests with random game results show that, even with only 4 games, adding a 6th round (where every player plays all but one possible opponent) only failed to provide a suitable set of games in 2 tournaments out of 20.

Figure 1: Games Chart for Round 1, with names and results filled in.

The program has been tested on Excel 1997 and Excel 2003 with no problems. Operating it is a simple matter for anyone with a basic familiarity with Excel or a similar spreadsheet. The spreadsheet comes as read-only, so that you always have a pristine form to start a tournament. Firstly, therefore, make a copy to a suitable new filename (e.g. 'august_tournament.xls'). The copy must be opened with Macros enabled. (You may have to adjust Excel's security setting to Medium to enable the macros to run.) Then type players' names into the Round 1 games chart, starting from the top, in any random order (e.g. in the order in which they arrive, or alphabetically). If there are an odd number of players, add an imaginary player called 'Bye' at the bottom of the list. (Bye always loses, so his opponents never actually have to play against him!)

At the end of round 1, enter the results in the Result column as '1' for a win and '0' for a lose. Draws are, naturally, not allowed; though a simple alteration to the program would allow this option.

Figure 1 shows an example spreadsheet at this stage.

A mouse-click on the button marked "Enter all results, then press to calculate Round 2" causes the results to be added to the previous scores in the 'Won' column (all 0 for the first round), and the players are then sorted in order of their total scores and entered automatically into the Round 2 games chart. This is repeated through up to 6 tournament rounds, with corrections

made to ensure that no two players play each other again.

To the right of the 6 games charts is the Games Log, shown in figure 2 after 5 rounds have been played. This records which games have been played, and enables the program to keep tabs on who has played whom.

Provided all goes to plan, the program practically runs itself; all you need do is enter the results of games and click the appropriate button. But events can conspire to frustrate this simplicity. In my first test of the program, before I had allowed for them, two such events occurred:

- a) One player requested a bye in the third round because of another commitment, although he was not due for one.
- b) I entered one result wrongly, and this was not discovered until later in the tournament.

Figure 2: Round 6 and Games Log, after 5 rounds have been played.

To cope with such events I introduced the Recalculate button. You can make manual alterations to previous results, or to the order of players in the round about to be played. Pressing the Recalculate button will then correct the scores throughout the rounds already played.

A final word is in order on the practicality of using a laptop computer in the context of a croquet tournament. Mains power is often not available in the vicinity, and the program is used for short periods between rounds, with long intervals while the games are actually played. The Hibernate function in recent versions of Windows (e.g. XP) is ideal in this situation, allowing the computer to be switched off and on quickly without exiting from the program. If Hibernate is not available and you are running from batteries, you will have to save the spreadsheet and shut down at the start of each round, and restart at the end of the round to enter the results.

I can send a copy of *xlswiss.xls* to anyone who sends a request and their email address to peter.w.fry@talktalk.net.

References:
 "Ties in swiss tournaments" by Kevin Carter in www.oxfordcroquet.com.
 "Swiss events - a tutorial" by John Wall in www.oxfordcroquet.com.

Barlow ceases croquet ball production

The story from beginning to end

By Reg Bamford

Barlow Croquet Equipment announced last month that they have ceased trading, bringing an end to the production of the Barlow Ball. The business was founded by Tom Barlow in around 1986 and, following his passing away ten years later, was continued by his daughter-in-law, Victoria Barlow.

Tom Barlow was a keen sportsman all his life. Before taking an interest in croquet, he had played practically every major sport, including club level cricket and rugby, as well as receiving a "blue" for polo whilst at Cambridge University in England, touring both the USA and Argentina. When Tom moved back to his family home at Vergelegen, outside Somerset West, South Africa, he was introduced to croquet by his mother, Cynthia, who for many years welcomed friends to her immaculate croquet court in front of the gabled family home. In 1979 Tom and the late George James OBE founded the Somerset West Croquet Club, of which Tom became President for Life.

Tom started playing croquet seriously in around 1971 and, within two years, he had won the SA Open Singles, a title he was to win ten years in succession, from 1973 to 1982. Tom introduced a modern tactical approach to the game which had not yet been adopted in South Africa. His style was quite unique - left hand on top, with the thumb up the back of the shaft, and a light pencil grip with his right. He travelled to England to play in the British Open in 1974 and 1975, beating many of Britain's top players at that time, including Andrew Hope and Bernard Neal. In 1975 he reached the final of the British Open, losing to Nigel Aspinall. Tom was the first Springbok croquet captain and led South Africa to victories over a number of countries on various occasions, including Scotland and the USA. Tom's last croquet title was the SA Open Doubles championship, which he won with his son, Charles, in Durban in December 1995, only one month before his death.

Tom had a refreshing, light-hearted approach to croquet. Famously, when Tom was asked by an American television interviewer, whilst leading the Springbok team to victory over the USA in 1982, how he prepares his team psychologically for the big game, Tom's response was, "To tell you the truth I have some trouble convincing myself that it matters at all who wins or loses." On court, Tom was always ready to give his opponent the benefit of the doubt whenever a referee was required. I will never forget when, during the 1981 South African Open Championships in Pietermaritzburg (then a "Draw and Process" format) there was a shortage of time and courts and I was to be scratched from the Open Singles, Tom insisted instead that he would scratch from the Process so that I could remain in the tournament. Tom

proceeded to win the Draw and the title!

Charles continued Tom's playing legacy. Immediately following Tom's consecutive 1973 to 1982 run of SA Open Singles victories, Charles won the SA Open Singles title three years running, from 1983 to 1985. Both Tom and Charles won the SA Open Doubles titles on various occasions, either partnering each other, or Dick Le Maitre (in Tom's case), or Reg Bamford (in Charles' case). Charles received his Springbok colours in 1986, in a World Team test against the USA. Both Tom and Charles contributed hugely to the emergence of a strong croquet contingent in South Africa – at its height, the country boasted ten minus 2 players.

In 1986, two factors inspired Tom to develop a new croquet ball for the South African market: the South African Rand weakened markedly which made the Jaques balls, the only product on the market at the time, prohibitively expensive, whilst at the same time the quality of Jaques balls had deteriorated to an unacceptable level. Tom spent several years experimenting with various materials and moulds and gradually developed a prototype of the croquet balls that are used around the world today. The key factor that differentiated Barlow Balls from Jaques Balls was the fact that Barlow Balls were made of a uniform, solid polyurethane resin whereas Jaques Balls were not uniform throughout, but were covered in a brittle plastic casing which tended to wear down and crack. However, an amusing story is told of one of the first Barlow sets to be imported into the USA; they had a tiny hole drilled into each ball which mystified the American recipients. Customs had evidently X-rayed the balls and detected the central cavity. No drugs, though - just a sample of African air!

Tom had intended for the Barlow Ball to solve what had become a genuine threat to championship level croquet in South Africa. Ironically, as was the case with many South African industries at that time of the country's history, political isolation resulted in the development of a world class product and, within a few years, some 98% of Barlow Balls were bound for export.

Tom died suddenly in 1996. Charles and his wife Victoria had moved to England, and Victoria, who took over the business, decided to move its administration to England, whilst keeping the manufacturing in South Africa. Over the past ten years, a number of croquet ball manufacturers have emerged. Victoria Barlow, having considered that the quality of these products is on a similar level to that of Barlow Balls, and considering also her own family demands, has decided that the original purpose of the business (it wasn't to make money – but rather a quest to do something good and meet the challenge of solving an issue in the game Tom loved) had largely been met. Accordingly, the business is to be discontinued.

Tom was more than just another croquet enthusiast. He was a great South African patriot and a true sportsman. The croquet world is grateful for the contribution of Tom Barlow, a true legend in the game.

Coaching Notes

by Keith Aiton

These notes are intended for coaches of groups or individual players who aspire to A-class croquet or better.

V. The Triple Peel

I want to deal with the triple peel in the context of the position left after the opponent has missed his lift shot. I shall begin with the position left as a result of making a diagonal spread leave. Let us assume that the opponent lifted his ball near the west boundary and shot from corner 3 missing into corner 4. You have a rush towards the ball at the peg and the first part of the turn is to pick up a three ball break. Partner is sent as a pioneer to hoop 2 and hoop 1 made using the opponent's ball. The first point of interest that may not be immediately obvious is that after making hoop 2 the pioneer at hoop 4 should be placed a little to the east of the hoop and well up to the hoop or a little to the south of it. The reason for this is that in a few strokes time you will be playing a croquet stroke from corner 4 sending a pioneer to hoop 5 and going to the pioneer at hoop 4. This will be needlessly tricky if the pioneer at hoop 4 is too far north or west of the hoop.

After making hoop 3 I would play to rush towards hoop 4, to somewhere 12-15 yards from corner 4, take off and roquet the ball in corner 4. Send that ball as a pioneer to hoop 5 and then after making hoop 4 croquet the ball (which is partner) towards, but short of 4-back going to the opponent's ball north of hoop 4. Rush that ball to a spot from where you can send it a couple of yards west of 4-back going to the pioneer at hoop 5. (Note that this will be easier if the pioneer at hoop 5 is north of the hoop rather than south of it.) After making hoop 5 rush east of partner and send the ball a couple of yards north of 1-back going to obtain a rush on partner to peeling position in front of 4-back.

If at all possible it is best to make a peel with a straight stop shot, or at least a straight shot rather than one with some "split". This is because a straight croquet shot will not "pull". The subject of pull is a topic in itself and I do not want to embark on a major digression at this stage. *However, while I think of it I know that David Harrison-Wood has devised a formula for calculating the amount to allow for pull when attempting a peel which takes account of the type of shot to be played, the distance from the hoop, the make of balls, and the conditions of the lawn.* A "tip" of my own is that I try to reduce the variability of pull by always placing the striker's ball with one of the four "centres" of the milling against the croqueted ball. I actually started doing that many years ago when Jaques balls were the norm with deep and sharp milling. I am not sure that it makes any difference with Barlows or Dawsons but I have no intention of changing that habit.

Meanwhile back at the 4-back peel, the intention is obviously to make the peel and obtain a rush to hoop 6 on the opponent's ball to the west. Second prize is to "jaws" the peel, third prize is "bouncing out" and last place is failing to obtain a rush to hoop 6! Assuming that the peel is made, rush to hoop 6, make it and then there is a choice. You can either play to send the ball you have just

used to make hoop 6 to 2-back as a pioneer, which will hopefully then allow you to place partner near penult before making 1-back, or, you can play to send partner to 2-back as a pioneer, leaving the opponent's ball near penult. The first choice will then allow you to attempt the penult peel going to the pioneer at 2-back (the so-called "death roll"). This is an aggressive play that is best attempted on an easy lawn and with a good pioneer at 2-back.

I would suggest that the "main line" is to play to send partner to 2-back as a pioneer, make 1-back and send one of the opponent's balls to 3-back as a pioneer leaving the other one somewhere to the south of penult. After making 2-back you can rush partner back towards penult and leave it there ready to be peeled (if you are good at rushing you may get a chance at the peel now). Then you can leave an opponent's ball to the east and south of penult as a 4-back pioneer, make 3-back and rush towards partner at penult. Leave that ball as a pioneer at penult, which means leaving it a couple of yards south and to the west of the hoop. Rush partner in front of penult, peel it (not hard) and obtain a rush to 4-back.

After making 4-back rush towards partner and croquet the opponent's ball around peg high or just south obtaining a rush on partner to a spot where you can send it to rover going to the penult pioneer. This is one reason why the penult pioneer is left south of the hoop, to make this shot easier. Another reason is that if the penult peel is left in the jaws then after making 4-back a rush peel can be made and partner croqueted to rover going to the penult pioneer.

After making penult, play to croquet one opponent's ball well south of rover, in case it necessary to jump over partner when running rover, and croquet the other to the side of rover. Hopefully the peel will sail through and you can run the hoop under control and use the opponent's balls to obtain a rush to the peg. Job's a good one.

That is the basic plan, but of course things may not go exactly as planned. There are therefore "Plan B's" at various stages. For example if the 4-back peel bounces out before hoop 6 then play to send an opponent's ball to 2-back as a pioneer, rush partner back in front of 4-back and peel with a thick take-off going to the pioneer at 1-back. (By the way you look and feel like a donkey if you send the peel off the lawn which would of course end your turn.)

If that peel attempt sticks in the jaws then you can leave it there until after making 3-back and play to rush peel partner and croquet it over to penult going to your pioneer for 4-back. You will need to finish with a "straight" double peel. The alternative, which is to rush peel 4-back either before or after making 2-back is feasible but will involve playing some long rushes and/or take-offs in order to place partner in a position to be able to attempt the penult peel before making 4-back.

If that peel attempt bounces out then the aggressive way to play is to leave partner and one of the opponent's balls at 4-back, make 2-back, rush up to 4-back and play to peel partner while obtaining a rush to 3-back. That places 3-back at risk, but if the peel attempt works or goes in the jaws then hopefully you can convert to an attempt at a straight double peel finish. The alternative is to play for a straight triple peel finish. I am not going to explain how to complete one of those, other than to say that there are two methods, one of which involves a "sexy" promotion in a croquet stroke, and the other an accurate seven yard rush.

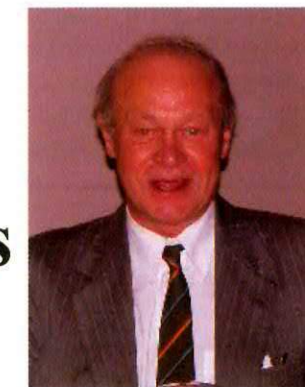
Quite often you will be left with a straight double peel in any event. I want to say a few words about this as I always try and play to peel "Irish", ie peel partner through penult and run it with the striker's ball in the same stroke. I place one of the opponent's

balls a little to the south and to one side of penult before attempting the Irish peel, with the other opponent's ball about peg high. Much will then depend on how far partner is peeled through the hoop, but I will be hoping to convert the position into a standard single peel, ie where I have placed both of the opponent's balls as described above before attempting to rush partner in front of rover.

One general final point worth emphasising about completing a triple peel is that it requires a higher degree of skill than merely playing a break to 4-back. It becomes more important to obtain rushes after making hoops and in croquet strokes it is important that both balls are placed accurately. Only practice will let you acquire that level of skill, but perhaps it is worth pointing out that you can use the first break as an opportunity to practice. So don't be tempted to settle for a sloppy first break just because the lawn is easy. Try to play the first break with the accuracy that you will need to complete the triple in the second break.

Some croquet recollections

by John Solomon



In 1950 I played in the Southwick August tournament on a court next to Lord Tollemache. "Solomon" he said (still very formal) "I hear you are going to New Zealand with the MacRobertson team. Shake hands". I thought it was rather a formal way to congratulate me. "That's good. Not too firm, not too soft. Give me your mallet. Oh, much too heavy for those fast courts out there. I'll bring you another tomorrow". The next day he produced a magnificent brand new Corbally which must have weighted nearer 4 lbs. than my own 3 lb. one and I politely declined it.

In October, Winifred Kingsford, Humphrey Hicks, Mrs. Ozanne and I boarded the S.S. Rangitoto at Tilbury bound for Wellington. We met for tea in the lounge. "John, you can't call us Mrs. Kingsford and Mr. Hicks, I'm Winifred". "And I'm Humphrey" he said. Mrs. Ozanne said nothing, possibly because she had switched off her cumbersome hearing aid, for she was profoundly deaf. Between ourselves we called her Hosanna, but her name was Aline. We called only at Curacao, Panama (most people think if you go through the canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific you are going broadly west; in fact you are going south-east) and Pitcairn Island, the home of the castaways from the Bounty, where we hove to and they rowed out to us in half a dozen large dinghies to collect stores and came on board to sell souvenirs. I was interested in a carved wooden flying fish. I was told it was normally £5 but as it was the Sabbath there was no charge. Nevertheless, money changed hands.

We spent 5 days in Wellington, playing at 7 clubs and then a week travelling north towards Auckland playing exhibition games at small towns. If I was playing with Hosanna and she just clipped a ball she was trying to rush and ended up at the other end of the

court she would call imperiously "John, ball"! and I would rush to retrieve it. At most towns we were given a tour before lunch and they almost invariably said "Look John, there's the maternity hospital". On one occasion, the tour just finishing, our guide said "Oh, I haven't show you the car park". I murmured that one car park was very much like another and we were spared, but they were all very kind and hospitable.

In Auckland we met up with Dudley Hamilton-Miller, our captain, who had flown out and Eddie Ward-Petley and his wife Leonie who had come from S. Africa. At lunch on the day before the first Test Eddie explained to me the desirability of making the last hoop of your turn off an opponent ball, which makes the leave much easier. I had never heard of this. Is this still taught by coaches?

Stands had been erected around the courts and it was reported that there were 600 spectators, almost all women, for very few men played. After the Test we went to Whangarei, about 2 hours drive north of Auckland. I went with 2 ladies who kindly asked me to drive. About halfway, on unmetalled roads, we had a puncture and I discovered that we had no jack. The ladies decided I should hide behind the hedge and they would do the helpless female act. In no time a driver had stopped, changed the wheel and when he had gone I re-appeared and we continued our journey.

Calling all Golf Croquet Players

The Fixtures Calendar for 2008 has more Golf Croquet events than ever! There is a section in the middle with all the tournaments listed and sections right at the end of the book with coaching and referee courses. So there is something for all standards of players. You need to be a CA Tournament member to play in the more advanced tournaments, unless it is your first when there is a one-off waiver, but there are other competitions for players with higher handicaps for which you only need to be a member of a Club.

All the Courses are open to any Club member, but early application is advised. Coaching courses come in various categories. Two-day courses for players who would like to become qualified Golf coaches are being run at Taunton Deane and Culcheth clubs. Southwick CC is holding a weekend coaching course for 0 to 6 handicap players. One-day courses are being run at Wrest Park, Eynsham, Taunton Deane, Woodhall Spa and Chelmsford & Bentley clubs which are for both beginners and improvers, but there is also a course for more advanced players at Blewbury Club.

So please spread the word around your Club about all these activities. The organisers appreciate being supported in their endeavours and you will find that all courses and tournaments offer really great value as well as being highly enjoyable.

Jennet Blake,
Golf Croquet Tournament Committee

2008 WCF World Championship

New Zealand 2nd - 10th February
Report & photographs by Samir Patel

Sunday February 2nd saw the formal opening of the 11th WCF World Championships. All living previous World Champions are playing, as are all of the current World top-10 ranked players; indeed only 2 of the top 25 ranked players are missing. While few would look beyond the top 6 for this year's Champion, current champion Reg Bamford isn't looking past his current #1 ranking, although five-times champion (and current #3) Robert Fulford is many people's favourite.

While formal practice started yesterday, United Croquet Club was kind enough to allow travelling players to start their warm up earlier in the week. Fresh from the 24hr+ flight and with freshly set hoops, it was quickly clear we were in for a challenge. It would appear that Christchurch is built on a foundation that allows for solid hoops, which, together with the work put in by both the hosting clubs and the organising committee, will result in a challenge for all.



The commentators, Ian Burrigge and David Maugham, together with spectators, and Chris Clarke as the the outplayer.

The tournament itself got underway, launched by a host of local dignitaries, including the Mayor of Christchurch and the New Zealand Minister for Sport.

At mid-afternoon today, the lawns (at United) were running at slightly over 12 seconds with everything set for a perfect tournament. Unfortunately, the forecast isn't good, with rain forecast overnight and the wind having picked up dramatically. We all await the morning to see what Mother Nature gives us for day one of the blocks.

Day 1: Sunday

The first day of block play saw the 1st seeds play 8,9,10 in their block, and there were few surprises as a result. Keith Aiton was the only one to drop a game, to Peter Parkinson. David Hajn

from the Czech Republic got as far as a second break before losing out to Reg Bamford, while Robert Fulford had a peel-free day.

Of more interest were the middle games in the blocks, with 2, 3, 4 playing 5, 6, 7. Jeff Newcombe, Toby Garrison and David Openshaw did the best of the lower seeded.

17 players are still unbeaten - Bamford, Kirby, Clarke C, Gibbons, Fulford, Dumergue, Maugham, McBride, Landrebe, Openshaw, Mulliner, Clarke J, Skinley, Wright, Patel, Jackson, Beijderwellen.

18 players are yet to record their first win.

Day 2: Monday

The overnight rain never came, meaning day continued with more of the same tough conditions. At the end of the day's play, United lawn 6 was timed at 12.5 seconds, suggesting 13-14 for the midday games.

By the end of the day's play, the blocks had started to take shape, and while no one was yet certain of qualifying for the knockout, others had already progressed to the plate.

Top 4 seeds in all blocks are in contention, although Forster and Hogan probably need all three games tomorrow, and with those seeds playing each other, that may be a tough ask. Of the lower seeds, Bassett, Davis, Openshaw and Newcombe look to be in good shape, while Johnston, Beard, Bennett, Bald, Murphy and Garrison will fancy their chances.

Various combinations are still possible, with a possible 5 way tie on 7 possible in block A.

Day 3: Tuesday

Overnight and continuing rain took the edge off the lawns for the final day of block play, bringing Cashmere down to just over 9 seconds and no faster than 8 during the showers.

With many players needing not only wins, but other results to go their way, there was much interest across venues which kept all venue managers and the webmaster busy, and players on the cusp of qualification on edge - even some top seeds, including Stephen Mulliner and Rutger Beijderwellen, were not sure of qualification as they started their last game.

3 blocks have a play-off tomorrow - AJ Reid vs. Jeff Newcombe, Brian Cumming vs. Shane Davies vs. Marcus Evans (for 2 places), Kevin Beard vs. Phillip Drew.

Jerry Stark and Stephen Forster are shock exits, while Jonathan Kirby and John Gibbons are the only players to have not

dropped a game.

Day 4: Wednesday

Today saw the start of the knockout stages of the 2008 World Championships.

With the challenging conditions at United, games were expected to be long, with the 4/7/10 time limit of relevance. The late starts got underway at around 11am, 2pm, 3pm and 4pm.

Early games produced some shock results with Lowe, Openshaw and Garrison going game up against Mulliner, Maugham and Aiton, but the four seeds all recovered to take the second.

Fulford, after a slightly shaky first few hoops, was clinical against Reid, winning +26tp +26tp.

The biggest shock of the day was Bamford who, despite winning the first, lost to an excellent under pressure TP by Shane Davis, who won -8 +22 +17tp.

All other top 8 seeds found themselves safely through (Clarke C vs. Johnson is still in play) with Beijderwellen having a tidy enough win against Drew +15stp +18tp.

Of those seeded 9-16, only Chapman (+5 in the 3rd vs. McBride), Dumergue (+1 on time with all round 3-ball break with one peel in the time turn of game 3 vs. Clarke J) and Westerby survived to the next round, the others having lost to Wright (2-1 vs. Landrebe), Patel (2-0 vs. Fleming), Lines (2-0 vs. Bryant, but 20-19 in the second), Jackson (2-0 vs. Kirby), Skinley (11-8 in the third vs. Gibbons).

The second round starts at 9am tomorrow.



James Death, winner of the Plate Event, minus whites, due to the red wine of his opponent.

Day 5: Thursday

Knock-out day 2 saw the seeds in the bottom half of the draw (Fulford, Aiton, Death, and Clarke) through in straight games (against Skinley, Dumergue, Patel, Jackson).

The top half saw another seed, Beijderwellen, fall to Westerby -25 +17tp +13, and Maugham beat Chapman 2-0 to play Westerby tomorrow.

The two late starts (Davis vs. Lines, Wright vs. Mulliner) ended up with Mulliner winning +26, -3, +6 and Davis vs. Lines was 1-1 at 1900 hrs.

There has been something of a players' revolt over the plate format, with non-qualifiers arguing that the original format meant they could not qualify for the knockout. The revised format instead appears to ensure that knockout losers cannot qualify apart from

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losing quarter finalists who get automatic right of entry to the plate quarter finals.

Lawn Hoops are being re-set into new holes for the quarter finals.

Day 6: Friday

Yesterday's quarter-finals saw three quick matches.

Clarke overcame Death, who while shooting well even when hoops were in the way made too many errors in break play. Aiton found himself unable to make 3-back (twice) which was too much of a handicap against Fulford. Mulliner vs. Davis was tightly contested, but with Mulliner having enough of an edge to take all three games.

Maugham vs. Westerby was much more tightly contested, with game 2, and a 1-1 scoreline being reached mid-afternoon. Both players inevitably had had lots of play, but both were making errors. The game was finally pegged down at almost 9pm, with Westerby 2-1 up and with the innings and for 1 and peg vs. 4-back alone.



Stephen Mulliner, celebrates a high point, but ultimately, had to settle for runner-up.

The resumption this morning saw a tactical chase around the lawn with Westerby making a hoop at a time; with Dave spending much of it in corner II waiting for lifts. However, he

missed his opportunities when they came and Westerby took the fourth game to win 3-1.

The semi-final line-up is Clarke vs. Fulford and Mulliner vs. Westerby, and will be underway shortly.

Day 7: Saturday

Today's Semi's saw a real classic match between Robert Fulford and Chris Clarke.

Robert took a quick +26tp +26tp lead which seemed decisive, particularly when an examination of the rankings failed to find when Chris had ever come back from a 2-0 deficit in a best-of-five (Rob's last defeat from a 2-0 lead was against Dave Kibble in 2005).

Post-lunch and with the lawns speeding up, Robert also gained the first break in the third, and at this stage Chris was yet to take croquet in the match. However, he nailed the short lift off Rob's spread and took on a brave TPO. Rushing into 2-back, after the hoop looked to be turn ending, but Chris played an excellent rush on peelee (then for rover) to 4-back, and completed the break with a tidy leave.



Chris Clarke, on his way to his second World Championship, will he have his sights on the Golf title too?

During the three ball ending, with Chris having failed hoop 2 (and rejected to W boundary) and Robert (for 3) shot from hoop 3 at the hoop 2 ball rather than the much shorter and more defensive shot at Chris's peg ball. Robert missed, and Chris followed it with an excellent croquet stroke to load 3 and get a rush to hoop 2, from which he finished, and from there Chris hit most of his shots (while Robert went a little off the boil) resulting

in a 3-2 win for Clarke.

In the other semi, Stephen Mulliner beat Aaron Westerby 3-0 and reports a few errors on a tricky lawn:

Game 1: Stephen failed a tight 2-back, Aaron croqueted off the boundary when approaching 2-back when seeking to run it at pace and also failed hoop 1 off partner.

Game 2: In the pre-pegged out phase both failed to approach 2-back and Aaron failed 6. There was admittedly some interactivity in the pegged-out phase but Aaron only made one hoop.

Game 3: Stephen hit in turn 3 and laid; Aaron hit in turn 4 and went to 4-back, Stephen hit in turn 5 and went to 4-back and to peg in turn 7 and out in turn 9 with Aaron missing lifts in turns 6 and 8.

The Final:

Chris Clarke won the 2008 WCF World Championship, beating Stephen Mulliner 3-1 in the best-of-five final at United Croquet Club Christchurch, New Zealand.

Opening exchanges, in front of a crowd that eventually numbered over 250, were well-balanced and the first two games were deservedly shared. However, Chris looked more confident in break play, particularly around hoops as the pace quickened, and hoops 5 and 6 (and penult) eventually proved to be Stephen's downfall in games 3 and 4, with Chris overcoming his own problems with 3-back to win the title for the second time.

James Death won the plate, beating Chris Patmore +26sxp -1tp +24 in the final.

David Hajn (Czech) won the

developing nations trophy.

80 players from 24 countries competed on 21 lawns at six croquet clubs in Christchurch, New Zealand. The Championship was decided by play in eight blocks of ten between the 2nd and 5th February. The top four players from each block qualified for the last 32-player knockout with losers entering the plate.

Chris, aged 36 was World Champion in 1995 and has won every major event in the sport. He is particularly proud of his doubles record, having won the Open Doubles eleven and a half times. In 2006, he held the doubles titles for Australia, New Zealand and GB, a feat never previously achieved. Chris has played in all the winning GB MacRobertson test teams since 1993, captaining the team in 1996.

Full details and results can be found at the Championship website <http://worldcroquet2008.com/tournament.html>

The Golf Croquet Laws for 2008

by Bill Arliss, Chairman CA Golf Croquet Laws Committee

May I start by thanking all those who made comments to our GC Laws Committee. (GC LC) Some of the comments you made were extremely helpful and have been taken on board by the GC LC.

The matter was discussed in detail at the Council meeting on Saturday 19 January where it was decided that we should adopt the wording of the WCF Golf Rules as the Laws of Golf Croquet for play within the Domain and that these new laws will come into effect from 15 March 2008. Council did however recognise the concerns voiced by our GC LC that, in some areas, the WCF wording does not cover some foreseeable situations, especially in connection with wrong ball play and non-striking faults. Council therefore has authorised the GC LC to issue rulings which will be appended directly to each law to cover such situations. As Chairman of the GC LC, I can assure every player that we have no desire whatsoever to play the game of Golf Croquet in a different manner to the rest of the world. However, we believe it is important that all foreseeable situations are covered so that Tournament Referees are not obliged to make arbitrary decisions each time such a situation occurs.

I would also like to pay tribute to the work done by the WCF Committee on the new version of the rules. I think you will find the new wording much more appropriate to the way the game is played in most of the world. Gone are all the detailed references to what the Referee in Charge should do and the specific behavioural rules. We are not trying to condone bad behaviour in any way, we are simply recognising the fact that only a minority of games are played with a Referee in Charge and all necessary refereeing matters and behavioural rules are better dealt with in Tournament Regulations. These are country specific and not international.

OBITUARY

BUNNY PORTER

Those who have played in tournaments at Budleigh Salterton in recent years will all remember Bunny Porter who would have either been playing in them, doing lunches, or serving in one of the bars. Although bunny had lived in a house adjacent to the Club for many years she did not join as a member until she retired, but when she first started playing croquet she made an immediate impact with her determination to learn the game. That determination was her hallmark during her life at the Club and shone through whatever she did, whether it was playing croquet and bridge or running the bars, and it was very evident in the way she coped with her heart problems. Bunny swept these aside as if they did not exist and insisted on carrying on as she always had. Her husband, Dennis, had given her tremendous support in running the bars but after he died three years ago she frequently rejected help. She was the member every club needs, prepared to give her time and talents for the benefit of all. Bunny will be sorely missed in many ways, but we shall remember her for herself.

Mary Goodheart

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GCLC has played an active part in the WCF drafting process, preparing many of the drafts used by the WCF committee and commenting extensively on other proposals.

It was unfortunate that the drafting process was cut short early and there was no available time for public consultation. The CA strongly endorses public consultation to allow fresh eyes to spot errors in meaning or omissions that are not obvious to those who have been immersed in the process. There is little doubt that, had more time been allowed for the revision together with public consultation, the final version of the WCF Rules would not have needed additional rulings for completion.

There is one other matter which some of you have raised and I feel needs clarification: that is the matter of whether we call them laws or rules. In isolation it makes very little difference which title we use. However I would remind all that we are an organisation which plays two major versions of the game of croquet and it makes little sense to use both titles. Also we have a Constitution which decrees that we play our sport in accordance with the "laws" of the game. We could change to rules but that will need an AGM resolution to change so for the moment they remain 'Laws of Golf Croquet'

So back to the basic contents of the new laws. I have already mentioned the removal of what most of us consider as being regulations. So, what are the major changes in how we actually play the game and was a new edition of the laws really necessary? There is really only one major change in the intent of the laws and that is the wrong ball law. Prior to 2005, playing a ball out of sequence was not an offence which carried a penalty and play simply restarted from the last lawful turn. However, this solution was not very practical as it relied on the players remembering when the original error occurred and this could lead to prolonged delays while the players discussed the issue. The 2005 Laws attempted to improve this by limiting the look-back period to four turns and introducing a penalty for playing out of sequence which was unpopular amongst some players as, in their opinion, it placed too much weight on concentration rather than mallet skills and tactics. There was an additional difficulty that it was effectively unenforceable in Egypt because the spectators would always call out when a player was about to play a wrong ball. The

2007 revision seeks to shorten the look back period even more while removing the penalty for playing the partner ball in singles play. This major change to Law 11 alone justifies the issue of a new edition of the laws.

We have also taken the opportunity to tidy up the wording on many of the other laws and introduce many minor changes which will we hope make the laws easier to understand and play to. The WCF wording is already on the CA website, as the consultative document, but all necessary rulings will shortly be added. A pocket sized book will be available before the start of the new season. However I now will try to outline all the significant changes in the new laws.

Law 1 - Outline of the Game

The only really significant change in this law is the wording of 1(e) which defines the striker's ball as the next ball in the colour sequence to be played and the owner of that ball to be the striker. This may appear a very simple statement but the point is that it applies even if the previous ball was incorrectly played. Thus, if play goes B (Bab, lawful), Y (Ray, wrong), Bab should forestall. But if Bab does not notice that Ray has gone out of sequence and plays K, she has not played the striker's ball because K does not follow Y. Understanding this principle should make understanding the new wrong ball law much easier.

Laws 2,3 & 4 – The Court, Equipment and Accessories

Minor cosmetic changes only.

Law 5 – The Start

The law no longer give the players a choice of who starts. It is always the winner of the toss who starts with blue. However in a multi game match, the loser always starts the next game but may chose which ball of his side that is used.

Law 6 - The Turn.

The significant change in this law is that balls that leave the court or are sent to a penalty point are now regarded as outside agencies. i.e. they are no longer any part of the game until it is their turn to be played. So there is no longer a striking fault of deliberately hitting a boundary or penalty

ball. There are some laws which ask a player to replace his ball on the line however this is purely to indicate where it will be played from when it is the turn of that ball. If a ball so placed on the boundary is hit by a ball in play, then the ball in play is positioned where it would otherwise have finished if the 'outside agency' had not been there.. This law change has very little effect on the way the game is played but we hope will simplify matters of how to deal with line balls.

Law 7, 8 & 9 Scoring a point, Interference and Advice

No effective changes

Law 10 – The Halfway Law

In the old laws this was Law 11 but it has been changed positions with the wrong ball law as it was considered much more appropriate to group the latter law with the fault laws. There is one minor change which is really a natural development of the law. If a ball reached its position as a result of an opponent's faulty stroke or because of an opponent's wrong ball play, it is now grouped as an exception to the halfway law.

Law 11 – The Wrong Ball Law

I would suggest it essential all players read through the actual wording of this law and so its full wording is given below complete with its rulings and is then followed by some explanation and examples. The first point to make is that singles and doubles are treated differently. The second concerns the shorter lookback periods. Now, in singles, you only need to know what balls were played in the last turn and the previous turn while, in doubles, you need also to know what was played in the turn before that.

The text of the new law 11 is as follows:

(a) If the striker plays any ball other than the striker's ball or any player other than the striker plays any ball as though it were that player's turn, a wrong ball has been played.

(b) (1) In a singles game, if the striker plays the partner ball the opponent or the referee should stop play before the next turn. No points are scored and any balls moved are replaced and the striker then plays the correct ball. To avoid delay the opponent or the referee should stop play if

the striker is about to play the partner ball to allow the correct ball to be played.

(2) In a singles game, if the striker commits the equivalent of a striking fault while playing the partner ball, the striker's turn ends without a replay. In this case the opponent chooses whether the balls remain where they stop or are replaced where they were before the turn. No points are scored and as the sequence has been broken the opponent may play either ball of the side.

(3) In all other cases of wrong ball play, if play is stopped before the opponent has played, the opponent chooses whether to leave any balls moved where they stop, or to have all balls moved replaced where they were before the wrong ball was played. No points are scored, and as the sequence of play has been broken the opponent may play either ball of the side. Neither a referee nor an opponent should stop play before a wrong ball is played, except when a partner ball is played in singles.

(c) If a wrong ball is played but play is not stopped before the opponent has played, there is no remedy and any points scored for any ball are scored for the owner of the ball. Then:

(1) In a singles match play continues until a wrong ball play is identified, when Rule 11(b) is applied, or

(2) In a doubles match, if the opponent played the stroke with a ball the opponent is permitted to play under Rule 1(a), play continues in the sequence following that ball. If the opponent played with a ball they are not permitted to play under Rule 1(a) then a wrong ball has been played, and Rule 11(b)(3) is applied. CA Ruling

Rule 11 is to be interpreted as if the following sub-rule (d) were added.

(d) If a side plays a wrong ball and then immediately plays one or more turns before the other side has played a turn or committed a non-striking fault and play is then stopped, no points are scored in any of those turns and the non-offending side chooses whether the balls remain where they stopped or are replaced where they were before the start of any of those turns. The non-offending side may then play either ball of the side.

Law 12 - Non Striking Faults

For a start it has been simplified by removing all reference to wrong ball play. We have introduced a non striking fault of damaging the lawn with a mallet outside the time when the stroke is actually being played. It has for a long time been

considered unfair that the player who ploughs a massive furrow behind the ball without actually moving the ball can get away with it. This is no longer the case because such damage now constitutes a non-striking fault and the player misses the turn he has yet to play.

Law 13 – Striking Faults

As mentioned earlier with the change in definition of a ball that has gone off the lawn is an outside agency, there is no longer any need for the fault of deliberately hitting a line or penalty ball. We have however introduced a new fault to effectively legalise the way many of our referees have been diagnosing a particular fault since Golf Croquet became popular. I am sure most of us have met the situation where we have two balls quite close together, say 4mm or less, and we wish to hit along the line of centres. The practice by virtually all referees has been that this must automatically result in a double tap. This has been an easy way of getting round a difficult decision but factually this has been proved not to be true. If the separation is quite small it has been shown that mallet and striker's ball are still in contact with one another when contact is made with the second ball; thus an actual double tap does not occur. Under the new laws there is now a fault of crushing a striker's ball between the mallet and another ball unless the two balls start in contact. This covers the very small separations and make a referee's job much easier when this type of situation occurs.

Law 14 – Etiquette

The wording of the WCF rule has changed dramatically in the latest issue and now accords very much with the previous CA law on this subject. It accepts that most games are now played without a Referee in Charge and that it is each player's duty to behave in a very responsible manner. It simply defines what is acceptable behaviour; most of its contents are common sense but some issues may not be obvious to the new player. One point I would make specifically to many of our senior players. It is no good complaining after a game that you were upset by some of the particularly annoying habits of your opponent if you did nothing about it at the time. This law gives you the right to complain to the Referee of the Tournament if you believe he is trying to gain advantage by unacceptable habits. It

effectively repeats the existing CA law with additions to the list of unacceptable behaviour.

The CA Ruling extends the principle of Law 14(a)(7), which prohibits repeated playing of the partner ball in singles, to repeated playing of an opponent's ball or of the partner's ball in doubles.

Law 15 - Refereeing

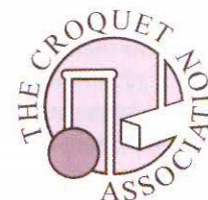
As with the previous law, the WCF version of this law now recognises that that Referees in Charge are not the norm in most play and simply concentrates on defining the powers of different types of referees. It effectively repeats the existing CA law. There is one minor change in policy. The law now allows a Spectator Referee to intervene if a player is seen to claim a point when the hoop run is not the current hoop in order. This can in fact happen quite often in 19 point games and we agree is a step forward. However the exact point at which a referee choses to intervene can give a big advantage to one player or the other. The GC LC would therefore like to advise all CA referees that they should use this power sparingly and only intervene if they witness the first hoop run incorrectly and intervene immediately after the hoop is run. This effectively replicates the actions that would occur if a referee was actually in charge. This gives the player who has not run the incorrect hoop the first shot towards the correct hoop. It may not be considered exactly fair as both players have played incorrectly but it will be a consistent approach.

Law 16 – Handicap Play

This is one law where there is divided opinion within the CA. We have chosen to follow the WCF suggested handicap ranges because virtually all of you who commented had suggested that it would be easier to understand if handicaps started from 0 rather than from minus 4. Although it is a view that it is not shared by some of the CA officials who have been involved in promoting handicap play, we have accepted the majority view. A detailed procedure of how to convert to the new scale will be issued well before the start of the season and new handicap cards will be available via the CA Office.

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