

THE

February 2013

Issue 342

CROQUET

GAZETTE



THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

CONTACTS

Manager

Elizabeth Larsson
The Croquet Association, c/o Cheltenham Croquet Club, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7DF
01242 - 242318
caoffice@croquet.org.uk

Hon. Secretary

Dr. Ian Vincent,
21, Cedar Avenue, Beeston,
Nottingham NG9 2HA
Tel: 0115 925 3664
E-mail: ian.vincent@cantab.net

President

Quiller Barrett
10 Frost House, Chesham Road, Berkhamsted
Hertfordshire
HP4 3AY
quiller3@gmail.com

Chairman of Council

Jeff Dawson, Wildcroft, 112 Potters Lane,
Send, Woking, Surrey GU23 7AL,
01483 770400,
jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com

Vice-Chairman of Council

Dr. Tim King
17 Hospital Street
Tamworth
B79 7EE
Tel: 01827 703620
tmk@ntlworld.com

Hon. Treasurer

Dr Roger Bray
Street Cottage, Polstead Hill, Polstead,
Colchester, Essex CO6 5AH
01206 - 263405
brayrw@tiscali.co.uk

CA Council Committee Chairmen

AC Laws

Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net

AC Selection

Martin French martin.french@btinternet.com

AC Tournament

David Maugham dmaugham@gmail.com

Coaching

Roger Staples
roger@staplessteeples.orangehome.co.uk

Development

Peter Death peter.j.death@gmail.com

Equipment

Alan Pidcock pidcock@manorh.plus.com

Executive

Jeff Dawson jeff.p.dawson@gmail.com

GC Laws

Bill Arliss bill.arliss@ntlworld.com

GC Selection

Stephen Mulliner smulliner@googlemail.com

GC Tournament

John Bowcott bowcott@hotmail.com

Handicap

Brian Shorney
brianshorney@drewassociates.co.uk

ICT

Ian Vincent ian.vincent@cantab.net

International

Ian Lines ian.lines@atkinsglobal.com

Management

Tim King tmk@ntlworld.com

Marketing

Jonathan Isaacs jonathanisaacs@btinternet.com

Investment

Peter Death peter.j.death@gmail.com

Publishing

Strat Liddiard liddiards@doctors.org.uk

CA Federation Representatives on Council

Croquet North - Charles Waterfield
01642 712551 cwaterfield@btinternet.com

North West - Geoff Young
0161 766 6048 gandbyoung@btopenworld.com

Yorkshire - Anna Giraud
01484 716663 eag@giraudnet.co.uk

East Midlands - Bob Thompson
01623 558650 robert_thompson9@sky.com

West Midlands & Wales - John Handy
01788 810572 john.handy1@virginmedia.com

East Anglia - Terrey Sparks
01553 770390 tds3elm@aol.com

Southern - Brian Fisk
01794 322209 master@brianfisk.net

South West - Brian Shorney
Home: 01249-783012 Work: 01249-782760
brianshorney@drewassociates.co.uk

London & South East - David Mooney
020 8789 7707 adavidmooney@sky.com

Gazette Editor

Gail Curry
46 Balkwell Avenue, North Shields, Tyne &
Wear NE29 7JN
Tel: 0191 2897159 or 07752356880
gazette@croquet.org.uk

Publication details

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

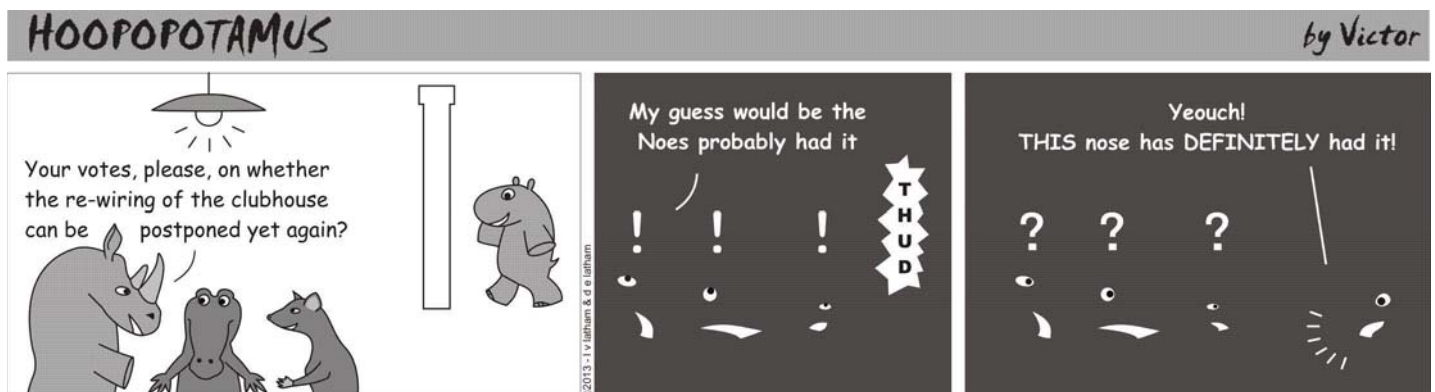
Copy should reach the Editor before the 15th of the month before publication is due. However if you have something that you think the Editor may be willing to expand this deadline for, please contact her direct.

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. Digital images are the easiest to work with, but coloured photographic prints are also acceptable. Please send digital .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.

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

The Croquet Gazette is printed by Billingham Press, Central Avenue, Billingham, Stockton on Tees.





CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN FEBRUARY 2013

One thing about working on the CA committees is that the winter months tend to be busy with meetings. At least it keeps me out of mischief until we can play again! A lot has been happening, but one area which has particularly interested me is the work of the Federation Working Party. The brief is to look at the relationships between Federations and the CA, to see if anything can be improved. The first thing we did last year was to send out a questionnaire to all the federations, which provided us with some interesting information.

Most striking from analysing the survey responses is just how much is achieved by the Federations, their success in seeking out new club opportunities and particularly the amount of competitive play they organise. I was amazed to see that there are actually more man-days spent playing in Federation leagues and tournaments than there are playing in CA tournaments. Perhaps competitive play is not falling as much as we thought – it is just refocused.

One of the concerns here is that the Federations are very different from one another. The strong ones foster significant amounts of competition, while the smaller ones are less able to do so. The contrast is stark, with the strongest federation offering around 270 days of competition in its leagues, while the weakest one offers only around 40 days. Of course some of this is inevitable, because of geographic hurdles, but I hope we can find a way to strengthen the smaller federations, and find ways to learn from one another.

The competitions the Federations run provide a great introduction to competitive play for many people, and are a very positive step forward that has clearly grown significantly over the last decade or so since the Federations were introduced. However, this does mean that we will need to reconsider how to fund central activities, such as providing development grants to help clubs start-up and improve facilities, since we presently rely heavily on CA tournaments and CA tournament members to fund this. I'm looking forward to the report of the working party, which will hopefully be discussed at the March Council meeting. We are, in the meantime, always willing to listen to your views. If you have suggestions then please let someone on Council know, or perhaps you could write a letter to the gazette.

As I write, I'm looking out over a snowy landscape, and the new season seems a long way off. Nevertheless, with the fixtures book now out, it is time to start thinking about this year's tournament entries, if you haven't already done so. I hope to see as many of you as possible out on the lawns!

Jeff Dawson



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Front Cover: The English GC team of Will Gee, Stephen Mulliner, Jacob Carr and James Goodbun. Photo by Rachel Rowe

Next Issue Published 15th April 2013
Copy Deadline 17th March 2013

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the February issue of the Gazette. As I write my final editorial today the weather is decidedly wintry with a good covering of snow in many areas of the country. Croquet is probably not at the forefront of many players' minds at the moment, but that will no doubt change quite quickly once the fixture book hits our respective doormats.

For those of you who enjoy playing abroad, you may wish to consider the new club in Portugal and you can read more about it on page 11.

For those who prefer to stay at home how about an early season warm up for your game as well as supporting a good cause with the Winchester Charity One-Ball? The charity one-ball of 2013 will have an additional, northern regional final, at Bowdon. This will be run on 12th May, the same day as the southern final, at Winchester. There will also be space for a few direct entries, at £20. If you require further details contact Kevin Carter, kevin@profundus.com

Congratulations to the Nottingham club, who with the support of the Croquet Association, have secured a grant of almost £25K from Sport England's Inspired Facilities fund for an automatic irrigation system, to utilise the borehole it sunk last year. The fund is part of the £150 million Places People Play London 2012 legacy programme. Elsewhere in this issue you can also read of the works undertaken at the Ember and Shrewsbury Clubs, both of whom were helped with grants from the CA.

Following a request in the December issue for members to consider joining the Editorial team I am pleased to say that Chris Roberts has joined the team and has made to valuable contributions to the new issue, using his expertise as a photographer and reporter to write two articles on how to improve your croquet photography and also how to best approach writing a tournament report.

In closing I would like to thank everyone who has contributed in the past and hope that my successor will be as fortunate with contributors. I will now forget about deadlines and will look forward to being able to play croquet with gay abandon instead.

Gail Curry

Letters

The Colours of Croquet Clips

I thank Ray 'Clipson' for his letter (Croquet Gazette 340) pointing out the difficulties which can arise in identifying clips. The comments which follow have been endorsed by Prof Alan Pidcock as Chairman of the CA Equipment Committee.

The first thing to say is that any specified colours for clips would be the same as those already specified for balls. The CA Shop—through the good offices of Paul Hands—has lent me samples of each of the sets they supply. There are three types: plastic clips, CA (metal) clips and Jaques metal clips. I have checked them against the colour ranges we recommend. As with balls, black and white are never a problem.

The plastic clips (£12 per set of 4, plus a delivery charge) are generally bright and easy to see, the chief difficulty being that the red and pink could be confused, as each is too yellowish to meet our ideal requirements. So these give quite a good solution, except that they are less robust than metal clips and the colours cannot so easily be controlled.

The Jaques metal clips (£34.99 for 4, supplied in a canvas bag) are nicely made and most of the colours are very good—I particularly like the pink and the yellow. The green and brown clips are a little too dark and might be confused with black in some conditions.

The CA clips (£22 for 4) are the most likely to have given rise to the problems cited by Ray. They are sturdily constructed but the colours tend to be too dark and several are well outside our preferred ranges. In particular, the brown is much too dark and not chromatic ('colourful') enough, the green is also too dark and insufficiently chromatic, while the pink is too bluish and too chromatic. Paul Hands is willing to suggest improvements to the manufacturer and I will supply colour samples for this.

Anything we do is likely to take some time and meanwhile clubs have their existing clips, which should last for many years. So the question arises: can we suggest suitable colours for repainting existing clips? Gloss paint has now become relatively expensive and clubs may well be unwilling to buy a 750 ml can if they intend to use only a minute amount. I have therefore checked the range of Humbrol paints, intended mainly for model makers. These are even more expensive per unit volume, but since the pots are so small (14 ml) the investment (about £1.70 each) is more modest. I haven't been able to open and use samples of each, but to judge from the colours on the lids, as illuminated by the lighting in the shop, the following would seem suitable:

For blue clips: Humbrol #14 (French blue)

For red clips: #220 (Italian Ferrari red) or #153 (Insignia red) or possibly #19 (Bright red)

For black clips: #21 (Black)

For yellow clips: #69 (Yellow)

For green clips: #208 (Gloss fluorescent green)

For pink clips: #200 (Pink)

For brown clips: #9 (Tan) or 62 (Leather)

For white clips: #22 (White); but most people will already have a suitable white gloss available.

A common problem is that colours are too dark, and it may be possible to address this by mixing in a little white paint before

use. I have traditionally made my 'pink' by mixing red and white. Perhaps others will comment from their own experience.

Lawrence Whittaker

Double-Banking

Almost every game today is played double-banked and standards of etiquette vary. There are both sins of 'commission' as well as 'omission'.

What to do before you start

Make yourself known to those with whom you are going to share a lawn for the next three hours and get on first name terms right from the word go.

Have at least two markers.

Know how to efficiently mark a ball or two in any position on the lawn including close to the hoop.

In tournaments the manager will normally allocate either primaries or secondaries, but if that has not taken place it is usually the first person on the lawn who chooses. It is unseemly to sprint from the clubhouse to a lawn to ensure you get the primaries.

Starting and play

Openings are a tense time and try to stagger the start times so that the East and West boundaries do not become clogged with balls coming in from a baulk line and having to be marked to let the other game play.

Try to make sure there is as little interference as possible with the start from the other players and vice-versa.

During the game, balls will need to be marked and it is essential that permission is sought before a ball of the other game is touched. Usually this is done by asking the player on the lawn if a ball can be marked

Balls should be marked with the minimum fuss and replaced immediately you have played your stroke or series of strokes and the player told that the ball has been replaced.

In the event of sharing a lawn with a player who is hard of hearing ensure that he sees you move the ball and replace it.

Only attempt roquet or croquet shots when the area of the lawn where the balls are expected to go is clear of the other game's balls.

When it is necessary to call a referee, do so with as little fuss as possible; preferably off the lawn.

Closing

Another tense period in timed games. If the other game is finishing before you, try to allow them the space to finish easily and quickly.

Leave the lawn quietly as soon as you have finished play and remove all clips and balls.

Do not try to start when the other game is starting; leave five minutes to allow the balls on the boundary to move on.

Do not try to take shots which may touch a ball in the other game. Mark it. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

Do not send balls close behind a player who is about to run a hoop or take croquet.

When you want to mark a ball do not shout at the other player if he is in the middle of playing a hoop or lining up a

roquet. Similarly when replacing a marked ball.

Be sensible about marking balls. If it obvious that a ball in front of your hoop is about to be moved wait patiently for that to happen. Do not jump in and mark it. This can be frustrating in the last few minutes of a close game.

When playing double-banked doubles try to have conferences with your partner off the lawn rather than in the middle.

When you have finished do not stand in the middle of the lawn having an inquest with your opponent just when the other game is at a tense stage close to the end.

Harry Midgley

The Science of Croquet

A recent Radio Times supplement listing British inventions reminds me how scientific breakthroughs can both give and take away; this valedictory issue might be a suitable place to reflect upon croquet's ephemeral popularity.

The game became affordable and increasingly popular among the English middle class with the invention in 1827 of the lawnmower (producing a cut on domestic lawns that had previously required a gang of servants with scythes and was within the means only of the aristocracy). Then, during the 1870s, a ball that bounced on grass became available as new uses were realised for vulcanized rubber (invented in the USA in 1839). A racquet-and-ball game with more predictable stroke outcomes became practicable and the rules of lawn tennis were codified in 1873.

Like turkeys voting for Christmas, the Wimbledon Croquet Club pandered to this new craze by introducing a tennis championship in 1877 and the rest (the decline of croquet and the rise of tennis) is history.

Peter Lowe

Two Thoughts to Consider?

I began playing association croquet tournaments two years ago and have thoroughly enjoyed them and recommend other beginners to enter, particularly starting with coached high-bisquers tournaments, such as at Southwick, and then moving on to handicap tournaments. Personally I would like to see more tournaments midweek, as I have family commitments at the weekends. Other considerations are obviously the cost of accommodation and I have really appreciated those clubs that have offered this in club members' houses.

Also, Alan Bennett in his latest play 'People' has done croquet a good service by stating 'the National Trust is now all about bicycles and croquet' (audience laughs).

As more people like activities to do on their visits maybe this is something that clubs who have NT properties nearby could encourage, by teaching the NT volunteers how to play the game to help visitors. In this situation golf croquet is easiest to explain. As mentioned before in the Gazette, having corporate entertainment days at croquet clubs is a good fund-raiser and introduction to the game.

Caroline Denny

Obituary

Iris Dwerryhouse 1919 ~ 2012

Iris Dwerryhouse heads the Roll of Honour at Sidmouth Croquet Club.

Croquet tournaments were first played in Sidmouth in 1907, but the Croquet Section lapsed during the two world wars and was not revived effectively until 1967. Iris was a member of the committee that year and remained a playing member until 2009. She worked tirelessly for the betterment of the club, not only to improve individual standards of play, but to promote recognition of Sidmouth as an important club within the Croquet Association. Under her leadership Sidmouth was a founder member of the South West Federation of Croquet Clubs and during one of Iris's periods as chairman in 1989 Sidmouth was presented with the Apps-Healy Award "for excellence" for the second time.

Her many years of service, ably supported during his lifetime, by her husband Philip, have been invaluable to the club. She was appointed President (the first lady to hold that office) of the overall Sidmouth Cricket, Tennis, Croquet and Hockey Club in 2005 for a three-year stretch.

Iris was born in Devizes in 1919. She was a good schoolgirl athlete and won several awards, representing her age group for Wiltshire at sprinting and high jump. She left school at of fourteen and at eighteen she had completed an apprenticeship in hairdressing, combining this with being a volunteer on the fire station switchboard. At the outbreak of war in 1939 she joined the Fire Service full time and qualified as a driver; there she met and married Philip, who was also working for the Fire Service.

One of her most vivid memories was of being woken at 3.00am in her billet in Taunton, peering through the blackout curtains, and seeing the orange glow in the sky that was Exeter in flames. She roused the cook, loaded the van with food and coal, which was used as fuel for the cooking, and set off down the A38. She managed to find a route through the chaos to Southernhay and there they set about doing their bit for the war effort.

Philip and Iris moved to Sidmouth in 1956. Iris took up croquet when the children left home and soon became a cool and well respected referee of the Association game. Philip joined the club when he retired. Iris's health, including her eyesight, failed gradually over the last few years and she died on 15th of December 2012. She is survived by her daughter Penny and son Clive. She will be greatly missed by them, her other relations and all her friends, particularly those at Sidmouth CC.

J. David Temple

Window on the World Croquet Federation



BY MARTIN FRENCH, SECRETARY-GENERAL

The World Croquet Federation has 30 Members, with the most recent new recruits being India (of which more next time), Portugal and Latvia. The 10 largest Member Associations have votes on the WCF Council which controls the WCF and largely operates by email. Council delegates the day-to-day management to a Management Committee comprising 9 people, 4 of them from the UK: Keith Aiton, Ian Burrige, Stephen Mulliner and Martin French. The President is Amir Ramsis from Egypt and the other members are from USA, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. We run the MC by email, plus weekly Skype calls. I receive a small honorarium for being the Secretary-General, but all the rest of the effort is on a volunteer basis – quite different from how most sports are run at an international level!



What's been happening in November and December?

The inaugural GC World Team Championship was held in two divisions, each of 8 teams. The 1st Division was held in Jo'burg; as had been tipped, Egypt ran out the first winners of the Openshaw International Shield. However, they did not have it all their own way and until the last four matches on the second day of the final, it looked like the young team from New Zealand would pull off a surprise victory. England had been second seeds, but ended up third. The hosts, South Africa, won the plate event (the consolation prize). The Openshaw Shield is closely modeled on the MacRobertson Shield, the 90 year old trophy for AC Test Matches between England, Australia, New Zealand and USA. We hope it will gain similar history and status over time.

A week after the 1st Division ended, the 2nd Division was held in Cairo. Top seeds Wales won the WCF Pyramids Trophy (kindly donated by Egypt) in a closely fought final with Belgium. Scotland came sixth.

Our next event is the GC World Championship in Cairo in April – there are 7 England contestants in a field of 64. In the preceding week, we are staging an Under-21 event, but sadly no young English players were available.

You may recall I've been moaning about the lack of a volunteer Webmaster ever since I started writing these updates. I'm really pleased to say we have now found one, thanks to Kathy Wallace (Nailsea CC), whose son-in-law Richard Simes is taking it on. A nice Christmas present!

In Conversation With...

Chris Williams

by Gail Curry

There are several names in croquet which when mentioned conjure up an image, and yet how accurate is that image? Chris Williams or 'Statto' is someone who I feel falls into that category. Having recently been awarded the CA Council Medal for his work on the ranking database, croquet records site and as CA Archivist, I decided to ask Chris a few questions to see if we know him as well as we think we do.

How did you find croquet, Chris?

I first played 'proper' croquet when I joined Dyffryn Croquet Club, near Cardiff, as a founder member in 1986. I had come across the game as an undergraduate at Magdalen College, Oxford in the late seventies, but had not realised that it was played seriously. About once or twice a week in the summer term a few of us used to knock a few balls round the lawn in front of New Buildings. Looking back, we played a version of American rules in the first year, because none of us knew the rules and I had misinterpreted the 'deadness' laws. However I think that by the third year we played something more like the proper Association croquet. I don't remember us ever playing Golf Croquet. I did not know that there was a 'proper' croquet club at the University – which, looking back, was a shame, because I was there at the same time as Ian Plummer and Francis Landor (though I did represent the college in Cuppers once).

Six years later in July 1986 I saw an advert in the local paper which said that there was going to be a demonstration match at Dyffryn Gardens (near Cardiff) with a view to starting a club. Even though Dyffryn was only a few miles from my house I had never been there. Since I had enjoyed croquet I decided eventually to go and have a look. I nearly didn't go because I had a bit of a cold that weekend. A single court had been laid out on the lawn at Dyffryn and there was a demonstration match between two minus players, namely Dayal Gunasekera and Roger Tribe, with John McCullough commentating and John Grimshaw going round giving out leaflets

and chatting with the spectators. The inaugural meeting of the club was the following Thursday and over fifty people turned up and became founder members. I was one of the last to arrive, because I had been playing cricket (badly) for the Works team and could only just get into the room.

Even though the first meeting was in late July I didn't get round to playing until the end of September after John Grimshaw rang me up to ask why I hadn't been along since I'd joined six weeks earlier. I think I then went nearly every evening for the remaining two weeks of that season. So 1987 was my first real season though I only played within the club and a few South West Federation B League fixtures. I did not get picked for the club's first venture into the Longman Cup. 1988 saw me play in my first CA tournament, the May Week at Budleigh Salterton, where I won the doubles with Les Chapman. I started the event playing off 13 and was cut to 11 after the first day. This was a real old fashioned tournament with no double-banking and only one game on some days; though the doubles final against Paul and Pat Macdonald was played in front of one of the biggest crowds I have ever played in front of.

This was followed that year by a few weekends at Cheltenham and culminated in me winning the All-England regional final at Bath with wins against Alan Bogle in the semi final and Peter Darby in the final. I think Alan will still say that our semi final was one of the best games he ever played in. Unfortunately it was followed by a disappointing last place in the national final at Colchester, where I first came across Bruce Rannie and Jeff Dawson.

I started playing regularly in Advanced tournaments in 1990, because I had been working away from home too much the previous year. My first proper Open Weekend was in May 1990 at Parkstone, where my first opponent was William Ormerod. I think we had a close game, but wily old William beat me in the end. On the Sunday afternoon at Parkstone I came across a cocky young undergraduate who tried to set up for a ladies sextuple against me. Unfortunately instead of leaving his ball in the jaws of one back he ran it. This was my introduction to Ian Burridge.



Chris with the Beddows Cup, one of the many trophies he has won over the years

Having played regularly in competitive tournaments for over 20 years Chris, can you say what has been for you the attraction of playing, and how and why you become involved in the Rankings and being known as Statto?

I have always been someone who is interested in sport, the main ones being football and cricket, but was never any good at any, however hard I tried. So it was nice to find a sport at which I could be reasonably good and one at which there are times where you have to think. I may also have benefited from being Welsh, which meant that I got to play in events which, if I had been English, I would never have got a look in. I have been fortunate enough to have played in every World Championship since 1992 and for Wales in the Home Internationals since '92. Croquet has also taken me to New Zealand twice, Australia twice, Canada and the USA on many occasions and has given me friends all round the world.

With regards to the rankings and stats I have always been a bit of a 'Statto'. I kept football records from about the age of nine, after I was first taken to see Cardiff City play in 1968, and cricket records after I first saw

CLUB NEWS

Glamorgan on 21 July 1969. I always remember this because it was the day of the first moon landing. My bedroom wall was covered in football team and player photos and I think I could probably have named all the players in each team in the whole league. I can't do that now. There was no Rugby in our house, even though my father's first language is Welsh and I was brought up just outside Cardiff in South Wales. Don't believe it when people say all Welshmen are Rugby fanatics. When I played cricket for the village team I used to do the scoring and keep the club's averages and records and so it was fairly natural for me to become involved with croquet records and rankings. Stephen Mulliner, who started the ranking system, gave me a copy of the program and database at the South of England Championship in 1992 and told me that he was looking for someone to take over from him. So I just became more and more involved over the next few years and within a couple of years had taken over completely. Also it was around this time that email took off and so it became much easier to obtain results from all round the world.

Which site came first, the Rankings or the Records?

I started the records site in the late nineties, mainly because there was no central place where the results of old tournaments could be found. When it got too big for the small amount of web space provided by my ISP (Demon), Adrian Wadley offered to host it on his site. I then thought it was probably time to get my own domain name so I bought the domain Croquet Records and lots of space.

The Interactive rankings site was set up after we got broadband at the end of 2003. I was made redundant from my job at Thales ATM and decided to go back to University to do an MSc in Computer Science. During my time off I had a lot of time to work on the site and get it up and running.

As you've played for a considerable number of years in top-class croquet, I'd like to ask what keeps you motivated to go out and compete regularly at that level throughout the summer.

I think the fact that I want to continue playing internationally for Wales means that I need to keep up a reasonable standard. Also I do seem to have continued to improve each year, even if progress is slow at times. Unfortunately I have not lived close to a club with decent lawns for over 10 years and with having an hourly commute each way to work in Bath every day I get no time to practice. This does seem to mean that I have to put more effort in when I do play. We are also helped in the UK by having a relatively short season, because it does mean that come April/May time many of us are raring to go, having felt somewhat jaded by the end of the previous season. I don't know how I would cope if living in parts of Australia where you can play all year; I think it is good to have a long annual break.

Another factor in continuing to play is that over the years I have got to know a lot of players well and many of us meet up regularly every few weeks during the season. It is a bit strange at times to be across the other side of the world with people you know so well and will be with at some event in the UK perhaps the following week.

It also helps that Liz enjoys going away to many tournaments and has also got to know many of the players well.



New lawns from start to finish with Hon sec Graham Colclough trying the new surface.

New Lawns at Shrewsbury

By Peter Dorke

Shrewsbury Croquet Club was founded on land belonging to Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council who, back in the early eighties offered the fledgling club, of only a handful of members, two lawns in a public recreation park. Sad to relate, they thought croquet was played on crown greens, so that is what they created, complete with ditches and a variety of gentle hills and valleys. The ditches were quickly disposed of, but the undulations remained until the millennium, by which time the land was in the hands of Shropshire County Council and there were plans to transfer ownership to Shrewsbury Town Council. All this was in the air when the club decided to improve the lawns, and affected somewhat the manner in which the work was done.

Acting on advice from Cheltenham, Inscapes of Bridgend was the firm chosen for the work. Their quote was also among the cheapest obtained, some being almost twice what Inscape quoted.

This was partly because other firms insisted on quoting for refinements well beyond our means: for example we could not afford after-care, expecting that to be done by the Town Council, who normally did the maintenance work on the lawns. In the event this did not happen and no treatment of the new lawns was carried out until we paid a local golf club to lend us a mower and three willing groundsmen. This galvanized the Town council and maintenance has continued ever since. There's a moral there somewhere but I don't much care what it is because we have two beautiful lawns, which is all that matters.

Probably we were lucky with the weather. The sudden frost during the last stages was brief and, while it delayed completion, did no harm. The weeks of drought that followed completion - in early February - caused our hearts to sink and when prolonged rain followed the lawns were waterlogged.

No great harm was done and we were able to begin playing in June. We found the new lawns a little bumpy, particularly playing from south to north, and it had proved impossible to achieve a completely level surface, without bringing in extra soil - which we could not afford. The attentions of Danny and Tim, the Town's groundsmen, have begun to even out the ridges and there is already no comparison between the new surface and the much-cursed lawns on which the club has played for most of its existence.

Inscapes were efficient, reliable and helpful, digging out a trench for our water supply before they left and giving the impression that they knew what they were about. The total cost of the project was £17,500, broken down as follows:

From club funds:	£4000
Private donations	£6500
Local Joint Committee	£2000
CA Development Fund	£5000

Given our lack of resources, we could not have done this in any other way. I do not think it has turned out too badly. To any club contemplating a similar project, I would say, "don't let anyone tell you it can't be done in mid-winter and have faith in grass - it is very forgiving."

Ember CC Borehole Irrigation Project

By Roger Dollimore

Introduction

The starting point for this project was a need to be able to water the croquet lawn 'automatically', this was realised as long ago as 1998. However the overriding limitation has been funding. We had had a budget of approx. £150 p.a. for water and this had allowed us to barely keep the grass alive in very hot summers. The summers of 2009 and 2010 stressed the lawn so much that serious reseeding was required. A visit for an SECF B league match to Reigate Priory Croquet club in 2010 identified without reservation the benefits of an automatic system. Time for more serious research.

Reigate had installed their system themselves, but still used the Utility water supply. Sufficient water to maintain the lawns adequately would use approx £500 of water at Utility prices, even when discounted for Sports facilities. So we turned to the possibility of sinking a borehole. We are not fortunate enough to have a stream running by, as at one of our neighbouring clubs, but an aerial photo taken while the estate was being developed showed evidence of a what could be a drainage channel running

across the grounds (now under the redeveloped tennis courts) and into the nearby river Ember about 500 metres away.

Next step the Internet and 'drilling companies'. Oil rigs were no problem, but small domestic and agricultural enterprises more difficult to find one still in business in the London Area.

Geology

All good exploration drilling programs start with a Geological Evaluation. Ember Croquet club were fortunate to have a member with 35 years of experience in petroleum exploration. The Drilling contractor we finally found (Cruman Drilling) had contacts at the British Geological Survey (BGS) and was able to obtain borehole records for the area. For a small fee (£60) the borehole records were available and showed that for our immediate area there should be between 6-9 metres of sand and gravel below our grounds above the underlying grey London clay. The local borough council planning department were able to confirm that the water table in the vicinity of the club was expected to be about 4ft 6ins (135cms) below ground level.

Drilling

Now to commit to action – not talk. We had decided at a fairly early stage that a shared borehole with other sections of the club would be sensible. The geological evaluation indicated that we may be able to abstract water at a rate of about 5 m³ per hour. We only need some 7 m³ of water per lawn per day for an average of perhaps 4 days a week for the season, at this rate of abstraction sufficient to water both the Croquet and Bowls lawns.

The Club as a whole understood the risk in the venture - the borehole could be dry. So the initial drilling of the borehole was underwritten by the Club management committee, to be charged to the participating sections if the borehole was successful.

Drilling was started in early November, two weeks after agreement to give it a try. A small portable percussion rig was moved in and drilling commenced. We were down through the topsoil and into wet sand before the end of the first day. As the next day progressed so the sands became coarser and turned into gravel and then flinty ballast (some of the flints more than 2 inches in diameter), 6 metres of good water bearing formations, then into the London clay. The well was drilled to a total depth of 10 metres, to give a sump at the bottom for detritus.



The Cruman Drilling crew ready to Break Ground

Completion of the Borehole

Drilling the hole and proving it contained water had taken four days. Before testing the water deliverability the well was 'cased off' by inserting a slotted liner inside the temporary steel casing and then packing the space between the bore hole walls and the slotted liner with gravel. The slotted liner and the gravel packing would hold the sand and gravel of the formations in place and prevent the borehole from collapsing. The well was flow-tested using a submersible pump. The well was flowed at 3.7 m³ per hour and flowed clean after 40 minutes. The flow was maintained for 1hr 50 mins with a flowing drawdown of 15cm; this confirmed that the well would sustain production of 6-8 m³ of water per day at a rate that would be sufficient for the application rates we were anticipating for irrigation purposes.

From the geological records it was estimated that the underground reservoir extended for approx 3km east-west by 2 km north-south. If the quality of the sand found in our borehole extended over the whole area (and this was what was indicated from the BGS geological records) then there are approximately 45million m³ of water available, which under normal circumstances would be replenished by rain.

The well was observed for two weeks and the water level measured at a stable 1.45m below the casing top. The well was now completed by fitting the abstraction tailpipe to a depth of 5m with a filter and non return valve at the bottom. A well-head cap and pipe-work to the pump shed 5m from the well connected to the pump. A Pedrollo H15 pump was installed and all the electrics connected from the Croquet pavilion 7m away. A 30A electricity supply had been laid to the pavilion some five years previously to enable an automatic irrigation system to be installed when we could afford it.

We now set about testing sprinklers to optimise the irrigation coverage. Hunter I60 and I35 sprinklers were selected from the Hunter range, with the assistance of City Irrigation of Beckenham, based on a cost/performance balance to the Pedrollo pump. The I60 sprinkler proved to be the better choice. This sprinkler has a dual-spray mode of operation giving long-range coverage in one direction of rotation and short-range spray mode when returning. It is also adjustable from 45degree to 360 degree arc of operation. These sprinklers deliver 2.7 m³ of water per hour with a max throw of 17 metres when optimised with the H15 pump working at 4.5 bar (65 psi).

Installing the Irrigation System

It was always envisaged that the whole scheme would be installed in phases over some two years. Phase Ia was to drill the Borehole and establish we had a supply of water. Phase Ib was to install the pump. This would give us a supply of water independent of the Utility supply that could then be used to water the lawn 'as required' and not limited by our budgets. Phase II was to connect up the borehole and pump to the south and east of the Croquet lawn and thence to the Bowls storage tank. Phase III was to complete the ring-main around both the Short lawn and Main lawn and to install the eight sprinklers and solenoid control valves, the nine channel Orbit Control panel and control-wire loop. At this point our application to the CA for a grant for Phase III was approved and we realised that we would be able to complete the whole project in 'one hit'.

It was going to be necessary to bury the pipework and control cable round the croquet lawns because of the lack of perimeter space. We had planned to use a mini digger to dig a trench.

Searching the Internet for a suitable machine we stumbled on a mini trencher, rather like a monster chainsaw. The contractor who maintains the Bowls irrigation system realised we were serious in what we were doing and competent to do the work ourselves and offered to cut the trench for us with his heavier duty trencher for 70% of the hire cost of a smaller machine. We had planned 3 to 4 days for the work. He and his machine did the work in 6 hours without any time or learning curve input from us. This gave us a 60cm deep 10cm wide trench all the way round the lawns with all the spoil neatly heaped all the way round one side of the trench.

We had been laying out the pipework and control cable while the trench was being cut and by the end of the day the pipe had been installed in the trench and the cable laid. The whole of the pipework was now flushed out until clean water was being delivered. This was performed in stages to ensure that air was also expelled. The whole system was then sealed and pressure tested for leaks while the trenches were still open with the solenoid valves in place.



Mike Beaney and Tom Eddy start work on wiring up the solenoid control cable

Day 2 saw the installation of the sprinklers and the hook-up of the solenoids. While this was being done the trench runs were filled in using rakes to pull the spoil back into the trenches. The whole system was then ready by mid afternoon to test the sprinkler operation before we finally buried the solenoids and sprinkler heads. All went well except one sprinkler which persisted in leaking around the popup stem of the sprinkler head. City Irrigation was very positive in their assistance and their field engineer dropped in to help. In the end they dispatched a complete replacement unit which has performed impeccably since.

Fine Tuning

At this point we received notification from Thames Water that we could no longer use the utility water for irrigation of the sports facilities because of the drought and the hose-pipe ban. This was the signal for the rain to start. Apart from a couple of weeks when there has been some really hot dry sun the system was only used occasionally until this last month. The lawns are however now in the best condition we have ever achieved (in the 23 years of our existence).

We have needed to adjust the pressure thresholds of the pump output and the rotation of the sprinklers, but as everyone with an automatic system knows this is just a fact of life, but it takes time and patience. Occasionally players on the adjacent tennis court have been cooled down while we have fine tuned the sprinklers.

What we have achieved is a reliable (unrestricted) source of water that is automatically dispensed every night if necessary and will cost a fraction of the cost of Utility water. It will also reduce the use of treated water to be used for horticultural purposes, less storage, less treatment, less delivery, less energy consumption.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank many people for their help in this project. Michael Hague; the Croquet Association and the South East Federation for their encouragement and support in the way of grants; Cruman Drilling, for their help in the geological determination, the drilling of the borehole and the installation of the pump; City Irrigation for their advice on sprinklers, the system controller and the solenoids; Lakeside Irrigation for help in cutting the trench and, finally, to the all members of Ember Croquet Club for their work and support in making all this happen - without the work of the many members this project would not have been achieved.

Costs (less VAT)

Phase I (to Nov 2011)

Exploratory drilling, complete borehole and test flow: £3,220

Phase IIa (to Dec 2011)

Install Pump, pressure tank, connect to well head, flow and Lab tests: £2,551

Phase IIb (to Mar 2012)

Install surface supply pipe and control systems: £818

Phase III (to May 2012)

Installation of irrigation system, Sprinklers and controls: £2102

Total to date: £ 8691

Croquet in Portugal

By Sarah Byrne

In January 2012, Portugal was accepted into the WCF, pioneered by Bela Romao, Portugal's first ever Croquet Club. The 7-acre property was created solely for croquet and within its cloistered walls and security gates another world exists (www.belaromaoacroquet.com).

Club founder, Portuguese-born Lita Gale, has dedicated her time enthusiastically developing Portugal's Croquet Federation and the club, after committing more time in the Eastern Algarve from *her busy London solicitors firm*.

The Club House and property, overlooks the pristine blue-flag beaches of the Ria Formosa Islands, nestled among secluded exotic tropical gardens with 360° views of coast and mountain backdrops. Bela Romao Club (BRCC) features Golf Croquet, Association Croquet and holds local and International competitions on an elevated grass pitch overlooking the beaches. For guests wanting to relax after a busy day's play, the club has a gold-tiled pool surrounded by shaded arbors of old carob and olive trees, along with a Petanque pitch and Badminton area. Visiting guests may indulge in gastronomic pleasures in their own Moroccan-styled tents around the pool. Culinary Institute of America chef and joint proprietor, Sarah Byrne, creates an



Coaching in progress at Bela Romano Portugal

invigorating fresh fusion of Californian and Portuguese tapas dishes, with a quirky cocktail bar and full Portuguese wine list inside the club house Bistro, providing breakfast, luncheon and dinner menus.

The club is for private members and their guests; however non-resident guests may enjoy a visitor's day/week pass or non-resident membership, which is waived if the guests are staying at Madresilva cottage, a minute's walk from the club house. This is a lovingly restored traditional farmhouse, close to the sea in five acres of private, tropical gardens, with its own pool. There is also an old Romanesque amphitheatre for outdoor parties or theatre shows and restored outdoor bread baking/pizza oven and barbecue grill. The white sandy beaches of Armona islands, the restaurants, bars and local shops of Fuzeta village are 5 minutes away.

Faro Airport 25min; Spanish border 30min; Lisbon & Seville 1½hrs.

Belsay Hall Website Experience

by Derek Johnson

If there are any clubs out there thinking about setting up a website I thought it might be helpful to recount the experience of Belsay Hall CC.

We decided it was time to embrace the digital age at the end of the 2011 season, when as a committee member, I volunteered to take on the task of investigating the feasibility of a club website.

I tried several Service Providers who had appeared as the result of a Google search (other search engines are available!) of "Sports Club website". I found these all targeted at clubs whose main interest is their position in a league, what night training is to be held and who's been selected for the team next weekend and therefore not in the least bit suitable.

I cast my net wider and found Yola.com. (There have been TV adverts recently for an apparently British company, 1and1, that appears to be very similar). An American company whose target audience is small businesses did not appear at first to be a very likely fit, but our experience with them has been entirely

positive. They provide a number of professionally designed style templates that you tailor for your own use and to which you add your content. It requires no programming ability unless you want tables. You just type or paste the content into text boxes. If there are any graphic designers out there, we know we face your scorn for using the despised Comic Sans font, but hey, we like it. We went for their free package, which means you do not get your own domain name, i.e. we were “belsaycroquet.yolasite.com”.

We also set up a club e-mail address using Gmail. This had the added advantage that we could use the Google calendar attached to the account on our website which provided a means for making court reservations. Two members acted as gatekeepers regularly monitoring the e-mail inbox for reservations made to the club address, or receiving reservations by telephone or word of mouth for those not on e-mail, or when matches were arranged at the courts. Bookings were then made on the calendar. We did not dare dispense with the trusty desk diary for the first year, so had to be assiduous in synchronizing the two media, but the system has been such a success we will rely entirely on the website next year. We are perhaps fortunate that 95% of our members are on e-mail (100% of our competition players!) despite an estimated average member age in the 70s.

In addition, our Latest News page has proved invaluable over the past season for advising members of the state of the courts and whether they are actually playable and for keeping everybody abreast of match results in both club competitions and external competitions. There is also a password-protected page where we record the contact details of our members.

Emboldened by the positive feedback from members we have taken the plunge this year and have stumped up to upgrade our service package with Yola; this gives us more storage space and more features and we have also obtained our own domain name, www.belsaycroquet.org. We now appear in Google searches and have already reached page two!

In short, if you have been daunted at the prospect of having a presence on the interweb thingy - don't be. It's not as hard as you might think and there's a lot to be gained both for members and club officials.

Wanted: Editorial Team Volunteers

The newly-formed Editorial Team needs volunteers – the team gathers feedback from readers around the clubs and helps define what they need; they commission tournament reporters and article authors.

Proofreaders are also needed - you can do as much or as little as you have time for, even an hour or so every few months would help.

Contact Liz Larsson (CA Manager) on 01242 242318 or caoffice@croquet.org.uk. Alternatively, contact Strat Liddiard (Publishing Committee Chairman) at liddiards@doctors.org.uk for more information.

Improving your Croquet Photography

by Chris Roberts

‘A good picture is worth a thousand words’ – at least that’s what we Photographers like to say!

But it’s true - How many of us pick up the Gazette when it arrives and dutifully sit down and read it methodically one page at a time, every page in order? Most of us rip open the bag and quickly flick through the pages to see what grabs our attention.

And it’s the pictures that we see first, not the words.

If an image grabs our attention, we are far more likely to read the accompanying article before another that is simply text alone. But the image has to be good, eye catching and different. Definitely not another dull snap of some folks one doesn’t know, dressed in whites and just standing around. All submissions are gratefully received I’m sure, but our poor editor is never swamped with images from which to make a choice and is frequently forced to use a ‘so so’ image or nothing at all. So this article will attempt to illustrate how to improve your croquet photography if I can, and let’s start with the exciting stuff – the ACTION!

Some sports lend themselves to great images almost by default – motor racing, cycling, skiing, – it’s action packed stuff with lots of movement and colour. Some other sports have a hard fought passion to home in on – football, rugby, rowing, boxing...

But croquet isn’t quite like that, it’s a generally quieter and slower game of course, but don’t be fooled into thinking that good images aren’t there – one just has to look for them and try that bit harder to create something.

On the plus side though, one doesn’t necessarily need all the expensive long lenses that the aforementioned sports demand, and with croquet, one usually not restricted to being miles away from the action.

I’ll come to the exposure technicalities later but for now let’s keep on with what makes a good image.

The biggest snag with croquet is that players ‘must keep their heads down and watch the ball’ and this makes photography of them a difficult task and it’s made even harder by the hat wearers!

In this respect photography of croquet action is exactly the same as for golf. The best images of both sports are from the position of being ‘head on’ to the player and waiting until just after the mallet/club has made contact with the ball and the player’s head has risen. In golf, the ball will be long gone but with croquet it’s usually possible to include the ball in the image even if one delays until the player looks up.

To increase the chance of including the ball in the image, the secret is to ‘get down really low’ as this foreshortens the perspective, and (although I appreciate that this isn’t for everyone) laying on the ground can be very effective!





Lay down for dramatic effect - Brian Bucknall at Phyllis Court



Wait until just after the shot - Rayn Cable with a trademark jump shot



Pose up your shot - Mark McNerney, GC World Champion

A note of caution here though.

Be aware that a photographer's presence can be very off-putting for a player and especially the noise of a camera shutter can disturb in a quiet game like ours. You don't want to incur the wrath of a player who's crucial shot you have just ruined.

This is why in golf you will hear a loud 'clatter' of camera shutters immediately after a tee shot has been played but not a single one until the club head contacts the ball.

Try also to fill the frame (get as close in as you can) because it's the player that your viewers are interested in and not the rest of an empty court!

Consider where the sun is, shooting into it is to be avoided and look out for those harsh shadows falling across the faces of cap wearing players. Generally having the sun behind the camera is the best policy. Think about your background too, and choose the least cluttered that you can find.

We are lucky in croquet, because we can sit in the best vantage point and then wait for the players to come to us. Get in a good position, perhaps look for hedges and bushes which are ideal as backgrounds. Definitely do not shoot looking at a litter bin or the car park!

On the technical front it is essential to 'stop the movement', and for those with control over their cameras as opposed to those who stick it on 'automatic', the guideline is a shutter speed of no less than 1/1000th sec.

Better also to shoot with a large aperture as this will shorten the depth of field (that which is in focus) and thereby isolate your subject from the background.

This is particularly important if you can't avoid shooting towards that messy car park, you can throw it out of focus and minimise it's distracting effect in your image.

Before closing, I will just touch on non-action images and how to improve your results with presentations and team shots.

Taking the latter first, it's all about shape and smartness. A

long thin image of folk just standing in a row is no good to anyone, least of all a poor editor trying to fit it on a page. Organise people into at least two rows, seated and standing perhaps, get all there arms doing the same thing and everyone looking smart.

"Right everyone! - Back row hands behind your backs please, front row hands in laps and sit up straight, nice big smiles, thank you very much!"

If you want to do presentations, it's the same rule as with the action - go in close and 'fill the frame'. Heads and shoulders are all that's required; nobody is interested in legs, you need to get in there and let us see that cup that's being awarded.

To be frank, unless the individual making the presentation is part of the story, the better images are always of a player holding a cup aloft (tip - pose it close to their head for easy cropping) or set up something afterwards introducing a hoop, mallet and some balls.



Better than a handshake - Sylvia Thomson & Mike Fensome hoist the silverware



Looking for a picture - Frances Colman, Corfu Croquet in reflection

Don't be frightened to leave out the Club Chairman, it happens to the Queen all the time! When the big sports stars are presented with their awards how often do you see published the dreaded 'grip and grin' handshake shot? – Never!

And be on the look out for the unusual image too – variety is the spice of life after all!

That's about all we have room for here and I hope that it's been useful.

If anyone would like any further photography tips, please do give me a call (number from the CA web site).

Now get out there and experiment and be sure to share your results with The Gazette!

Chris Roberts has been a professional photographer for 35 years working firstly for the construction industry and then Police Forensics. At the same time he photographed sports action for local papers and specialist sports publications, later adding a sports report writing string to his bow. 20 years ago he launched his KICKPHOTO sports photography business centring on schools rugby and was Official Photographer of the England age grade teams. He turned KICKPHOTO into a full time occupation six years ago.

He is Chairman of both Phyllis Court CC and the Southern Croquet Federation and is also a member at Surbiton.

LAWS

YOU ARE THE REFEREE - IV

BY IAN VINCENT AND BILL ARLISS

In this issue we deal with a situation that can arise in either Golf or Association Croquet, but the way the laws treat it is very different:

Situation:

The owner of blue is preparing to take his turn. Whilst on the backswing, prior to hitting blue, he just nudges red, but he fails to notice this and continues with his stroke. His opponent brings it to his attention. How is the situation to be resolved?

GC Decision:

When the new edition of the Golf Croquet laws came out in 2008, there were some players who felt that this could be interpreted as playing the wrong ball although the clear intention was to play the correct ball. To leave this matter in no doubt, an International Ruling 6.1 was issued in Aug 2010. "If a player whilst preparing to strike a ball makes accidental contact with another ball, not the striker's ball, and before making contact with the ball he intends to strike, the accidental contact is a non-striking fault and not the playing of a wrong ball". (Note that it cannot be a striking fault, as the period during which a striking fault can be committed starts from the time the striker's ball is struck by the mallet).

The action to be taken after a non-striking fault is set out in Law 12(c) and the side that commits it loses its next turn. However if, as in this case, the player does not notice the accidental contact, we can have a situation where the player has just lost a turn he has just played!

To solve this problem the actual taking of blue's turn should be regarded as the mayhem caused by the non-striking fault and can therefore be dealt with by law 12(c)(1): "If a non striking fault affects one or more stationary balls, the opponent chooses to leave them where they stop or have them all replaced where they were before the fault was committed". After rectification red will

be next to play. Of course clause 12(c)(3) also applies and no points may be scored by any ball by a non-striking fault, so you cannot for example peel an opponent.

In relation to non-striking faults, it is worth mentioning that there appears to be a number of players that want to apply the opponent's choice of ball next played to the rectification of a non-striking fault. This is totally incorrect, but happens quite often.

Finally, note that if the striker had nudged his own ball rather than red it would count as a stroke and the subsequent contact with blue would be a striking fault.

AC Decision:

In Association Croquet, under Law 5(d) a stroke and the striking period start when the mallet head has passed the striker's ball on the final backswing, so the decision depends on whether the striker was still lining up his shot (often called casting), or was intending to hit blue on the downswing. If the latter, it is a striking fault under Law 28(a)(12), with the usual consequence (turn ends, no points scored, and the opponent chooses whether the balls are replaced).

If however the striker was still 'preparing' when he hit red, then there is no fault. Instead, an interference with a ball between strokes has occurred under Law 33(c). Red should have been replaced without penalty before the stroke was played, but, as it was not, Law 27(a) applies (playing with a ball misplaced). The stroke is still valid, but red should be replaced when the interference is pointed out.

It is the same if the striker hit blue on any of his backswings: the striking period has not started so no fault is committed and the stroke is valid.

Future Issues

We are sure that there are many situations like the above which regularly cause puzzlement amongst players and could be helped with simple clarification. Please email your ideas for future columns in this series to either of us, using the addresses given on the inside front cover

COACHING CORNER

By ROGER STAPLES

Happy New Year! The Fixtures Book is about to land on your doorstep. It is full of tournaments, but also lists those coaching courses that have been organised around the country. The Academy courses are as popular as ever, so don't deliberate for too long as they will fill up very quickly.

I was at a Luncheon party the other day with a group of Badminton & Golf players and one of them mentioned to me, "You won't be getting much practice in at this time of year". Well it got me thinking. I explained to him that we played indoor croquet. "Indoor Croquet?" he asked. Further explanation followed and it dawned on me, surely, the ability to play our game on almost any surface and under almost any conditions is one of its attractions.

Yes we all know that a level billiard-table surface is ideal. Short grass, sunny days are a luxury. But someone has to cut the grass, set the hoops and make the tea. Often, and I guess the majority of our club players, look upon the weekly club day as an opportunity for a social gathering with some competitive play be it full lawn or short lawn. There are also those clubs whose landlords are not as croquet-minded as some and seemingly put up objections to short grass, claiming that to cut so short will expose the 'bare' spots. Perhaps, they are just trying to hide their lawn imperfections. But that brings me back to my original thoughts.

For those of us who have the luxury of playing indoor croquet in the warm at this time of year, the changeover at the start of the outside season is quite a challenge. We move from a fast carpet to a slow lawn, from a pocket size court to a large lawn. But we do it because we enjoy the game AND it demonstrates that we have to adapt our technique to suit the conditions.

So the snow and frost prevented the lawns-man from giving the grass its final cut. Does this mean the surface is unplayable? Surely not. It just means that tactics and technique have to be thought through carefully.

Maybe this is the time to play short lawn croquet and get in some practice for the forthcoming competitions; because of one thing I am certain, there will be some opposition out there that has been practising and I want to beat them!

One Ball Tactics - the Ten Commandments

by David Mooney

It seems that at a lot of people believe that One-ball could be a good bridge from GC to AC. I am not so sure, but that is another debate. I have been asked by a couple of GC players what tactics I need to be able to play One-ball against Association players as they know the game so much better than we do. So here are ten things to think of when playing One-ball.

1) *The Start. What should I do when I win the toss?*

If I win the toss I will always go in second. Why? Because a ball already on the lawn is better than either attempting hoop 1 or running away. It is normally better to be following your opponent unless you have a lot of bisques and can establish an early lead.

2) *What lead is worth having?*

Certainly not fewer than 3 hoops, but more likely 4. Why? If you are in front of rover and your opponent is in front of 4-back and it is his turn he can run 4-back and take position in front of penultimate and take effective control of the centre of the court, forcing you to take the defensive position peg high out towards the east or west boundary.

3) *Choosing the right hoop approach.*

Most novice players use the wrong approach. In One-ball the best approaches for forward hoops (hoops 1,3,5,7,9,11) are either drive or stop shot approaches. You need a forward rush out of these hoops so you need to play a croquet shot that puts the reception ball at least 3 yards beyond the hoop, allowing you to run the hoop to a position 4-6 feet beyond the hoop. At turning hoops (2,4,6,8,10,12) you need split approaches putting the reception ball onto a rush line to the next hoop. The best approaches are natural drive split-shots.

4) *Using your bisques wisely.*

You will be getting bisques from the better AC players; $\frac{1}{3}$ of the handicap difference (plus additional bisques from A-class players). So it is important to know whether these players will be capable of playing 2-ball breaks. Players below handicap 3 should be capable of playing a 2-ball break of between 4-8 hoops; players below handicap 1 will be capable of completing a 12-hoop break. It is therefore important to play more defensively against these players, as you may not get a second chance. So how should you be using your bisques for establishing a 4+ hoop lead? Use your bisques for:

Maintaining a position behind your opponent.

Jawsing in a forward hoop.

Getting a wiring.

Most importantly, finishing the game without letting your opponent back onto the lawn.

5) *What do I do with my $\frac{1}{2}$ bisque?*

A $\frac{1}{2}$ -bisque is a very useful tool, especially at the end of the game when the play is becoming constrained to the centre of the court. It is a guaranteed roquet. You should at least be looking for position in front of your hoop with your opponent in a neutral position. Using your $\frac{1}{2}$ -bisque in tandem with a full bisque can be made to have the same result as using 2 bisques. So think of using your $\frac{1}{2}$ at either the start or the end of the game.

Don't forget Law 37(a) - ... "A half-bisque is a restricted bisque in which no point can be scored for any ball."

This can be a powerful ally. Supposing your opponent has jawsed his ball in penult or rover; leaving your ball hoop high. Normally, if you were to roquet his ball through the hoop, it would be a peel and you would give him an extra point. However, the way the Law is written, a peel in this circumstance using your ½ bisque does not score any points.

6) **The Power of Jawsing.**

It is often better to jaws a ball than to run a hoop. To give an example, I was playing Chris Clarke at Surbiton in one of the winter One-Balls. I was for hoop 2 and Chris jawsed the ball in hoop 1. I retreated from hoop 2 to corner II and Chris then moved his ball so he could play his ball hard at an angle through hoop 1. I deemed my ball in corner II, but Chris then ran his ball into corner II and finished the game with a 2-ball break. A ball jawsed in hoop 3 is in control of all of the eastern half of the court south of hoop 3, a ball in the jaws of hoop 6 all of the north of the court and south for hoop 11 and so on.

7) **Counting Shots.**

It is useful to count the possible shots of your opponent and yourself to see when you are likely to get the chance of making a roquet.

8) **Watch Out for Grannies' Alley.**

The game gets condensed when you run through the middle hoops 5-6 & 11-12. If you are running any of these hoops it is important to watch whether your opponent is in front of hoops 3, 7 or 9 as it is relatively easy to pick up a ball in the middle of the court after running one of these. If you are running a hoop in the middle, you may need to retreat to a defensive position rather than taking position in front of the next hoop.

At the end of the game, after running rover; if your opponent is in front of a hoop, you should only take position at the peg when the opponent is in front of hoops 2, 4, 8 and 10. This will leave your opponent about a 12-15 yard shot after running his hoop.

If your opponent is in front of hoops 3, 7 or 9, take position half-way from the peg to the east or west boundary, but on the opposite side of the court to your opponent.

9) **Remember lifts and wiring lifts.**

Wirings and advanced lifts can totally change the game, especially when playing an A-class player. So if you are in a break you need to think carefully if you intend running a hoop what could happen if you fail the hoop and give a lift away. You may need to use a bisque to save the situation or to take a position where no lift would be conceded.

10) **Should I go for the opponent or stay back?**

Yes

I am more than more than 4 hoops behind.

I have enough bisques to finish the game.

I can make a break or disrupt the opponents shot schedule allowing me to catch up.

No

I have no more bisques and I have a lead of 3 or more hoops

I am behind by less than three hoops

I am going to go into the opponents range if I miss.

What should I practice for One ball?

Hoop approaches

7-10 yard roquets

Rushing a ball to a hoop

Controlled hoop running

Knowing the ration of my croquet strokes

News from the CA Office

By Elizabeth Larsson

Membership Mailing

At the time of going to press, the CA office staff were busy working on the annual membership mailing which is sent at the end of January/beginning of February to all those who have renewed their membership. By the time you read this, you will have had your letter with new membership card etc and as ever, please check your details and let us know of any changes.

Fixtures Book

The Fixtures Book is also included in the annual mailing to tournament members, and this year it has a slightly different format, following comments from users. All club tournaments are listed under the club name, rather than have two sections, one for AC and one for GC, but the GC tournament list is still preserved for those who want to see GC events only at a glance. The book now has headers at the top of each page, to aid navigation.

Online Fixtures Calendar

The online Fixtures Calendar also lists all the tournaments and by using 'Display Options', players can sort the tournaments by type (AC, GC or Courses), handicap restriction, venue etc. Tournaments can also be selected for downloading to diaries. In addition to CA Tournaments, tournaments held at Bowdon, Hurlingham and Nottingham Clubs can be entered online. This is the second year of the trial for online entry for clubs and a great deal of work has gone into the system by Dave Kibble to improve it and provide useful information for the club treasurers.

Club Mailing

The annual mailing to clubs takes place just after individual members' mailing. This contains all the forms that clubs need to pay their subscriptions, enter inter-club tournaments such as the Mary Rose and Murphy Shield, and a Fixtures Book for club use. Clubs holding tournaments will also receive levy forms for each tournament, and for those holding CA Tournaments, ball and lawn hire forms.

Shop

The Shop is, as ever, open for business and Paul Hands is always happy to help with any enquiries.

Most Improved Player Awards 2012

The Apps Memorial Bowl for the most improved male AC player: Nick Mounfield, nominated by the Bygrave Croquet Club. The Steel Memorial Bowl for the most improved female AC player: Francois Garcia, nominated by the Bowdon Croquet Club. The Spiers Trophy for the most improved Golf Croquet Player: Harry Dodge, nominated by Nailsea Croquet Club.

Brian Shorney, Chairman of the Handicap Committee, said: "We had some strong nominations this year which meant that we had some tough decisions to make, and the overall standard was high. We are keen that clubs nominate players for these awards so that improvement can be recognised. It is particularly pleasing to see one of our juniors, Harry Dodge, being awarded the Speirs Trophy."

MERIT AWARDS ACHIEVED DURING 2012

Bronze Awards

Jaimie Mussi - Cheltenham Easter Tournament
 Frances Colman - Tyneside Midweek Handicap
 Erica Malaiperuman - Woking Midsummer Handicap
 Roger Mills - Sidmouth June Mid-Summer Tournament
 Nick Mounfield - Newport Advanced
 Graham Pegley - Compton Summer Tournament
 Lee Ault - Ramsgate Handicap Singles
 Susan Fulford - Fylde Handicap
 Nicholas Halton - Roehampton Summer Tournament
 Simon Hathrell - Wrest Park 4-back Tournament
 Brian Havill - Colchester Midweek Over-Fifties
 Andrew Kenyon - Bowdon May Weekend
 Judith Moore - Nottingham Annual Tournament
 Chris Phillips - Ramsgate Handicap Singles

Christina Rice - Ramsgate Handicap Singles
 Alan Slater - Cheltenham 96th July Tournament
 Carol Steinberg - Bowdon Northern Week
 Robert Tait - Budleigh Salterton August Tournament
 Peter Mallen - Budleigh Salterton Autumn Weekend
 Jordan Waters - Wrest Park Rover Tournament
 Richard Cain - Longman Cup Semi-final, Roehampton

Silver Awards

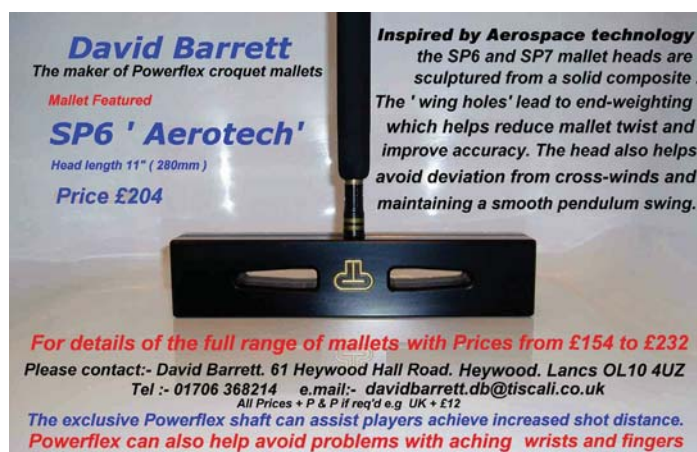
Jaimie Mussi - Cheltenham Easter Tournament
 Margaret Hampson - Surbiton Easter Handicap
 Philip Harris - Budleigh Salterton May Week
 Luc Berthouze - Hurlingham May Weekend
 Jackie Hardcastle - Budleigh Salterton May Week
 Paul Wolff - The Peel Memorials, Hamptworth
 David Gunn - Ashby National Forest Handicap Weekend
 Roger Hendy - Sidmouth June Mid-Summer Tournament
 Timothy King - Ashby National Forest Handicap Weekend
 Nick Mounfield - Newport Advanced Weekend
 Sara Anderson - Budleigh Salterton August Tournament
 Simon Hathrell - Wrest Park 4-back Tournament
 Georgeen Hemming - Colchester Midweek Over-Fifties
 Trevor Longman - Ramsgate Handicap
 Charles Martin - Ramsgate Handicap
 Peter Petrie - Cheltenham 96th July Tournament
 John Pollard - East Dorset Midweek Handicap
 John Wastell - Bowdon Northern Week
 Roger Mills - Sidmouth Handicap Weekend
 Graham Pegley - 105th South of England Week, Compton
 Peter Balchin - All England Handicap Final, Ramsgate

Gold Awards

Malcolm Bigg - Hurlingham May Weekend
 Sam Murray - Hurlingham May Weekend
 Jonathan Wood - East Dorset Handicap Singles Weekend
 Matt Holmes - Pendle & Craven CC Advanced Weekend
 Adrian Kirby - Cheltenham Over Fifties' Advanced Tourn.
 Nick Mounfield - Newport Advanced Weekend
 Simon Hathrell - Wrest Park 4-back Tournament
 David Marsh - Roehampton B-Level Advanced Weekend
 Andrew Willis - Budleigh Salterton August Tournament

Platinum Awards

James Hopgood - The Open Championships, Cheltenham



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Shock, Horror, Probe!

Tips for Tournament Reporting

The Editor asked **Chris Roberts** to offer some thoughts on improving tournament news reports – here is what he came up with:

There is writing and then there is reporting – so what is the big difference?

Why do some story tellers have us hanging on their every word, yet others bore the pants off us?

It's an odd fact that most people tell each other news in a completely different way in writing than they do verbally face to face.

For some reason, when sitting down to write, we often re-order the facts we have to tell and end up moving the headline news to much later in the story. This risks losing the interest of the reader almost before one starts the tale.

Enjoyable though 'who-dunnits' might be, it's not news reporting.

News journalists overcome this with a writing style that mimics conversation and hence their reports are short, sharp and snappy, and above all 'hook in' the reader right from the opening sentence. They hit us between the eyes with their top fact in an exciting manner that grabs our attention and makes us yearn for more detail.

We can adopt this approach too, by deciding on the most newsworthy fact of the report and 'yelling it out' right at the beginning. Excite the reader by telling your tale as you would do if you had just met him in the street, but imagine that you have a train to catch and you have to get the important facts told because you don't have much time.

The great cricket 'Test Match Special' broadcaster Brian Johnson, in his book 'Chatterboxes – My Friends the Commentators', highlighted this style of reporting (journalists call it the information 'pyramid'). Reporters pre-sort the facts they are going to tell in order of importance. Johnston said that this was vital in the early days of live outside broadcasting because he never knew how long he was going to have 'on air' before the line went dead, and many will remember that it frequently did. It was no use him saying: "well, here we are on a lovely sunny day at Lords, the stands are packed to the rafters and everyone is enjoying a good day's cricket. The West Indies are..." if the line goes dead. Better to say "the West Indies are 155 for 3, chasing England's 250 overnight lead..." and get the most newsworthy facts delivered. Match details can follow, perhaps even with some comment, but all before colouring the report

with the weather, the crowd, the pigeons and the delights of inevitable chocolate cake!

The most important facts should be delivered right at the beginning and the same applies to the written word, even though time is on one's side. Instead of 'time' consider 'page space', because this is at a premium and by adopting the same principle of sorting facts in the most newsworthy order, one's report will automatically be more interesting.

So how to order your facts?

At the top of the 'information pyramid' is the single most important fact – Who won!

Just beneath this might be a couple of other pertinent details; was it a shock result? Was there a game-turning incident perhaps?

Below this, halfway down the pyramid, it broadens out into more general facts: who else played well, or above expectations, and was there anything else out of the ordinary worthy telling?

And right at the bottom of the pyramid are all manner of minor details that it might be nice to know, but frankly it's not the end of the world if the reader never finds out. The weather (unless exceptional), the nice clubhouse, the manager, the hospitality and the cake (even if it was to die for). This way the reader can leave the report at any point and it will still have made sense. Or they can stick with it, because you 'hooked' their interest and added detail in the right order, in which case you can reward them with a nice juicy nugget or perhaps comment at the end. Something like "as Smith is left to lick his wounds and wonder how it all went so wrong, this victory sees Jones sure to be the man to watch at the XYZ Championships next month".

Competitive Golf Croquet for all

By John Bowcott, Chairman of the G.C Tournament Committee

Lots of Golf Croquet is played 'just for fun'. Some is however played to an extraordinary standard. The gap between these extremes is being filled by those now excited enough and confident enough to play outside their own clubs and by those aspiring to the now ample array of Ascot Cup Qualifier events. There is a growing appetite for competitive GC and the Tournament Committee resolves to feed it. Already there really is 'something for everyone', either within the Federations or in national events sponsored by the CA, but we believe that there is more that can be done.

Managers always plan well-run tournaments and a warm welcome, so our efforts concentrate on tournaments that will help to develop the playing base. Although a good number of very young players compete at the very pinnacle of the game, it makes great sense to encourage more. The opportunities to do so overlap several areas of responsibility, but the Tournament Committee believes that a National Under-21 Championship would help underpin all attempts to broaden the participation of this target group. Also important is the opportunity for 'rapid improvers' to find the competitive

opportunities to do so. A small number of 'B-class' tournaments exist and we feel that there may be scope for this to be increased. To further encourage B-class play the committee is considering a National Final for which players will qualify in Open club events. At the time of writing there was still 'work to be done' on both proposals, but it is hoped that inaugural events will be possible this summer.

Competitive Golf Croquet remains popular and you are always ready for a sterner test. Whether you contemplate your first Grass Roots experience, the Open Championship or one of the many steps between, do resolve to challenge yourself. Everything has been arranged for you.

GOLF CROQUET WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP 2012

Egypt Triumph in first team Championship

Report by Stephen Mulliner

The inaugural Golf Croquet World Team Championship kicked off with the eight teams comprising Division 1 meeting at the Country Club Johannesburg from 25 November to 2 December 2012. CCJ is quite similar to Hurlingham in many respects, providing a beautiful 45-acre gardened enclave just to the north-west of central Johannesburg and a wide range of sports. Croquet, especially GC, has flourished in recent years and Chris Wakeham, WCF Management Committee member, and his team of volunteers did a superb job in organising an excellent event. CCJ itself had spared no expense to make the event a success and the quality of the lawns and the general amenities, including the catering and accommodation at the Lodge inside the CCJ grounds, were simply first-rate.

Egypt began as distinct favourites, with the main challenge expected to come from England and New Zealand. The format consisted of two all-play-all blocks of four teams, with the top two proceeding to the semi-finals and the bottom two entering the Plate. Block matches consisted of two b-o-3 doubles and four b-o-3 singles, so ties were possible. The championship semis and final were played as 13-point matches over two days with one doubles and six singles on day 1 and two doubles and four singles on day 2.

Block A comprised Egypt, New Zealand, Australia and Sweden. Block B had England, South Africa, USA and Ireland. Block A followed the form book, with Egypt and New Zealand finishing first and second and looking to be in excellent form. The (generally) young NZ team, with their even younger manager and one-man barracking and real-time reporting squad, Jarrod Coutts, displayed an impressive team ethic.



The Egyptian team celebrate their win. Photo by Rachel Rowe.

Their block match with Egypt provided was a 4-2 loss but included excellent wins for Duncan Dixon and Mike Crashley against Ahmed Nasr and Anwar Abdelaziz, while Philip Drew pushed Ahmed El Mahdi very hard, only losing 7-6, 6-7, 6-7.

In Block B, the USA turned out to be noticeably stronger in depth than South Africa and it was unfortunate for England, emerging from a very wet autumn with limited practice opportunities, that their opening match was against a decidedly in-form USA team. USA won 4-2 and went on to beat both the other teams to win Block B and so qualify for a semi-final against New Zealand, while England, despite emphatic wins against South Africa and Ireland, could do no better than second and thus meet Egypt in the semi. The pick of the England results was undoubtedly Will Gee's superb defeat of Reg Bamford 3-7, 7-5, 7-5.



The New Zealand team of Duncan Dixon (Captain), Jarrod Coutts (Manager), Hamish McIntosh, Mike Crashley and Phillip Drew, who were worthy finalists. Photo by Rachel Rowe.

In the semi-finals, Egypt had a convincing 9-3 win against England, although Stephen Mulliner recorded a decisive win against Mohamed Nasr 6-7, 7-4, 7-1 and both James Goodburn and Jacob Carr had good wins against Anwar Abdelaziz. New Zealand achieved an even bigger margin, 10-3, against USA and it was clear that the final would be very closely fought.

New Zealand were straight out of the traps on Saturday and took a fully justified 4-3 lead. Duncan Dixon repeated his block defeat of Ahmed Nasr with an even more decisive 7-2, 7-5 win and Hamish McIntosh beat Mohamed Nasr 6-7, 7-3, 7-6. Sunday began with two shared doubles so the lunchtime score was 5-4 to New Zealand and there was every prospect that the long-time GC top dogs would be forced to accept the runner-up spot. The atmosphere, already noticeably electric in a GC teams event in comparison with the rather calmer atmosphere of the MacRobertson Shield, had built to an extraordinary intensity when the final four singles began. Sadly for the Kiwis, either the

occasion got to them or the Egyptians raised their game when it mattered most, and only Hamish McIntosh was able to take a game by 7-3 against Ahmed Nasr, by which time all three of the other singles had been won in straight games by the Egyptians, finishing rather astonishingly within three minutes of each other. The outpouring of victorious emotion by the Egyptian team was a sight to behold and perhaps indicated how important victory was to them for the future of their sport in the light of the domestic uncertainty currently gripping Egypt.

In the other matches, England squeezed into third place with a 3-2 defeat of USA and South Africa beat Ireland comfortably by 5-2. The very popular Swedish team, who play GC with their own style of verve, managed to push Australia into wooden spoon position by 3-2 in the *7th/8th place play-off to complete a memorable week of intense competition and excellent camaraderie in superb surroundings.*

A Mind(set) for Croquet

Part 1

By James Hopgood

Almost every book on Sports Psychology starts with the statement that top-level performance is “90% mental, because there’s very little that separates players at the elite level”. But what is sport psychology really about; can it help improve your game, and is it relevant to beginners or just elite performers where the physical skill levels are so similar? This article gives an introduction to what sports psychology is, and to some extent what it isn’t, and is designed to motivate those who are interested in the topic to pursue it further, from beginner level upwards. This article outlines a couple of key introductory concepts of sports psychology, and tries to motivate the importance of studying and implementing the mental approach in order to improve your game of Croquet.

What is sports psychology and why is it important?

Virtually all croquet players recognize the importance of the mental approach during a game and the importance of sports psychology; nonetheless, many readers might consider their state of mind during a match to be a random performance factor over which they have little or no control. They might be unsure how to develop their psychological skills, motivation, and mental toughness (Karageorghis & Terry, 2010). Sports psychology will help develop ones mental approach to the game, but it is not a magic wand and no single technique will suit all. A major part of sports psychology is the discovery of what works by practising different techniques, similar to the way you might develop your croquet swing or hoop stroke. Particularly useful topics in sports psychology include: understanding different types of motivation; improving self-confidence; dealing with anxiety, mood and emotion; concentration techniques; visualization; how to make the most of practice sessions (Karageorghis & Terry, 2010).

Do these techniques really work?

There may be some readers who aren’t sure what Sports Psychology is about and whether it is worth spending time investigating. Around six years ago, nearer the start of my croquet career, I recall players making statements about other players’ mentality to the effect that “they don’t have the mental toughness to win”. Perhaps I was naïve at the time, but I assumed these people knew of some characteristics needed to be successful, such as resilience to criticism, an obsession to win, an ability to perform under pressure and a natural-born confidence in their ability. I assumed these characteristics, frequently recognizable in many successful sports people, were linked with a certain personality: you either had it or you didn’t, and it wasn’t necessarily within my control. Equally, I thought that some of these attributes would simply come with time, as one’s ability improves, or after a certain amount of experience at match level. I was similarly bamboozled with jargon and concepts regarding the mental approach, such as “being distracted by voices in your head” when playing, and visualization methods, such as “seeing the ball go through the hoop, coming to a stop, and even rolling back to a particular spot”. In part, this was because I hadn’t experienced enough competitive play to understand such issues. Reg Bamford in his wonderful seminar at Surbiton in September 2012, filmed by Duncan Hector (Hector, 2013), talks about “practising perfect croquet” in his mind: but what does this mean? On the one hand, Reg has played enough excellent shots in his playing career that he might be able to visualize examples of strokes which have worked out perfectly, and therefore piece together a perfect break in his mind. On other hand, it might be possible to imagine the perfect stroke and its outcome in a more abstract manner.

The apparent vagueness of concepts within sport psychology and its ambiguous language mean that to some people the whole mental approach can be as alien as learning how to triple-peel consistently. As someone who studied a traditional subject, I assumed that sports psychology, as a hot new degree subject, was some wishy-washy nonsense that (a) kept people employed, (b) was used by sportsmen with long experience and match practice to explain their top-level performance and (c) was

used, in some cases, to explain why some people might be incapable of achieving such high standards.

Nevertheless croquet is a relatively simple game, and the main difference between an average player and the best in the world is more often than not (a) a couple of thousand games or equivalent practice, (b) a mindset for improvement (Ankersen, 2012; Shenk, 2011; Syed, 2011; Colvin, 2008), (c) preparation both physically and mentally. The mental preparation is absolutely a process which can be learnt, is most certainly within your individual control (Karageorghis & Terry, 2010), and is definitely not just restricted to the elite. Pete Trimmer's excellent article in the Gazette in Oct 2004 (Trimmer, 2004) covers a number of elements of sports psychology and, as it is focused on croquet, is well worth reading first.

A significant proportion of sports psychology seems like common sense and, once someone has told you what to think about, is surprisingly simple. Rather like break hygiene, it's straightforward once you've been shown how, although you still need to "practise, practise, practise". The same is true with the mental approach and more importantly learning the difference between "knowing what to do", and "doing what you know" (Lazarus, 2006). The following highlights some introductory topics, and the reader is referred to the bibliography for further information and study. Reg Bamford's recent seminar, which is available online, covers numerous gems and will take on different meanings the more one studies sports psychology and can understand the different nuances about the ideas he discusses.

The Confidence-Ability-Cycle

An important concept in sports psychology is that most of the thought processes that take place during practice routines, important tournaments, moments of pressure in games and so forth, are universally experienced by most players. The only difference between successful players and those who perform poorly is experience of similar scenarios and appropriate preparation in how to deal with different situations, both of which can be learnt with time. These could be anything from dealing with difficult angled hoop strokes, to worrying about what's being said in a commentary during an important match, to thinking about the last lift shot in a match.

A phenomenon often observed in the development of skills sets is an apparent regression in ability - despite more practice, more match experience, and increased knowledge about tactics and

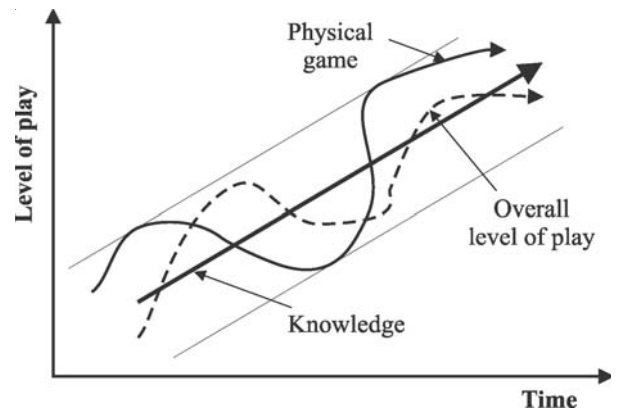


Figure 1: Level of Play versus Time



Figure 2: Handicap Index versus Games (Time)

technique. This might be of concern to some players, unless they realise that it is a well-understood process that everyone experiences to differing degrees. Everyone means everyone, from novices through to the top ten players in the world, as well as players who appear to have natural talent, through to those who simply seem to work hard at their game. As knowledge about croquet increases, with the correct mindset, improving players will push themselves out of their comfort zone. As a result, they might, for example, try more difficult breaks, despite their skill-set not being sufficiently strong to execute the more challenging strokes and shots. Thus they break down and despite an improvement in skill their overall standard of play might decline temporarily. This is shown in Figure 1. Similarly, players might

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choose to face tougher opponents in order to improve and might face a sequence of losses as a result. Frequently this can affect a player's confidence which can in itself lead to poorer results as a player attempts to improve.

It is important to embrace the confidence-ability-cycle and to use it positively. Understanding that this cycle is the process which a player must go through to improve is crucial to being able to deal with a decline in performance, as well as explaining trends seen on handicap cards, for example in Figure 2 (notwithstanding the effects of quantized handicap steps). Rather than feeling negative about this cycle, focus on the positives that arise from pushing yourself to get better and the feedback from such attempts. A drop in form will only be temporary if players know they are always working to improve their game.

Part 2 will follow in the next issue, along with a reference section for anyone wishing to explore the subject further.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING RATES

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Council News

By Ian Vincent, Hon. Secretary.

January Council Meeting Cancelled

The Council meeting due to have been held at Hurlingham on Saturday, 19th January, was cancelled at short notice due to the risks of travelling in the severe weather conditions experienced in many parts of the country. The Agenda and reports had, of course, already been circulated.

A few urgent items, such as approving the budget to authorise expenditure for the year, will be agreed by e-mail, but discussion of the other items will be deferred until the March meeting.

Roger Bray's Treasurer's report indicated that there was a modest deficit of about £3,300 in 2012, though this is subject to some uncertainty. The expectation is that although the shop's turnover reduced by about 5% in a difficult trading year, the profit margin was about £5K greater than in 2011. Most other sources of income came in at about the level budgeted, though individual subscriptions were slightly down due to the new introductory discount scheme. As usual, expenditure was well less than budgeted, the problem being that committees need to budget for things that may not occur: for example, there were no bursary applications last year.

The budget for 2013 is for an averaged (for predictable variations in some costs year by year) deficit of about £6K, which the Management Committee considers to be acceptable in the short term, though recognises that structural changes will eventually be necessary to deal with it.

An increasing focus on work with young people has highlighted the issue of child protection and the need for what used to be called Criminal Records Bureau checks. Regulations in this area have been, and are, changing rapidly, with the introduction of the new Disclosure and Barring Service. Previously, people needed to be checked by each employer or organisation that they volunteered for, but a new system of portable checks is to be introduced this spring. Watch this space.

Liz Larsson, the CA Manager, reported on the highlights of the year for the Office and Shop, noting several upgrades to IT systems. She thanked Liz Budworth and Paul Hands for their sterling support.

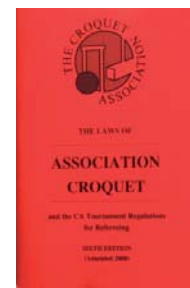
A number of constitutional changes have been drafted, to be laid before the 2013 AGM if approved by Council. One is to restrict the Domain to England, but widen the CA's objectives to allow it to operate in neighbouring countries with the agreement of their governing bodies, where they do not have the necessary resources or to reduce duplication. Others update the constitution to recognise the (now 20 year!) existence of the WCF.

It is proposed to disband the now sadly defunct Lawns Advisory Group, passing responsibility for lawns advice to Federations, backed by a handbook updated in line with changes to regulations governing lawn treatments.

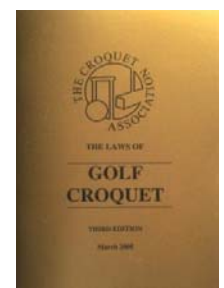
It is also proposed that a limited number of e-mails should be sent to Individual Associates, to keep them informed about CA activities, provided that an opt-out mechanism can be provided.

Finally, the Chairman, Jeff Dawson, had circulated a discussion paper about the level of Development Grants, following the soundings taken at the 2012 AGM.

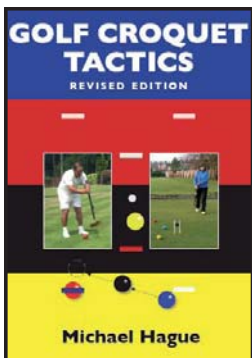
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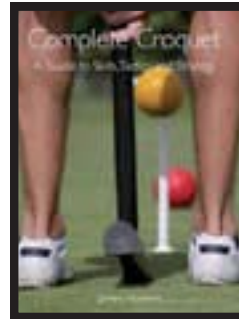
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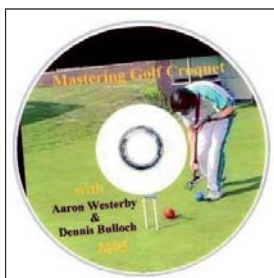
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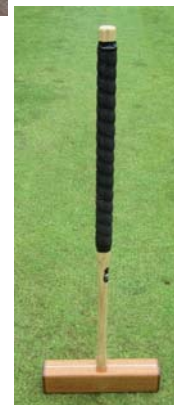
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