

# Croquet: General Rules

A coin toss should determine who goes first. Among younger players, there is often a rush to get a certain color. Color determines order and should be allocated based on teams selected and the coin toss. It should be noted that there is not a particular advantage to being first. In fact, many players prefer to be late in the order.

The player to begin play places his ball about mid-way between the stake and the first wicket. He hits his ball with the mallet and attempts to pass through the wickets before him. If he passes through both wickets, he receives two bonus strokes.

Generally, bonus strokes do not accumulate - only the last bonus strokes earned are allowed (the exception being the two wickets at the starting or turning stakes). Bonus strokes are awarded for going through a wicket, for hitting a stake, or for hitting another ball.

Bonus strokes for passing through wickets or hitting a stake are played from where the ball lies after the point is made. When a player hits another player's ball, it is called roqueting. For roqueting a player is awarded two bonus strokes.

If a player roquets he has four options. First, he may take two bonus strokes from wherever his ball lands. Second, he may place his own ball a single mallet head's length away from the ball hit - in any direction he chooses. Then he may take his two bonus strokes. Third, he may put his ball next to the ball hit. Then hit his own ball so that it moves both balls in a desired direction. He then has one bonus shot remaining. Finally, he may place his own ball side by side with the struck ball. Then placing his foot on his own ball strike it so as to move the other ball without moving his own. He then has one stroke to execute as he chooses.

Each ball may be roqueted only once per turn unless the player goes through a wicket or hits the turning stake. Even so, a player may roquet more than one ball per turn between wickets. If a ball is struck twice in the same turn without passing through a wicket, no penalty is awarded, no bonus is awarded.

If another player by any legal means moves another player's ball through a wicket or causes it to hit a stake, the wicket or stake is scored, but no bonus strokes are awarded.

Balls sent out of bounds should be placed one mallet length (about 36 inches) from the boundary back within the playing field at approximately the point it went out

of bounds. In tournament play, balls that fall within a mallet of the boundary at the end of a turn are moved back from the boundary by the length of one mallet.

A few final notes: Balls may be struck only with the face of the mallet. A mallet cannot strike another ball. Balls played out of turn accrue no penalty - the balls are returned to *status quo ante* (the situation before the error occurred). There are many rules adjustments made by people playing friendly games of croquet. Most are designed to make the game more challenging or exciting.

**Dead Ball Option:** Players are not allowed to roquet a ball more than once between wickets no matter how many turns may pass. This increases the difficulty, giving players fewer extra strokes.

**Poison:** This game is usually played cut-throat (no teams). When a player does the complete course, instead of leaving the game, he becomes "poison". When he hits another ball, it goes out of play. When all players are eliminated, the final player left on the field is declared the victor. A twist to this game is that if the poison player goes through a wicket or hits a stake, he himself is eliminated.