

BROOKLYN CROQUET & HUNT* CLUB
&
KEENE CROQUET & HUNT* CLUB
Rules of 9 Wicket Croquet
Version 1.1
November 5th, 2017
(*hunting postponed until further notice)

*The USCA rules of backyard 9 wicket croquet are published online at www.croquetamerica.com. The KC&H*C has modified these rules in certain areas after years of play and much debate. The BC&H*C plays by these same modified rules. Both the KC&H*C and the BC&H*C believe that these changes create the best, most challenging and enjoyable version of 9 wicket croquet currently out there. The USCA rules were used as a template for the outline of the following.*

The Court

Officially 50' wide by 100' long, though this can be approximated and can be shortened to speed up play. Out of bounds can be marked by flags, string, tape, garden edging or in wide open areas, done away with entirely.

The Wickets and Stakes

Nine wickets (or whoops) and two stakes (or posts) are arranged in a double- diamond pattern inside the court (see diagram). If playing on a smaller court, the distances shown should be scaled down in proportion to the length and width of the court. The wickets should be firmly planted in the ground, and the width of the wickets should be uniform throughout the court. If the area you are playing in has natural obstacle such as a tree or rock, simply arrange the court around them as best you can to keep the double diamond layout. Additional obstacles such as bricks can be placed on the court to add an extra challenge to play.

The Balls

Games can be played with one, two and even three balls per player or team. For two-ball games, the second ball should be the same color as the first ball but with a white stripe. For a three-ball game, the third ball can be another color. Be sure all players know which team the third balls belongs to to avoid confusion.

The Mallets

Each player uses a mallet to play. Only the end-face of the mallet head may be used to strike a ball. When the term "a mallet length or head" is used to describe placement of a ball this is a measurement of 9."

Object of the Game

The object of the game is to advance the balls through the course by hitting them with a mallet, scoring a point for each wicket and stake made in the correct order and direction (see diagram). The winner is the first player or team to score the 14 wicket points and 2 stake points for each of its balls (1 ball, 2 ball or 3 ball). If the game is played to a time limit and time runs out before a player or team finishes, the team with the most points at the end of the time period wins; often called "counting wickets." A player in the middle of their turn when time expires shall finish their turn. If points are tied, the ball closest to the contested wicket wins. A warning of time nearing completion should be given.

In the course of play, players take turns, and only one player plays at a time. For team play, one player from each team plays each turn all the way through and may not trade off to their teammate in the middle of a turn. The following turn, the other teammate plays. At the beginning of a turn the player (called the "striker") has one shot. After that shot the turn ends, unless an extra shot is earned by scoring a wicket or stake or by hitting another ball. The turn ends when the player has no more shots to play or has finished the course by scoring the finishing stake. The striker may directly hit with the mallet only the ball he or she is playing in that turn (the "striker ball") and cannot change during their turn to their other ball or balls if playing with more than one.

Clothespins or Clips

Colored clothespins or clips are used to mark the next wicket a player or team's ball must go through and should be angled in the appropriate direction (see photo). Each ball in play has a corresponding clothespin. At the start of the game all clothespins can be clipped to the first wicket. The clip is picked up when a wicket is scored, then placed on the ball's next wicket at the end of the turn. Clips are also used to indicate "liveness" and "deadness" by angling them up for "live" and down for "dead" (see Liveness and Deadness).

Game Starting point

All game balls start from a spot halfway between the finishing stake and first wicket. Balls that haven't been started should be kept off of the court. A ball may be started to the right or left at an angle to the first wicket as long as it stays on the halfway line between the finishing stake and the first wicket.

Determining Order of Play

To determine order of play players can "duke it out." This is a tradition of the KC&H*C and the BC&H*C though other means of determining order such as tossing a coin or hitting a ball closest to the middle wicket are also acceptable. To "duke it out" all players (or one representative from a team) stand in a circle. On the count of "one, two, three, shoot" each player puts forward one or two fingers. If only one player shows the only "one" or "two" of the group they pick position first for order of play. Whenever there is a tie, "duking out" is repeated until there is a clear lesser number of "ones" or "twos." If two players show the same ("one" for example) and all other players show "two" then they "duke" out again by first choosing either "odd" or "even" before shooting (the total of the "shoot" being either 2, 3, or 4). The choice of color ball(s) is given first to the last place team in the "duke out." If preferred, the order of play throughout the game can be determined by the end stakes which is blue, red, black, yellow, green, orange in which case, order of play determines color ball(s) played by each player/team.

Direction of Play

A game can be played by going either to the right or left after passing the #2 wicket. Flip a coin before play starts to determine direction.

Order of Play

After all balls have started the game, play continues in the same order until a ball is staked out by making contact with the finishing post. When a ball is out of the game, the remaining balls continue in the same order unless a single-ball game is being played in which case that player first out has won. If a player or team is caught or admits to playing out of order they lose their next turn and any ball moved during the out-of-turn play is replaced to its position prior to the

error. If the out of turn play is discovered after subsequent turns have played, no penalty is applied.

Shots

There are many styles of holding a mallet to strike a ball. But regardless of technique, any contact between a player's mallet and their ball shall count as their shot. A shot should be of clear, clean contact with the ball and never a "push shot." If a player pushes their ball instead of a clean strike of contact, they lose their turn. Also, If the striker makes their intended swing at their ball and misses entirely or digs their mallet in the ground, the miss counts as a shot and their turn ends, unless the striker has a second extra shot.

In certain situations it may be desirable to perform a "hand" or a "foot" shot whereby instead of swinging one's mallet to strike a ball, the mallet can be placed against the ball to be struck and using one's foot or a hand, cleanly strike the other end of the mallet not in contact with the ball.

Scoring Wicket and Stake Points

Each ball can score wicket and stake points by going through a wicket or hitting a stake in the proper order and direction. Going through a wicket out of order or in the wrong direction is not counted as a point gained or lost. A ball caused to score its wicket or stake during another ball's turn earns the point for that wicket, but no bonus shot is earned as a result.

A ball scores a wicket only if it has cleared the playing side of the wicket. An easy way to determine if a ball has cleared a wicket is to run the side of the mallet head down the plane of the playing side of the wicket. If the mallet head touches the ball on the way down, it has not cleared the wicket; if the mallet head does not touch the ball, it has cleared the wicket!

Extra Shots

The striker earns one extra shot if the striker ball scores a wicket or hits the turning stake. The striker earns two shots if the striker ball hits another ball (a "roquet"). However, the maximum number of bonus shots earned by a striker is two; there is never a time when a striker is allowed three shots.

When two extra shots are gained by striking another ball, the first of these two shots may be taken in any of four ways:

1. From where the striker ball stops after the roquet.
2. Moving your ball and replacing it from up to a mallet-head distance away from the ball that was hit ("taking a mallet") to enhance its lie in position.
3. From a position in contact with the ball that was hit, with the striker ball not held by foot or hand to take a "roquet" shot.
4. From a position in contact with the ball that was hit, with the striker ball held steady by the striker's foot or hand (a "croquet" shot). If the striker's ball also moves from under the player's foot or hand while making a croquet shot it is returned to its original position before continuing to the second shot.

The second shot after a roquet or a croquet is an ordinary shot played from where the striker ball came to rest, called a "continuation shot" or in the case of a croquet shot from where the ball was under the player's foot or hand. Extra shots may not be accumulated. The only exception to this is if a striker ball scores two wickets in one shot, they will then have two shots.

Liveness and Deadness

After a ball has made the #3 wicket it is considered "live" and may only then be able to gain two extra shots by roqueting any other ball. However, that ball may not roquet another ball again to gain extra shots until they have completed their next wicket. After roqueting a ball the striker ball is considered "dead" on *all colors* or just simply "dead." They will be "live" again after making their next wicket. Clothespins should be tilted down to indicate "deadness" and moved upright again when a ball becomes "live" by completing its next wicket. A ball does not become "live" by hitting the turning stake. If a "dead" ball roquets another ball no extra shots are gained.

Wicket and Roquet

When the striker ball scores a wicket and then hits another ball, only the wicket counts and the striker has earned only the one extra shot for scoring the wicket. It is considered incidental that it hit a ball after making the wicket. The striker may chose to then roquet that same ball or any other ball to earn two extra shots, or simply continue on "live" with one shot. If the striker ball is "live," roquets another ball and then goes through a wicket, the striker ball has their two extra shot options, is "live" again and has scored the wicket. When determining game play events such as this, it is helpful to think in terms of "first things first."

Out of Bounds

If boundaries are established, whenever more than half of a ball crosses the inside edge of a boundary, it is "Out Of Bounds." If the striker ball ever goes out of bounds on a shot, the ball is returned to its original position and that player's turn is over. If any roqueted or croqueted ball be sent out of bounds it should be brought back in bounds a mallet length perpendicular to the out of bounds line at the point it went out and play continues. In short, if a striker ball goes out of bounds on a shot, the ball is returned to its original position and that player's turn is over.

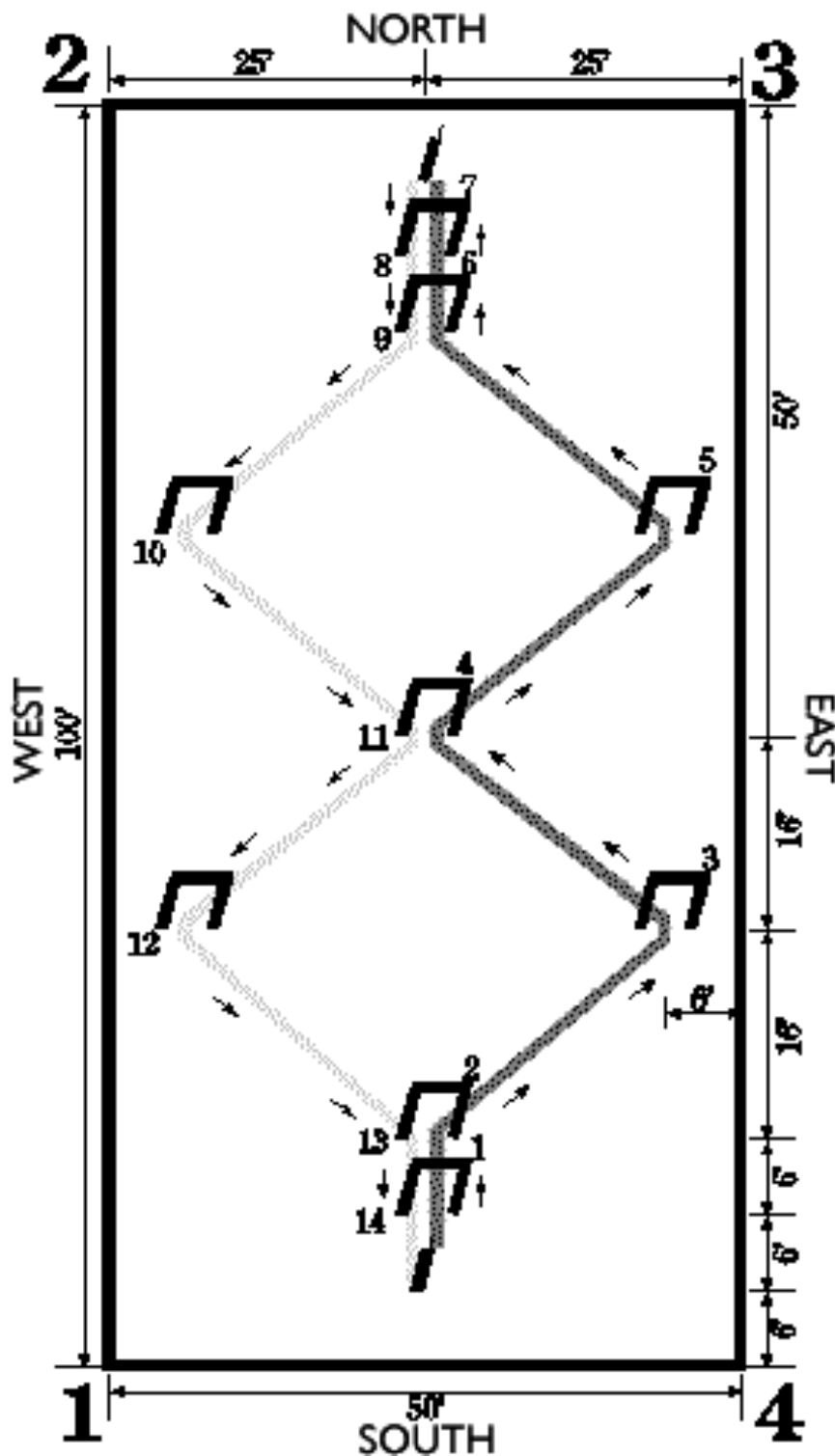
Rover Balls

In two or more ball games, after a ball scores all of the wickets in the course, its player may choose to keep it in the game as a "rover" to help advance that side's remaining ball(s) and to prevent the opposing side from advancing. During a turn when a rover is played, it may hit any other ball only once during that turn, gaining extra shots accordingly, but it does not earn any extra shots or wicket points for making a wicket. "Liveness" and "deadness" apply the same to a rover but a "dead" rover may become "live" again by making any wicket in any direction. Any player may put a rover out of the game by causing it to hit the finishing stake. The rover's side earns the point for the stake, and the order of play continues without the staked-out ball.

Additional Challenging Penalties

Should the striker during the course of setting up a croquet or roquet shot mistakenly pick up another player's ball by accident instead of their own ball, their turn is over. The striker ball should be returned to the best approximation of where it was to begin as well as any other ball that may have been moved during the setup of the shot.

If the striker's mallet makes contact with a wicket in the course of a shot or in setting up a shot, the player's turn is over and any balls moved are returned to their original position.



Standard 9-wicket court layout and direction of play going to the right.



Clothespins to indicate direction, liveness and deadness.

Disputes

Disputes will inevitably arise in the course of competitive play. Unless there is a "Commissioner" on hand who can make a final determination of a dispute, let any arbitration be decided by a majority ruling. Always strive for civility with your fellow players and remember to have fun!