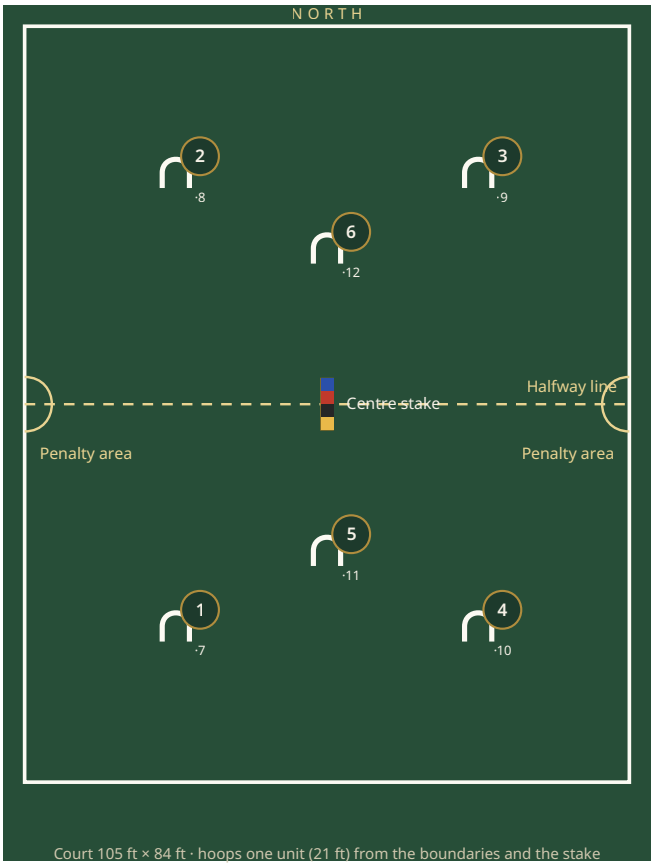
THE CAMBRIDGE CROQUET CLUB

How to Play UK Croquet

“Have a Wicket Good Time”

A beginner’s tutorial in the two games played in Britain and around the world: **Association Croquet**, the classic game of breaks and tactics, and **Golf Croquet**, its swift and sociable cousin.

The Court Both Games Share



The standard court: six hoops and the centre peg. Golf Croquet adds the halfway line and its penalty areas.

Both games are played on the same lawn: **35 yards by 28 yards** (105 by 84 feet), six hoops and a centre peg, with four balls — **Blue & Black** against **Red & Yellow**. The hoops are run in the order 1 to 6 and then back again as 7 to 12 (in Association play the second round is called 1-back to 6-back), finishing at the peg.

Part One — Association Croquet

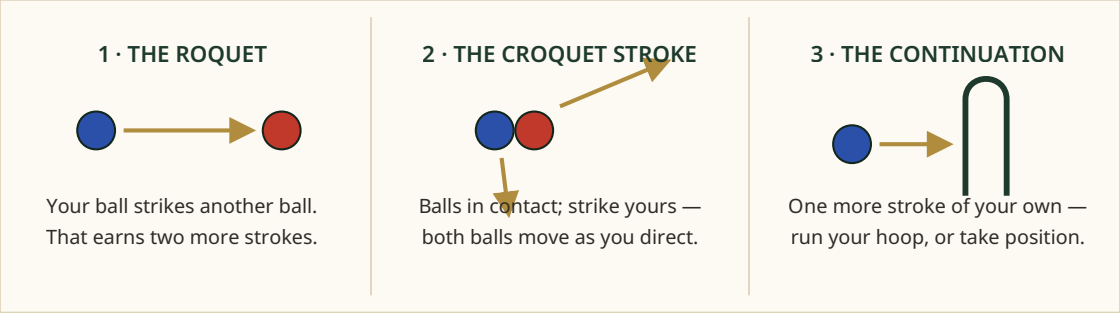
Association Croquet is the game of the long, planned turn — the “break” — in which a skilful player scores hoop after hoop without ever handing over the lawn. It is chess at walking pace.

THE SIDES, AND CHOOSING YOUR BALL

Each side owns two balls. At the start of *your* turn you choose **either of your side's balls** and play it for the whole turn — a freedom the American game does not allow, and the root of Association tactics. Turns pass from side to side, not ball to ball.

HOW A TURN GROWS

1. You begin with **one stroke**.
2. **Run your hoop** and you earn one more stroke.
3. **Roquet another ball** — strike it with yours — and you earn two: the *croquet stroke* (your ball placed touching the struck ball; strike yours so both move) and a *continuation stroke*.
4. There is **no deadness**. After your ball runs a hoop, it is live on every ball again — so a turn can roll on: roquet, croquet, hoop, roquet, croquet, hoop… That rolling sequence *is* a break.



Roquet, croquet stroke, continuation — the engine of the break.

WINNING

Take each of your balls around all twelve hoops and onto the peg: thirteen points a ball, **twenty-six points** to win. A ball that has run its last hoop (the "rover" hoop, 6-back) may be pegged out when its side is ready — but beware: a rover ball that touches the peg by accident is out at once. In handicap play the weaker side receives extra turns called *bisques* — ask at any club and they will gladly explain over tea.

Part Two — Golf Croquet

Golf Croquet keeps the same lawn and throws away the bonus strokes. It is quick to learn, quick to play, and wonderfully social — most new players in Britain begin here.

HOW IT WORKS

1. The balls are played in a strict colour order — **Blue, Red, Black, Yellow**, and around again. Each turn is exactly **one stroke**; there are no extra strokes for anything.
2. Every player on the lawn is racing for the **same hoop**. The side whose ball first runs it scores the point, and everyone turns to the next hoop.
3. Hoops are contested in order, 1 through 6 and back to 12. The game is usually **first to 7 points** (a 13-point game) — win seven hoops and the match is yours.
4. **The halfway rule.** When a hoop is scored, any ball lying more than halfway toward the *next* hoop is "offside" and is sent to the nearest **penalty area** on the halfway line — unless it arrived there honestly, off another ball or in the hoop's own play. It keeps the race honest.
5. **Jump shots are allowed** — a ball may be struck downward so it hops over another ball, a favourite moment on any lawn.

> **Which to learn first?** Golf Croquet, for an afternoon's fun with friends. Association Croquet, when you want the deep game — the one this Club's tutors will happily open up for you, hoop by hoop.

This tutorial is a beginner's summary, written by the Cambridge Croquet Club for new players; it is not the laws. The Laws of Association Croquet and the Golf Croquet Rules are maintained by the World Croquet Federation and published in Britain by the Croquet Association — croquet.org.uk. Diagrams are the Club's own. · The Cambridge Croquet Club, John F. Kennedy Memorial Park, 970 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, Massachusetts.