

## KNOWING THE LAWS CAN IMPROVE YOUR GAME

It is essential to have a good working knowledge of any game you play, otherwise when you play someone else, disputes can arise as to what is correct procedure and what is not. However, another important aspect of a game's rules is that as well as telling you what you **cannot** do, they tell you, sometimes by implication, what you **can** do. Knowing this information can sometimes allow you to do something that you did not think was possible. It is the purpose of these three short essays to give an insight into these aspects of the rules of croquet.

NB. These essays are not a treatise on the laws, they just serve to show how a knowledge of certain of them can help in your play. The figures at the end of some sentences refer to a relevant law.

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### 1. General Laws of Play

#### 1.1 The stroke and the striking period, 5.

The laws book is precise but essentially the striking period starts when you swing your mallet intending to strike your ball and ends when you have quit your stance **under control**. This "under control" bit is important because it is only during the striking period that a fault such as a crush or double tap can occur. So if a player kicks another ball while stepping back from a shot, he or she has not quit under control and it's a fault. But if that player catches another ball far away from the scene while walking away, it is not a fault.

Can this cause disputes? You bet it can! It's a referee job if players' opinions differ. The point here is to know the law and challenge if you consider a fault to have been committed.

What about the stroke? This is the striking period plus the extra time needed for all balls to come to rest or go off the lawn. It needs to be defined, but it is not very important as far as this essay is concerned.

Question 1.1. A player makes a lunge at his ball to run a hoop. His ball sticks in the hoop. He staggers back after the stroke, treading on another game's ball, squirting it onto his own and knocking it through the hoop. Has (a) a fault been committed and (b) the hoop been scored?

#### 1.2 Misplaced balls

Unsurprisingly, a misplaced ball is any ball where it shouldn't be. Examples are balls not put back on the yard line, marked balls not being replaced and lift shots not being taken from A or B baulk. The laws have now been made much more rational. Essentially they say that a misplaced ball must be correctly replaced as soon as the problem has been noticed but if it gets used then the wrong position is deemed to be the right one. If the misplacing is due to a lifted ball not being played from the A or B baulk, the ball is brought back to a correct spot. A marked ball not being replaced may well result in a claim for being misled, see later.

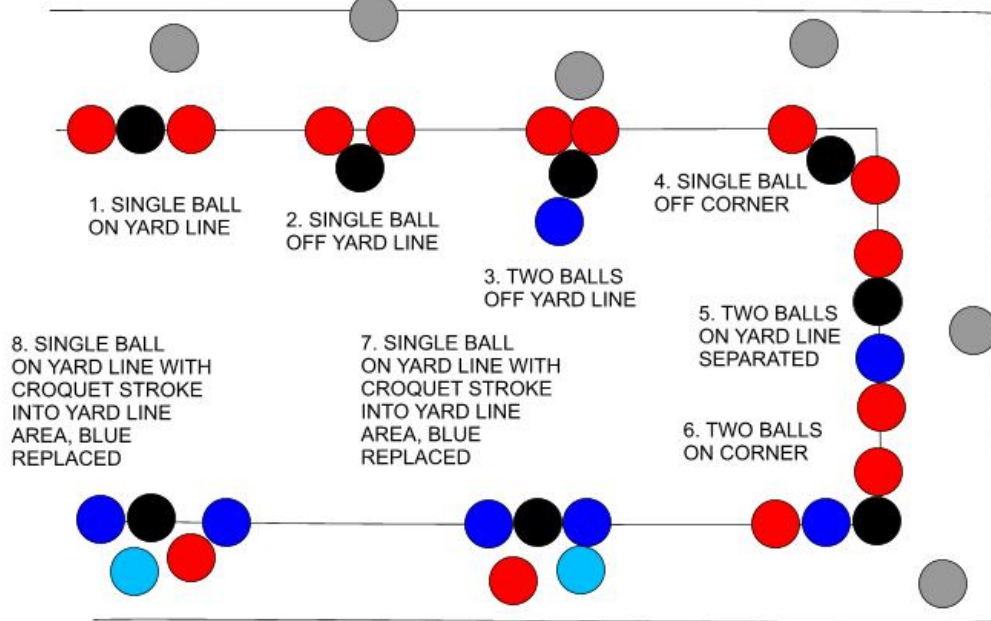
Question 1.2. Red is in play. Green finds blue in the way and asks red if it can be marked. Red agrees. Green forgets to put blue back. Red now takes off to blue and roquets it. Green now remembers the marked ball. What happens?

#### 1.3 Replacement of balls on the yard line, 12.

The replacing of balls has been simplified. The corner spots which used to have special laws are now just considered to be sharp bends in the yard line. Also, cannons which once could only occur on the yard line or corner, can now occur anywhere.

● POSITION OF RED BALL BEFORE REPLACEMENT OR POINT AT WHICH IT WENT OUT OF BOUNDS

● BALL TO BE REPLACED, SHOWING ALTERNATIVE REPLACEMENT POSITIONS.



● POSITION OF BLUE BALL BEFORE REPLACEMENT

QUESTION:- IN EXAMPLES 7 AND 8 WHAT IS THE SITUATION IF RED AND BLUE WERE THERE AS A RESULT OF RED RUSHING BLUE?

### REPLACING YOUR BALL

## 2. Errors and Faults

### 2.1 Wiring lift, 13.

This is a very significant law regarding possible changes in the fortunes of a game. It is therefore important that you know what the law is and what you do about it. Again, the laws book gives a precise definition but essentially to obtain a lift the relevant ball (RB) has to be unable to roquet any other ball on the lawn. If only it were that simple! There are lots of ways for the RB to be wired (or not) as you will see. It can be complicated which is why a referee should always be called if that is possible. However, sometimes no referee is available and the following diagrams should help you make a decision. When you use the diagrams, bear in mind the following points.

1. It must be the first stroke of your turn.
2. The opponent must be responsible for the RB's position. This will be the case if;
  - It (the RB) was put there directly;
  - It was put there as a result of a previous fault
3. The opponent is not responsible for the position of RB if you did either of the above.
4. Law 13 also contains a number of special cases but to include all of these would just be confusing. However, it is worth mentioning that if the RB is in the jaws of a hoop and the conditions of (2) are met, a lift is automatically conceded.
5. You do not have to take a lift in that turn (you do not in fact have to take the lift at all). As long as the conditions of (2) are met, then you can take it in a subsequent turn. However, think carefully before taking this option, when your opponent plays, it is unlikely that you will stay in a wired position!
6. If you opt to take a lift, once you have lifted the ball you cannot change your mind and put it back.
7. Note that as the player who might be giving a lift, you cannot ask a referee, before you finish your turn, if you will be conceding a lift when you finish. You have to rely upon your own judgement.
8. Note that in short croquet you get a lift if you are wired just from your partner ball (and the other conditions are met).

The three diagrams below are designed to help if you do not have a referee available. Remember to check all the points above before using the diagrams.

#### Lift (1).

The top sketch shows just how wide the wiring area can be. Any hoop or peg in the shaded area will make the hatched ball wired from the dotted one.

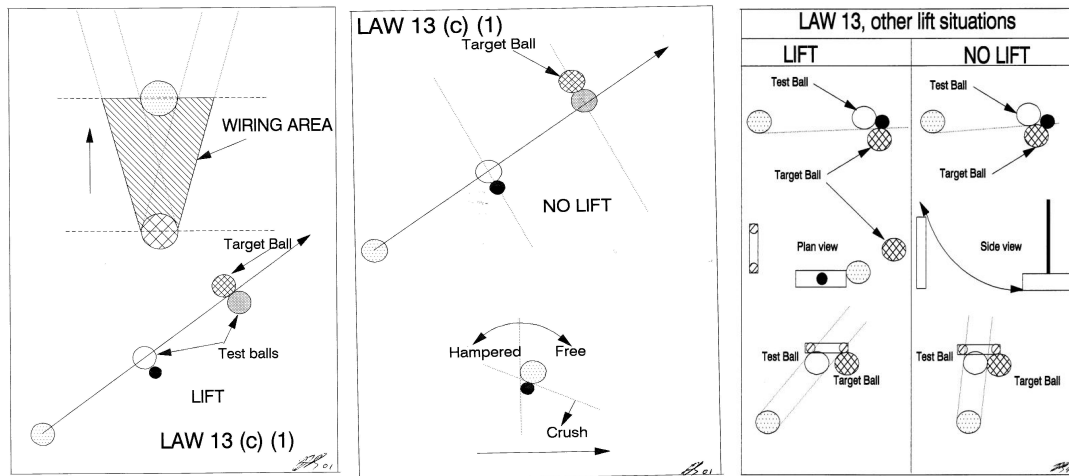
The bottom sketch shows how to use two test balls to aid in the check for wiring. Here the hatched ball is unable to hit all of the target ball, conceding a lift.

#### Lift (2).

The top sketch again uses two test balls to check for wiring. Here the hatched ball is able to hit all of the target ball, no lift is conceded.

The bottom sketch shows the RB against the peg (or hoop upright). The RB is being struck in the direction of the arrow. Any stroke from the left of the vertical line (in the direction "hampered") will

hit the peg before the ball, so a lift is conceded. Any stroke from the right of the vertical line (in the direction “free“) will hit the ball before the peg and is not hampered and does not concede a lift. Any stroke in the direction “crush” will crush the RB against the peg so a lift is conceded.



Lift (1)

Lift (2)

Lift (3)

Lift (3).

Here are three other lift situations. The top and bottom sketches show how the test ball can be used to check if a lift is conceded or not.

The centre left diagram shows the test being made with the extreme edge of the mallet being used to roquet the extreme edge of the target ball. In this position, the mallet will foul the hoop so a lift is conceded. This might seem ridiculous, but that is the law, and a moments thought will show that there might be a situation where that shot is required.

The centre right diagram shows that the normal swing of the mallet just misses the hoop, so no lift is given. Note “normal”, you must not exaggerate your backswing to get a lift.

**Question 2.1.** In a doubles match, black is given a lift. The player of blue picks up black and places it against red which is in corner 1. Is this legal, and if not, what is the penalty?

## 2.2 Faults, 28.

Remember that faults can only occur during the striking period, see 1.1. This essay is only concerned with knowledge of law 28 as it impinges on improving your play, so that is all I will concentrate upon. However, I will just mention one or two snippets which might be overlooked. You should in any case read this law carefully, it is fundamental to understanding incorrect play.

28(a)1, Touching the mallet head. No-one is going to actually hold the mallet head, but note that just resting your finger on the head is a fault, as is sliding the mallet along your foot. However, sliding the head along a hoop upright or the peg is OK.

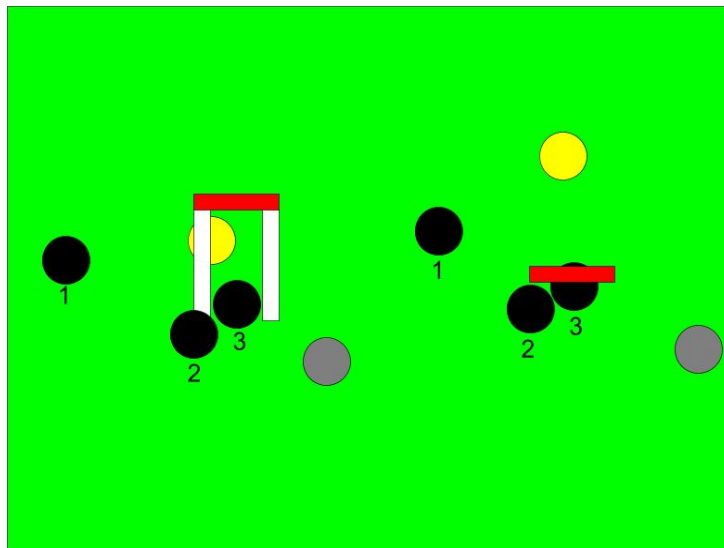
28(a)2, You can't rest the mallet shaft, or your hand or arm on the ground. Note “rest” Just touching or sweeping along the ground is not resting, so is legal. Note that the knees are not included so you can kneel to play a shot.

28(a)6, Although this refers to any part of the mallet except the end face, it is really the bevelled edge that is important here. In a hampered shot (one normally watched by a referee), hitting with the bevelled edge is a fault. Otherwise it is not unless you did it deliberately (why you should is beyond me!). So a rubbish croquet stroke in the middle of the lawn is not a fault.

28(a)13, Watch out for this one, especially in the wet where you are wearing floppy cloths. If the wind catches your trousers and they flap against a ball, it is a fault. I have to admit that in the pouring rain and a howling gale, if my waterproofs brushed a ball, I would - well I'd better not say.

28(a)15, This law has been toughened up and defined more carefully so watch out for those strokes which could, and do, damage the lawn.

28(b)2, If a fault occurs, you as the opponent have a choice. The balls can remain as they lie after the stroke, or you can have them put back where they were. In either case no point is scored. In handicap play, the player can decide whether to take a bisque or not after you have made your choice. Think very carefully about your choice and the effect that it will make, don't just rush into a decision. Also watch out for referees who forget that you have a choice. (Yes I have done it!)



Question2.2. In the above diagram, black, from the position shown in grey, tries to jump through the hoop. It is a fault. In each of the three positions shown for black, what would be your choice, replace or leave the balls where they are and which ball would you play? Blue is at 6 and for hoop 1, Red is by the peg and for hoop 1 and Yellow is for hoop 1. On the left is the front view, on the right is the plan view.

### 3. Miscellaneous laws

#### 3.1 Loose impediments, 34d.

Loose impediments include worm casts, leaves, nuts etc. The law allows these to be removed if in the way. They **MUST** be removed if likely to assist the player. An example of this might be in a long take-off which might go off, and you leave a pile of leaves near the boundary to stop its progress. Note that loose impediments are **NOT** outside agencies so you cannot claim a replay as a result of interference by them. Watch out for worm casts. In the morning when wet they pose no threat, but when they dry out they can set like concrete.

Question 3.1. Your opponent is about to take a long shot at you. You can see a huge nut in front of your ball. Should you tell your opponent about it?

#### 3.2 Playing When Misled, 31.

There are three ways you can be misled; your opponent has placed a clip incorrectly, a ball has been misplaced or you have been given duff information by your opponent about the game. Note that the first applies to any clip and the second to anyone misplacing a ball. Being misled means that you have, say, placed your leave in what you think was a safe place, only to find that you are by oppo's next hoop.

The remedy for this is that you can have a replay from the point at which you were misled. Only if you were misled from the start of your turn can you play the whole turn again. If this is the case you start the turn with either ball (or either player in doubles).

But be careful. You must have been misled. You can't claim a replay if, say, you blob a hoop that you would have gone for anyway. Nor, if allowed a replay, can you play the same strokes as before. Nor of course if the mislaying was your doing.

One final point, if you see a misplaced clip, then you must say so immediately. You can't "store the error up" for possible future use.

Question 3.2. Is a long shot and possible roquet the start of being misled? Hint. There are at least four possible scenarios!

#### 3.3 To forestall or not to forestall?

Firstly, let's consider the situations where the laws specifically prohibit forestalling. There are 3 of them.

1. Your opponent is about to play the wrong ball. You may think this is harsh, I do, but that is the law. You cannot even stop your opponent just before the shot, because if the ball is not struck, it is not a fault. All balls are replaced to the point before the error and turn ends.

2. Your opponent is about to run the wrong hoop. Again, you have to let the shot take its course. Note that sending a ball through the wrong hoop is not itself a fault, you should forestall the opponent before the erroneous "continuation shot". All balls remain where they lie and turn ends.

3. Your opponent is about to take croquet from a dead ball. A dead ball is not, as you might think, one that plays no part in the game. It is one that has already been roqueted in that turn with no subsequent hoop having been run. All balls are replaced to the point before the error and turn ends.

In handicap play, after a fault has been called, and the balls corrected, the player may take a bisque and continue with the correct ball (or either ball if the fault was at the first stroke of the turn).

Question 3.3. Red roquets black and rushes it into the jaws of hoop 3. Red then runs into blue then goes off in corner 3. Black is picked up and “croquet” taken on red. In the “continuation” stroke, blue is “roqueted”. Wrong ball is called. Where are the balls replaced to and does any player have any choices?

In all other cases you should forestall. Examples include your opponent:- about to play a hampered shot that needs watching; failing to take croquet after a roquet; playing with a ball or clip misplaced. Apart from the first of these, there is no penalty involved so forestalling before the stroke is a good idea as it saves a lot of ball replacement.

However, the hampered stroke should always be forestalled beforehand, as it allows for a clarification and the possible calling of a referee.

Question 3.4. Blue is about to play a hampered shot. The opponent calls out in a clear voice (blue is not deaf) “I’d like that watched please”. Blue ignores him, plays the shot and carries on regardless. Has the opponent any redress?

Answers to questions. Note that where an answer involves a line of play, this may not be the only, or even the best, solution. This can only be decided according to the circumstances of that particular game.

Question 1.1. A player makes a lunge at his ball to run a hoop. His ball sticks in the hoop. He staggers back after the stroke, treading on another game's ball, squirting it onto his own and knocking it through the hoop. Has (a) a fault been committed and (b) the hoop been scored?

Answer 1.1. (a) no, the other ball is an outside agency, 33(b) no, 33(a)1B

Question 1.2. Red is in play. Green finds blue in the way and asks red if it can be marked. Red agrees. Green forgets to put blue back. Red now takes off to blue and roquets it. Green now remembers the marked ball. What happens?

Answer 1.2. Play continues, 27(a)3. Red might perhaps have thought to check if the ball had been replaced, but he wouldn't have deliberately played to a misplaced ball.

Question 1.3. In examples 7 and 8 what is the situation if red and blue were there as a result of red rushing blue?

Answer 1.3. In these two situations, red is a ball in hand. It is therefore removed before blue is replaced. In both examples blue is placed either side of black and a cannon is played, 12

Question 2.1. In a doubles match, black is given a lift. The player of blue picks up black and places it against red which is in corner 1. Is this legal, and if not, what is the penalty?

Answer 2.1. Yes, 40(b)

Question 2.2. In the above diagram, black, from the position shown in grey, tries to jump through the hoop. It is a fault. In each of the three positions shown for black, what would be your choice, replace or leave the balls where they are and which ball would you play? Blue is at 6 and for hoop 1, Red is by the peg and for hoop 1 and Yellow is for hoop 1. On the left is the front view, on the right is the plan view.

Answer 2.2. (1) Leave. Yellow has a good rush to hoop 1 and a 4-ball break. (2) Leave. Black is in a horrible position. Yellow might also have a lift although how much good that would be would have to be decided. Whatever the choice, red/yellow are in a good position to capitalise on this. (3) Leave, possibly. This one requires some thought. How easy would the roquet on black with yellow be in either the leave or replace situation? It looks good from the plan view but less so from the front. On balance I would go for leave but it isn't clear-cut.

Question 3.1. Your opponent is about to take a long shot at you. You can see a huge nut in front of your ball. Should you tell your opponent about it?

Answer 3.1. The laws do not really help here. The law says you must remove anything that would help you, but nothing about hindering your opponent! This is my personal answer - I would say about it in the interests of good sportsmanship.

Question 3.2. Is a long shot and possible roquet the start of being misled? Hint. There are at least four possible scenarios!



### Answer 3.2.

Imagine target ball near 4. Other ball in corner 1. Oppo clips on 3, should be on 4, and 1.

(1a) Roquet missed. **Misled** - Good chance of a break with a ball at 4 and one on the boundary nearby.

(1b) Roquet made. Probably **Not Misled** - because croquet likely to be taken and some sort of turn started. However, depending on the leave, mislaying may occur then.

(2a) Target ball near 4. Oppo clip on 2, should be on 3, and 1. Roquet missed. On balance I would allow **Misled**. Not perhaps a brilliant pick up for 1 but a chance even so.

(2b) Same as (1b).

(3) For other long shots in different positions, the same logic should be applied. Some decisions will be easy, some not. The best solution is not to misplace the clips!

Question 3.3. Red roquets black and rushes it into the jaws of hoop 3. Red then runs into blue then goes off in corner 3. Black is picked up and “croquet” taken on red. In the “continuation” stroke, blue is “roqueted”. Wrong ball is called. Where are the balls replaced to and does any player have any choices?

Answer 3.3. What should have happened is that red should have taken croquet from black in the jaws of hoop 3. So black is put back there and blue is put back to where it was before red hit it. There is no actual croquet position on black for red as this never happened, so the player of red places red in contact with black any place he or she can, 26.

Question 3.4. Blue is about to play a hampered shot. The opponent calls out in a clear voice (blue is not deaf) “I’d like that watched please”. Blue ignores him, plays the shot and carries on regardless. Has the opponent any redress?

Answer 3.4. All play is invalid from the forestalling by red/yellow. Balls are brought back and the hampered shot is reconstructed as best as it can be. The referee may choose to have a quiet word with blue!, 23(e).

### Homework 1

- a. After a missed roquet, blue throws his mallet down in disgust. It hits the nearby yellow ball. Is this a fault?
- b. Red has a lift. He takes his ball to corner 4 and places it in contact with black which is there, and starts a break. After 3 hoops, black/blue thinks “hang on, this can’t be right” and calls a referee. What happens?
- c. Red roquets black which in turn hits blue. All three balls go off in the corner area. How are the balls replaced and what happens then?

### Homework Answers 1

- a. I would deem yes, not under control and 28(a)12.
- b. Nothing, it is too late, 27(g)
- c. Red is in hand and is replaced last, in contact with black, and on the yard line. Blue and black are replaced at the strikers discretion, the first being placed on the corner spot, 12. The balls are then rearranged for a cannon, 19(b).

## Homework 2

- a. Your ball, red, has been left by you in contact with an upright of hoop 6. During a turn by black, the black ball makes a roquet on blue and bounces away, hitting hoop 6. This clearly shakes red but leaves it in its original position. At the end of black's turn, red is wired. Red claims a lift. "Oh no" says black, "red hasn't moved position and in any case black had made a roquet when it hit the hoop so it was a dead ball". Is black right?
- b. What things should you consider when deciding whether to opt for a replacement of the balls or to leave them where they are after your opponent has committed a fault?

## Homework Answers 2

- a. Red has a lift. 13(b)1C defines "moved or shaken" and black has confused "dead ball", 6(e)3 with "ball in hand", 6(c)2D and 13(b)1B and 18(a)2
- b. You could make a long list of things but I suggest you simply remember this; "For each of the two choices, what are the advantages/disadvantages to me and what are they to my opponent".