



Golf Croquet Course
Stage 3 - Advanced

Version 2A

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About the course:

This Golf Croquet course, which is at three levels, is not a course on how to coach GC. Its purpose is to provide coaches and players with advice, guidance and material to help the learning process.

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The author would appreciate feedback on the content or recommendations on additional material required.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Course content

1. This Advanced Course is aimed at low handicappers who already play in matches and tournaments and would like to improve their game further. It covers:

Playing against extra strokes

Position selection

Finishing off

Advanced rush shots, setting up and achieving

Obstruction shots and when to use them

In-off shots, creating and avoiding them

Judging shot strength

Playing hampered shots

Ricochet shots

1.2 Previous courses

2. The Beginners Course covers :

- i. The Basics

The layout of the lawn

The structure of a game

The basic rules.

How to hold and swing a mallet.

How to approach the ball.

How to approach a hoop and then run it.

Basic rules and faults.

Handicaps and extra strokes.

- ii. Various Shot Types

Hoop shots

Clearance shots, stop-shots and split shots

Blocking shots

- iii. Basic Behaviour

Noise

Pace of play

Following the ball

Positioning and shadows

Double-banking

Self-refereeing

iv. Thinking Ahead

Tactical planning

Partner play

v. Exercises

Skills

Tactics

3. The Intermediate Course covers :

i. Using extra strokes

ii. Using the half-way rule

iii. Jump shots

iv. Angled hoops

v. The wrong ball rules

vi. Making the most of a hoop

vii. Rush shots and cut rushes

viii. Exercises

2 Watching the time

4. Many games in club matches and tournaments are timed; either 50 minutes or 1 hour are common time limits.
5. This has several implications and you should constantly be aware of the time left as it can affect your choice of shot as well as such aspects as the use of extra strokes.
6. Clearly, if you have any extra strokes yourself you should make sure that they are used within the available time limit, with one exception. The rule is that no extra stroke may be used after the time is finished and during the play of the 8 additional turns (4 by each side). If, after that period, the scores are level and a draw is not allowed, then any unused extra strokes may now be used for the golden hoop.
7. This means that if, before the time expires, you are ahead or level and using an extra stroke is highly unlikely to gain you a point then save it. It may be the key to winning if the 8 additional turns do not create a result.
8. For example, you are winning 6-5 with one extra stroke left but the next opponent is in front of hoop 12 when the time is about to end. Striker has played a shot and now is a long way away with a minimal chance of clearing the next opponent with the extra stroke. Don't waste it; let the opponent run hoop 12 with the first shot after time as there is a good chance that the 7 remaining turns will not resolve the draw. Your saved extra stroke could be the key to winning.
9. If you are losing 5-6 or drawing 5-5 and the opponent is in a hoop-running position then the situation is very different and you must use that last extra stroke within time.
10. Many players are unaware of the time left and keeping your own stopwatch with you is a sensible precaution. In particular, if you are ahead 6-4 with a marginal chance of running hoop 11 for a 7-4 win with the last shot before time, don't try it. Clear or block an opponent instead.
11. If you try for the hoop and fail you are very likely to leave an in-off opportunity for an opponent who may go on to run hoop 12 to level the score.

Situations like this are dealt with in Section 5.

3 Playing against extra strokes

3.1 Introduction

12. The recent innovation of Advantage GC to replace Extra Strokes GC in handicap play does not require any special coaching. The Advantage game is the same as Level Play GC, except that one side has a head start of a certain number of hoops. Although the scoring is more complicated, particularly for timed games, the tactics are unchanged.
13. Extra Strokes GC is, tactically, more challenging for both sides and, though players with very low handicaps do not tend to play many handicap games, it is useful to know how to counter extra strokes. In principle the two sides have an equal probability of winning but if the higher handicapper uses their extra strokes well it is very difficult to defeat them. For example, a 10 playing against a 3, with 7 extra strokes, has only to create one hoop with each extra stroke, meaning that the low handicapper must:
 - i. go for very long hoop runs.
 - ii. constantly clear at long range.
 - iii. anticipate the extra stroke and set up a rush.
14. The best use of an extra stroke is in an attacking, rather than defensive, mode. Two typical cases are:
 - i. After running one hoop, go to the next hoop in order to run it on the subsequent shot.
 - ii. Go to the next hoop in order to stop-shot an opponent away, leaving your ball in a hoop-running position.
15. In both cases the purpose is to score a hoop on the next turn. A defensive extra stroke merely removes an opponent from the hoop without setting up your own ball.
16. Therefore, when playing against extra strokes you should:
 - i. Try to make your opponent use extra strokes defensively by leaving situations that cannot be ignored.
 - ii. Avoid giving situations that allow an easy attacking extra stroke.
 - iii. Set up delayed approaches, using rushes, in order to counter long shots with extra strokes.
17. If you simply send a ball behind the hoop, to cater for your opponent jawsing the ball, he will save the extra stroke and you will be out of position. If, instead, you send your ball to a position from which a hoop run is easy, and a jump shot is feasible, he may be tempted to take an extra stroke to jaws the ball and force you to jump.
18. Perfecting your jump shots is therefore of primary importance.

3.2 Anticipating the extra stroke

19. Consider the situation where the next opponent is in a good position to run the current hoop and striker's ball cannot clear it. You can expect that the opponent will use an extra stroke after running the current hoop in order to go to the next hoop. This could be true for odd- or even-numbered hoops.
20. Place striker's ball (Black) between partner ball (Blue) and the next hoop.
21. If the next opponent (Yellow) uses an extra stroke then Blue will rush Black, giving an easy clearance, or even a hoop chance. If the opponent does not use the extra stroke then the rush can be used to put striker there in a dominant position. The four stages are shown in Figure 1.
22. Alternatively, Blue could jump Black to go down to a more controlled position.

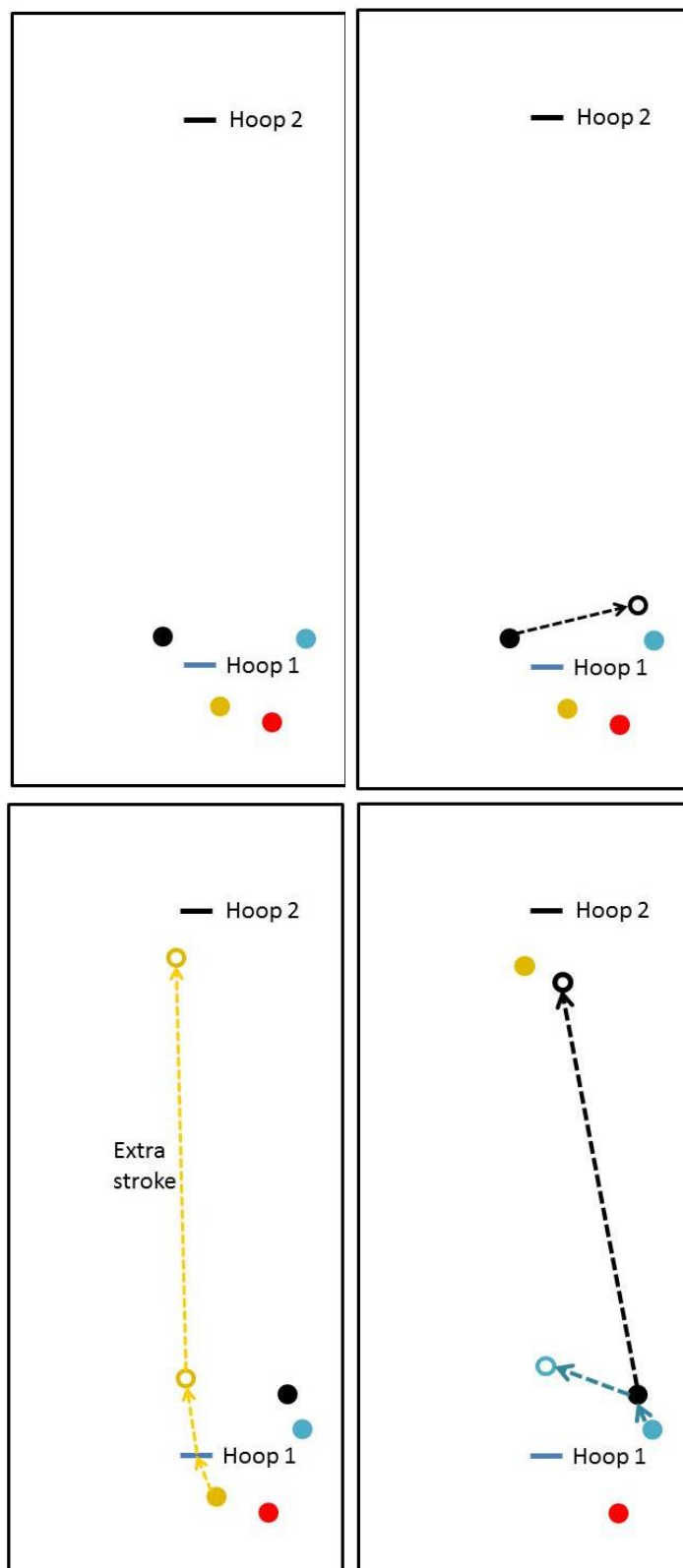


Figure 1 Using a rush to counter an extra stroke

3.3 Setting up long hoop-runs

23. If you are the first to play to the next hoop (Blue in Figure 2) don't try to set up too close to the hoop. Leave your ball at least 2-3 yards away, or more if your hoop-running ability is good (panel 2).
24. If the opponent then joins you (panel 3) and uses an extra stroke to clear your ball (panel 4), they will probably have difficulty setting up a hoop run with the same shot. Their shot is therefore defensive.

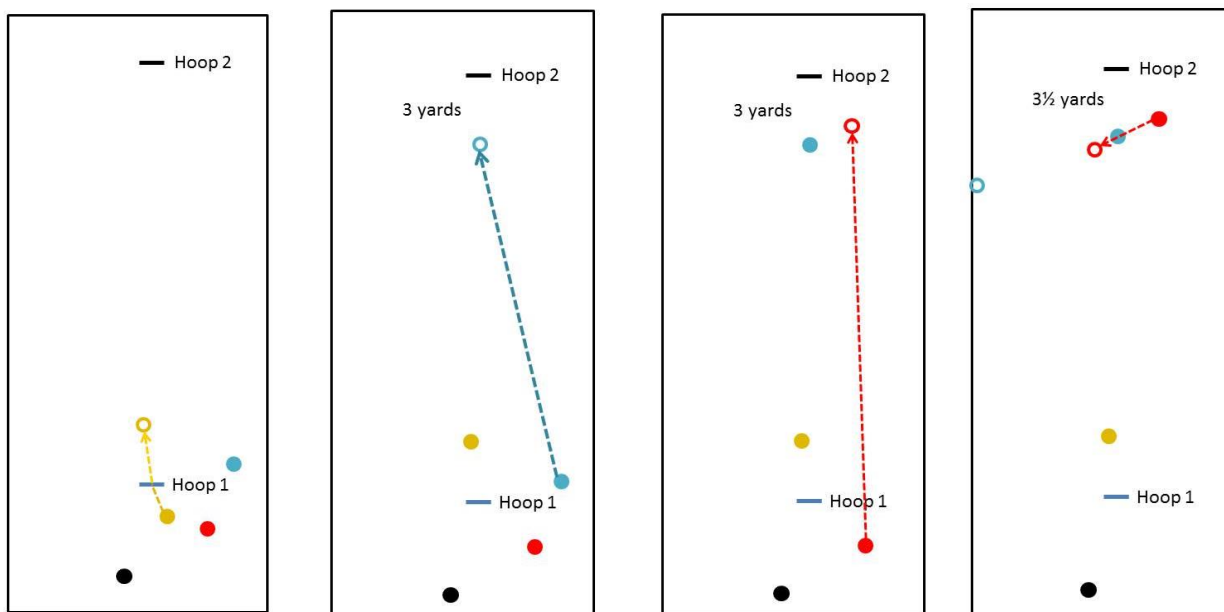
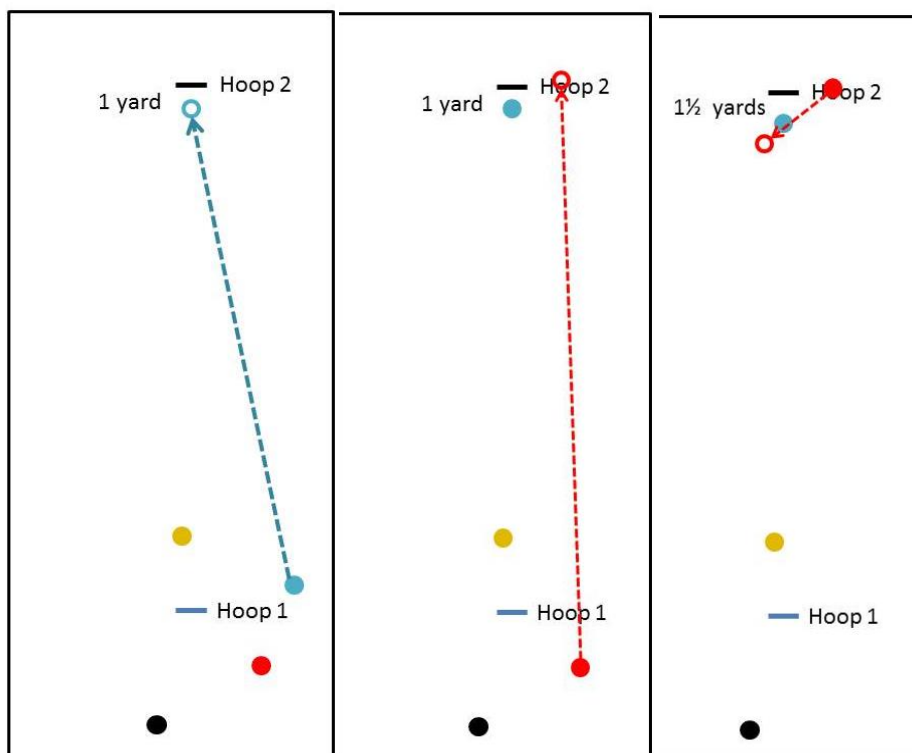


Figure 2 Leaving a long hoop-run



25. Your chance of running the hoop might have been only 50% but theirs will be no better and it cost them an extra stroke to achieve.

26. The advice is therefore never to put your ball close in front of a hoop (panel 5) where the opponent can set themselves up with a stop-shot. (panels 6-7).

3.4 Jawsing a ball

27. Clearly, if you can run a hoop you should do so and, in general, this is best done with a hard stroke. However, if you are unsuccessful in a long hoop attempt then a hard stroke runs the danger of leaving your ball a long way from the hoop.
28. If the opponent does not have any balls behind the hoop then play a long or angled hoop run gently. It may go through but, if not, it should leave you in the jaws. An opponent who is unable to jump reliably, or is in no position to do so, will be forced to go behind the hoop and use an extra stroke to clear you away.
29. This is a defensive extra stroke as they are unlikely to be able to set up with the same shot.
30. Such a clearance is particularly necessary if your partner ball is in a position to rush you through, as shown in Figure 3.

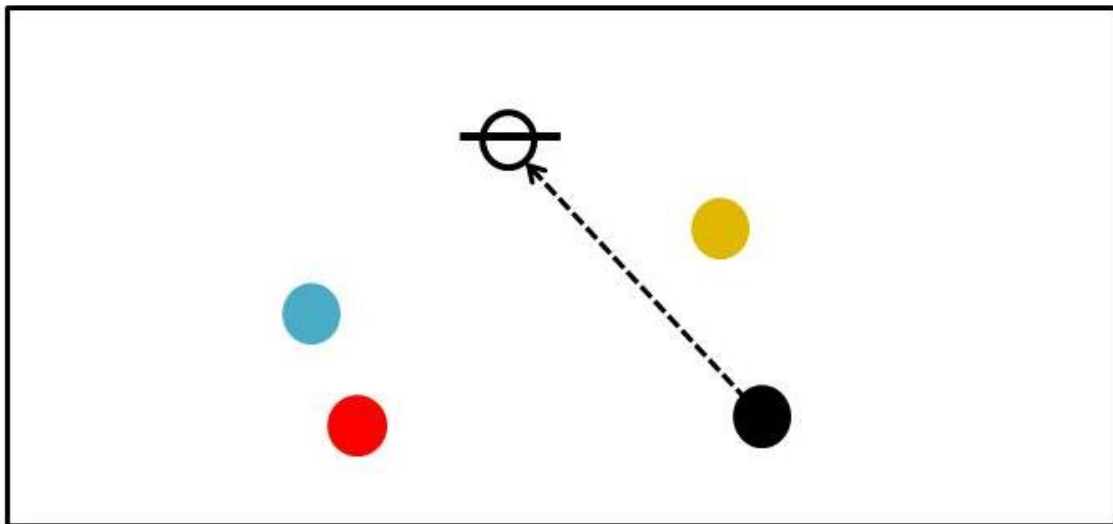


Figure 3 Jawsing a ball to force a defensive extra stroke

31. In this situation, a hard shot by Black that failed to find the jaws would enable Yellow to clear Blue so that Red could run the hoop. Putting Black in the jaws with Red too far away to attempt a jump shot leaves Yellow with the option of giving up the hoop or using an extra stroke to clear Black from behind.
32. If he does so then several consequences are possible, depending on where Yellow goes after hitting Black.
 - i. If he goes to one side then Blue can go into the jaws.
 - ii. If he comes into the jaws (from the back) then Blue can clear Red and set up a jump shot.
 - iii. If he comes through by a few inches then Blue can play an in-off.

4 Position selection

4.1 Overview

- 33. There are several cases when a small difference in the position of your ball can have a major effect on the subsequent shots.
- 34. It may make your next shot more effective, your opponent's shot more difficult or reduce their options.

4.2 Opening shot

- 35. When playing the first shot of the game it is better to send it too far rather too short.
- 36. This means that if your opponent plays into a hoop-running position in front of that hoop your clearance shot will be into the open court, rather than towards the side-line.
- 37. Figure 4 shows a wedge in front of hoop 1 from which a hoop run for Blue is feasible. If Red is placed directly in front of the hoop then it can be cleared toward the centre of the lawn or the east boundary with a stop shot. If Blue had stopped in the equivalent wedge on the other side of the line to the hoop then Red could only be cleared to the west boundary.

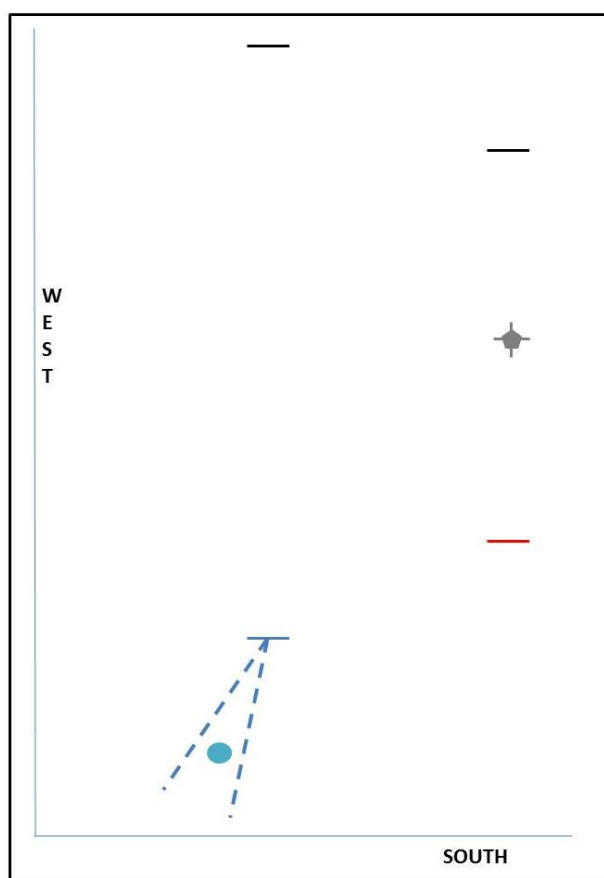


Figure 4 Benefit of playing too far

4.3 Setting up

38. If you decide to set your ball up for a hoop run and an opponent's ball is close enough to try for a clearance, always put your ball on the opposite side of the direct line in front of the hoop. This will have little effect on your chance of running the hoop but has two effects on the opponent's clearance shot:

- i. The opponent is slightly further away, making the clearance shot more difficult (and a stop-shot less feasible).
- ii. When the opponent's ball hits yours it is moving away from the hoop and even a stop-shot will finish with a longer or more angled hoop run.

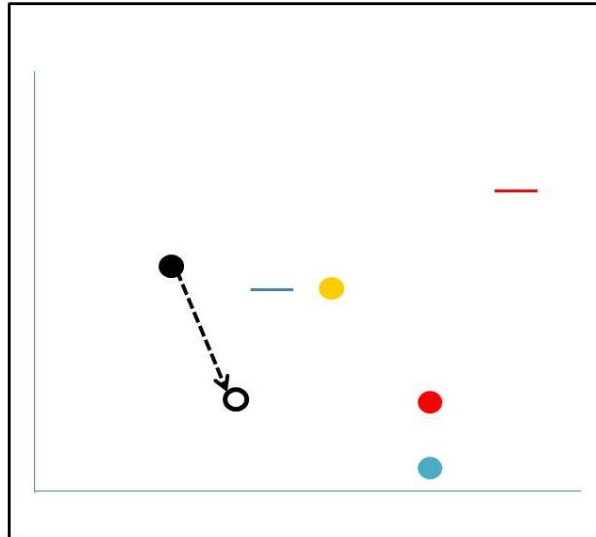
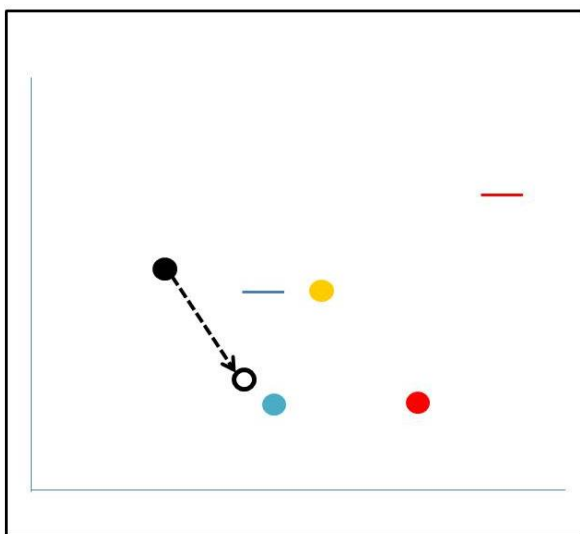


Figure 5 Set up on the opposite side of the straight approach

4.4 Don't leave a double

39. There are two kinds of double to avoid: two balls and hoop-and-ball. In both cases the opponent is given the opportunity for an easier shot with a much greater likelihood of some success.

40. The two balls double occurs when you play your ball to finish close to your partner ball so that an opponent has the opportunity to clear both with a single shot.



Not only can they achieve a greater success with this but it actually makes it easier for them to clear the ball they really want to hit. In Figure 6 Yellow was going to clear Blue anyway but the position of Black means that it can safely aim at the right side of Blue and be sure of hitting Blue-then-Black or Black-then-Blue.

Figure 6 Two-ball double target

41. The hoop and ball double gives the opponent a larger target with a high likelihood of success. Whenever possible, you should position your ball for a hoop run so that, from the opponent's perspective, there is a gap between your ball and the hoop.
42. This will force them to go for one or the other and reduce their likelihood of success.
43. Figure 7 shows three possible positions for Blue, achieved either directly from a position by hoop 1 or by use of an extra stroke. Position 2 is the one to be avoided, if possible.
44. Position 1 has a good line on the hoop and Red will have to select the clearance or the hoop run.
45. Position 2 also has good line on the hoop but, from Red's position, has left hardly any gap between the ball and the hoop. Red will aim at the right side of Blue with an excellent chance of hitting Blue or running the hoop, and possibly both.
46. Position 3 is blocking the hoop and gives Red a single target.

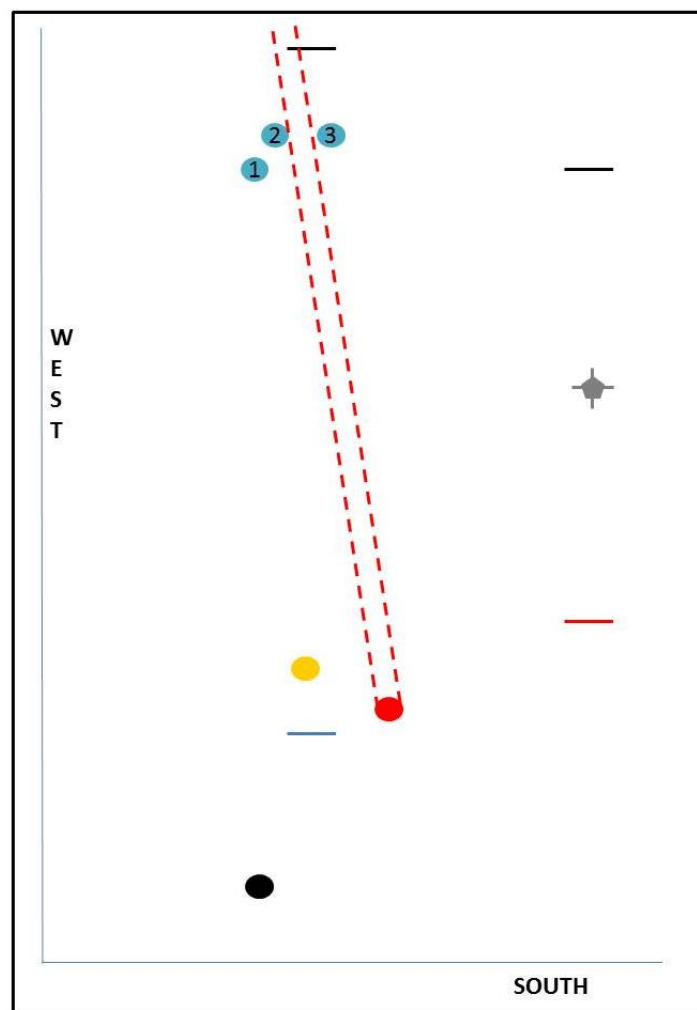


Figure 7 Hoop-and-ball double target

5 Match thinking

47. Consider the situation where you are winning 6-5 when time is called. There are three main possibilities with the final shots:
- You score another hoop for a clear 7-5 win.
 - Your opponent scores a hoop to leave the score 6-6.
 - Neither of you scores and you win 6-5.
48. It is always satisfying to score 7 but in any match the win is what matters and 6-5 is as good as 7-5. Therefore you should never try for a 7-5 result if it might give your opponent even a faint chance of achieving 6-6.
49. After the first extra turn by each ball the situation is as shown here, with Blue to play, leading 6-5.

Figure 8 Finishing: ball positions at 6-5

- If Blue plays for the hoop and misses or bounces back then Red can run it.
- If Blue sticks then Red can jump it.
- If Blue clears Red then Red will try for a long hoop run and make be lucky.

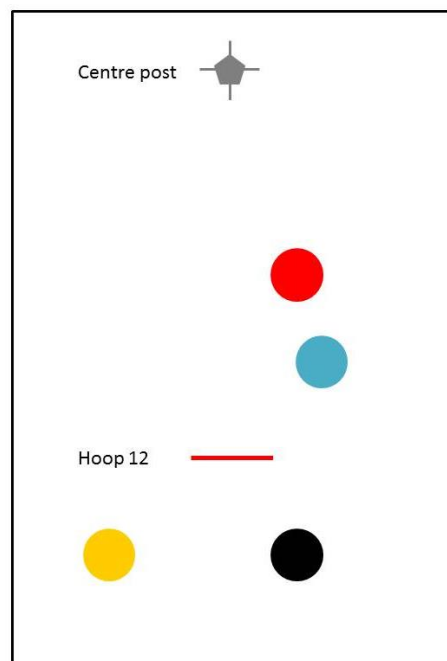
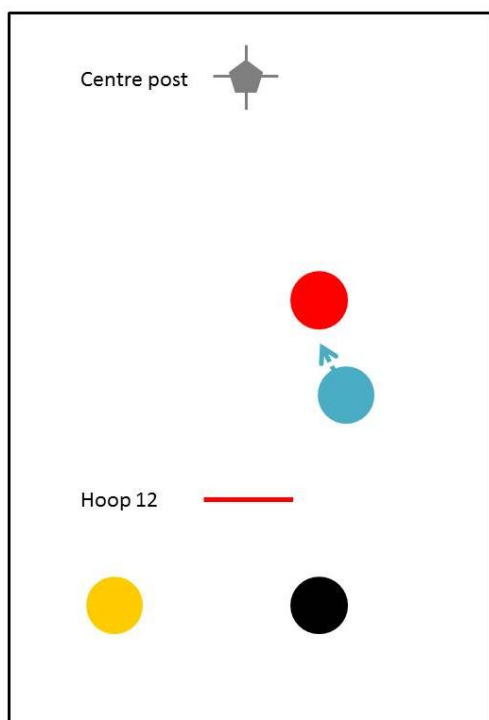


Figure 9 Finishing: blocking to win 6-5

- If Blue gently rolls up to, but not touching, Red then Red has no options left.

5.1 Finishing off

5.1.1 Introduction

- 50. Many games are decided by a single hoop, either within time or by a golden hoop after time. If you can anticipate when such a hoop will occur you can prepare for it in advance.
- 51. The principle applies whenever the result depends on a single hoop but the examples here assume that it is the 13th hoop.

5.1.2 From a winning position

- 52. You are Red and Yellow. Red is to play and you are winning 6-5.
- 53. The same kind of forward thinking is required. If Blue is in hoop 12 and cannot reliably be removed by either Red or Yellow then play a ricochet shot up to hoop 13, removing Black from near hoop 12.

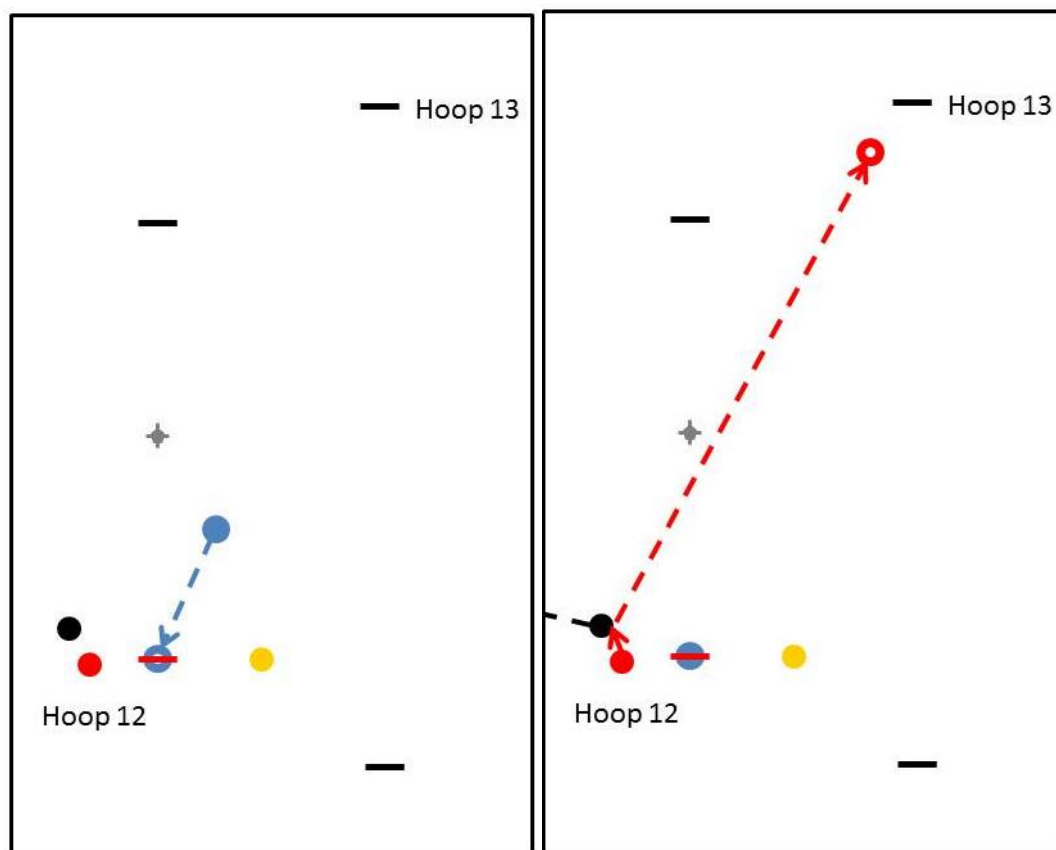


Figure 10 Starting the 13th hoop from a winning position

- 54. Black will return to a position near the half-way line. Play Yellow to a position behind hoop 12, but hidden from Black (Figure 11) so that Blue is forced to run the hoop, leaving Red on-side near hoop 13.

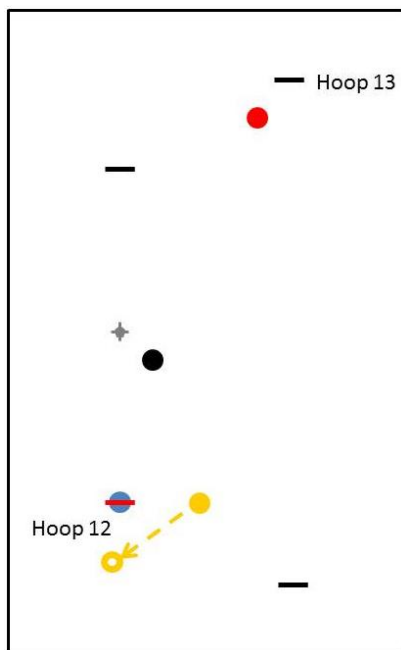


Figure 11 Forcing the hoop run

5.1.3 From a losing position

55. If you are 5-6 down then there is little benefit in gaining hoop 12 if the opponent has a good opportunity to run to hoop 13.
56. Using the same scenario as shown in Figure 11 except that you are now Blue and Black; Blue is to play and you are losing 5-6.
57. The same kind of forward thinking is required. If Blue runs hoop 12 then Red will put itself in front of hoop 13.
58. Instead, declare ('deem') the Blue ball. Red will have to return past half way and Black can peel Blue through hoop 12. With the geometry shown in the figure, Yellow is hampered and unable to run straight to hoop 13.
59. This is a risky tactic as the opponent may play Red back, either just behind Black, or between Black and Blue, in which case Yellow will clear Blue.
60. However, if Red is unsuccessful, Blue could be the first ball with a direct shot for position at hoop 13.

62. A different scenario is shown in Figure 12. Blue and Black are losing 5-6 and Black is to play. Black could peel Blue but then Yellow will be the first ball to play to hoop 13. Instead, send Black behind hoop 12 and then run Blue through, as in Figure 12.

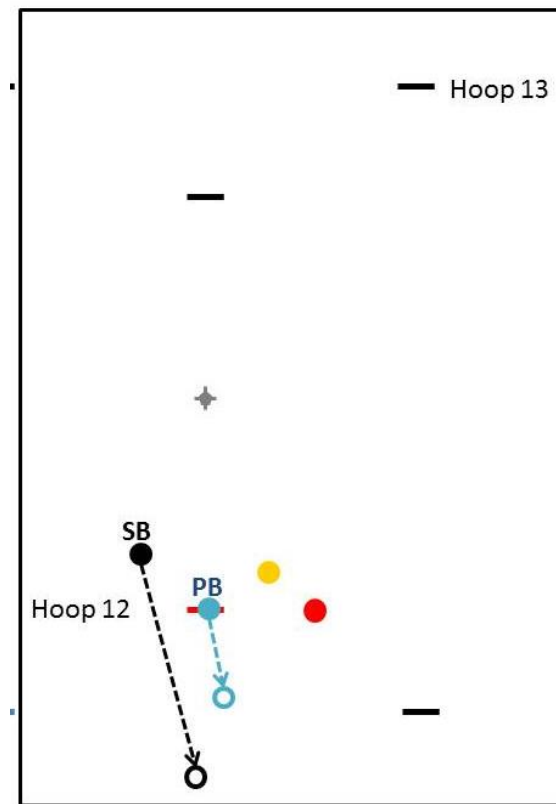


Figure 12 Starting a from a losing position

63. After Red plays to hoop 13, Black rushes Blue to the same hoop. If this is done well then Blue will dominate hoop 13.
64. This situation can give rise to several permutations. Red and Yellow may see the possibility of this shot and set up their own rush so that Red rushes Yellow to hoop 13. In this case the game may depend on who can set up and play their rushes more accurately.
65. Alternatively, Yellow may contest the hoop by nestling against Blue and preventing the hoop run. Blue should then play a gentle touch shot backwards towards Yellow, being careful to avoid the double tap, or declare it in the hoop. Depending on what Red does, Black might then play a hard shot on Blue (in the hoop), which should have the effect of sending Yellow away and leaving Blue in place.

6 Advanced rush shots, setting up and achieving

6.1 *The purpose of a rush shot*

66. A rush shot, which involves hitting another ball to a specific position, can be extremely useful and often occurs by chance during a game.
67. The aim of this section is to emphasise, with examples, how important it can be to set up such rush shots deliberately, rather than simply exploiting them when they happen to occur.
68. Some examples have already been given (Section 3.2**Error! Reference source not found.**), but the rush shot is very versatile.
69. Whenever it appears that the opponent is likely to have the advantage of being the first to the next hoop then a rush shot that promotes your partner ball can counter that advantage.
70. Although a straight rush is best, if it can be created, an alternative is the 'cut rush' which involves hitting the target ball at an angle away from the straight line. This shot is discussed further in Section 6.3.

6.2 An opening rush

71. Consider a situation where the opponent has sent a ball to hoop 1 with the opening shot and then used an extra stroke to put it into the jaws. Clearly, this will not only give them hoop 1 but also put them in a dominant position in front of hoop 2.
72. The standard counter-move is to send both of your balls close to the half-way line, trying to block the direct route from hoop 1 to hoop 2. This is a difficult shot to achieve but it does mean that they will both be at a long clearance range from the ball sent from 1 to 2. However, the opponent's second ball will probably also be close to them and will clear your second ball if the first one misses.
73. An alternative tactic is to send your first ball a few yards towards the centre post. If the opponent sends his second ball up to the half-way line then your second ball should be sent about 2 feet past the first, as shown in Figure 13.

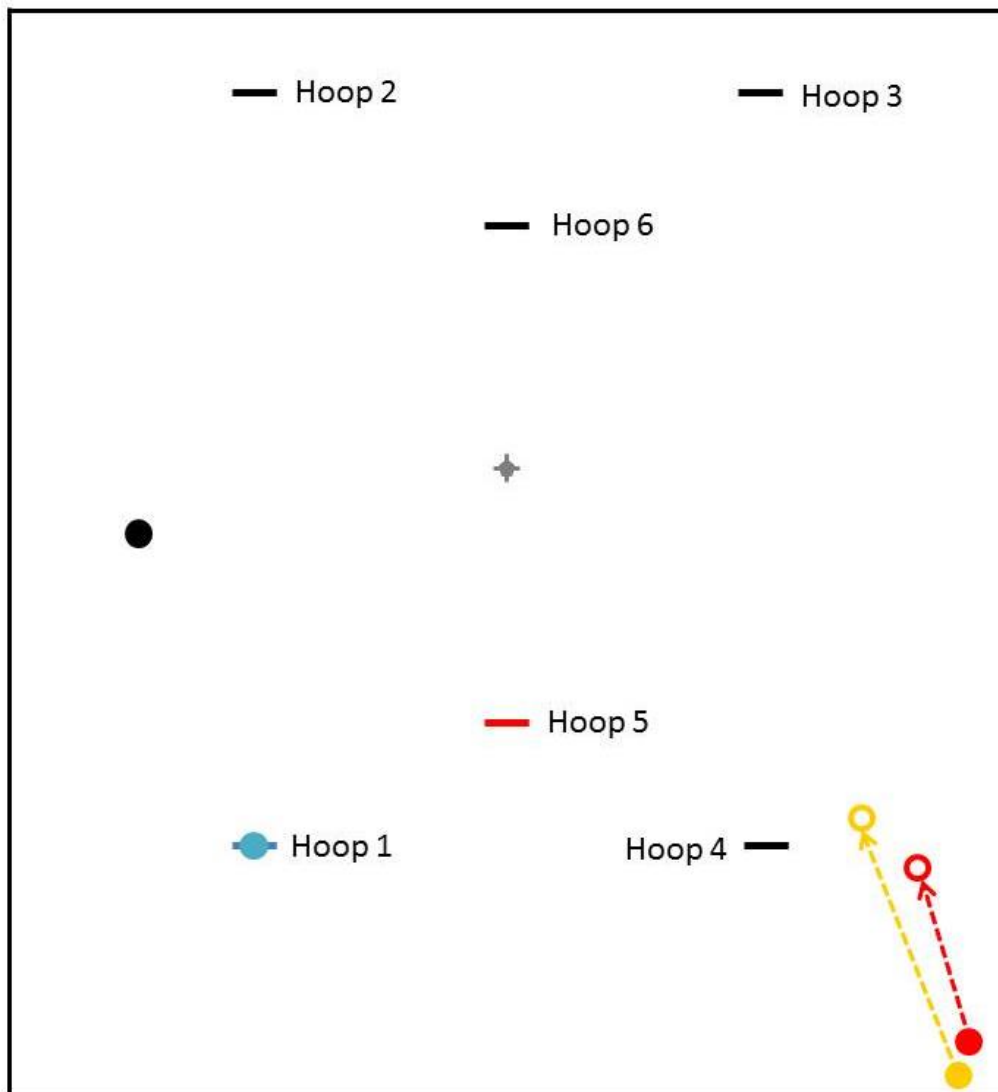


Figure 13 Setting up an opening rush

74. This will enable you to rush a ball up to hoop 2 into a position to clear the opponent or even, with a good rush, to try for the hoop, as shown in Figure 14.

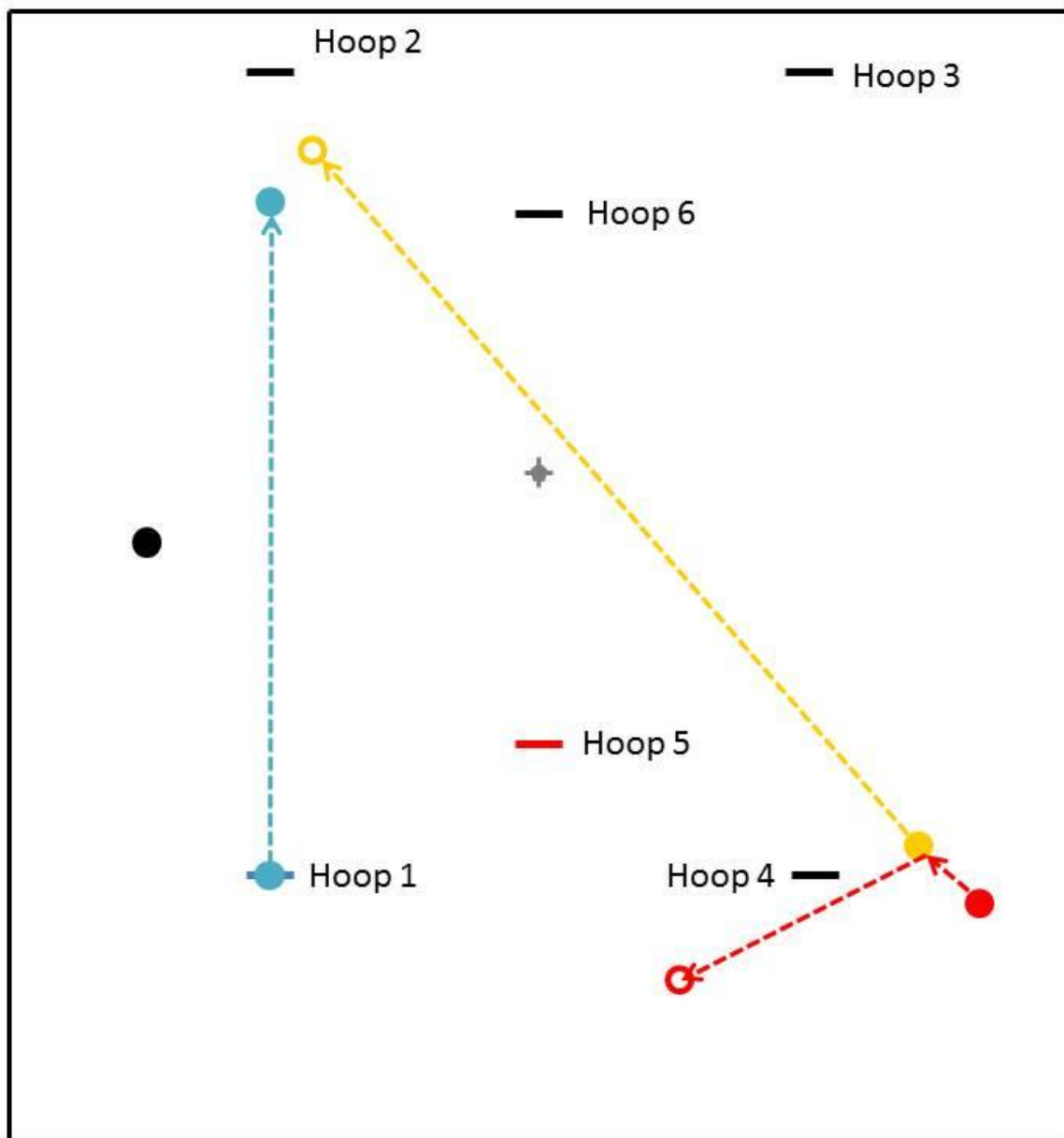


Figure 14 Completing an opening rush

75. This tactic can be risky as it leaves Red as an 'orphan' ball, distant from its hoop.

6.3 Cut-rushes : The imaginary ball and how to play it

76. Figure 15 shows the geometry of a cut rush shot. Red is trying to hit Yellow about 45° away from the straight line. When you play this shot there is a tendency for the mallet to swing from right to left in order to achieve the cut. This 'steering' results in the target ball going straight or even being cut to the right.
77. One way to counter this tendency is to use an imaginary ball (usually purple or orange). Draw a line from the intended final position of the target ball through its centre and beyond. Place your imaginary ball touching the target ball so that the line passes through the centre of the imaginary ball. If you had a real ball in this position you would hit straight along the line so that is what you want to achieve with the striker ball.
78. Draw a line from the centre of the striker ball through the centre of the imaginary ball and hit straight down this line, as shown in Figure 15. If you can picture in your mind that you are trying to drive the imaginary ball straight and forget that you are trying to cut the target ball to the left then your mallet will not swing off line.

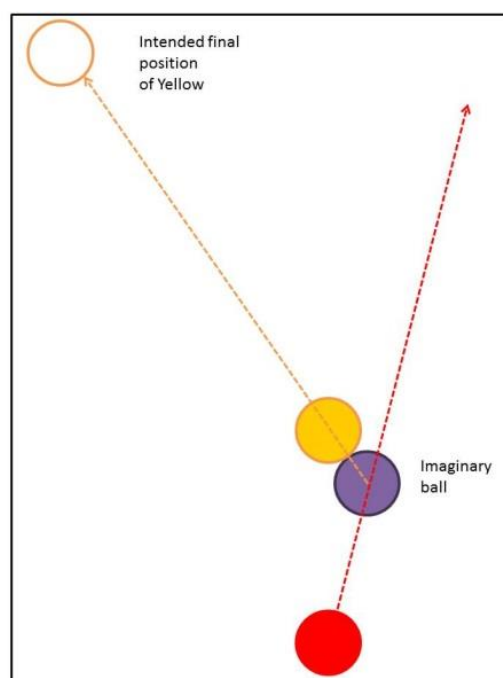


Figure 15 Placing the imaginary ball

79. For practice, put a real third ball in contact with partner on the opposite side to the planned direction of travel and set up your stroke. Get a practice partner to remove the third ball and then hit striker so that it passes exactly through the position that the third ball occupied. If this is done correctly then partner will travel in the desired direction.

7 Obstruction shots and when to use them

7.1 Overview

- 80. Obstructing an opponent's shot can be a very useful defence but it tends to be greatly over-used.
- 81. Firstly, it is very difficult to make your ball stop in a specific position and, if a blocking shot fails, it is a complete waste.
- 82. Secondly, simply blocking an opponent often allows them to play a stop-shot, thus removing your ball to a distance whilst improving the position of their own.
- 83. Thirdly, a good player will often avoid the obstruction by jumping over it.
- 84. However, there are certain guidelines to follow if you do decide that blocking is your best option.
- 85. If you have a choice of direction then play your stroke at an angle to the opponent's intended direction. This gives a greater chance of achieving a block.

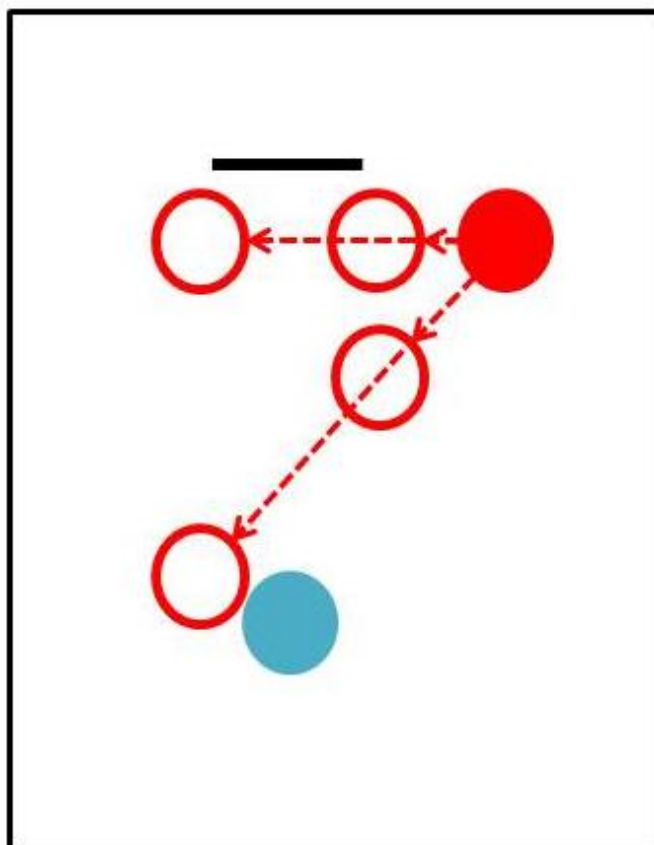


Figure 16 Play blocking shots at an angle

- 86. As shown in Figure 16, the stopping distance for the angled stroke is much greater than for the perpendicular shot, making it easier to achieve the block.

7.2 Close to an opponent

87. An obstructing ball that is very close to the opponent, particularly if it is on the straight line to the hoop can be very effective. The opponent is faced with the problem of clearing it without either committing a double-tap or peeling you through the hoop.
88. In the situation shown in Figure 17 Blue would have great difficulty playing legally and clearing Red safely.

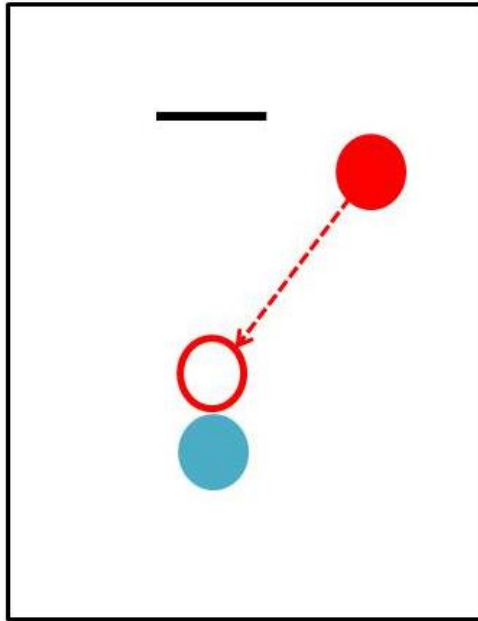


Figure 17 Blocking close to an opponent

89. If you are playing a blocking shot to protect your partner, don't put yourself too close to your partner's ball as this will enable the opponent to clear both with a single shot. Instead go close to the opponent but off the straight line to your partner.

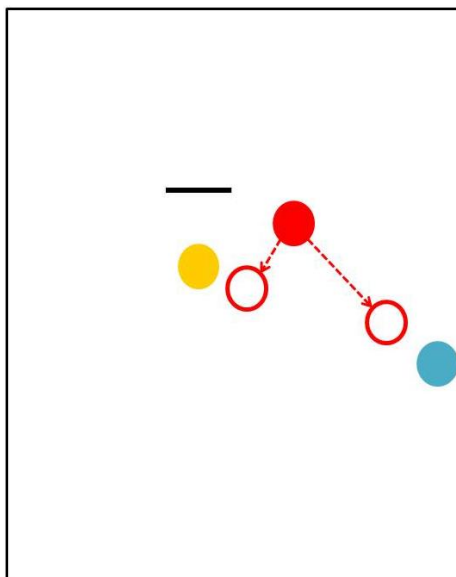


Figure 18 Don't block close to partner

90. Sometimes the protection block is worth playing even when the opponent has little likelihood of clearing your partner.
91. In the example shown in Figure 19, Blue has run from hoop 1 all the way to a good position in front of hoop 2. Red has played a similar shot and Black could join them. However, a good long clearance played by Yellow could remove Blue and give Red the hoop.
92. This is a case when Black should play a short blocking shot to obstruct Yellow and ensure that Blue gets the hoop.

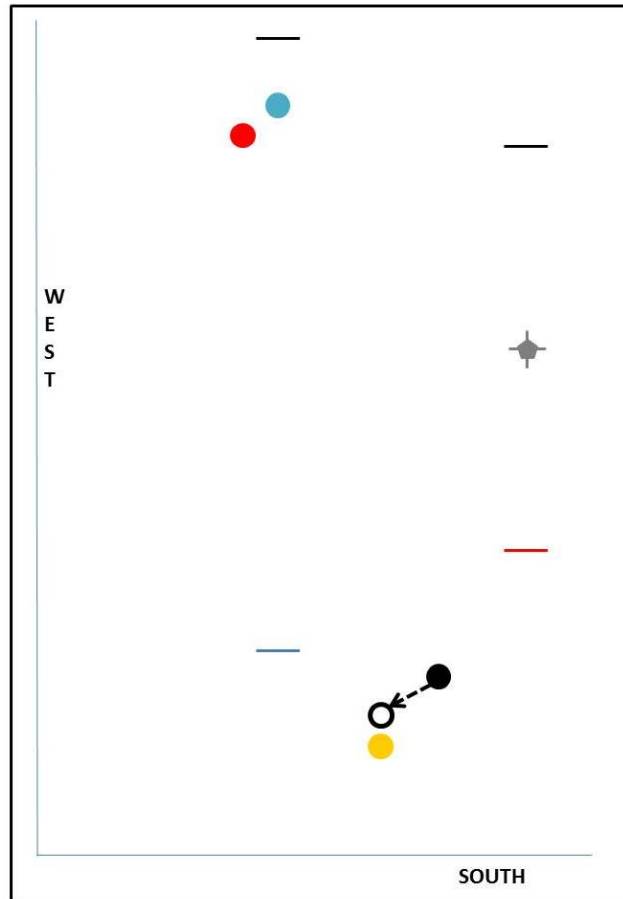


Figure 19 Blocking a long clearance

7.3 Obstructing the opponent's stance

93. Sometimes the balls are positioned so that you cannot easily clear the opponent's ball or obstruct it.
94. As an alternative, you might consider placing your ball where your opponent will want to put his feet. This is particularly relevant for difficult shots like jump shots as many players lose accuracy if their stance is uncomfortable.
95. If you are planning to play this kind of obstruction shot then it is necessary to study your opponent's stance and, particularly, how they stand to play a jump shot.

8 In-off Shots, creating and avoiding them

8.1 Recognising in-off opportunities

96. In-off opportunities occur frequently in the game, whether by accident or design, and it is important to be able to assess the value of possible in-offs.
97. They are particularly valuable when your ball is too wide to run the hoop directly because the in-off shot changes the line of approach from a wide one to a virtually straight one.
98. Four geometries are shown in this figure. In each, the Red is too far to the side to attempt the hoop with a direct shot, even with top-spin.

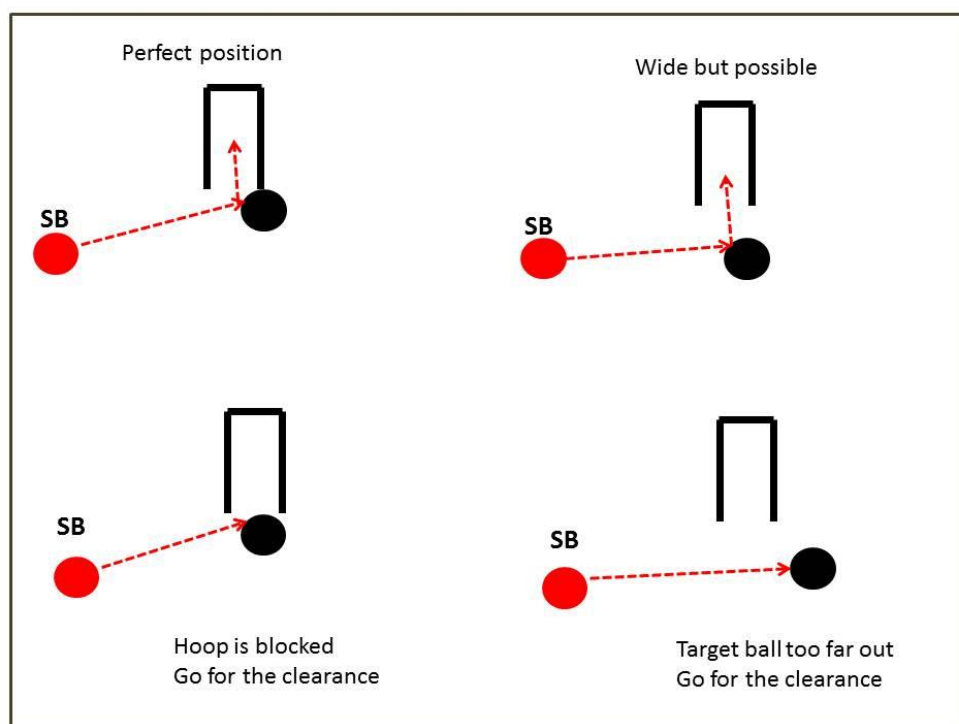


Figure 20 In-off geometries

99. In the first case the target ball is perfectly positioned to straighten your line of approach.
100. In the second it is rather far out but the in-off is possible. In this case it is important to go hard for the in-off so that the target ball will be cleared even if the hoop run fails.
101. In the third case there is not enough space between the target ball and the hoop so a stop-shot clearance is needed. If this shot is played hard there is a chance that striker will get through with the spin off the target ball.
102. The final example shows the target ball past the line from which an in-off is possible. It should be cleared with a stop-shot.

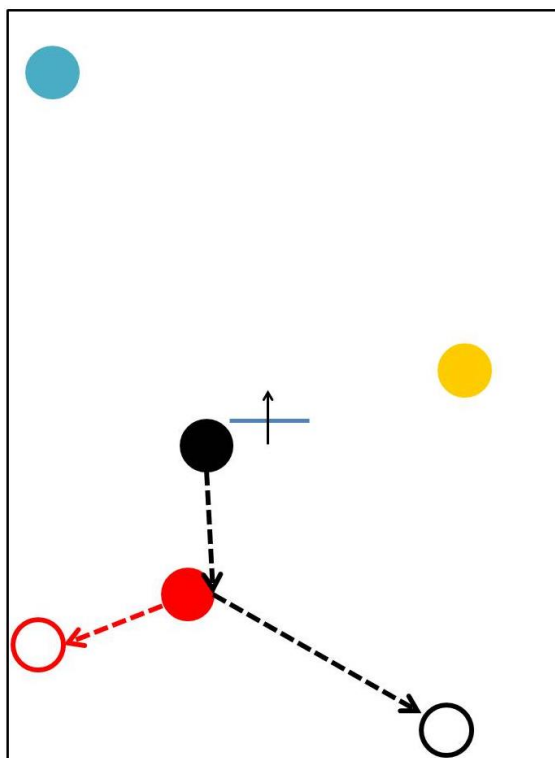
8.2 Creating in-off opportunities

8.2.1 Create an in-off for your partner

103. In this example, Red has cleared Blue well behind the hoop leaving itself in a good position, but has gone slightly too far, allowing Black a chance to clear it. Black does so but with a cut and Red is no longer in a hoop-running position. What should Yellow do?

104. Yellow could simply set up in front of the hoop but it would then be visible to Blue and might leave Black with a clear line to the hoop.

Figure 21 Creating an in-off: initial positions



105. Instead, Yellow should place itself just in front of the upright.

106. Now it is hidden from Blue, which must either play a long clearance on Red or block Red. Whatever happens, Black is blocked from the hoop.

107. If Blue fails to clear or block Red then Red has a good in-off chance.

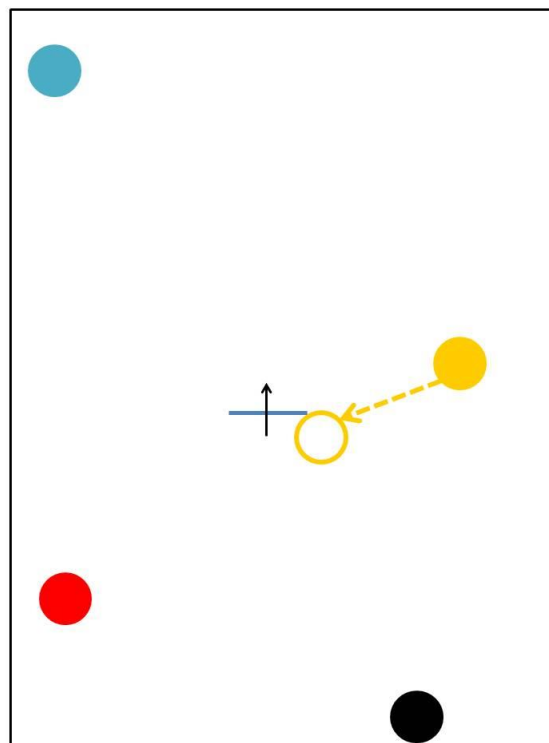


Figure 22 Creating an in-off: setting it up for partner

8.2.2 Avoid setting up an in-off for the opponent

108. When getting into a hoop-running position you should always be aware of what the opponent might do with your ball.
109. In the case shown in Figure 23 Ray is losing 5-6 and has a 1-in-10 chance of running hoop 12 with Yellow.
110. If he goes for the hoop he might level the scores but he might also leave an opportunity for Bab to win 7-5 with an in-off.
111. It would be safer to put Yellow into a long position so that Blue is forced to clear it.
112. If Blue blocks Yellow he will be cleared by Red.
113. If Blue fails to block Yellow then Red will clear Black a long way.
114. If Blue clears Yellow then he will be out of position and Red can set up and be wired from Black.

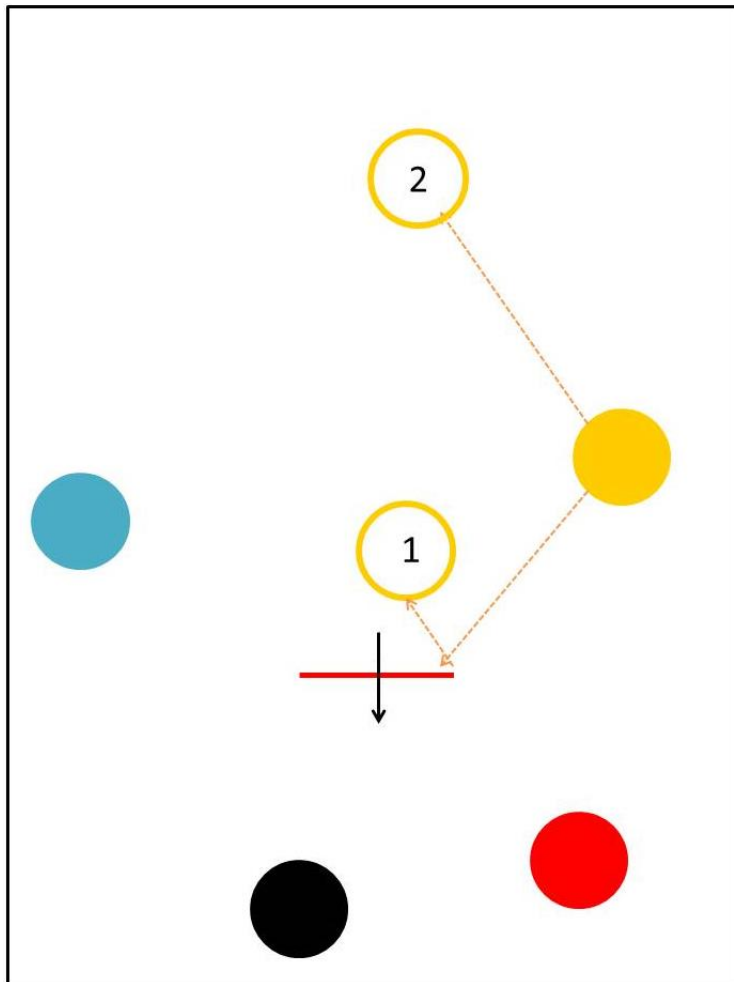


Figure 23 Avoid creating an in-off for the opponent

115. All these alternatives give Red and Yellow a better chance than 1-in-10 of getting the hoop.

9 Judging shot strength

- 116. Accuracy is usually thought of as a question of angle, e.g. running a hoop, promoting partner or clearing an opponent.
- 117. The distance that your ball travels is just as much an issue of accuracy, particularly when you are trying to set up in a specific position relative to another ball or to a hoop.
- 118. If you play with a different type of swing or follow-through for shots of different length then it will be very difficult to achieve consistent accuracy.
- 119. The distance travelled by the ball should be a function of the amount of backswing, rather than the type of backswing, and consistency is of paramount importance in this. Try to cultivate a smooth swing, both for short and long shots; if your swing is jerky or uneven it is much harder to control the power.
- 120. Clearly, if you are playing a stop-shot, a tap-shot or a roll shot then your stroke should be suited to the shot you are playing but for a purely positional shot the stroke should always be the same.
- 121. This becomes even more important when playing on an unfamiliar lawn with a pace that is slower or faster than you are used to. During a warm-up period it is worth practising a few hoop-runs, clearances and jump-shots but these will not vary greatly from lawn to lawn.
- 122. You should be sure to practice some simple drive shots to get familiar with the pace of the lawn.

10 Playing hampered shots

10.1 Introduction

123. There will be cases in every game where the shot you want to play is hampered by a ball or a hoop. It is very valuable to be able to play these shots with confidence (and without committing a fault).
124. For the same reason, it is often worth playing a shot that will give your opponent a hampered position. Not only is their shot more difficult but if they commit a fault then you can have the balls replaced so their next shot is equally difficult.
125. Each of the categories of hampered shot in this section is prone to cause a specific fault, e.g. bevel-edge contact (Rule 11.2.3), double-tap (Rule 11.2.4), touching another ball (Rule 11.2.8), hitting a hoop and moving a ball (Rule 11.2.9). If your shot (or your opponent's shot) falls into one of these categories then a referee should be called to mark the positions and watch the stroke.

10.2 Striking over another ball

126. This is probably the most difficult hampered shot because of the difficulty of seeing the mallet's position in relation to the other ball.

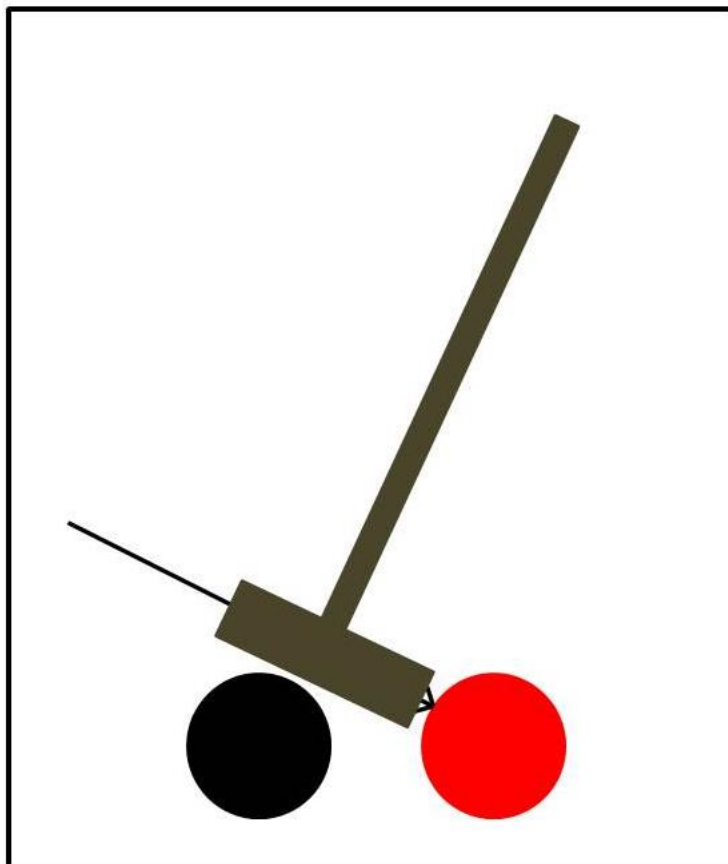


Figure 24 Hampered shot over another ball

127. It is easy to make the mistake of swinging too high, causing a bevel-edge contact, or too low and touching the hampering ball.

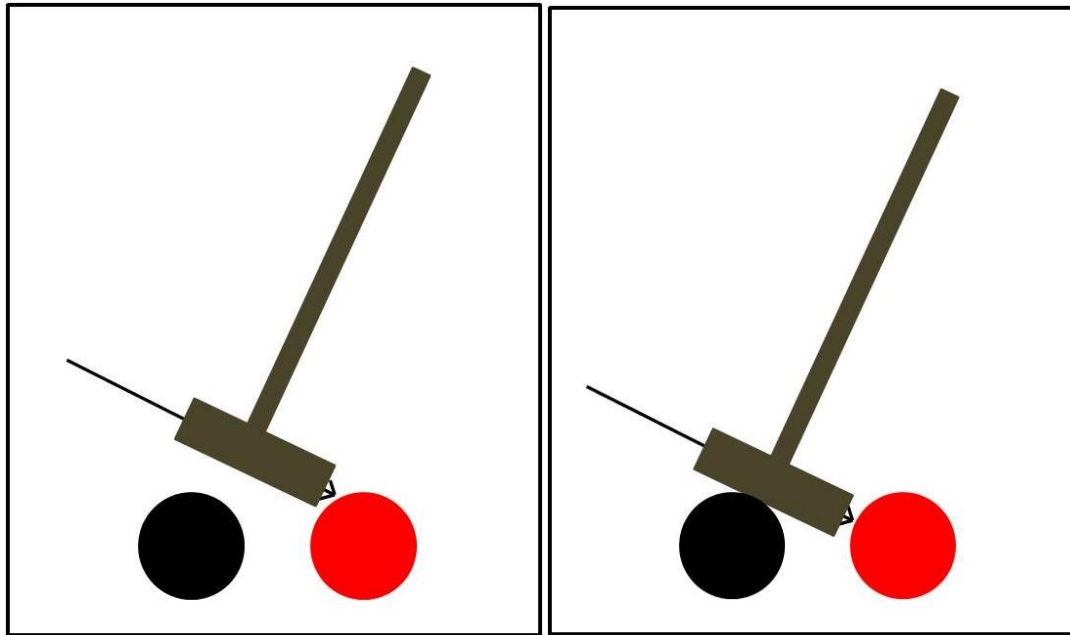


Figure 25 Hampered shots played too high and too low

128. Some players, to avoid these possibilities, play a stroke at a high angle and drive their ball into the ground, causing a double tap.

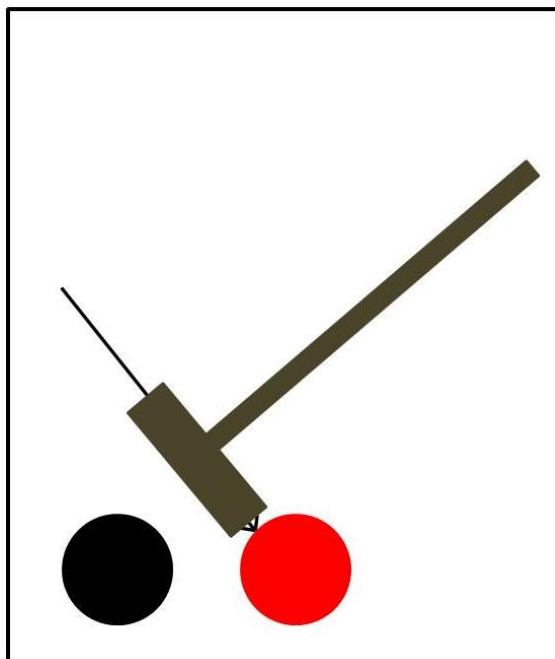


Figure 26 Hampered shot played with a double tap

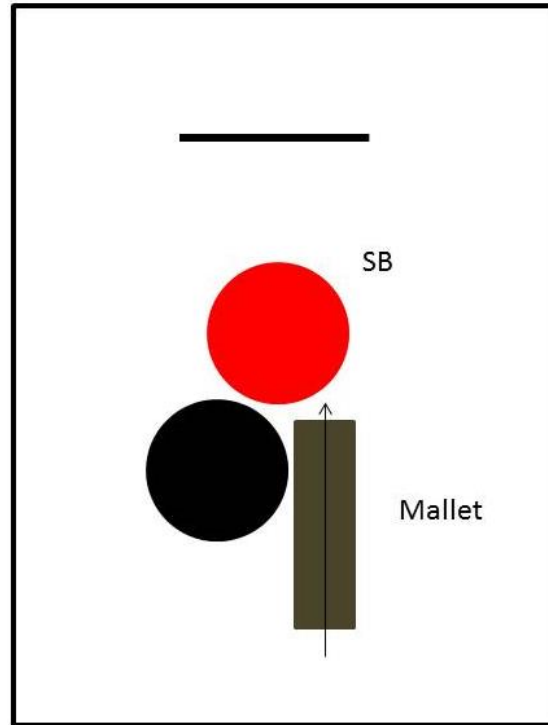
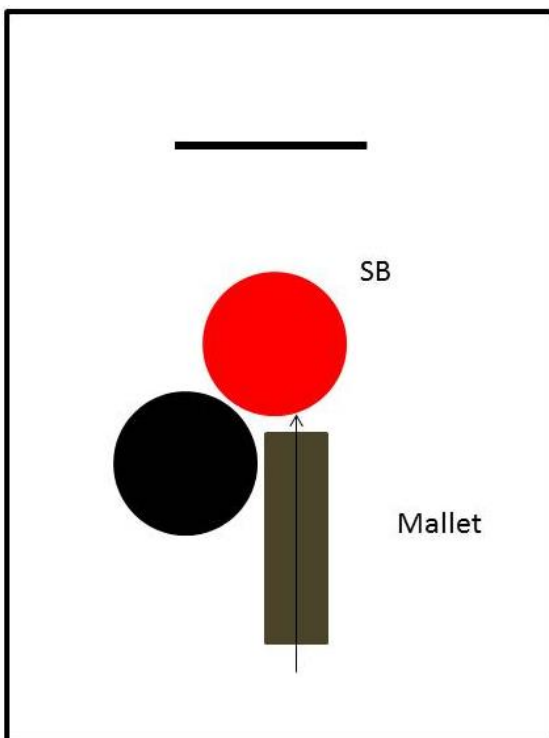
129. It is possible to play this shot by crouching or kneeling to one side of the ball and playing with the mallet handle horizontal to the ground. This is awkward but gives better visibility of the hampering ball.

10.3 Striking past another ball

130. The key to playing a hampered shot that requires the mallet to pass close to another ball is to swing with no lateral deviation. It requires a lot of practice to give the player the confidence that the swing will be precise.

131. If the hampering ball overlaps the striker's ball by more than 50% then it is impossible to play without causing a bevel-edge fault and a different shot must be played.

Figure 27 Bevel edge fault on a hampering ball



132. Some overlap can be tolerated if the swing is very accurate but it may require the striker to use one side of the mallet face.

Figure 28 Striking with part of the mallet face

133. Unless you can be sure of a fault-free strike it would be better to choose a different stroke. Any fault would mean that no point was scored and would entitle the opponent to leave the balls as they finished.

134. In the cases shown in these figures the opponent would probably be able to run the hoop, either directly or with a jump, depending on whether the striker's ball went through the hoop or not.

10.4 Striking close to a hoop

135. This hampered shot has the same problems as when playing close to another ball but with a different possible fault.

136. If the striker's ball is actually in contact with the hoop then it is likely that an inaccurate shot will hit the hoop, causing the ball to move. This is a fault and the opponent could ask for the ball to be replaced.

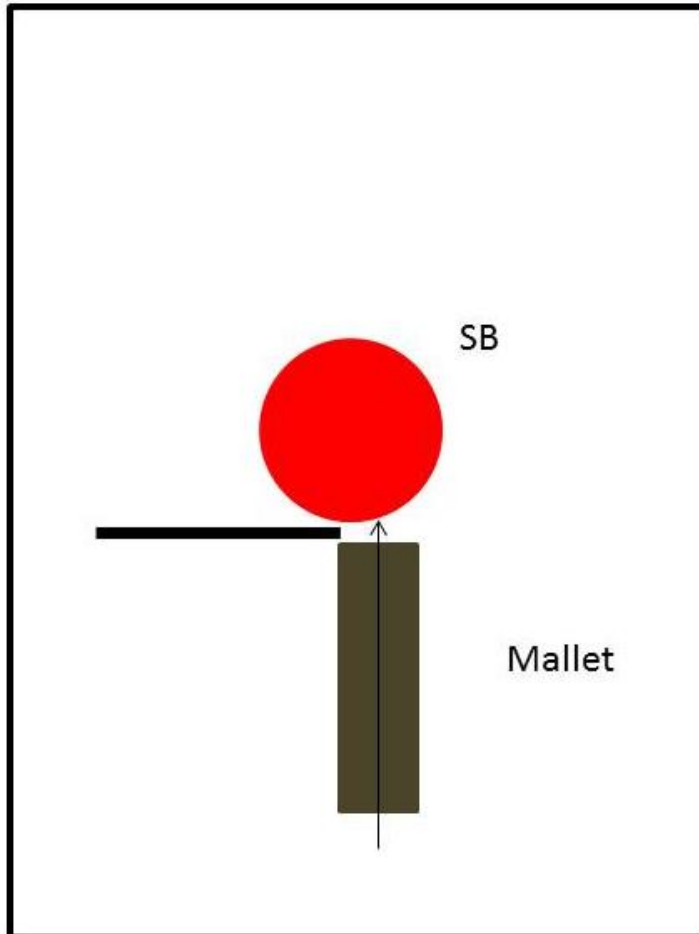


Figure 29 Striking hoop and moving ball

10.5 Playing through a hoop

137. It can be surprisingly difficult to play a clean shot through a hoop and it is worth practising. The most likely occurrence is when you have run an odd-numbered hoop by only a few inches and need to play a long shot to the next hoop.

138. It is not a fault if your mallet hits the hoop, (unless a ball is moved), and you are allowed to play the shot again. However, if your swing is sufficiently off-line to hit the hoop it could easily glance off the inside of the upright and hit the ball with the bevel edge. As the shot was hampered this is a fault and the ball would be replaced. This is therefore a shot worth practising.

11 Ricochet shots

11.1 Purpose

139. A ricochet shot is primarily concerned with getting your ball to go to a specific position after hitting another ball. The final position of the other ball is of less, or no, importance.

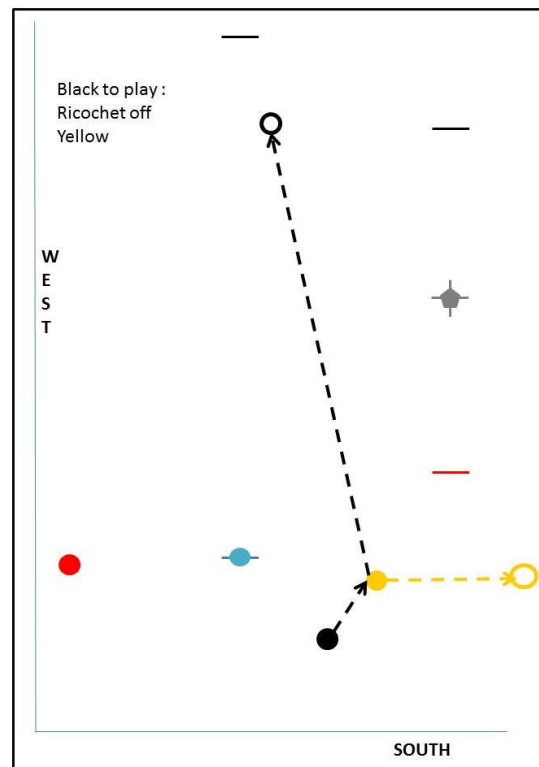
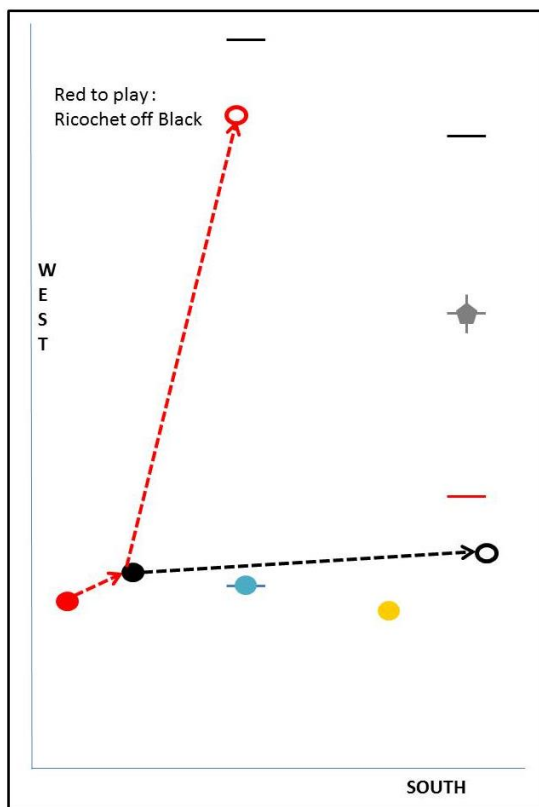
140. The first examples are of long-range ricochets where the final location of the other ball is irrelevant.

11.2 Long-range ricochet past half way

141. Two examples were shown in the Intermediate course to illustrate the use of ricochet shots to exploit the half-way rule. The equivalent shot can be used to go from any hoop to the next, such hoop 2 to 3.

142. In the first case, Black is to play when Blue is in the jaws of a hoop. The use of the ricochet means that both Black and Blue will be at the next hoop before either opponent.

Figure 30 Ricochet with partner in the jaws



143. In the second case Red is to play when Blue is in the jaws.

144. The ricochet shot by Red should be followed by Yellow playing to a position behind the hoop so that Blue is forced to run the hoop or be cleared.

Figure 31 Ricochet with second opponent in the jaws

11.3 Clearing and positioning for a hoop run

145. Although a well-played ricochet is extremely beneficial in many situations, one of the best is the two-way split shot. This involves sending striker's ball to a specific location, as in a normal ricochet, but also sending the opponent to a particular place.
146. It is therefore usually played more gently than a standard ricochet in order to achieve the precision.
147. In the case shown in Figure 32 the Black ball is being placed in front of the hoop. If it were hit straight there then Yellow would clear Blue and Red would clear Black.
148. By using Red for a ricochet, Black can push it to a wired position behind the hoop whilst protecting itself from Yellow. This requires great accuracy in the angle of strike on Red as well as the force used.

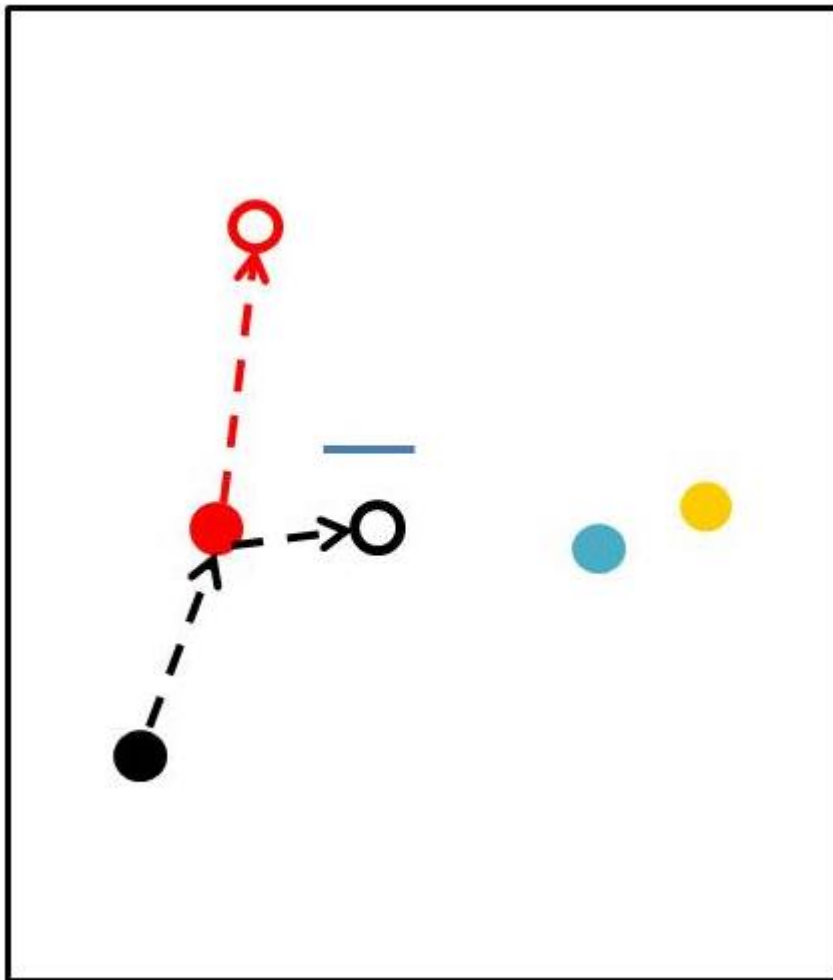


Figure 32 Ricochet for clearing and positioning

12 Exercises

12.1 *Playing against extra strokes*

149. Practising long hoop runs and long-range clearances is a fairly obvious exercise and always useful.
150. Try running a ball from a distance to finish at least 3 yards from the next hoop. On the even-numbered hoops this has the advantage that a slight over-hit will still leave the ball in a hoop-running position.
151. Setting up and playing rushes is less commonly practised but is particularly useful for countering extra strokes.
152. Set up the situation shown in Figure 1 (page 5) and try playing a precise shot to leave a perfectly lined-up rush to the next hoop.
153. Whatever position you achieve, play the rush anyway in order to practise judging the amount of cut needed to correct for a slight misalignment. This is therefore also an exercise in the use of the imaginary ball for cut rushes, as described in Section 6.3.
154. Place your ball about 3 yards from a hoop and about 45° to one side. Practice playing gentle shots that leave the ball in the jaws.

12.2 *Positioning*

155. Place an opponent's ball about 2 feet in front of a hoop and your own ball 1 foot to the side of the hoop. Play a stop-shot to clear the opponent and leave your own ball in a hoop-running position.
156. Repeat this with the opponent's ball further away but still straight in front of the hoop.
157. Now place the opponent's ball on the far side of the straight line, as shown in Figure 5 on page 9 and try clearing it whilst remaining in a hoop-running position.
158. As you move the opponent's ball further to the side of the hoop you will find it is increasingly difficult to keep your ball in position.
159. The purpose of this exercise is to show the value of leaving your own ball on the opposite side of the straight line.

12.3 Finishing off

160. This is more of a tactical exercise than a shot-playing exercise. In pairs, set up the balls around hoop 12 and, for each ball in turn, decide whether in a 6-5 situation you would go for the hoop or try an alternative shot.
161. In the cases where you would go for the hoop, mark the ball's current position and try the hoop shot. If it fails, see what has been left for the opponent. Replace the ball and try again to give a variety of possible outcomes.
162. Also in pairs, place a ball in hoop 12 and the others in positions around it. Identify as Striker a ball that is not in a position to clear it and discuss what the options are that would give the greatest likelihood of a rush to hoop 13.

12.4 Rush shots

12.4.1 Straight rushes

163. Place two balls about 3 feet apart and put a marker on the lawn about 20 feet away and straight down the line joining the balls. Play a simple drive shot, trying to hit the target ball exactly centrally.
164. Do the same shot but this time play it as a stop-shot and note how the striker ball's final position changes.
165. Repeat this with the marker 20 yards away and with more force.
166. Repeat with the balls less than a foot apart and get someone to watch and listen for a double tap when you play a drive shot. If a double tap is suspected, check the ratio of the distance travelled by the two balls; if it is less than 8:1 then a referee would consider that the double tap happened.

12.4.2 Cut rushes

167. Place two balls about 3 feet apart and put a marker on the lawn about 20 feet away and to one side of the line joining the balls.
168. Take a third ball and put it touching the target ball exactly opposite to the marker.
169. Line up your shot to pass through the position of the third ball then get your practise partner to remove the third ball. Play the shot through the third ball's position and see how close you can get the target ball to the marker.
170. Try this with different marker positions and ball separations.
171. Repeat the exercise but without the third ball. Imagine a ball where the third ball would be and play to pass exactly through that position.

12.5 Obstruction

12.5.1 Simple blocking

172. Place an opponent's ball about 2 yards in front of a hoop and your ball 2 feet to one side of the hoop. Play several blocking shots, alternately going just in front of the hoop and close to the opponent.
173. After each shot, look to see whether you have blocked the straight hoop run and keep a tally of which type of shot was more successful.

12.5.2 Position accuracy

174. The core requirement for a successful block is that you can get your ball to stop at a specific position.
175. Place two markers about 10 feet apart and play from one to stop on the other. Estimate how far you are from it and then play back to the first marker.
176. This will (a) improve your distance accuracy and (b) give you an estimate of your probable success at blocking at this distance.
177. Repeat the exercise with separations from 3 feet to 20 feet.

12.6 In-offs

178. Playing the in-off
- i. Experiment with putting a target ball in different locations in front of a hoop and test which ones allow an in-off to be played.
 - ii. Move the target ball further from the hoop. The further it is the more accurate the strike must be.
179. Setting up an in-off
- i. Using a ball in a non-running position behind or to one side of the hoop, try placing it just in front of the upright.
180. Avoiding the in-off
- i. Working in pairs, each player should set up a situation where there is a danger of leaving an in-off for the opponent. Discuss the alternatives and try them.

12.7 Shot strength

181. The exercise described above for position accuracy is also an exercise for consistent shot strength but only for short ranges.
182. Put a marker 3 yards in front of hoop 2 and play a series of shots from beside hoop 1 to try to stop on the marker. Test how many of your shots finish at a hoop-running position from hoop 2. Then play the hoop run and score your successes.
183. Repeat this 10 times and count 1 point for a ball that is within 1 yard of the marker and 1 point for each ball that runs the hoop.
184. Repeat the exercise with the marker set 1, 2 and 4 yards from the hoop.
185. The closer to the hoop you try to place the ball, the greater the likelihood that the ball will go past the possible hoop-running positions. Conversely, the further from the hoop you place the ball the lower the likelihood of running the hoop. Establish your own preferred marker position that gives the highest overall likelihood of running the hoop on the second shot.
186. This is an exercise that you should always carry out on an unfamiliar lawn before any game.

12.8 Hampered shots

187. Although nothing can replace playing real hampered shots there is an exercise to increase confidence in the accuracy of your swing.
188. Set two sticks in the ground, about 3 inches apart, at about the distance ahead of you that the striker's ball would be. Set another two sticks about 2 feet from the first pair, also about 3 inches apart.
189. Position yourself so that your forward swing passes between the first pair and your backswing between the other pair.
190. Practice with increasing amounts of backswing and follow-through until you are confident of swinging between the sticks without touching them. This will give you confidence that you can swing close past a hampering ball or hoop without touching it.



Figure 33 Using swing sticks for accuracy

12.9 Ricochet

191. An accurate ricochet is one of the most difficult shots in croquet but is well worth the effort of perfecting.
192. Place a marker on the lawn about 20 yards away. Put two balls about 2 feet apart on a line about 45° from the marker and play a ricochet shot to finish near it.
193. Repeat this with a variety of angles to see how the glancing angle affects your accuracy.