



Short Croquet Tactics
1-Day Course

Stephen Custance-Baker

Version 8

May 2025

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	2
1.1	COURSE CONTENT	2
2	SHORT CROQUET RULES.....	2
2.1	OVERVIEW.....	2
2.2	LAWN LAYOUT	2
2.3	HANDICAPS	2
2.4	HANDICAP CARDS.....	3
2.5	MANDATORY PEELS.....	3
2.6	WIRING LIFTS	3
3	SHORT CROQUET BEHAVIOUR	4
4	OPENING TACTICS.....	5
4.1	NORMAL OPENINGS	5
4.2	COUNTERS TO THE STANDARD OPENING	7
5	USING BISQUES	10
5.1	USE THEM EARLY	10
5.2	BREAK BUILDING.....	11
5.3	PEGGING THE OPPONENT OUT	12
5.4	PEGGING OUT A PEELER.....	12
5.5	LEAVE POSITIONS	13
6	PLAYING AGAINST MANDATORY PEELS	14
6.1	STOPPING THE PEEL	14
6.2	SELECTING YOUR LEAVE POSITION	15
7	SPECIFIC SHORT CROQUET TACTICS.....	16
7.1	WIRING LIFTS.....	16
7.1.1	<i>Avoiding Them.....</i>	<i>16</i>
7.1.2	<i>Making the most of your lift.....</i>	<i>17</i>
7.1.3	<i>Setting up a wide target.....</i>	<i>18</i>
7.1.4	<i>Exploiting the law.....</i>	<i>19</i>
7.2	4-BALL BREAKS WITHOUT A PIVOT.....	20
8	EXERCISES	21
8.1	OPENINGS.....	21
8.2	COUNTERS.....	21
8.2.1	<i>Corner 2 counter</i>	<i>21</i>
8.2.2	<i>West tice counter</i>	<i>21</i>
8.2.3	<i>Duffers tice</i>	<i>21</i>
8.3	BREAK-BUILDING WITH A BISQUE.....	21
8.4	LEAVE POSITION	21
8.5	OPPONENT'S PEEL	21
8.6	AVOIDING THE WIRING LIFT.....	22

8.7	CHOOSING THE LIFT BALL.....	22
8.8	EXPLOITING THE WIRING LIFT.....	22
8.9	PIVOT OR EXTRA PIONEER?.....	22

FIGURES

Figure 1	Usual openings	5
Figure 2	Tice openings	6
Figure 3	Counters to standard openings	7
Figure 4	The Corner 2 counter	7
Figure 5	The West tice.....	8
Figure 6	Counters to the West tice	8
Figure 7	The Duffer's tice.....	9
Figure 8	The Duffer's tice missed	9
Figure 9	Roquet or bisque?	11
Figure 10	Leave position.....	13
Figure 11	Positioning your balls when opponent peels	15
Figure 12	Wiring Lift Danger Areas	16
Figure 13	Selecting the lift ball	17
Figure 14	Break after a lift	17
Figure 15	Setting up a triple	18
Figure 16	View of triple	18
Figure 17	Exploiting the wiring lift law	19
Figure 18	Setting up two pioneers	20

Schedule for the day

09:45 Registration and tea / coffee

10:00 Short Croquet rules, handicaps and behaviour.

10:30 Opening shot tactics and counters to them.

11:40 Using bisques to build breaks. Pegging opponent out. Leaves.

13:00 Lunch

13:30 Playing against mandatory peels.

14:30 Wiring lifts. Avoiding them, Using them, Exploiting them.

15:45 Breaks without a pivot.

16:15 Wrap up

1 Introduction

1.1 Course content

1. This 1-day course is aimed at Association Croquet players with handicaps of 20 or less or Short Croquet players with handicaps of 8 or less. It would also be useful to AC players with low handicaps who have not yet tried Short Croquet.
2. The aim of the course is to identify the main differences between AC and SC and to guide players through the tactical differences between the two codes. Most of the lessons learned in this course will also be applicable to AC.
3. Notes summarising the course will be handed out at the end, showing the examples used and describing the exercises.

2 Short Croquet Rules

2.1 Overview

4. The rules of Short Croquet are broadly the same as for Association Croquet so this section concentrates on how they differ. If you have any questions about AC rules, please ask.

2.2 Lawn layout

5. Short Croquet is always played on a small court. This is usually half the size of a full court, or 28 yards by 17½ yards, but it may also be a standard Short Lawn, which is 24 yards by 16 yards.
6. One effect of playing on a smaller court is that it is more difficult to hide, particularly from a low handicap player who is good at hitting in. It also means that a ball is more likely to run off the court in a croquet stroke.
7. Hoop 1 has a blue crown, as on a standard layout, but the red-crowned hoop may be set as Hoop 5 or as Hoop 6. This is because the standard setup has it as Hoop 5 but in Short Croquet the Rover hoop is Hoop 6, which is what the red indicates.

2.3 Handicaps

8. Short Croquet is always played as a handicap game. As it is a full-bisque game, the number of bisques depends solely on the player's handicap and not on the difference between the handicaps. Therefore, if two players with equal handicaps of 8 play each other then they both get 8 bisques.
9. The handicaps range from 10, for a beginner, down to 0 for an experienced player, and denote the number of bisques received. If a player on 0 handicap improves further they receive a penalty implied by their new handicap, '1P'. This means that they get no bisques and also must carry out at least one partner peel during the game before they can peg out either of their balls.

This is a significant difference from AC, which has no mandatory peels. It is also the reason why 'handicap difference' cannot be used in Short Croquet and why there is no Level Play Short Croquet. Further improvement for a 1P player will move them to 2P or even 3P.

2.4 Handicap cards

10. Because there are no level-play games in Short Croquet the handicap cards are rather easier to maintain. All games are worth 1 point on your index and the handicap trigger points are at every 5 index points. In all other ways the cards operate the same as AC and GC.
11. The handicaps start at 10, with an initial index of 30, and reduce in steps of 1 down to 4 then in steps of ½ down to 0. After that they go to 1P, 2P and finally 3P, which equates to an index of 115.

2.5 Mandatory peels

12. Even though you may not have to do mandatory peels yourselves it is important to know how they work as you may have to play against them. The main points to know are:
 - i. A player can win a game without doing their mandatory peels but they cannot score more than 12 minus the number of mandatory peels remaining. This means that if a player runs a hoop that would leave them with too few hoops to carry out their remaining peels then the hoop point is not scored. It also means that a player with peels still remaining to be done can peg an opponent out but cannot peg themselves out.
 - ii. If a player peels an opponent's ball, or their own ball is peeled by an opponent, it does not count as one of their peels. The exception to this is when an opponent peels them through a hoop to leave too few hoops for their remaining peels, in which case it does count as one of the mandatory peels.
 - iii. If a player who needs to do mandatory peels has a ball pegged out by an opponent, then all remaining peels are cancelled. That's why it's so important to know the number of peels left to be done by your opponent.

2.6 Wiring lifts

13. In Short Croquet, a wiring lift only occurs when your turn starts with one of your balls, that has been positioned by an opponent, unable to hit all parts of its partner. There are some additional conditions but we can look at those in the session on lifts. This is very different from AC, which requires a ball to be unable to hit all parts of any other ball before it can claim a lift. The consequence is that wiring lifts are far more common in Short Croquet and can have a decisive effect on the result.
14. It may make the difference between leaving the court and taking a bisque.

3 Short croquet behaviour

15. There isn't really any difference between SC and AC behaviour but the smaller size of the courts means that there can be more interference between double-banked games and a greater likelihood of hitting onto a neighbouring court.
16. If you are playing double-banked, please carry marker pins with you. Never, ever, use a coin to mark a ball; that is a capital crime.
17. If there is any likelihood of hitting a ball from the other game then, after asking the current player, carefully mark the ball(s) concerned and remove them entirely from the danger area. Don't assume that your shot will be accurate and just move the ball a small amount, get it right away, either off the court or behind you.
18. Always check that you are not about to walk across another player's sight-line or about to hit towards them while they are preparing a stroke.
19. Calling for a referee or an umpire is the same procedure for both codes and all faults are the same.

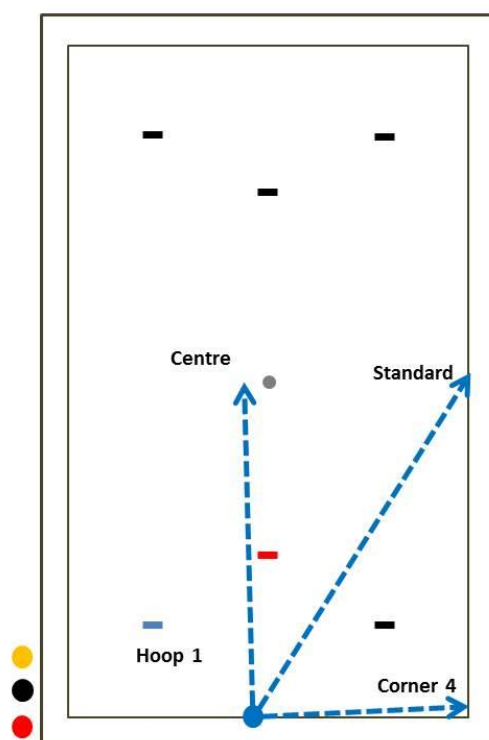
4 Opening tactics

4.1 Normal openings

20. We'll start by looking at some opening tactics that are used for AC handicap play and see how they are changed by the smaller distances involved. Whole books have been written about AC openings but these are mostly addressed to Advanced and Super-Advanced players. I will also describe some opening methods that might be used by peelers.
21. We will be trying out some of these and considering what follow-on shots can be used with each.

Figure 1 Usual openings

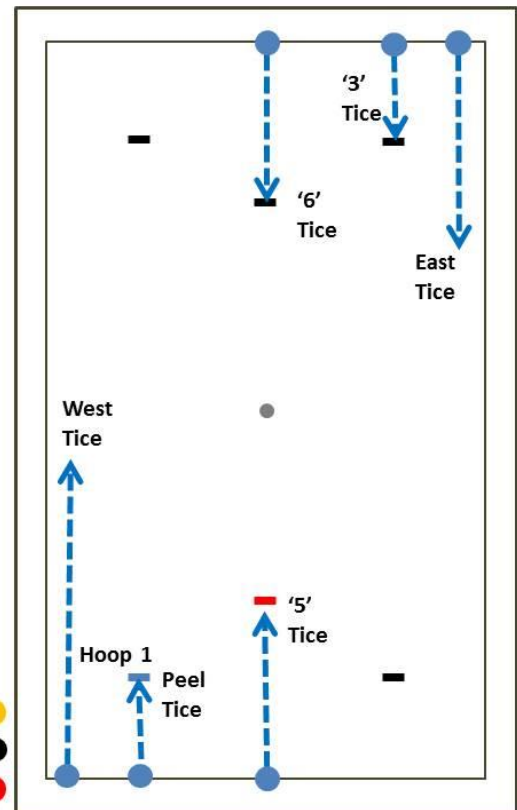
22. There are three 'usual' opening shots, all from Baulk A:
 - i. Standard, to a point on or near the yard line on the East boundary and between $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ -way up the court from the South boundary.
 - ii. Corner, to Corner 4, but deliberately placed about 4 to 6 inches from the corner spot.
 - iii. Supershot, to the centre of the court.



23. Each of these has arguments in its favour; I'll list some and we can look at others on the court.
24. The Standard opening isn't very tempting for the opponent to go for with their first ball. If they miss then they leave a possible double from the Baulk B for your second ball and if they hit then there is little they can do with it. They will probably go for a totally different position on the court and we'll look at those later.
25. The Corner 4 opening is more tempting for the opponent; on a standard half-court the hit-in is at less than 8 yards, compared with 13 yards on a full-size court. However, if they hit they will have a problem actually creating anything useful from it and if they miss then they will leave a double for your second ball. This is why you should put your opener 4-6 inches along the East boundary so that they cannot place theirs to give a single-ball target.

26. The Supershot opening is not very tempting as a target. The opponent can't play hard for it because that will leave an easy shot for your second ball and a gentler shot will leave you with two to aim at and a good chance of a 3-ball break.
27. Just to give you an idea of some other openings you may encounter when playing against low handicappers, particularly those with mandatory peels, here are four more possible openings.

Figure 2 Tice openings



28. Most of them are deliberately into or close to a hoop. These are less likely to be used in AC because the distances are greater and the precision needed is more difficult to achieve.
29. In the case of the West, East, Hoop 3, Hoop 5 and Hoop 6 tices, the aim is to give a possible hit-in but offering only an awkward 2-ball break for the opponent.
30. If the opponent puts their ball elsewhere on the lawn then the low handicapper will attempt to hit in and start a 3-ball break.
31. The Peel tice into Hoop 1 is a very dangerous opening used exclusively by peelers against high handicappers. The perfect shot puts the ball right into the jaws of Hoop1.
32. The opponent then has a choice between:
 - i. Hitting in, which will peel the opener's ball, and then trying to make Hoop 1. If this shot is missed then the opener can make their peel and continue with a 3-ball break.
 - ii. Playing elsewhere on the court, which will leave the first ball for the opener to shoot at and peel. This is a rush-peel and, should enable the peeler to set up, or even play, a peel at Hoop 2 as well.

33. If their roquet misses then the opponent will have to take a bisque rather than leave the peel. They are unlikely to gain more than 1 hoop with the bisque, which is also a good result for the opener.
34. In small groups, try each of the standard and tice openings and see what opportunities exist for counters.

4.2 **Counters to the standard opening**

35. Assuming that you don't want to shoot at the opening ball on the East yard-line, what are your options?

Figure 3 Counters to standard openings

36. Of the 5 shown here, the most common are Corner 2 and the West Tice.
37. The Corner 2 defence shot, which should be aimed 4-6" up the West boundary from the corner spot, gives the opener a fairly easy hit-in (A) but with minimum benefit and maximum risk. If they hit in they then need to take off to behind their first ball (B) in order to get a rush to hoop 1 (C), with a problem promoting your ball to a useful position. If they miss then they leave you with a double (D) and every chance of setting up a 3- or 4-ball break.

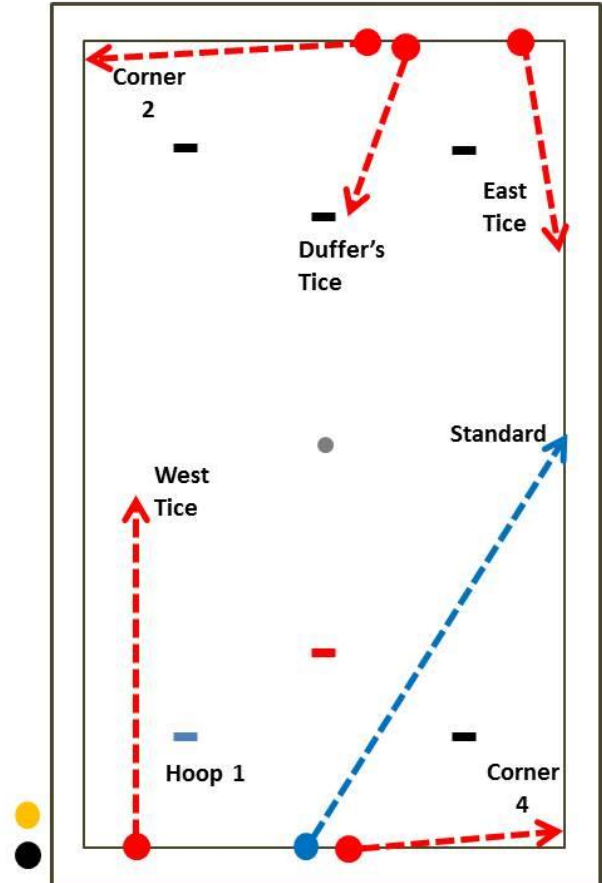
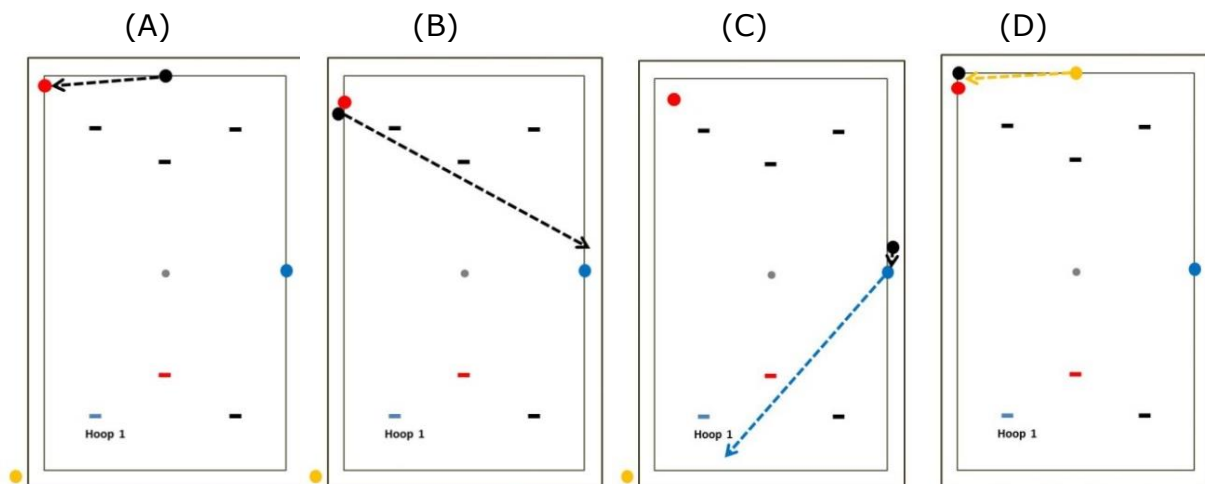


Figure 4 The Corner 2 counter



38. We will be practising :

- i. Placing your ball 4-6" from the corner spot.
- ii. Hitting in on that ball and trying to get behind the opening ball.
- iii. Hitting in on a double in the corner in order to set up the rush to Hoop 1 (or to the opening ball).

39. The West Tice should be played to finish at least one foot inside the yard line. This is because your second ball (the fourth to be played) will have much better geometry to work with.

Figure 5 The West tice

40. If the opener manages to hit your tice they will have to play a difficult backwards take-off (A) to go for Hoop 1 or cross the court to get behind their first ball (B) for the rush.

41. If they miss, then you can play an angled shot at your tice (C) and come down to Hoop 1. If you miss, then you will leave yourself with a rush to Hoop 1 (D) and the opener will not have a double for either of their balls.

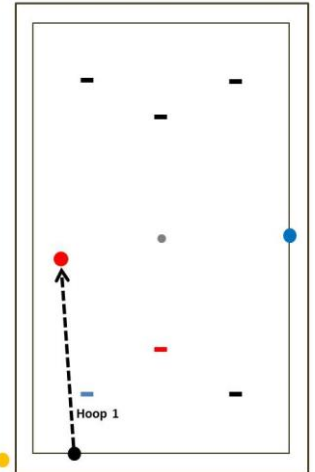
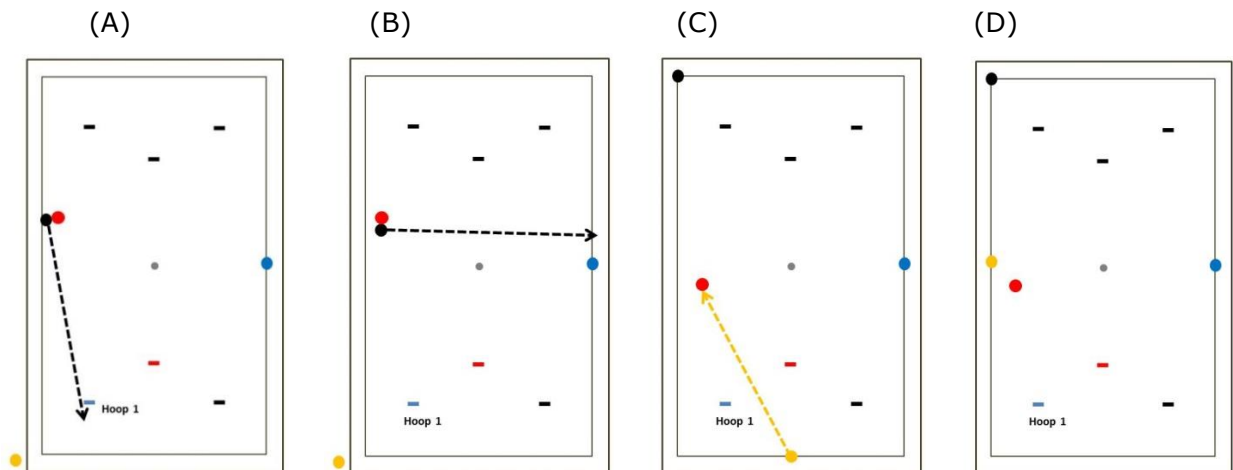


Figure 6 Counters to the West tice

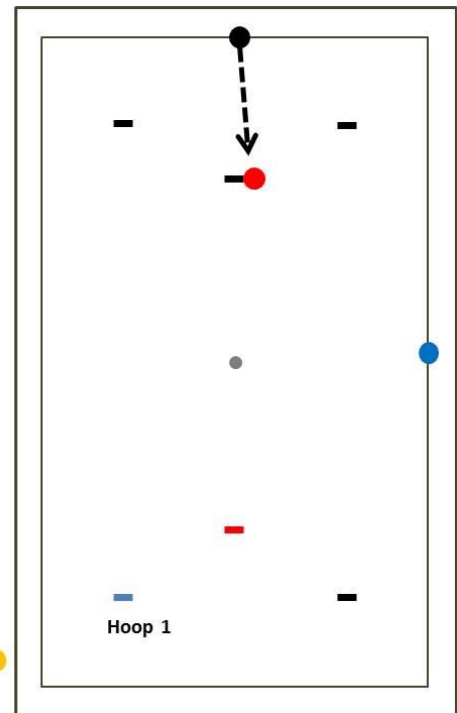


42. We will be practising:

- i. Placing your West Tice 1 to 2 feet from the yard line.
- ii. Taking off from it and trying to get in front of Hoop 1.
- iii. Taking off from it and trying to get behind the opening ball.
- iv. Hitting in at an angle at the tice ball.
- v. Playing the rush back to Hoop 1.

Figure 7 The Duffer's tice

43. The Duffer's Tice is named after the great Irish player, Duff Matthews, and involves putting your ball just beside Hoop 6. As with all tices, the aim is to get the opponent to shoot for it and, hopefully, miss.
44. If they hit, they are faced with the problem of getting behind their opening ball or leaving your ball in a 'safe' place and joining up.
 - i. If they miss, they could leave three possible positions for you to exploit. They could:
 - ii. hit the hoop
 - iii. run a short distance past your tice
 - iv. come down towards the South boundary.



45. The first two will give you a double to aim at and the third will give you a short hit-in.

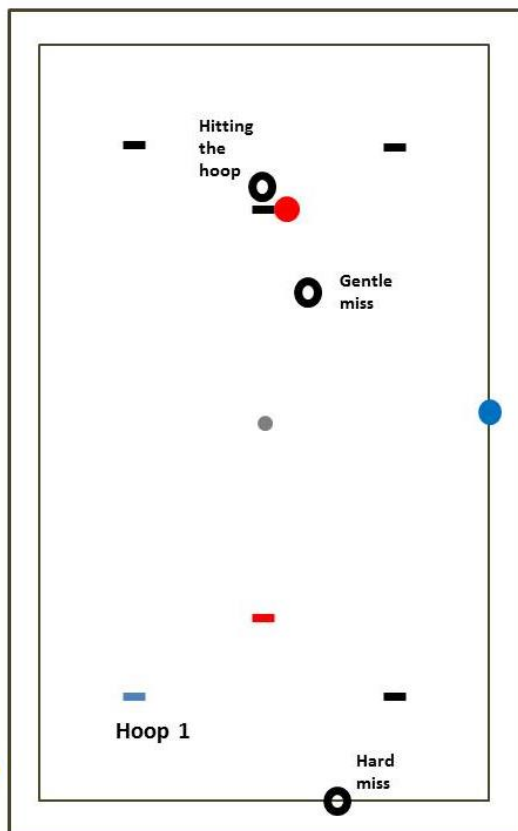


Figure 8 The Duffer's tice missed

46. We will be practising:
 - Setting the Duffer's Tice.
 - Trying to hit it and then see what follow-on shots are possible.
 - Playing the fourth ball when the opener has missed the tice.
47. Note that in AC the opening ball is sometimes placed well into the court. This stops the opponent using the Duffer's Tice because it is too easy to get behind the first ball after hitting the tice.

5 Using bisques

5.1 Use them early

48. Although it might seem that the bisque situation is similar to AC, there are, in fact, many more bisques per hoop available. The maximum possible number in a South West Federation B-league game is when a 24-handicapper plays with 12½ bisques. When playing on a half lawn this means making 26 points with 12½ bisques or just over 2 points per bisque. In Short Croquet, a high handicapper has to make 14 points with 10 bisques or 1.4 points per bisque.
49. This means that a 10-handicapper should plan to use 4 or 5 bisques to get the first ball round to the peg in a single turn and not hoard them.
50. If you are up against a really good player, with a handicap of 0 or 1, you can expect them to run all 6 hoops in a single break. A 1P player can probably do the same and peel their back ball through Hoop 1 as well. If you don't use your bisques fairly early against a low handicapper you may not get the chance to use them at all.
51. As with all forms of timed croquet, it's your job to be aware of the time remaining. Either carry a stopwatch with you or consult the clock frequently.
52. You cannot use bisques after the timer has gone, even if you declare your intention to do so within the time.
53. If, however, the scores are equal after the extra turns have finished then any remaining bisques may be used. If the opponent manages to score in their extra turn after time then you may have lost the game by saving your bisques.
54. You should also be aware that the Golden Hoop can be scored by a peeler without doing any further peels.

5.2 Break building

55. A frequent situation is one where you have a choice between playing a difficult shot in the hope of saving a bisque or deliberately playing to a position for using a bisque. In Figure 9, BAB is to play, still needing Hoop 1 with both balls. BAB decides to play Black but there are still several options.

i. Shoot for Red

- After hitting Red, take off to Yellow and make Hoop1 with Blue. This will leave Red near the boundary and awkwardly placed for Hoop 2.
- After missing Red, take a bisque and roquet Red. Split Red to Hoop 2 and go to Yellow. Make Hoop 1 with Blue.

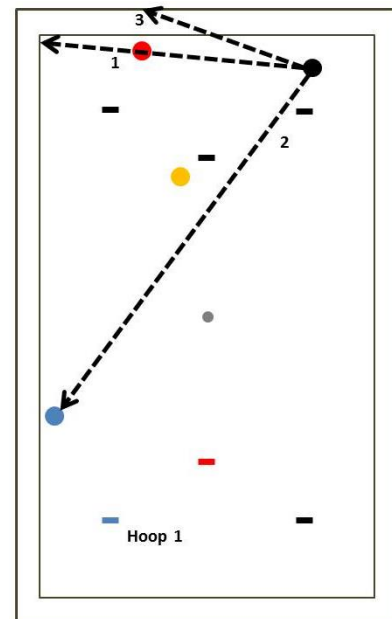
ii. Shoot for Blue

- After hitting Blue, do a backwards take-off to make Hoop 1.
- After missing Blue, leave them joined up or take a bisque to rush Blue to Hoop 1 or to Yellow, depending on the geometry.

iii. Go off the lawn behind Red

- Put the ball on the yard line just behind Red.
- Take a bisque and rush Red to Hoop 2.
- Do a thin take-off to behind Yellow.
- Rush Yellow to near Blue.
- Do a take-off to get behind Blue.
- Rush Blue to Hoop 1.

Figure 9 Roquet or bisque?



56. Each of these options will probably need a bisque so it is better to choose the one that gets the 4-ball break going most efficiently, which is Option 3.

57. If you play Option 1 and miss Red, there is still a chance of missing it again with the bisque.

58. If you play Option 2 and miss Blue, you can't afford to leave them joined up but you may not have a good position for your bisque.

5.3 *Pegging the opponent out*

59. This is a dangerous tactic in the short game because there are fewer hoops altogether and giving the opponent an extra point can be significant. It's very irritating to lose by 1 on time when you have given the opponent that point.
60. However, if the right situation arises then it will often be worth a bisque to reduce the opponent to a single ball and it may be worth pegging yourself out as well.
61. The rule in all handicap AC, including Short Croquet, is that a ball may not peg itself out unless its partner is a rover (i.e. has run the last hoop) or another ball is pegged out in that shot or has been pegged out in an earlier one.
62. For example, you have one clip on Hoop 4 and one on Rover and two bisques left. Your opponent has one clip on Hoop 2 and one on the peg and no bisques left.
63. If you run rover, rush the opponent to the peg and peg them out, should you then peg yourself out? If you do you will be ahead on points with 2 bisques left and your opponent is faced with having to make a 2-ball 6-point break.
64. You are also limited to 2 balls but with only 4 points to make and 2 bisques to help.
65. If you don't peg yourself out and the opponent manages to hit in they will still need 6 points but will have a 3-ball break to do it with, which is far easier than a 2-ball break.
66. However, this is another case in which watching the time is vital. If you peg your opponent and yourself out then you have each gained a point but you cannot use any bisques in that turn.
67. If, when time is about to finish, you peg your opponent out and not yourself then you may have cost yourself the game.
68. Instead, with one or two minutes to go, send one opponent to corner 1 and the other to corner 3, using a bisque if necessary, and send your balls to corner 4 with a rush set up to your partner ball's hoop.

5.4 *Pegging out a peeler*

69. This should be avoided until the peeler has completed all of their peels. If you peg out one of their balls then all remaining peels are cancelled.
70. It is therefore very important to keep a close track of the number of peels remaining to be done.

5.5 *Leave positions*

71. When you can see that your break is ending, either because you have failed to get position in front of a hoop or because you have run rover, you need to think carefully about your leave. Just hitting away into a corner may not be the optimum choice.
72. You need to think what the opponent will do. In Figure 10 Red has run rover but left itself wired from Yellow . It could play to a safe position in corner 2 but Black would then shoot for Yellow, leaving the court if it misses.
73. If you place Red on the yard line close to where Black would finish, as shown in Figure 10, then Black no longer has a safe shot-to-nothing and will have to try the more difficult shot with Blue or risk joining up.

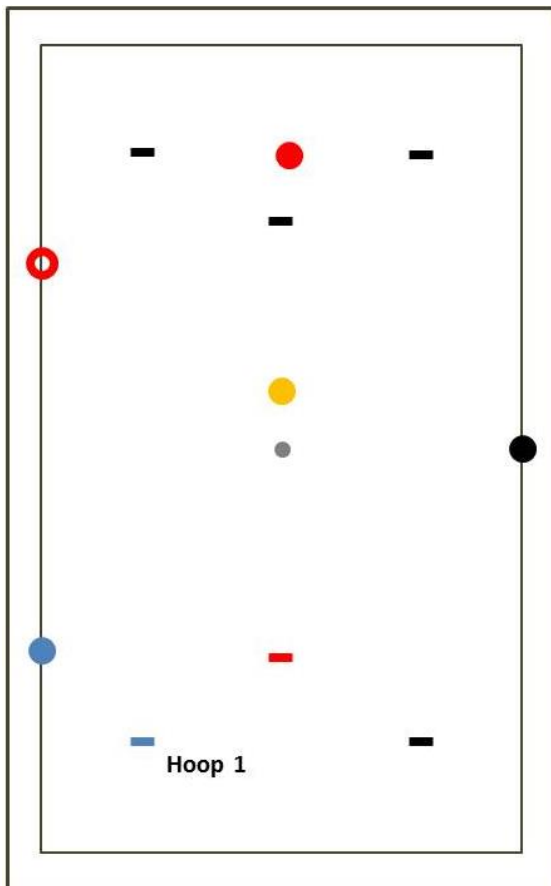


Figure 10 Leave position

74. Care must be taken to ensure that you don't leave a double target for Black. Go to the side of the court and line up where Black will finish if it misses Yellow. Hit Red off the court at a point that brings it back on at least a yard away from Black's finishing position.

6 Playing against mandatory peels

6.1 *Stopping the peel*

75. If a player who is required to do one or more peels manages to set up and complete the peel(s) within their break then there is nothing you can do about it.
76. If, however, they are unable to complete the peel, and leave the ball to be peeled in a good position in front of a hoop it is almost certainly worth using a bisque to move it. Having to do the peels is a major influence on the game of low handicappers and means that they cannot simply complete a break but must take the peel into account.
77. This is opposite to the advice given in AC that you shouldn't use a bisque simply to break up the opponent's position. In AC your opponent may want to do some peels, but doesn't have to, and in Short Croquet stopping their peel is probably worth much more than one of your bisques.
78. If you are playing against mandatory peels then a half-bisque may be more useful in Short Croquet than it is in AC. Using a bisque to stop a 'peeler' completing a peel is a very strong use of the bisque. It is even better if it is only a half-bisque as the loss is well worth it if the opponent has set up a peel or has a good opportunity to achieve one.
79. Whenever possible the 1P player will do the peel through hoops 1, 3 or 5 as this means that they are hitting towards the court and not away from it. There are two good reasons for this:
- i. It reduces the possibility of sending the peeled ball off the lawn in a hard croquet stroke, which would be the end of their turn.
 - ii. They are more likely to be able to play the peel and approach another ball so as to continue the break.
80. Therefore, whenever possible you should remove an opponent's ball if it has been put in front of an odd-numbered hoop ready for a peel.

6.2 *Selecting your leave position*

81. Above all, you should avoid leaving one of your balls where it can be approached easily by the peeler with the peel shot after an even-numbered hoop.
82. In the layouts in Figure 11, Yellow is to play and needs to do a peel. Red is for Hoop 2 and Yellow is for Hoop 4.
83. In the first layout, Yellow can make the peel on Red but is then left with nothing to shoot at. One alternative is to roquet Red, take off to Black, set up behind Blue, rush it to Hoop 3 and return to Red. The roquet and long take-off will probably move Red away from the perfect peeling position. A better alternative is to roquet Red and take off to Blue. Send Blue to Hoop 5, set up behind Black and rush it to Hoop 4, make the hoop and use Black and Blue to get back to Red.
84. In the second layout, Yellow will roquet Red gently, then peel it whilst taking off to Black. Set up behind Blue, rush it to 4, make the hoop and continue the break, having achieved the required peel.

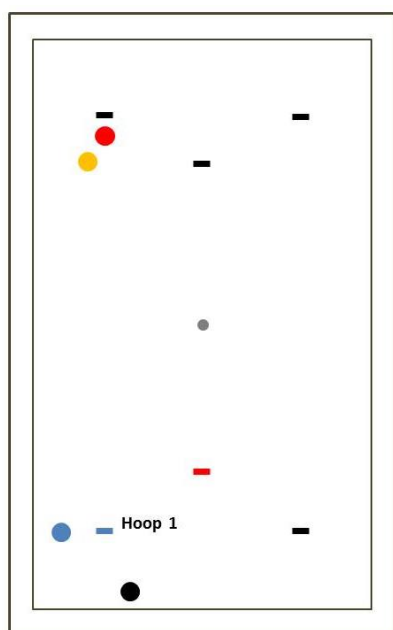
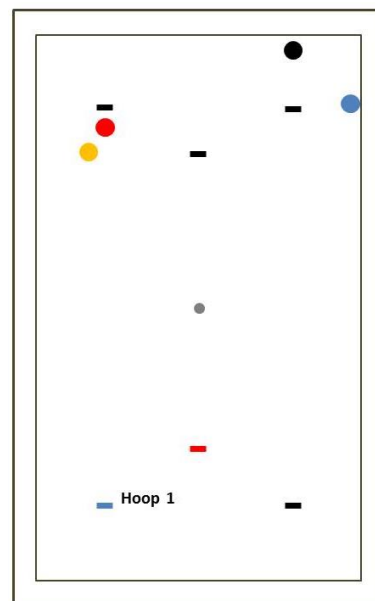


Figure 11 Positioning your balls when opponent peels



7 Specific Short Croquet Tactics

7.1 Wiring Lifts

7.1.1 Avoiding Them

85. Wiring Lifts are far more common in Short Croquet than in AC because:
- You are wired if either of your balls, which has been positioned by an opponent, is unable to hit both sides of its partner ball when struck with any part of the face of the mallet.
 - The hoops and peg are the same size as on a normal lawn but they obscure a much larger percentage of the playing space.
86. A quick re-cap of the law about wiring lifts; you can claim a lift at the start of your turn if
- The opponent is responsible for the position of the striker ball.
 - Any part of the striker ball or target ball is within a hoop.
 - You cannot hit the striker ball with all parts of the mallet face in the direction of its partner ball.
 - Your normal backswing is hampered by a hoop or the peg.
 - You cannot hit all parts of the target ball.
87. Remember that you can't ask for a ruling about a lift while you are in play; you have to make your own decision (and you can't use additional balls to help you). A referee can only say whether the balls are wired when you claim a lift at the start of your turn.
88. Unless you are certain that your break will continue you should check that each croquet shot will leave the opponent's balls well separated and with a view of each other. This requirement adds to the difficulty of playing long split rolls.

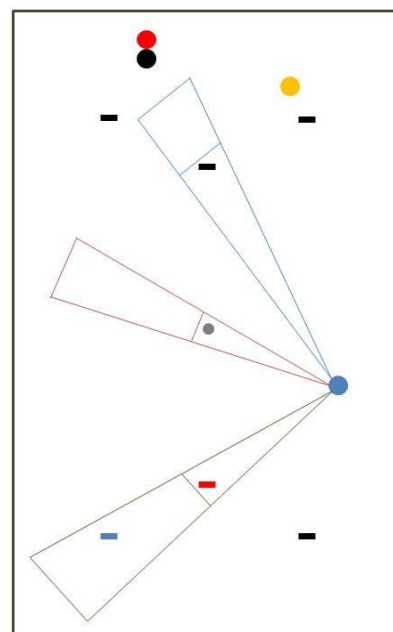


Figure 12 Wiring Lift Danger Areas

89. You will be practising choosing your shots in the open court to minimise the probability of giving a wiring lift, using situations like the one shown in Figure 12.

7.1.2 Making the most of your lift

90. If you are lucky enough to have been given a lift then it is important to make the most of the opportunity. Games are frequently won or lost because of a wiring lift.
91. Assuming that you have a lift on either ball, which is common in Short Croquet but very rare in AC, then your criteria should be :
- Which ball needs to make most hoops?
 - Which ball has partner or an opponent near its next hoop?
 - If there is a ball near a baulk line, can it be used to set up a useful rush (to a hoop or another ball)?
 - If there is no ball near a baulk line, can a double (or triple) be created?

Figure 13 Selecting the lift ball

92. In the situation shown in Figure 13 it is a fairly easy decision to lift Yellow. It is the back ball and, as shown in the sequence of positions below, it will enable a 4-ball break to be set up quite easily.

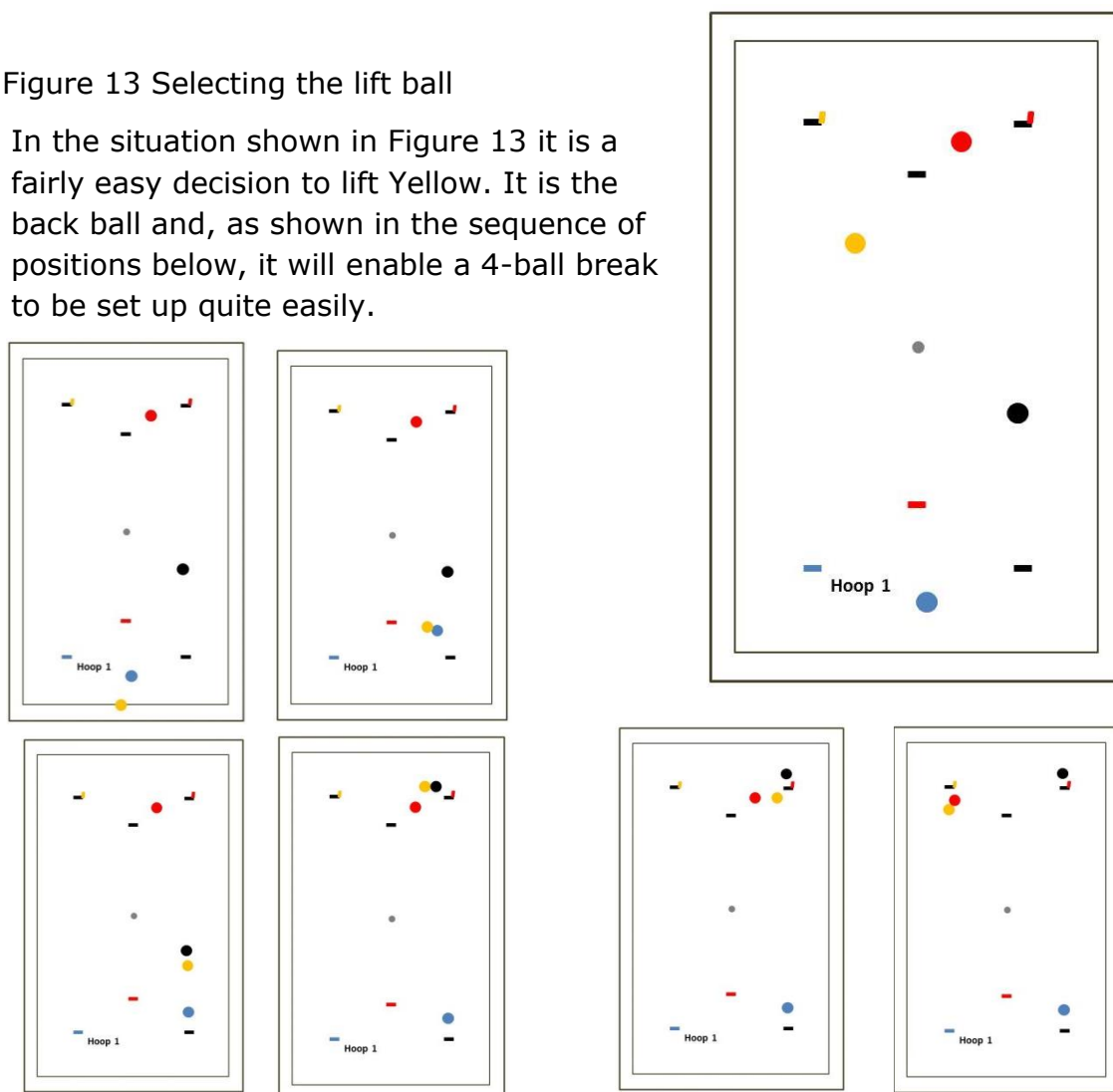
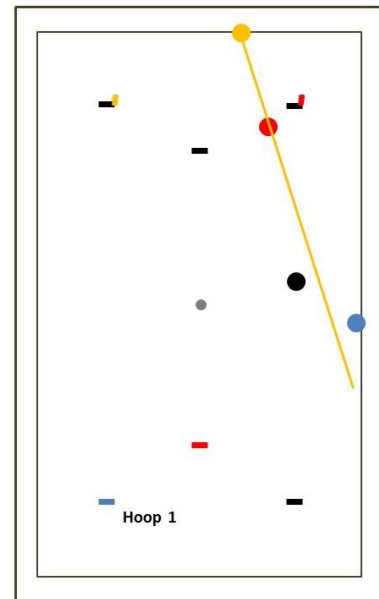


Figure 14 Break after a lift

7.1.3 Setting up a wide target

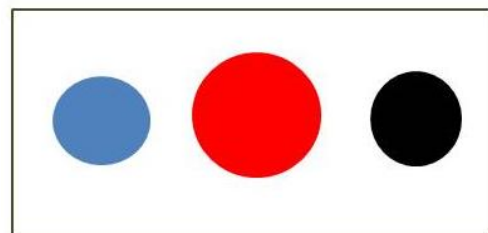
93. If there is no ball near a baulk line to give an easy hit-in then look for a possible double or even a triple.

Figure 15 Setting up a triple



94. In the case shown in Figure 15, Yellow has been lifted and placed on Baulk Line B. It is usual, when placing a ball on the yard line, after it has gone off, to do so with one's back to the court. In this case, where you can choose your own position, you do so facing the court and line it up very carefully.
95. The perfect position will give the situation, seen from behind Yellow, as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16 View of triple

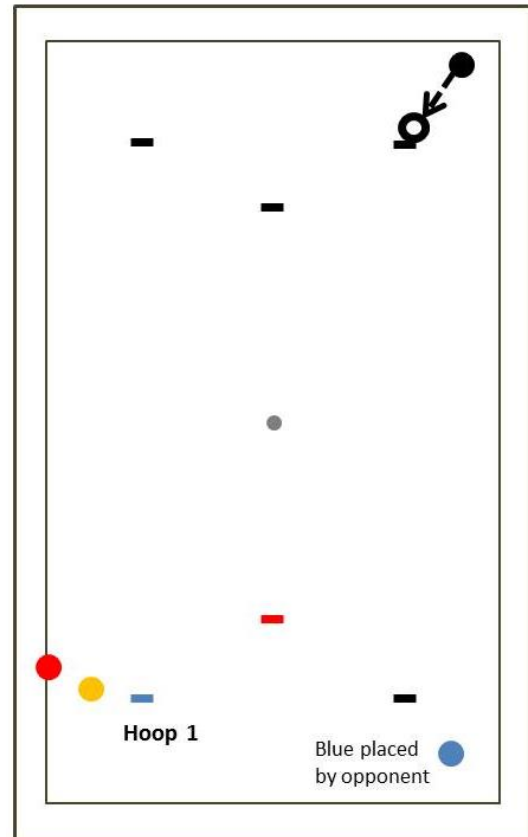


96. This is therefore the maximum size of target possible. Aim directly at Red, but with enough power to reach Blue.

7.1.4 Exploiting the law

97. It is possible to make positive use of this law, even when the opponent has not left your balls wired.

Figure 17 Exploiting the wiring lift law



98. In the situation shown here, RAY has left your balls widely separated but has set up a rush to Hoop 1, wired from both of your balls. What are your options?

99. If you shoot for your partner ball and miss you will leave yours joined up, giving your opponent an excellent chance of 4-ball break.

100. Instead, you can deliberately play one ball into a hoop so that your balls are wired. RAY can make Hoop 1 but, without a good rush to Hoop 2, they are faced with the problem of moving your ball in the hoop.

101. It won't help to move the other ball because, wherever they put it, it will remain wired from the one in the hoop.

102. The break will therefore be disrupted by the need to move a ball that is likely to be awkward to use.

103.If you didn't do this then they would be able to leave their balls joined up with a rush to Hoop 1 or 2.

104. The exercise is to practise sending a ball into a wired position from different starting points.

7.2 4-Ball breaks without a pivot

105. In standard AC it is normal to see a classic 4-ball break based around a pivot. The distances involved are much greater than in Short Croquet and the long rolls and rushes are therefore more difficult to achieve with accuracy. The pivot ball enables the striker to play shorter rushes, rolls and take-offs, using the pivot as a centre point to rotate the break around.
106. Because of the smaller size of the Short Croquet lawn, the distance between the middle and the outlying hoops is much less. This means that a pioneer for an outlying hoop is not very different from a wide pivot.
107. It is therefore reasonable to think of setting up a 4-ball break with no central pivot but with pioneers at the next two hoops.
108. In Figure 18, Red has missed hoop 2 leaving Black with a good opening position and a pioneer at hoop 2. Black runs hoop 1 and roquets Blue but, instead of sending it to a pivot position or to hoop 3, sends it across to be a pioneer for hoop 4, taking off towards Yellow.
109. Black roquets Yellow then splits Yellow to hoop 3 whilst going to Red at hoop 2. Black now has the next three hoops prepared.

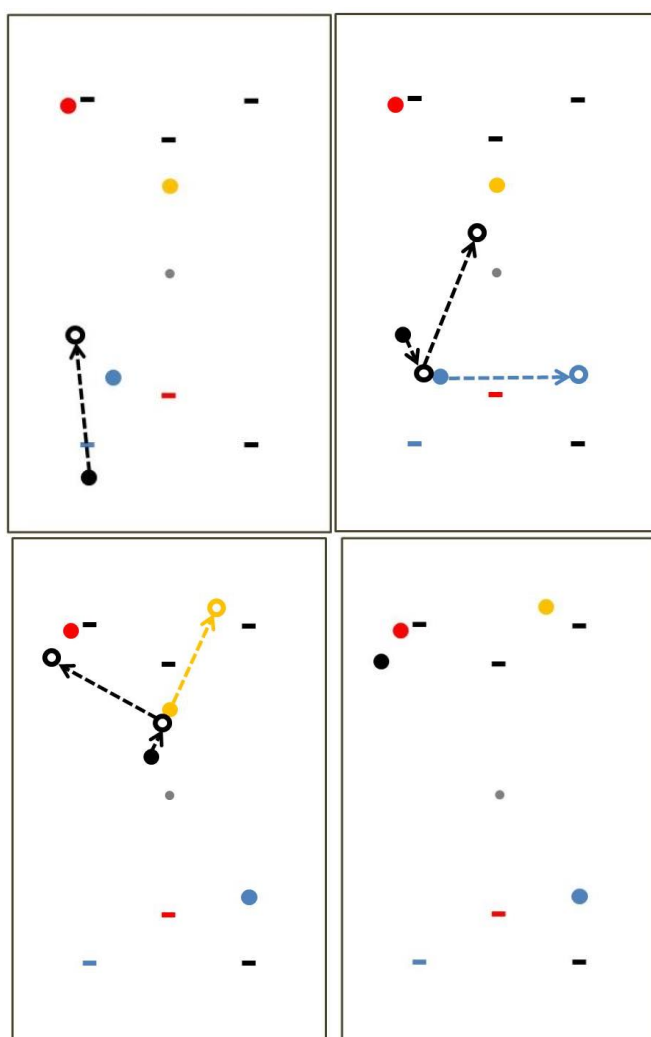


Figure 18 Setting up two pioneers

8 Exercises

8.1 Openings

110. In small groups, try each of the standard and tice openings and see what opportunities exist for counters.

8.2 Counters

8.2.1 Corner 2 counter

111. Place your ball 4-6" from the corner spot.
112. Hit in on that ball and try to get behind the opening ball.
113. Hit in on a double in the corner in order to set up the rush to Hoop 1 (or to the opening ball).

8.2.2 West tice counter

- i. Place your West Tice 1 to 2 feet from the yard line.
- ii. Take off from it and try to get in front of Hoop 1.
- iii. Take off from it and try to get behind the opening ball.
- iv. Hit in at an angle at the tice ball.
- v. Play the rush back to Hoop 1.

8.2.3 Duffers tice

- i. Set the Duffer's Tice.
- ii. Try to hit it and then see what follow-on shots are possible.
- iii. Play the fourth ball when the opener has missed the tice.

8.3 Break-building with a bisque

114. Set up the scenario in Figure 9 and consider the options available.
115. Play through the steps for the options of Roquet, Bisque or Join up.

8.4 Leave position

116. Set up the scenario in Figure 10 and consider the options available.

8.5 Opponent's peel

117. Set up the two scenarios in Figure 11 and compare the benefits of the positions.
118. Play the peelers shots to see how their break might develop.

8.6 *Avoiding the wiring lift*

119. Practice choosing your shots in the open court to minimise the chance of giving a wiring lift, using situations like the one shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**

8.7 *Choosing the lift ball*

120. Set up a number of positions giving a lift and discuss the options of which ball to lift. See how this changes if your balls are for different hoops.
121. See how the careful choice of position can greatly increase your chance of hitting in. Look at doubles and triples.

8.8 *Exploiting the wiring lift*

122. The exercise is to practice sending a ball into a wired position from different starting points.
123. Start with the case shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** and play through Ray's break to see how the wired ball may be moved.

8.9 *Pivot or extra pioneer?*

124. Play through some 4-ball breaks with a pivot or with an extra pioneer to see how the shorter distances can favour the extra pioneer.