

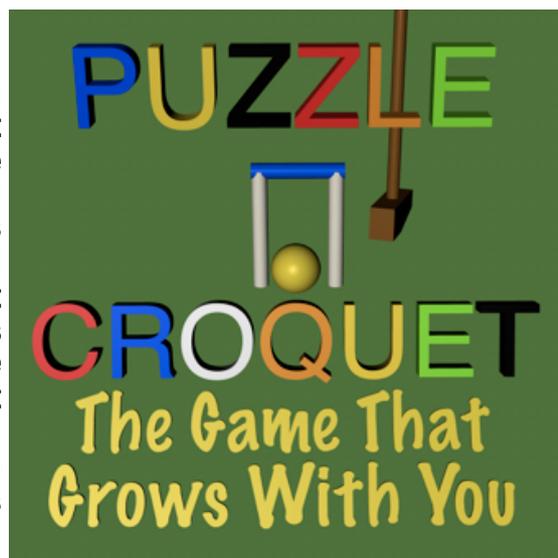
'PUZZLE CROQUET'

A New Malletsport for Coaching towards Association Croquet
and a possible game in its own right.
August 2009 (C) Lowen Clarke 2009

PUZZLE CROQUET IS AN ASSOCIATION CROQUET GAME DEVELOPED BY COACH LOWEN CLARKE AS AN INTRODUCTION TO ASSOCIATION CROQUET. IT IS A POWERFUL NEW TOOL TO HELP COACHES INTRODUCE PLAYERS TO THE WONDERFULLY RICH GAME OF ASSOCIATION CROQUET. IT ALSO ADDS ANOTHER GAME TO THE RANGE OF MALLETSPORTS CODES. IT ALSO CONNECTS OUR GAME TODAY'S 'BRAIN TRAINING' ERA.

Double the fun.

Puzzle Croquet achieves a combination of the best of Golf Croquet and the best of Association Croquet. It has all the involvement of Golf Croquet in that all players are on the lawn together. It keeps all the social capacity of Golf Croquet. All players are in the game together and just as in Golf Croquet, as soon as a hoop is scored, it becomes 'dead', and the players then focus on the next hoop. But here's where it gets really interesting. Puzzle includes all the best association shots. Players use croquet shots, rushes and continuation shots.



Why Puzzle Croquet? The ancient sport of croquet with its roquets, croquets, one backs, rovers, lines of swing, ratios and divided angles is a real challenge.....and that's why it's so loved. But, from a beginner's perspective, it's a real nightmare. Generations of players have struggled with the concepts of croquet. Here at last is a practical and fun way to teach groups and individuals the skills and concepts behind the game. No more struggling with players who get left behind; everybody stays together in a group, learning together. No more missed roquets with players left out of the game and the learning curve. No more impossible combinations of ball movements to get to the vital learning. It's fun, easy and, at last, easy to coach.



Lowen is a Level Two Coach, and has been the State Team Coach, coaching Victoria to a National win. In Puzzle Croquet Lowen introduces to players some of his knowledge and experience in developing good play. Players learning Puzzle will find that without even realizing it they have developed a great understanding of croquet.

'I have spent a great deal of time considering how to create an Association Croquet game that will appeal to today's market. I hope I have achieved that with Puzzle Croquet.'

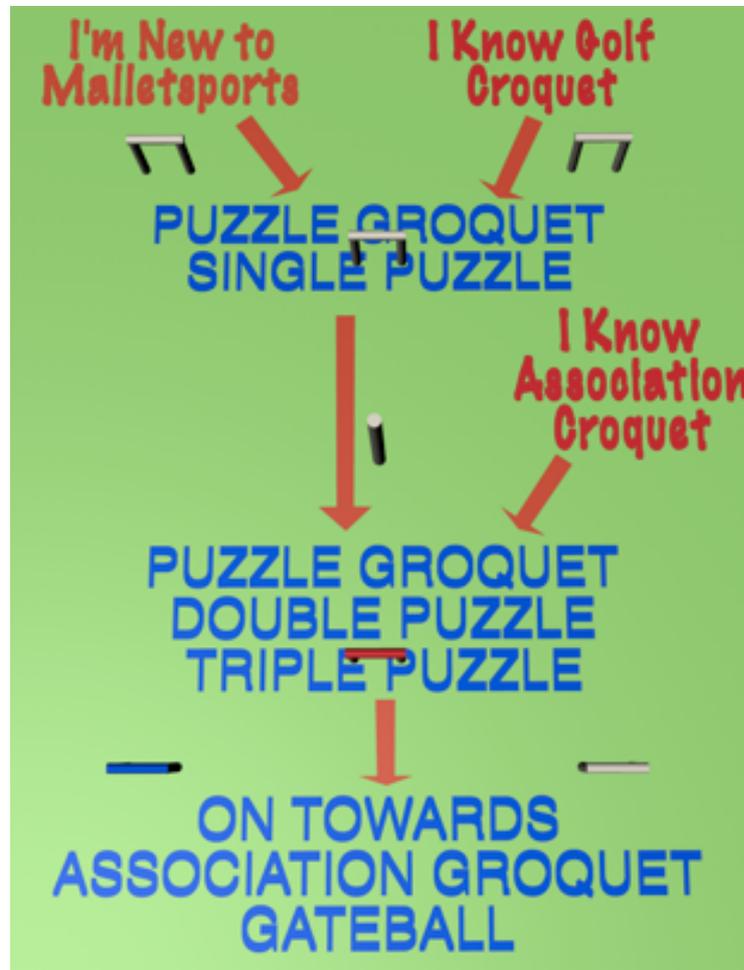
Contact Lowen for more information on Puzzle Croquet, or to introduce Puzzle Croquet to your Club Phone : 0414 745 731, or email Lowen direct at lowenclarke@iprimus.com.au

PUZZLE CROQUET = ASSOCIATION + CONTACT + SINGLE HOOP CONTEST

= ASSOCIATION - FIRST ROQUET - BREAKS

PUZZLE CROQUET = GOLF + CROQUET SHOTS + ASSOC 6 SHOT SEQUENCE

IT'S A COMPLETE COACHING SYSTEM AND A NEW MALLETSPOURT



I'm New to Malletsports

PUZZLE GROQUET SINGLE PUZZLE

Malletsports has several games. They all have the aim of running a hoop and scoring a point. Some are single ball games, some are single shot per Innings games, some include two ball shots, and multiple shots per innings, which can make 'team members' of the other balls.

Golf croquet is a 'single ball, single shot' game : a great game full of skill, of positioning balls to a spot, of hitting targets, and running hoops.

Association croquet is a '1 and 2 ball shot, multiple shots in an Innings' game. The two ball shot, called the Croquet Shot, means you can position balls anywhere on the court for strategy, and use them to 'transport' your striker ball to and through the hoop.

Gateball is also a '1 and 2 ball shot' game, with teams, and a multiple shot Innings.

(Of course, an Innings can end suddenly if something goes wrong, or if you make a faulty shot !)

(C) 2009 Lowen Clarke (08/09) PUZZLE CROQUET OVERVIEW

Puzzle Croquet helps you to play an Association Croquet game, while enjoying learning the skills of the sport by playing Golf Croquet.

A COACHED EXPERIENCE IS PREFERRED FOR THOSE NEW TO MALLETSPOUNTS. HOWEVER, 'PUZZLE CROQUET : PROGRAM ONE', A FULL SELF COACHING COURSE OF PUZZLE CROQUET' IS AVAILABLE AS AN ADDITIONAL AIDE. (IT ALSO EXPLAINS THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ASSOCIATION CROQUET.)



PUZZLE builds on the shots you know, in separate Contests for hoops, and adds the two ball croquet shot which is the Hallmark of Association Croquet games. In Traditional croquet, the Innings is made up of a continuous sequence of one ball shots followed by two ball croquet shots. This is to add diversity to the game, and enable strategic planning.

Learning the two ball shot can be fun : ask your Club Coach, or just put the balls together and have some fun hitting them around and seeing what happens.

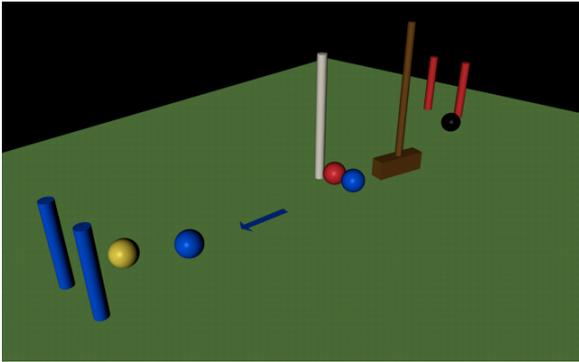
Players coming to Puzzle Croquet from Golf Croquet can build on skills you already have. You learn to use the three important shots you already know, and get mastery over them : putting a ball to a spot is transformed into the take off shot; the stun shot is transformed into the rush shot; and of course, hoop running can always improve. Gradually, you build up the skill of seeing the usefulness and variety of the two ball shots and then executing them well !

A COACHED EXPERIENCE IS PREFERRED FOR GOLF CROQUET PLAYERS. HOWEVER, 'PUZZLE CROQUET : PROGRAM ONE', A FULL SELF COACHING COURSE OF PUZZLE CROQUET' IS AVAILABLE AS AN ADDITIONAL AIDE. (IT ALSO EXPLAINS THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF ASSOCIATION CROQUET.)

WHAT IS ASSOCIATION CROQUET ? ADD THE PLEASURE OF THE TWO BALL SHOT TO YOUR REPERTOIRE.

Association Croquet is one of many 'Grab and stash' type sports. Football, basketball and many others centre on this strategy. A particular action gains possession of the ball, or control of the playing arena, and an opportunity is afforded to attempt to get the ball to the goal, nest or gate, and 'stash' it. In all such sports, there is the tactical problem of 'How to get the ball to the Goal'. Sometimes, it is via team mates, sometimes extra shots. In effect, 'How to get to Goal' is a Puzzle that needs to be solved. In croquet, a rotation of one ball and two ball shots means that finding the solution to the pathway question is complex. In croquet, the sequence of one ball/two ball shots and the layout of the court have evolved to make the game interesting and diverse in the skills sets used.

So, at its basics, Croquet is a Puzzle game based around an easily understood football-like concept. Naturally, physical execution of the solution to the Puzzle involves all sorts of sports psychology and skills acquisition.



PUZZLE CROQUET OVERVIEW :

Puzzle Croquet is a variety of Association Croquet.

The 'Puzzle' is the solving of finding the pathway of the Striker's ball to the contested hoop using the one ball/two ball (croquet) shot sequence in a six shot Innings. A Game is made up of separate Contests for Each Hoop. The Puzzle is a 'Transport' type puzzle. In Puzzle Croquet, you are automatically awarded an Innings sequence, going straight on to a croquet shot (the name of the game !) by being given 'Contact'. The full 6 shot Innings sequence of one ball/two ball shots with all four balls is followed and then 'Contact' and an Innings is awarded to the Opponent. Once a hoop is run and scored, that Contest is over and the next hoop becomes the contested hoop. Each Contest may have many Innings, if neither player can solve and execute the Puzzle. So, if a hoop is not run by a player who has played all the balls, the opponent gets 'Contact'. 'Contact' means you pick up your ball and put it next to another one for a two ball croquet shot.

Two ball shots can be take offs, rolls or splits, and you will soon get skills with them.

In summary, the 'Puzzle' is a fully played out Association Croquet innings sequence of six shots, but there is no initial roquet, and Contact is given after a full sequence of six shots has been made. So, if a player doesn't run the hoop, the opponent has a turn and chance to solve the puzzle.

End of turn occurs after a full innings or if a target hit is missed, or if there is an error or fault in the two ball shot.

Puzzle Croquet is just like Golf Croquet but you use the full Association Innings sequence.

Puzzle Croquet is just like Association Croquet, but one hoop is contested at a time, and 'Contact' ensures you get into the game.

PUZZLE CROQUET GROWS WITH YOU ! THERE ARE EXTRA PUZZLES AS YOU

GET COMPETENCE AND SKILL : For players new to the two ball shot or to malletsports, there is Single 'Puzzle' : working out the pathway to the hoop. For advanced players who know the two ball shot, there is Double Puzzle : 1 : work out the pathway to the contested hoop using all balls, and 2 : in that process, put a ball to peg. And for experts, there is also a Triple Puzzle : Getting to the hoop, Putting a ball to peg, and also Peeling a ball, which means putting the another through a hoop as well.

GENERALLY, PLAYERS WHO KNOW ASSOCIATION CROQUET WILL PLAY DOUBLE PUZZLE CROQUET.

PUZZLE CROQUET : SOME 'RULES'

GENERAL ORDER OF THE GAME : CONTEST FOR HOOP, HOUSEKEEPING, CONTEST FOR NEXT HOOP.....

ALL BALLS MUST BE USED : A Player has to utilise all the three non-striker balls to create the pathway.

THE START : The game can be begun by just throwing them on, then tidying them up into the Inner Court, bounded by the four outer hoops. Then, Toss to see who starts.

THE END: The game can go for 6, 12 or 24 hoops, plus Peg. A well contested game might end up 6/6 !

END OF INNINGS : Normal Association Rules apply : miss a roquet (hit), faults, croqueted ball out of bounds, 'still balls' all mean end of turn.

HOW MANY TAKE OFF SHOTS PER TURN ? You choose. This is a Growth Factor as you gain skills. That is, there is a difference you decide on : are you new to the two ball shot or new to malletsports ? Or do you have some experience with them ? Players new to two ball shots can do three, and advanced players should only need one in a full sequence.

TOWARDS THE PEG : is also one of the DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY - GROWTH FACTORS in the game. The standard for this is that a player has to change the color of the ball within a 2 metre radius of the Peg. However, there are really three levels of Difficulty : 1 : both players can be satisfied to take off from a ball that stays in the radius chosen, that is 2 or 3 metres.

2 : a player need only rush the ball out and then make sure it comes back in

3 : a player must change the color of the ball that is in the radius, preferably working to a 2 metre standard. Players can choose beforehand, or get a Manager to choose.

HOW MANY TO PLAY ? HOW MANY HOOPS ?

For two people, only Red and Blue need play. Choose how many hoops you want to contest. 6 is a good start. This can take up to 50 minutes. 12 hoops is a good game for more experienced players.

For four people, play in teams with alternate shot. An experienced player might Captain the team.

All players can stay on the Court at all times.

THE BOUNDARY : You can play a ball to anywhere in the court, but play them to remain in the Inner Court, bounded by an imaginary line joining the four outer hoops.

HOUSEKEEPING : 1 : After each Innings that has ended by a ball running a hoop, move the balls back onto the Boundary Line, in a 'housekeeping' process. Balls near a Hoop, not closer than a meter. You will soon enjoy utilising the two ball shot to tidy up as you go, as you learn the two ball shots, and may eventually play with that as a Rule.

Later, if both players are equally experienced, you can both agree to allow balls to remain in the Outer Court, even on the yard line. This makes for challenging situations to test out a player's ability to get balls off borders.

2 : After a hoop is run, if there is no ball within 3 metres of the centre Peg, the ball (other than the next to play) which is the furthest from the next contested hoop should be hit by the Opponent to within 3 metres of the Peg. You can vary this rule as you wish, but it later develops into the Double Puzzle.

COURT MARKING : You might paint circles at 2 and 3 metres from the Peg, and a 'perforated' line from Hoop One to Two, Two to Three, Three to Four and Four to One.

DEGREES OF DIFFICULTY : GROWTH FACTORS

You can also see that the number of take offs and the boundary of play can be varied between agreeing players. Add some challenge this way. Gradually, a player will find they need only one take off per innings.

So too, what Towards the Peg means can change as you get skills and experience.

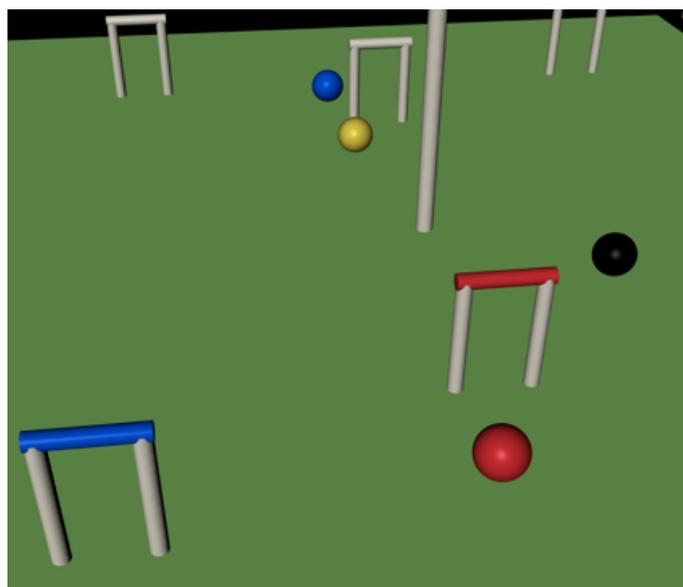
SINGLE PUZZLE SITUATION FOR PLAYERS NEW TO TWO BALL SHOTS OR NEW TO MALLETSports :

CONTEST FOR HOOP ONE :

All two ball shots can be Take offs.

SOLVE THE PUZZLE : HOW DO I GET BLUE TO HOOP ONE AND RUN IT ?

Work out pathway.

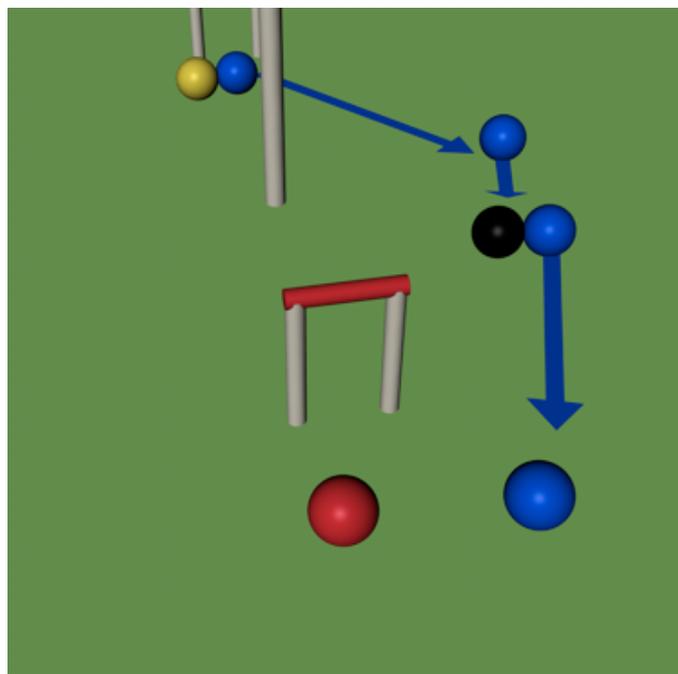


SHOT ONE : contact two ball shot : Blue

takes off from Yellow towards Black

SHOT TWO : one ball shot : Blue hits black

SHOT THREE : two ball shot : a take off from Black towards Red



SHOT FOUR : one ball shot : to rush/stun the Red ball to the hoop

SHOT FIVE : two ball shot : Blue takes off from Red at hoop to put Blue in front

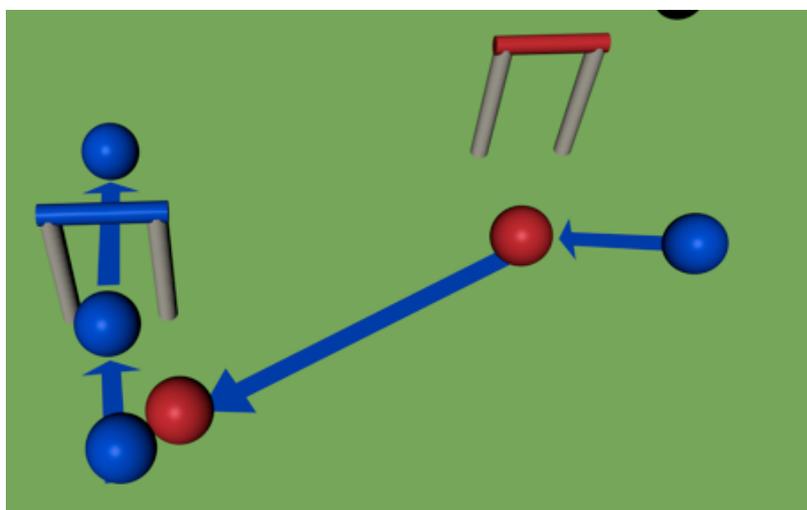
SHOT SIX : one ball shot : Blue runs hoop.

Now Red's Turn:

AFTER A HOOP IS RUN, CHECK HOUSEKEEPING IF NEEDED

The Puzzle is the pathway for Hoop 2, the next Contest.

If Blue did not run the hoop, Red would pick up and take contact, probably from Yellow.





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End of turn occurs after a full innings or if a target hit is missed, or if there is an error or fault in the two ball shot.

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Puzzle Croquet is just like Association Croquet, but one hoop is contested at a time, and 'Contact' ensures you get into the game.

(Normally, this sequence is expressed as 'the one ball shot entitles the player to two extra shots, a two ball and a further one ball, which in turn can entitle the player to two more shots, so long as there is no miss or fault'. Puzzle croquet assumes you will complete the sequence, and does not put it the normal way, though the resulting innings is the same.)

FOR ASSOCIATION PLAYERS, A COACHED EXPERIENCE MAKES LEARNING PUZZLE VERY QUICK. HOWEVER, 'PROGRAM TWO', A FULL SELF COACHING COURSE OF PUZZLE CROQUET AND A PROGRAM FOR ASSOCIATION CROQUET PLAYERS ARE AVAILABLE AS AN ADDITIONAL AIDES.

DOUBLE PUZZLE SITUATION FOR PLAYERS WHO KNOW TWO BALL SHOTS:

CONTEST FOR HOOP 1

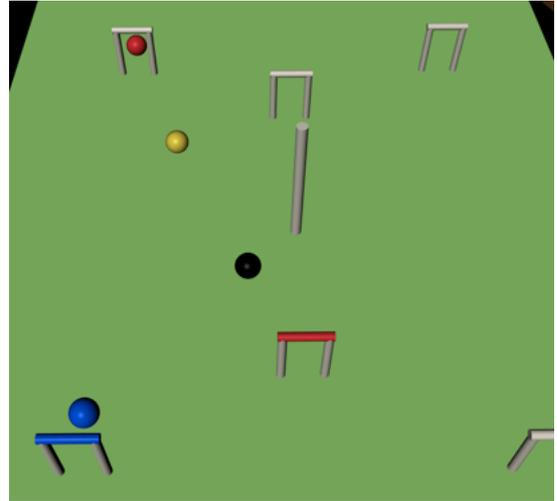
Degree of Difficulty : One Take-off only

SOLVE THE PUZZLES: BLUE PLAYS.

Puzzle 1 : Find the pathway to Hoop One.

Puzzle 2 : Put a ball towards the Peg.

Work out pathway.



PLAN : A flat shot to put Red to Peg and get rush on Yellow.

Rush/stun the Yellow to the Black, stop shot to ensure the rush on Black, and use that as Transport to the front of Hoop One, where a take off or classic hoop approach would be made.

Illustrated :

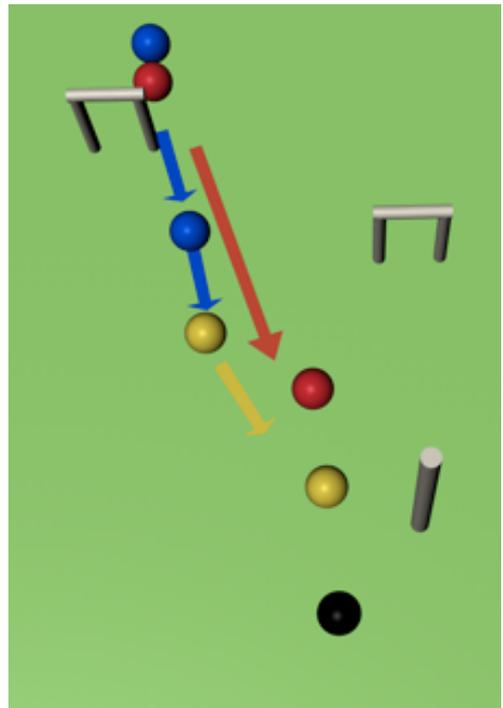
SHOT ONE : contact two ball shot, to move both balls.

Red towards Peg, and Blue goes to Yellow

SHOT TWO : one ball shot, rush Yellow

to use it as Transport towards Black

SHOT THREE : two ball shot - take off to get Rush on Black

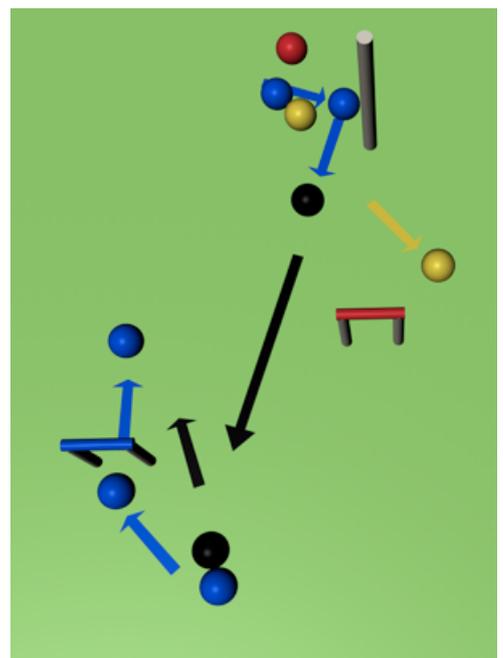


Illustrated :

SHOT FOUR : one ball shot : Blue rushes Black to the hoop

SHOT FIVE : two ball shot : say, a hoop approach

SHOT SIX : one ball shot : Blue runs the Hoop.



NOW RED'S TURN :

AFTER A HOOP IS RUN,

CHECK FOR HOUSEKEEPING IF NEEDED

Whether or not Blue runs the hoop, it has finished the sequence and Red has Contact.

As Blue did run Hoop 1, Red has Contact on any ball, and, using all balls, finds a pathway to Hoop 2.

Q : What ball would Red take contact from ?

A : Probably the Blue.

Q : What if Blue hadn't run the hoop ?

A : Then Red tries for Hoop One and probably, puts Red to Yellow, uses Black and Hoop Approaches off Blue.

ON TOWARDS ASSOCIATION GROQUET GATEBALL

***CAN I PUT THE CROQUETED
BALL TO PEG ?
CAN I PLAY OUTSIDE THE INNER
COURT ?
CAN I PLAY RIGHT INTO
BORDERS ?
CAN I DO PEELS ?***

BECAUSE PUZZLE CROQUET CAN GROW WITH YOU, PLAYERS OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE CAN PLAY EACH OTHER :

Instead of getting 'bisques' in the traditional way, which are sometimes of little real value, two people of differing abilities can play, because they play slightly different strategic games, of differing puzzle complexity - at levels which suit their experience and competence.

Where an experienced croquet player plays a less experienced player, they can decide at which level each player plays - Single puzzle or Double puzzle. Peeling a ball in the Triple Puzzle can be a level of play required for a very experienced player. This is a challenging level of play !

The levels of Experience and the levels of Puzzle are :

New to Two Ball shots or new to Malletsports : Single Puzzle Only : solve and play one puzzle : this player can do three take off shots, till gradually, the take offs are reduced as skill with two ball shots grows. The degree of difficulty here will be gradually reducing the number of take offs, till there is only one in a turn. (Program One)

Advanced: this player knows two ball shots : Double Puzzle, with degrees of difficulty increasing between equal competence players : allowing only one take off in a sequence, expecting tidying up in the two ball shots, or allowing balls to be left in the Outer Court, or even on borders. (Great practice for getting balls out and establishing breaks.) Players choose and agree. (Program Two)

Expert level : Triple puzzle : a player must peel a ball, say every two hoops, or even every hoop, and between two such players, there can be points for peel of first, second or third ball. (3, 2, 1).

THE JOURNEY TO ASSOCIATION CROQUET CONTINUES :

Puzzle Croquet can appeal to new members, existing players of both Golf Croquet and Association Croquet. Learning to play Association Croquet may be best achieved by a period of Puzzle Croquet and Golf Croquet, then periods of learning the 4 ball break for its own interest, and maybe learning Captaincy of a Gateball Team. Then, a player is ready for Association Croquet in a graduated system of Equal Shot Croquet, and Tournament level Association Croquet Games.

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Because of the different levels in Puzzle Croquet, players can share a game or a tournament :

THE EQUALISER FOR PLAYERS OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SKILL OR EXPERIENCE :

	OPPONENT					
	New to 2 ball shots		Advanced		Expert	
New	Player	Opponent	Player	Opponent	Player	Opponent
P	Single	Single	Single	Double	Single	Triple
L	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle
A	3 T/off	3 T/off	3 T/off	1 T/off	3 T/off	1 T/off
Y	Inner	Inner	Inner	Inner	Inner	Inner
E	Court	Court	Court	Court	Court	Court
R						
Advanced						
	Player	Opponent	Player	Opponent	Player	Opponent
P	Double	Single	Double	Double	Double	Triple
L	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle
A	1 T/off	3 T/off	1 T/off	1 T/off	1 T/off	1 T/off
Y	Inner	Inner	Inner	Inner	Choice	Choice
E	Court	Court	Court	Court	Court	Court
R						
Expert						
	Player	Opponent	Player	Opponent	Player	Opponent
P	Triple	Single	Triple	Double	Triple	Triple
L	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle	Puzzle
A	1 T/off	3 T/off	1 T/off	1 T/off	1 T/off	1 T/off
Y	Inner	Inner	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice
E	Court	Court	Court	Court	Court	Court
R					Choose :	No of Peels to Hoops
					Choose :	Score for 1,2,3 peel

Notes : for Doubles, Seed experienced player as Captain in team
If Equal, then each plays Captain to the Shot
Doubles is Alternate Shot.

Split a Singles Tournament into two groups New, and Advanced and Expert. If numbers are high, three groups.

Play 6 or 12 hoops, plus Peg.
A well contested game will have a score of say, 6/6.

“Towards Peg” in Double Puzzle can mean 1 : OK to take off 2 : Must move the ball at least outside chosen radius, and return it 3 : (the default standard) Must change color of ball in the chosen radius (2 or 3 Metres.)