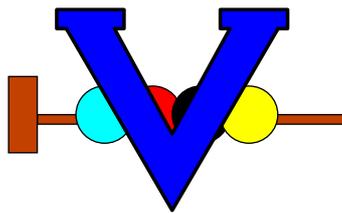


**Victorian Croquet Association**

# **Growing croquet in Victoria**

**Resources for clubs and regions**

**Compiled by the  
VCA Marketing and Publicity  
sub-committee**

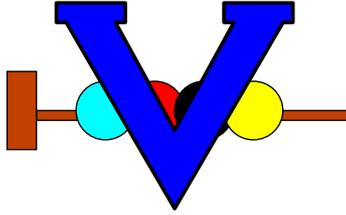


These resources are being developed to support clubs and regions in their local publicity efforts, as part of a concerted attempt to attract new members to croquet. They have been put together by the Marketing and Publicity Sub-committee of the Victorian Croquet Association Council.

The sub-committee's job is to promote the sport of croquet across Victoria. Our meetings with Regional Associations in 2015/16 have added new ideas and materials to these resources. More suggestions would be most welcome. Contact [marketing@croquetvic.asn.au](mailto:marketing@croquetvic.asn.au).

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## **Why does your club need to grow?**

Some clubs may be sailing along quite nicely, perhaps with a few dedicated members who enjoy the game. However without the influx of new members the future of the club may be in jeopardy.

What would happen to the club in the future as aging and ailing members retire?

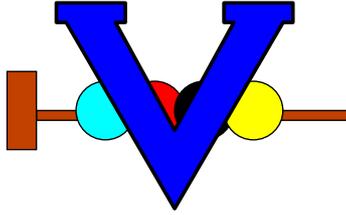
Is it desirable for the club to simply close its doors? Of course not!

To maintain a healthy club competitively and financially a steady flow of new memberships is imperative.

## **How can you help your club grow?**

Let's start with the club committee.

It's been suggested to us that a club committee should try to spend at least half its meeting dedicated to strategic planning and no more than half on administration. The club needs direction and goals, brainstorming and sharing ideas, developing them and working out how to put them into action. This might involve meeting with other clubs or your regional committee. The club should be open to change and up to date with all legislation to give an optimal, professional image to prospective members and the community.



## Strategic planning

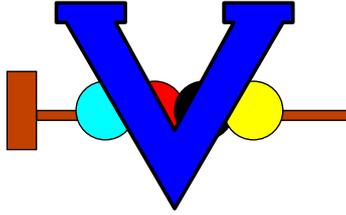
In building your club, you may find it useful to go through the formal steps of developing a strategic plan.

If you want to do this, start with a club or committee meeting where you brainstorm your present situation. What are the club's strengths and weaknesses? What are the opportunities and strengths in its environment (think the local community, the region, the VCA, local government, state government, potential sponsors and associates).

Then decide on three or four priorities. What is happening that you would like to maintain? Where does the club need to develop? How many members would you ideally like to have? Your priorities are the basis of your strategic plan. Take a time frame (three years is useful) and set yourselves a couple of goals for each priority – what you would like to achieve by the end of three years. That takes you to the nitty gritty: the actions, timelines, and responsibilities which will enable you to achieve your goals.

It may help to form a subcommittee to take charge of following the plan and reporting to the club committee. Delegation is key. It is not a committee problem, it is the responsibility of all members.

The VCA's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 includes some objectives and strategies which are relevant to clubs. You can download this from the VCA website – go to <http://www.croquetvic.asn.au/governance.php>.



## Using courses for recruitment

A number of clubs have been very successful in recruiting members through running introductory courses that last several weeks (five, six, even twelve). Some example course outlines are included in a section at the end of this resource, along with names of other clubs to contact. All the organisers have indicated that they would be happy to provide more information and materials to interested clubs.

Involving informed players and coaches in these courses helps to give newcomers a consistent introduction to the game. Ask your Regional Committee for help if you need to, they can organise support from players and coaches in your area. We are all part of croquet and no club has to stand alone. Accredited coaches are listed on the VCA website. Currently listed coaches in your region are shown overleaf (though note, this list is probably incomplete).

You might advertise a beginners' course separately, or use it as a follow up to your promotional events. You could talk with your local library or neighbourhood house and get their support for putting on a daytime (or twilight) course for interested locals. Other advertising options would include word of mouth, through posters in your local neighbourhood, or via your local University of the Third Age (if you have one). Whichever approach you take, you will have participants who have signed up to learn something new and your club will be ready to help the newcomers.

Remember courses and fundraisers are two separate things - be prepared to offer these courses at a low cost.

## Accredited coaches

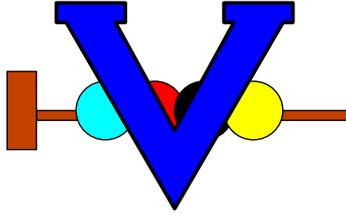
### Example: South Western Croquet Association

In 2015, hard copy of this page in *Growing Croquet* was customised by region, with information taken from the most recent listing on the VCA website:

[croquetvic.asn.au/refscoaches.php](http://croquetvic.asn.au/refscoaches.php).

This example shows information which was accessed on 1 February 2016. The online version of *Growing Croquet* will provide a direct link so that the information is always current.

Club	ACA ID	First name	Surname	Coach	
				AC	GC
Hamilton	7994	Cicely	Fenton	B	
	3022	Lesley	Hobbs	B	
	3717	Doris	Lanyon	B	
Koroit	6055	Gwen	Sicely	B	
Portland	1102	Jean	Chapple	B	
	8009	Val	Hogan	B	
	3489	Helen	Keltie	B	
	12672	Lorna	Lakey	B	
	14148	Jan	Logan	B	
	12981	Pat	Punch	B	
	11104	Dot	Rowe	B	
	12980	Joy	Simpson	B	
	12333	Bruce	Uhe	B	
Terang	3192	Catherine	Humphrey	B	
Warrnambool	7807	Carmel	Hughes	B	
	3485	Ian	Kelson	B	
	3486	Margaret	Kelson	B	
	4329	Barbara	McKean	B	
	7719	Russell	Worland	B	
	7802	Kerri	Worland	B	

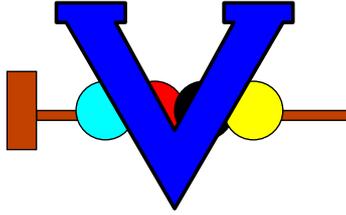


## **Club promotions**

To promote your club you need to be positive, upbeat and grasp every opportunity you can to keep up your profile in the community. Holding events for charities can be a great way to raise the profile of your club in the community.

- You can hold a morning tea for Pink Ribbon Day - remember most local media outlets will help promote events for charity for free.
- A Croquet and Crèche morning for Red Nose Day or the Royal Children's Hospital Good Friday Appeal is another way of getting young mothers in the community involved.
- One off events for Opening of the Season or Social Days can also be open to the community.

Your event could incorporate a sausage sizzle or afternoon tea. Think about what attracts people to other functions held in your community. How were these promoted?



## Writing a press release

Tips from the Public Relations Institute of Australia

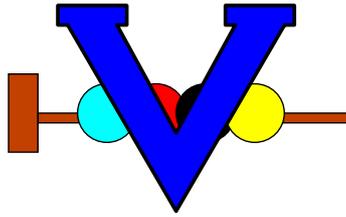
1. **Put on a journalist's hat:** The press releases that will get the most traction from journalists are written in classic, journalistic style. Start the release with a strong (non-sales-y) lead that answers some of the basic questions of your message such as who, what, when, where and how, and go from there.
2. **Lose the superlatives:** Using lofty terms—"leading" being one of the main culprits—is still a chronic problem in press releases. "Solution" is another term that's used frequently and gives reporters and editors pause; better to use vernacular that doesn't draw attention to itself and/or cause the ire of media reps, but, rather, demonstrates that you're familiar with the intricacies of the market.
3. **Include some salient quotes:** Not just comments from your CEO or CFO on the benefits of the product and/or service that you are writing about but quotes from partners, suppliers and customers who can testify on how the product and/or service can help consumers or, if it's a B2B company, how the information in the release can help someone do his or her job better.
4. **Keep it short:** Reporters and editors are notoriously time-poor, so when writing press releases choose your words very carefully. Be somewhat surgical with quotes. Ditto for any statistics and/or metrics that you may want to put into the release to help substantiate your message.
5. **Put your contact information in a prominent place:** It's a no-brainer to put your name and contact information in a prominent place on the news release, such as the upper left hand-corner, but we're often amazed at how many press releases lack this basic information. Without it, you're not only telling the reporter to lose the release but it also suggests you may be hiding from something.

See next page for a sample press release.

Source: <http://www.pria.com.au/priablog/5-tips-to-follow-when-writing-press-releases>

## Annotated sample press release

Press release content	Notes
	Organisation logo.
<p><b>PRESS RELEASE</b> 19 April 2015 For immediate release</p>	<p>Standard heading</p> <p>Release date and details (embargo date if any)</p>
<p><b>Croquet regionals down to the wire</b> Victorian Croquet Centre, Cairnlea, Victoria</p>	<p>A heading aimed at capturing attention</p> <p>Location</p>
<p>It was neck and neck in the weekend’s competition between eleven Victorian regional croquet associations for the Lefel Shield. In the end Geelong, with a total of 192 hoops, pipped four other associations. Runners up were Gippsland. Western Metropolitan, Ballarat, and Goulburn Valley were close behind.</p>	Who what where why when
<p>Tournament manager Lorraine Gutcher, who hails from Gippsland, says, “People travelled to Melbourne from as far apart as Portland, Wangaratta, Albury, Sale, Boort and Horsham – many of them came a long way to represent their regions. A lot of friendships are fostered over this weekend between people who just see each other once a year on this one occasion.”</p>	Quote. Role of person quoted identified.
<p>Eleven three-member teams at all levels of the game competed for individual success in three sections, with the Lefel Shield awarded to the region with the most hoops at the end of the competition.</p>	Detail
<p>The successful Geelong team members all came from one club, Geelong Eastern Park, including the winner of section 1, Bob Roycroft. Bob is also an accomplished Association Croquet player.</p> <p>Bob says, ““Four years ago we only had two active members of this club. We’ve managed to recruit twenty odd keen players and the results are there. That’s been good. It’s a rags to riches story for us. We were quite chuffed about it all.”</p>	Point of interest. Quote. Person quoted is identified.
<p>The Victorian Croquet Association is the peak body for croquet in Victoria, with 13 member regional associations, 91 clubs and a membership of over 2600 players.</p>	Standard para about the organisation providing the information.
<p>Further information: Kate Patrick, Director, Victorian Croquet Association croquetvic.asn.au 0403 108 215 (m) katepatrickoz@gmail.com</p>	Contact details for further information



## Newspaper listings

Hard copy of *Growing Croquet* distributed in 2015 included a customised listing of newspapers and press contact details for clubs by region. The example on the following page is for South Western.

The information was compiled from newspapers.com.au and Leader newspaper listings and was last updated on 17 April 2015.

The online version of *Growing Croquet* will include a downloadable PDF listing local newspapers by region.

It would be helpful if regions could notify any changes to the Marketing and Publicity Committee so that we can update this document. Please email [marketing@croquetvic.asn.au](mailto:marketing@croquetvic.asn.au) .

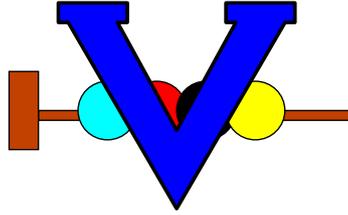
.

## Newspaper contact details

### Example: South Western CA

Casterton
Casterton News
76 Henty St Casterton3311
5581 1177
Hamilton
Hamilton Spectator
59 Grey St Hamilton 3300
5572 1011
Koroit
The Standard
170-176 Koroit St
Warrnambool 3280
03 5563 1800
Portland
Portland Observer
170-176 Koroit St
Warrnambool 3280
03 5563 1800
Terang
Corangamite Extra
170-176 Koroit St
Warrnambool 3280
03 5563 1800
Warrnambool
The Standard
170-176 Koroit St
Warrnambool 3280
03 5563 1800

Newspaper listings revised 17 April 2015.



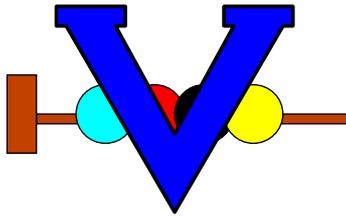
## **Planning a promotional event**

It is important to identify the people you are trying to attract to your club and then focus your event to suit the demographic in that area. Get to know your local media. Invite your local newspaper to do an article about your event. Most local papers are looking for community events to report on. Some radio stations allow free advertising for community events so check if that is available. Create a poster and a press release – see attached examples.

Always try to make the event fun, focus on fun activities as well as game play. We have included examples of some fun exercises in the attachment section. Give lots of small prizes for achievements such as longest hoop, best stop shot and longest roquet.

Once you have decided what type of event you want to run, set a date for about six months ahead. Then check that there are no conflicting events within croquet or the local community. Decide how you will promote your event and get some quotes. Work out your financial requirements then do some fundraising or apply for a grant if you need to.

Invite important locals about three months before the event, eg the mayor, local member, local councillors, local personalities. One month before put up posters and distribute flyers. Contact your local newspaper (see list in Attachment) and radio stations. Radio stations will read out community announcements if you send them one. Make sure you include your contact details.



## **Conducting your promotion**

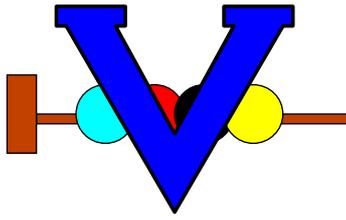
When welcoming the visitors give them a name badge and get some personal details. Make sure all participants register and give phone and or e-mail. Ask club members to have their name badge on as well.

Learning something new can cause embarrassment so make sure you pair them with the same club member for the day and encourage them along.

Have the club suitably decorated to add a sense of occasion. Decide what format you are going with, Golf croquet or Aussie. Children respond to Aussie as they all get to run hoops so keep that in mind if there are families or schools involved. It is very difficult to learn Association in a one off event.

Make sure you have a feedback form for them to fill out. It is important to find out what they liked and what they didn't for the future.

A week or so after the event contact them, this is best done by the club member who assisted them on the day of the event. Give them important information about club days etc, and invite them for morning tea or see if they are interested in a free course of coaching for beginners. Sell your club with confidence so you make joining an exciting prospect for new members. If they seem undecided ask if you can contact them again for future club events and then make sure you send a personal invitation to any club functions so that they get a sense of social interaction, they may feel more comfortable joining for social reasons rather than sport to begin with.



## **Opening of the Season**

Holding an Opening of the Season is a perfect way to invite the community into your club or region.

Choose a date early in the croquet season. Try to make it a weekend to maximise community involvement. Three months beforehand find a local personality or government official to run the first hoop of the season. One month before put up posters and distribute flyers. Start advertising in local media.

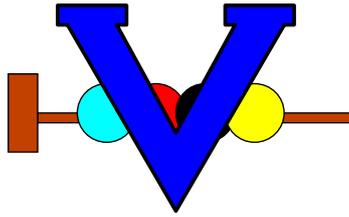
Make it family friendly, with games for the children and goodie bags, balloons etc.

A sausage sizzle at lunch is always a crowd pleaser.

Have some exhibition games in progress during the day as well as novelty games. Some ideas are listed later in this resource pack.

If this is a regional event make sure you have representation from all clubs in your region. Provide information about each club along with a free information package compiled by the region with input from all clubs.

Make sure you have plenty of advertising for up-coming events and training programs in your region or club.



## **Social days**

In most regions social days are conducted throughout the year for both Golf Croquet and Association Croquet. These are usually held on regular club days and all clubs within a region are invited. It is a perfect time to get to know other affiliated members within your region.

These days should have a casual feel about them and are aimed at the members who like social play and don't enter into tournaments.

However social days can be open to a wider section of the community if run a certain way.

You can have a Bring a Friend day on a social day especially for Golf Croquet. This is an opportunity for members to introduce their friends to the croquet community and give them a chance to see an organized croquet day without the stress of serious competition.

During school holidays you can have a Childrens day for Aussie croquet. This is an opportunity to bring your children or grandchildren along for a fun day of Aussie. Plan some kid friendly food such as hot dogs and chips. Have some prizes and goodie bags ready for a full day of fun. Make sure that the children attending have a supervising adult or you will have to organize Working With Children checks for some members.

See next two pages for the rules of Aussie Croquet. These are followed by rules for some less formal mallet sports games for social days.

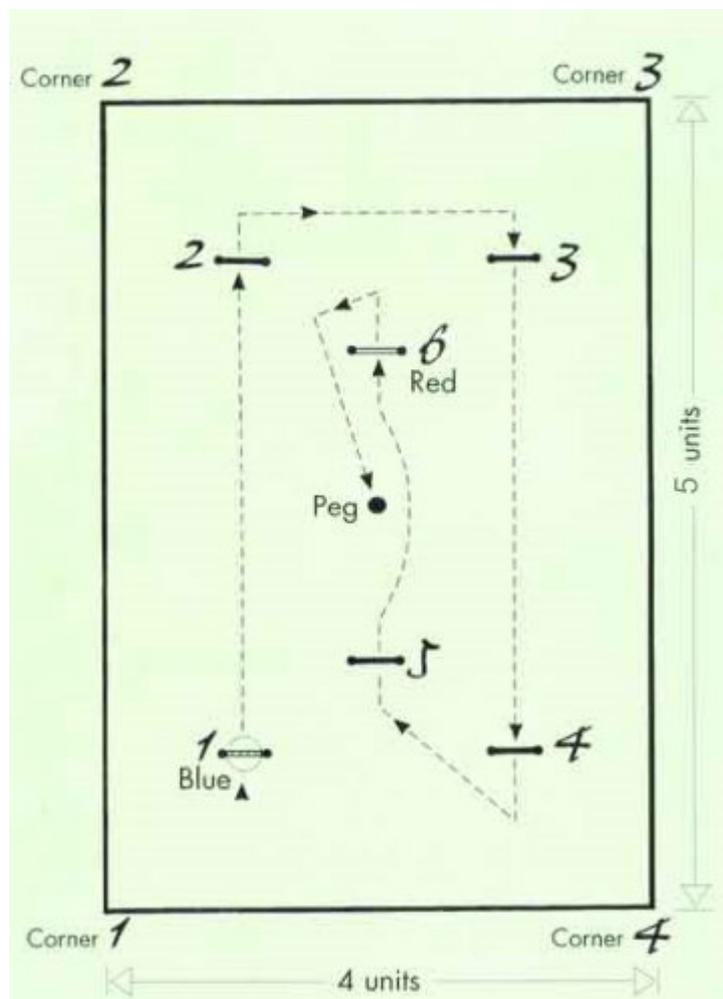


## AUSSIE CROQUET

Get with Croaky the frog and Play Aussie Croquet

### ***How to Set Out an Aussie Croquet Court***

The hoops and peg are laid out as for Association Croquet.



If you do not have room for a full court then you can scale it down. Use five units for the length, and four for the width. The corner hoops (1 to 4) are one unit from each boundary; hoops 5 and 6 one unit either side of the peg.

### ***The Course***

The path along which your ball has to travel starts with hoop 1 (the blue-topped one) and has to follow the set order through to hoop 6, and then hit the centre peg. The dotted line and arrows on the diagram show the direction each ball must go to score each hoop.

# ***How to Play Aussie Croquet***

## **To Start the Game**

- Four players
- Choose partners
- Toss a coin to decide which pair go first
- BLUE and BLACK play against RED and YELLOW
- The partners winning the toss play with BLUE and BLACK
- Each player plays the same colour ball for the whole game
- The order you play is painted on the peg: BLUE, BLACK, RED and YELLOW

Time allowed is 30 minutes.

## **To Score**

Count one point for every hoop each ball runs through in order and one for hitting the peg. The winners are the team with the highest score.

## **To Play**

Starting: Place each ball in turn halfway through the first hoop for an easy start.

Each turn is only ONE hit ... *unless you earn an extra hit!* An *extra hit* is earned when you:

- hit your ball through the next hoop in order
- when you hit any of the other three balls with your ball. (You can only hit each other ball once per turn unless you go through the next hoop - then you can hit them all again.)

If you hit two balls in the same stroke, the hit on the first ball is the only one that counts.

If a ball scores a hoop and continues on to hit another ball, the hoop score counts and the player gets only one extra stroke for hitting the ball after the hoop is scored.

If a ball goes over the boundary it is measured in the length of a mallet (36 inches).

## **Some tactics**

- Your partner or opponent can hit your ball through your hoop - you score the point.
- You can hit your opponent back out of a hoop if they've not gone all the way through.
- Your ball can go through the hoop the wrong way to get to the right side - but it doesn't score a point.
- You can hit your partner ball into a better position - or an opponent ball out of position.
- You can gently hit your ball into, or off the sides of, the other three balls to finally position your ball to go through a hoop.

Source: <http://www.croquet-australia.com.au/Kids/> Accessed 19 April 2015.

## Mallet sports games for social days

These games are designed for play between teams of 2 or 4 people. If this doesn't work for you, just adjust the number of balls in the game.

Most of the games can be played by beginners. \*Asterisked games are probably not for beginners.

If you take a competitive approach, suggest that players keep a note of their team name and their scores.

Aim to have someone on hand to advise on the rules of each game. People don't always read instructions.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Helter Skelter

**Aim:** to strike balls through 6 hoops in sequence and peg out.

**Equipment and set-up:** Small court standard setup, blue ball, red ball.

**Game:** Two teams of four (can be played with more or fewer).

Players in each team take shots in turn. The ball must come to rest before the next player in the team hits.

Team 1 starts with blue ball from the corner boundary near hoop 4, and heads for hoop 1 (completing 6 hoops in the order 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and then pegging out).

Team 2 starts with red ball on boundary corner near hoop 2 and heads for hoop 3 (completing 6 hoops in the order 3, 4, 1, 2, 6, 5 and then pegging out).

Teams start at the same time.

Players can hit their ball against the opponents' ball to send it off course.

**Winning team:** Team which hits the peg first.

**Conclusion of challenge:** Balls are returned to their respective starting corners.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Peg hit simultaneously by both teams – 1 point to each team.

### Eggs in a Basket

**Aim:** To strike the ball into the inner circle from an outer circle.

**Equipment and set-up:** Concentric circles 2m and 5 m from peg, marked with custard powder. 2 sets of balls (primary and secondary).

**Game:** Two teams of two players. Each player has two balls. Team 1 plays with primary colours, Team 2 plays with secondary colours. Teams and players take alternate shots from any point on the outer circle and try to hit their ball into the inner circle.

*It is permissible to hit an opponent's ball so it is moved out of the circle. It is also permissible to hit a team ball to push it into the circle.*

**Winning team:** Team with most balls in the circle after all eight balls have been played.

**Conclusion of challenge:** Place balls on the start corner of the court.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets one point.

# Mallet sports games for social days

## Croquet Bobs

**Aim:** Hit balls through the arches in the frame, from between markers on a line.

**Equipment and set-up:** Nine 9" hoops with hanging numbers 6--19--1--25--2--18--5--15--14, arranged along a boundary line with baulk boards behind them. Line marked 12m in from hoops. Peg at each end of line.

Two sets of 4 balls in primary and secondary colours.

**Game:** Four consecutive shots for each player. Teams alternate. Record the score for each arch cleared by a ball (hanging number must return to vertical). Balls that do not pass through the arch are removed.

**Winning team:** Team with highest score after tallying.

**Conclusion of challenge:** Balls are replaced on line.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets 1 point.

## Gateball Tunnel

**Aim:** To run all hoops with one stroke of a mallet

**Equipment and set-up:** 6 gateball hoops lined up at 5m intervals along the length of the court, 4 balls placed on the boundary line.

**Game:** Four consecutive shots for each player. Teams alternate. Each player attempts to run as many hoops as possible in a single shot. Record the number of hoops cleared each time and tally the total for each player and then each team.

**Winning team:** Team with highest score after tallying.

**Conclusion of challenge:** Balls are replaced on the line.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets 1 point.

## Croquet Tunnel

**Aim:** To run all hoops with one stroke of a mallet

**Equipment and set-up:** 6 hoops lined up at 5 cm intervals. 2 balls for each player.

**Game:** Two consecutive shots for each player. Teams alternate. Each player places their ball just in front of the first hoop and attempts to run as many hoops as possible in a single shot. Record the number of hoops cleared each time, and tally the total for each player and then each team.

**Winning team:** Team with highest score after tallying.

**Conclusion of challenge:** Balls are replaced on the line.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets 1 point.

# Mallet sports games for social days

## Skittles

**Aim:** To knock over skittles with long croquet shots.

**Equipment and set-up:** Five skittles placed on marked spot 12m from boundary line, one set of balls placed on boundary.

**Game:** Four consecutive shots for each player with teams alternating. Record the number of skittles knocked over by each player. Skittles are replaced after each player's turn finishes.

**Winning team:** Team that knocks over most skittles.

**Tidying up:** Return balls to boundary line. Replace skittles on markers.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets 1 point.

## Tennis

**Aim:** To have as long a rally as possible hitting between white pegs placed 3 balls apart.

**Equipment and set-up:** For each pair of players:

Two pegs placed in ground 3 balls apart, 1 peg at start lines 6m (or chosen distance) either side of pegs, 1 ball.

**Game:** In pairs: players from Team 1 hit to each other, players from Team 2 hit to each other.

First player from Team 1 plays from one side of the pegs on the start line and tries to hit between the two pegs in the centre to the second Team 1 player on the other side of the pegs on the other start line.

Players from Team 2 do the same separately.

Count how many times the ball is hit between the central pegs without hitting either peg (length of rally).

**Winning team:** Team that has the longest rally.

**Tidying up:** Return balls to marked lines.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets 1 point.

## The Best of Thirteen (small court)

**Aim:** to make maximum number of hoops in order in 13 strokes. Limited to 6 hoops plus hitting the peg.

**Equipment and set-up:** B court with standard set-up. Blue ball (Team 1) and red ball (Team 2). 6 blue and 6 red hoop clips.

**Game:** Two teams of two or four. Players in each team take turns to play. Team 1 starts from corner near hoop 1 (blue ball). Team 2 starts from the same spot when Team 1 has gone through hoop 2 (red ball).

Each team can make only 13 strokes altogether. Number of strokes to be counted by the team. Team puts hoop clips on hoops as they are made.

**Winning team:** Team which runs the most hoops with their 13 strokes.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets 1 point.

**Tidying up:** Return the balls to the starting corner.

## Mallet sports games for social days

### \*Speed Croquet

*Requires running*

**Aim:** to strike balls through 6 hoops in sequence and peg out.

**Equipment:** Standard setup, blue, red, black and yellow balls.

**Game:** Blue and black are partners, red and yellow are partners. Can be played as singles or doubles.

Play is in the sequence Blue Red Black Yellow.

Blue hits off from the corner boundary near hoop 4, and heads for hoop 1. May then take another two shots provided the ball is still moving. If the third shot runs the hoop the player has another 3 shots to make the next hoop.

Once the ball stops it is end of turn. If 3 shots are taken without a hoop it is end of turn.

Once hoop 6 is run the player has only one shot per turn.

Players can hit their ball to knock away the opponents' ball.

**Winning team:** Team which hits the peg first with BOTH their balls.

**Tidying up:** Return the balls to the starting corner.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets 1 point.

### \*Bull's Eye

**Aim :** split shot to send each ball to separate target points – targets being two sets of concentric circles with a bull's eye in centre of each.

**Equipment and set-up:** Two primary balls (Team 1) and two secondary balls (Team 2). B court (no hoops).

Starting point at the centre of the long boundary, marked with a white peg. On either side of the centre of the court, two concentric circles and a central bullseye drawn with custard powder, with the bullseyes at about a 45° angle from the starting point.

**Game:** Two teams with two players in each team. Teams and players alternate to take split shots aiming to send a ball to the centre of each circle.

Note score after each turn. Score 3 for a bulls eye, 2 for a ball in the inner circle and 1 for a ball in the outer circle. Balls touching a line score low (if touching the outer circle, score is zero).

Remove balls before next turn is taken.

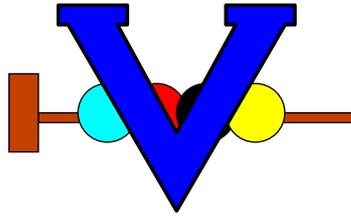
Three turns per player.

**Winning team:** Team with more total points.

**Scoring:** Winning team – 2 points. Equal score – each team gets 1 point.

**Tidying up:** Return the balls to the starting corner.

*Sources: EMCA Bear's Cup; Brunswick Challenge Day.*



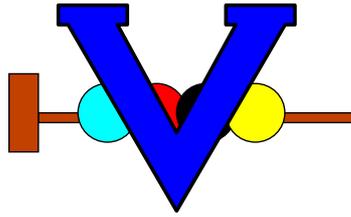
## **Incorporating Association Croquet and Golf Croquet**

Some clubs and regions have problems with Golf Croquet and Association Croquet players integrating. There are some clubs where Association and Golf Croquet players never meet let alone play together. If your club or region has this problem, all members can help overcome the divide.

Perhaps your club has social days for Golf Croquet and Association Croquet but very few days designed to incorporate the two games. You could hold a Social Day pairing the Golf and Association players together, this will ensure that they get to know each other. They could play AC doubles with the AC players taking the two ball shots. Alternatively they could play Ricochet - or you could ask your region to hold Ricochet tournaments or even a pennant.

If the great divide is a regional problem, with some clubs Association only and some clubs Golf Croquet only, you may want to run a joint competition over a number of weeks. The Meadows Croquet Club in Scotland runs a Midweek League incorporating the two games. They form a team of one association and one golf croquet player, who play an association doubles and then a best of three golf croquet games. The association game counts as one rubber and the best of three golf croquet games counts as the other rubber. At the end of the competition season the team with the most rubbers wins (if teams are equal on rubbers, they use a hoop count back).

It is important to consider running joint competitions if croquet is to thrive. Remember we are all croquet players and we are all croquet members and we all want our sport to be recognized as an exciting and challenging game for all ages and abilities.



## Beginner course outlines

Examples from

(a) Monash – contact John van der Touw, 9803 3433,  
[jvandert@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jvandert@bigpond.net.au)

(b) Brunswick – contact Kate Patrick, 0403 108 215, [bmscshare@gmail.com](mailto:bmscshare@gmail.com)

(c) MCC – contact Helen Worlidge, 9885 1832, [helenbw@gmail.com](mailto:helenbw@gmail.com)

(d) Mornington – contact Colin Martin, 9787 1039, [martinvine@tpg.com.au](mailto:martinvine@tpg.com.au)

Other clubs running five or six week introductory programs include:

Essendon (U3A class) – contact Dot Dickson, 9379 1463,  
[dotdickson@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dotdickson@optusnet.com.au)

Sandringham (U3A class) – contact Joan Ford, 9558 3076,  
[fjorde@bigpond.com](mailto:fjorde@bigpond.com)

# Monash CC: Introductory course outline

## **Lesson 1**

### **Introduction**

The Monash Croquet Club and its members. Brief history of croquet.

Forms of croquet: Association and Golf Croquet

Equipment: Mallet, balls, hoops and the court

### **Where and when to play**

Other clubs: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia and The World

Playing socially & playing competitively. Playing times.

### **Basics of playing croquet**

Grip, stance & swing

Striking a ball: The five important things

Position and order of the hoops

Golf croquet: just enough about the rules to get you going

*Play a game*

## **Lesson 2**

### **Croquet court**

Standard size: The A court and the B court. Position and order of the hoops and the peg.

### **Basic shot options**

Taking position; Clearing another ball; Running a hoop

How hard should you hit: direction and distance

### **Basic rules of golf croquet**

The object of the game. Singles and doubles. How to start a game.

When has a hoop been run?

Out of bounds

Coming through the hoop the wrong way

What happens after a hoop has been run: the offside rule

Briefly mention striking the wrong ball, striking out of turn and committing a fault.

*Play a game*

## **Lesson 3**

### **Strategy in Golf Croquet**

The basic options, e.g. attempt to run the hoop, try for position in front of the hoop, hit an opponent's ball away, promote your other ball and many more

Choosing an option.

Play the percentages: that is not the same as playing conservatively.

Strategy in a game situation (using examples)

*Play a game*

## **Lesson 4**

### **Hitting a ball away**

When to hit an opponent's ball away. A ball is a bigger target than a hoop.

How to hit them away: Stun shot, long shots, hard and soft hits, straight hits and angled hits

### **Running a hoop**

The best position for running a hoop; running a hoop from an angle; sitting in the hoop; doing an "in-off"

### **Positioning your ball to run a hoop**

Don't try to be too close: give yourself a reasonable margin for error as you place the ball

Positioning your ball from a long way in front

Positioning your ball from behind or beside the hoop

What if an opponent is poised to hit you away?

*Play a game*

## **Lesson 5**

### **Introduction to association croquet**

The object of the game

Explain: The rules of association croquet are complicated and if I tried to explain them to you in a single lesson, you would just be confused. Instead, we will do some exercises that I think you will find fun and challenging. These will involve aspects of play that would occur in a typical game of association croquet.

The croquet shot: Drive, Roll, Split-shot, Take-off. The roquet shot, and what happens after a roquet

### **Hoop approach exercise (using a drive)**

From a simple set-up: (1) do a gentle roquet; (2) take croquet; (3) play a croquet shot; (4) run the hoop; (5) roquet (the same ball) again

### **Rush and hoop approach exercise**

Similar to "hoop approach exercise" but starting from a slightly more difficult position. Try to rush the ball to a better position with the first shot.

### **Take-off, rush and hoop approach exercise**

Building on the first two exercises, this time an extra ball is involved. Roquet that ball and take-off to try to create the starting position of the previous exercise.

### **Play a game, maybe**

In the unlikely event that time permits, you could start a game of doubles.

## **Lesson 6**

### **More on the rules of golf croquet**

Striking the wrong ball or striking out of turn. Non-striking and striking faults.

Things that are not faults, but may or may not mean your turn has ended.

Handicap games. Etiquette.

### **Revision of golf croquet skills and strategy**

Cover anything listed in lessons 1 to 4 that hasn't been covered yet

Go over things that need more work

Revise topics suggested by students

*Play a game*

More information: John van der Touw, tel 9803 3433.

# Brunswick MSC: Introductory course outline

## Five week seniors croquet course: two and a half hours including tea break

### Overview

*Provide one page handout on rules; small notebook; pencil; name tags.*

#### Session 1

*Outcomes:* comfortable hitting ball. Benchmark for running 6 hoops. Enjoyment.

*Skills:* grip, stance, swing. Stalk if appropriate.

*Knowledge:* basic rules of golf (colours, pairs, sequence of balls; sequence of hoops; scoring a hoop).

*Activities:*

1. Croquet bobs – in pairs (Blue and Black, Red and Yellow), and in sequence. Practice and comp (best of 3 tries).
2. Practise hits from corner to Hoop 1.
3. Take a single ball around a B course, counting the strokes (pairs)  
BREAK
4. Play a doubles game of golf – 6 hoops, first to 4 hoops.
5. Discussion: questions, strategies, targets for next session.

#### Session 2

*Outcomes:* Improve aiming over distance. Set benchmarks for running hoop. Enjoyment.

*Skills:* grip, stance, swing, stalk. Aim at “magic spot” for hoop.

*Knowledge when required by game:* Review rules. Boundary lines. Placing a ball on the line. Offside. Introduce idea of strategic options.

*Activities:*

1. Choice of croquet bobs or skittles to practise aiming, swing
2. Tennis (hitting between two pegs 3 balls apart = hitting over the net). Count the rally length (how many times ball went through between the pegs). Move back if too easy.
3. Single ball round a B course, counting the strokes (pairs)  
BREAK
4. Hoop running round the clock, in pairs, aiming at magic spot.
5. Doubles game of golf, 6 hoops, first to 3 hoops.
6. Discussion: questions, strategies. Agree targets for next session.

#### Session 3

*Outcomes (subject to discussion):* Improve consistency of hoop running. Improve consistency of hitting target ball. Reduce number of strokes to run the course. Identify strategic options. Enjoyment.

*Skills:* grip, stance, swing, stalk. Hitting a target ball. Review “magic spot” for hoop running.

*Knowledge:* Review basic rules if necessary. Review offside. Introduce faults (double taps).

*Activities:*

1. Tennis – increased distance (pairs)
2. Single ball round a B course (teams - race)
3. Hoop running round the clock (pairs)  
BREAK
4. Doubles game on B course, first to 7
5. Discussion: questions, strategies. Agree targets for next session.

## Beginner course outlines: (b) Brunswick

### Session 4

*Outcomes (subject to discussion):* Improved approach shots. Improved accuracy. Strategic play. Enjoyment.

*Skills:* as before plus review of approach shots (stalking, stroke).

*Knowledge:* Review previous. Discuss strategies (hit away, block – considering next ball to play).

*Faults:* non-striking faults, striking faults (crush, lawn damage). Secondary colours.

*Activities:*

1. Target practice: hitting the peg from an increasing distance
2. Hoop running round the clock
3. Single ball round an A course – team race
4. Doubles game on an A course, 12 hoops, first to 7, using secondary colours.
5. Discussion: questions, strategies.

### Session 5 (final)

*Outcomes:* Strategic play. Confidence. Enjoyment. Identification of areas to work on.

*Activities*

1. Warm-up: single ball round an A course.
2. Doubles tournament on a B lawn. 3 games to 7. Note: primaries and secondaries. Primaries to sit down at 6 if 2 is not cleared.
3. Discussion: questions, strategies, goals for future.
4. Evaluation.

Additional documentation available:

Flyer advertising the course  
Detailed plan for each session  
One page summary of Golf Croquet rules (2014)  
Evaluation sheet

Contact Brunswick Mallet Sports Club at [bmscshare@gmail.com](mailto:bmscshare@gmail.com).

# Association Croquet Lesson Outlines

## MCC Croquet Club

### LESSON 1

#### In Clubhouse:

Sit newcomers down. Serve tea/coffee, apple log, etc.

Welcome to the Club – brief history, member numbers, days of play, etc.

Give a brief description of the game using blackboard and diagrams, or show a DVD, or a video on YouTube.

Try and choose mallets – point out different weights and lengths.

Collect balls – explanation of ball colours – primary, secondary, pairs.

#### On court:

Safety - never walk backwards as there is a danger of bumping a hoop, the peg, or tripping over a ball. (At some clubs there is a ditch at the edge of the court.)

Grip - Allow beginners to grip and swing mallet comfortably. If guidance is needed teach standard grip with hands together, dominant hand below other hand near top of shaft. Solomon or Irish grip may better suit some people.

Stalk – Necessary to help align feet and body when hitting every ball. **STALK EVERY BALL.**

Stance - Balanced centre stance with left foot parallel to line of swing, right foot providing balance.

Swing - Pendulum swing - pivot from the shoulders. Keep eye on middle of back of ball. Let the mallet head do the work, back swing, strike ball and **FOLLOW THROUGH.** Do not lift head.

Keep shoulders still.

**Exercises** - Single ball strokes aimed between two corner pegs three ball-widths apart.

Hoop running - Point out aiming point for hoop running – half a ball diameter in front of middle of hoop. Straight smooth swing with follow-through.

Point out court layout and hoop order then start one ball break for practice of straight single ball hitting, hoop order, hoop running and distance judgment.

*Hand-outs – Court Diagram. Coaches' contact information. Glossary.*

### LESSON 2

Quick revision – grip, stalk, stance, swing and follow through. Hoop running. One ball break.

Introduce roquet, an important shot that needs accuracy.

Practise accurate ball placement, both short and long. Use a longer back swing for greater distance.

*Hand-out – Roquet drills. Diagram of completed hoop run.*

### LESSON 3

Revision – One ball break. Roquet practice.

Introduce first croquet (two ball) stroke – take off (practise two ball strokes with balls correctly paired). Demonstrate alignment of V and aim of swing. Practise short take offs, then longer.

Thick and thin take offs.

Introduce stroke order – ROQUET, CROQUET, CONTINUATION

*Hand-out – Croquet Strokes: take off diagram, split shot diagram*

### LESSON 4

Revision – One ball break. Roquet and take-off practice.

**Introduce stop shot:** This can be used as a two ball stroke, i.e. a croquet stroke, as well as a single ball shot. Demonstrate rush roquet using stop shot technique – must be straight. Practise setting up rushes.

Introduce split shot concept. Croquet strokes can be straight or split.

**Demonstration:** Set two targets, set balls to travel to both targets. The aiming line is halfway between the targets (mark this) not half the angle.

*Hand-out – see Lesson 3*

## Beginner course outlines: (c) MCC

### LESSON 5

Warm up practice – roquets, rush roquets, take-offs, split shots.

**Introduce rolls** – Sending both balls away from player, both straight and split.

Can be 1/3, 1/2,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , equal or pass rolls.

*Hand-out – Rolls diagrams*

### LESSON 6

Short demonstration of Association Croquet game. Introduce four-ball break with fixed pivot.

(The timing of the introduction of these two aspects may need to be varied according to the calibre of participants and may not be relevant until the second set of lessons.)

**Total revision** – Grip, stalk, stance, swing; roquets; take-offs; stop shots; “roquet, croquet, continuation”; split shots and rolls.

Club House - Discuss who intends to continue on to next 6 lessons – starting to play beginner croquet.

*Hand-out – Etiquette of Croquet. Self-assessment sheet.*

### NOTE

This outline is useful to co-ordinate coaching when more than one coach is present. Lessons last for up to two hours. Define all croquet terms when instructing until beginners start to use them themselves. If participants are acquiring skills expeditiously, the program is accelerated.

We offer non-member beginners the opportunity to have a weekly practice session on top of the lessons. Attendance at this can be a useful guide to interest/enthusiasm and an opportunity to become better acquainted with participants, as well as being very beneficial for skills development.

Further information: Helen Worlidge, 9885 1832.

## **Program for U3A – An introduction to Croquet.**

**4 sessions.**

**Each session commences 10 a.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> Feb.**

### **Session 1.**

1. Welcome to the Mornington Croquet Club and in particular to the sporting game of Golf Croquet.

A brief history of the game including Association Croquet. An explanation of the affiliations and accreditations and information about the Mornington Club.

**Before commencement of the course if you have any physical ailment, please advise your coach.**

2. After a description of the courts, croquet mallets and balls the U3A members are instructed into:
  - a. The grip. (How best to hold the mallet).
  - b. Stalk. (Approach to the ball).
  - c. Stance. (How best to stand before striking the ball).
  - d. Swing. (To swing the mallet in a smooth straight action).
3. L.O.S., line of sight and L.O.C., line of centre.  
Striking the ball in the centre so that it runs in a straight line. (Use the court boundary line).  
Using this method and placing another ball 1 metre in front as a target, knock the target ball away from its position. Practise this movement, increasing the distance to the target ball. (Up to 2 metres)
4. Running a hoop. By running your ball completely through a hoop, one point is scored. You have achieved the equivalent of scoring a goal, making a run or sending down an ace. To make a hoop the player should adhere to Para. 2. a.b.c.d. Explanations will be given as to the hoop and ball size, jawing the ball, (only part way through the hoop) running a hoop from an angle and making a clean shot to enable an unhindered shot when next striking this ball.
5. Practise for a long distance hoop and moderation of the swing for a short distance.
6. Description of singles and doubles games. Any questions.

### **Session 2.**

1. Refresh Session 1.
2. Further explanation of knocking away your opponents ball (Para 3 Session 1) and introduce the word ROQUET.
3. Describe the court layout, the starting point, and the order of which the coloured balls are played, primary and secondary. (Singles and doubles). The scoring method. Start to proceed around the court and introduce some of the rules when faults are made.
4. The HALFWAY rule. DOUBLE TAP and WRONG BALL play.
5. The FOLLOW THROUGH and STUN SHOTS are introduced.
6. At all times, STALK, STANCE and SWING.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Session 3.**

Repeat Session 2 playing with the coaches either singles or doubles, depending on the number of players.

During this session various points are refined, ethical play is explained and questions answered. As play proceeds tactics and strategies are explained as examples occur during play.

## Beginner course outlines: (d) Mornington

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### **SESSION 4.**

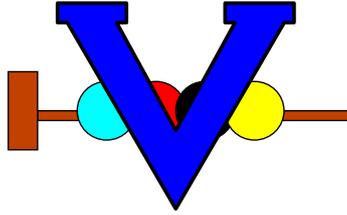
U3A members are invited to play with Mornington club members to experience the sporting game of Golf Croquet.

Sessions end.

Membership of Mornington Croquet Club is available. Please ask for details from the coaches if you are interested.

**Further information:** *Colin Martin, Level 1 GC coach.*

*Tel 03 9787 1039, email [martinvine@tpg.com.au](mailto:martinvine@tpg.com.au).*



## Developing a youth program

Many adult players report having first played croquet when they were young. If your region or club is interested in establishing a youth program, the following notes from Casterton Croquet Club may be useful. Do contribute notes on your experiences to expand this resource!

Early in 2016 the National Director Under 21 Croquet organised a national youth Golf Croquet tournament as a step towards preparing for the World Under 21 GC Championships to be held in Melbourne in early 2017. If you have energetic young players this may be of interest to them. For details, contact Jacky McDonald, National Director Under 21 Croquet, ACA – [ndu21c@croquet-australia.com.au](mailto:ndu21c@croquet-australia.com.au), tel (02) 4930 0733, or mob 0409 246 294.

## The Casterton initiative

*Casterton is a small rural town in SW Victoria, population 1764 (2011 census).*

### **Ellie Norris of Casterton CC writes:**

Following are the criteria we used to establish Junior Croquet. We have had to “tweak” things a bit along the way because it is still a work in progress and we had no guidelines. However, as we have now established Junior Croquet here we can’t be doing too much wrong!

1. Everyone in the Club has to be committed to the programme. However it does need a leader. After suggesting it at a meeting last year, I had unanimous support.
2. Establish a sub- committee whose recommendations can be reported back to the members as it is important everyone knows what is happening.
3. Arrange for enough members to have Working With Children Certificates because on any given Junior Croquet morning (in Casterton it is Sat. at 10am/11.30am) you need sufficient senior members to supervise and coach. Apart from me (I am there every Saturday) we use a rotation of members for this purpose.
4. Establish a strategy within the club that will automatically on an annual basis recruit new Junior players. This is done by dovetailing in or piggybacking (so to speak) with and on existing Government/ Local Council/ Community programmes. By doing this you are able to raise the profile of the club and also the Club has more credibility. For example: The State Government’s ACTIVE APRIL programme (more info on google)/local Council’s SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMME.
5. At a sub-committee meeting I produced an Objective called ‘LET’S TALK CROQUET’ which I could use to present to the principals of the primary schools. This Strategy contained : Club information/Playing times/Cost/Membership details etc. This will be different from one club to another of course but I felt it important that Junior Croquet had to be affordable and if the Senior Member’s green fees had to subsidise Junior Croquet in the short term I viewed it as an investment for the future of the Club.

At that meeting I also suggested that it was important for us to find a sponsor and to that end I contacted our local FOODWORKS store. They came on board and we now have set up a weekly Golf Croquet Game where scores are registered. Initially this was for all the Juniors but the boys have progressed significantly and we now have two competitions. One sponsored by Foodworks and the second (girls) the Club pays for. Each month one boy and one girl receive a \$25 Voucher for Best Player of the Month and \$10 voucher for Runner Up. I felt we needed this to keep the youngsters interested.

We also applied for a Glenelg Shire Council grant for \$500 to go towards advertising and promoting Junior Croquet. We were successful and subsequently produced an A4 "Flyer" and also some advertisements prior to the launch date of 18 October 2014.

I approached both the primary schools and asked them to participate in ACTIVE APRIL. The students spend one hour (numbers dictate this is done over 2 days) learning the basics of croquet. Most of our members are there on the day to lend a hand. As well as a couple of teachers. Importantly though it also has to be fun.

In my correspondence to the schools I also advised them that the Club would be involved in the Council's School Holiday Programme.

This participation gives the Club a higher profile and more credibility....not only with the schools but also the local newspaper, media etc.

In the 2 weeks prior the launch of Junior Croquet we also did a letterbox drop, plastered the A4 flyers on community boards and in shop windows. This together with our advertising etc. helped enormously to create the interest we intended .

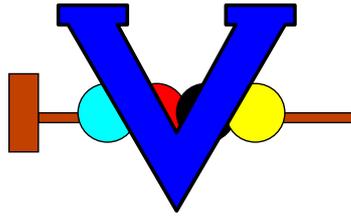
I feel it is important to keep the Junior players interested and was lucky enough to have Eric O'Donnell available for some coaching. Having Robert Fletcher visit too provided enormous interest in the community. As well as Golf croquet, the Juniors are now learning Aussie Croquet.

I write up the Junior Croquet Competition results on a weekly basis and the local newspaper prints this in the Sports Wrap Up. All good publicity. The editor/photographer also visits regularly to take photos. If he doesn't turn up, I take photos and email them to him.....just in case he has some space available!

AM I EXHAUSTED..... ???? Pretty much, but very excited with the results.

We have also put this strategy in place for Senior recruiting.

Ellie Norris can be contacted at  
[nandenorris1@bigpond.com](mailto:nandenorris1@bigpond.com) or by phone on  
03 5581 1761



## Club visitors & insurance

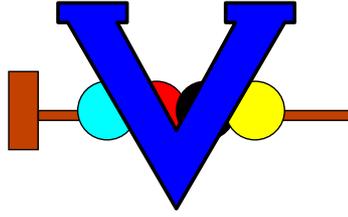
The issue of whether or not non-member visitors to clubs are covered by the ACA arranged insurance policy is frequently raised within clubs.

Questions such as “Are all visitors covered by the Public Liability Insurance cover which clubs have for members?” and “Are there any restrictions – do they have to record their names? Do they have to pay something? Is there a limit on the number of visits by a non-member?” are asked frequently.

The underwriters who arrange Public Liability cover for VCA clubs advise:

Yes the public liability policy covers third parties (such as visitors), subject to the terms and conditions of the policy. There is no requirement for visitors to record their names, however we recommend that clubs implement a visitor registration book for overall effective risk management practice. They do not need to pay any fees, and there are no limits on the number of visits a non-member can make to the club.

Jim Clement, VCA Secretary, can provide interested clubs with the full text of the Public Liability Insurance policy on request – contact [secretary@croquetvic.asn.au](mailto:secretary@croquetvic.asn.au).



## **Growing our club Queenscliff's experience**

*Queenscliff is a small seaside town on the Bellarine Peninsula, population 1418 (2011 census)*

### **Gail Stocker, Queenscliff CC president, writes:**

Our club numbers at Queenscliff have increased noticeably in the past two years and we have gone from mid twenties to low forties.

We had a complete change of committee at that time and club promotion was high on our agenda. Eight members completed the level 0 coaching course given by Eric O'Donnell as a starter.

We could not have done without this input as coaching in reality can be up to eight hours per player and you form quite a friendship with prospective members.

We ask our players to wear club colours on club days so the public see us as keen and dedicated players having fun. A small thing but amazing how local folk remark on our presence now.

Consequently we have a few passers by chatting over the fence who come in to inquire and someone gives them one on one attention.

That's when we offer a "Come and Try" time for them and also explain that we offer a four visit coaching session at \$5 a go and then they can decide whether they'd like to join.

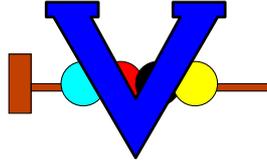
Everyone has joined. Some members in these two years have introduced friends or relatives to the club and they've also joined. We see that as a positive reflection on our club environment. Also we run a "Come and Try" afternoon in Seniors Week. We have surprised QBTCC management with our membership as this has traditionally been a bowling town but those numbers have been dwindling to almost half. They have employed a marketing/development officer but we only ask her to do our flyers which are really good. We haven't gone down the face book etc. road yet!!!!!!!

We introduce our new players at our morning tea break and give them a presentation pack. Their coaching fee goes towards paying for this.

In the pack there's a welcome letter from the president, name tag, current membership directory, rules of golf croquet booklet, golf croquet handbook, Bill Lawson 2009, VCA and GCA fixtures sheets. Also a copy of the QBTCC Constitution, their handicap card, hoop layout sheet, and a pack of 4 ball markers. A similar pack is available for Association players too.

We really welcome new players to this club and especially partner them with members who mentor them well. We know we have a very friendly club and the committee works very diligently to maintain this.

Gail Stocker  
President Queenscliff Croquet Club  
6 October 2015



## Growing our club Plimmerton's experience

*Plimmerton (population 2118) is a suburb of the City of Porirua in the Wellington region of the North Island of New Zealand.*

**The following information has been summarised (with permission) from a presentation to Croquet NZ by Kelvin Watson and Tom Berryman of Plimmerton Croquet Club, New Zealand.**

### Club history

- 86 years. Initially a single court attached to bowling club. 25 members.
- New 4 court facility in 1994.
- Membership - Mid-50s 2001. Mid-90s 2012. Recruitment now restricted by court capacity.
- GC introduced around 2005.
- Membership now 50% AC/GC in harmonious relationship.
- Mission Statement: All members will enjoy their croquet.

### Why Is Plimmerton on a roll

- Both codes are supported and respected.
- Members needs (competitive or social play) are supported and respected.
- Effective session management to ensure player enjoyment.
- Positive internal communication, talking to everyone, questionnaires, players' meetings.
- A culture of enabling rather than restricting.
- Playing a positive role within the wider croquet community.
- We welcome the enthusiasm and ideas of our new members.
- We encourage involvement with other Clubs for information interchange.
- And of course external publicity is crucial.

### Membership recruitment

Publicity is the key

- 45% from newspaper items. (Stories not tournament results)
- 25% from personal invites
- 20% from other
- 10% from letterbox drops (lots of work for poor return)

We use:

- Six local papers, Newstalk ZB Community Noticeboard & DomPost Sports
- Local Community Websites
- News releases every month, sometimes 2 or 3.

Important to build news media relationships. And thank them for their coverage.

We've got lots of great ideas for publicity with aggressive recruitment

- Beach and park demonstration picnics.
- Council publicity networks to reach other organisations and "retiring" sports people.
- Mall demonstrations.

### BUT

- Courts now close to capacity. Third highest member/lawn ratio in NZ.
- Need to manage player expectations.
- Promotion outside the Club for new members stopped. (Walk-ups only - 8 during Winter.)
- And still they come.

### **Membership induction - evolution**

- 6 lesson format AC-only focus. Poor sign-up. People lost to the Club and the game.
- 6 lesson format AC focus. GC offered to players not coping with AC. Created a 2nd class citizen mind-set. Little Club support for GC. Probably won't stay anyway.
- 2007 Water-shed year. New GC rules. Developed quiz and educated 120 regional players. Used nationally for referee re-qualification.
- 6 lesson format positive to GC. High sign-up rate. AC offered but low interest. Most new people coming as contacts from existing GC players.
- Now a 3 lesson format and 3 socialisation sessions. 100% sign-up. AC offered after 12 months unless really keen.

### **Success brings challenges – playing session management**

- 2001 – Four 3 hour sessions (Summer play and AC only). Winter clubhouse coaching.
- 2012 – Nine 3 hour sessions during summer. 4 AC, 3 GC, 2 shared (mainly GC), some ricochet as well. (Two sessions for interclub, three for court maintenance) (Lots of use outside session times.)
- 2012 – Seven 2 ½ hour sessions during winter season. 3 AC, 4 GC.
- GC sessions often at capacity.

### **Growth of GC – by raising its status**

- Croquet OLE – one-day, two sessions, 6 games, doubles, fun tournament. Different partner each game.
- Easter Tournament – levels in four divisions, 0-3, 4-7, 8-9, 10-12. 16 players in each division.
- In-house coaching programme – building on Jarrod Coutts sessions.
- Continued use of GC rules quiz for education and referee qualifying.

### **Continued support for AC**

- In-house coaching programme – building on Jarrod Coutts sessions.
- Practice routine material.
- Plain language rules documentation for education and umpire qualification.
- AC rules quiz (given success of GC quiz).

### **Where to from here?**

#### **1. Expansion planning**

Ideas being considered

- Additional playing sessions
- Midweek play only memberships
- Modified courts 30 X 24 yards – 5 instead of 4
- Pushing out boundary fence to enable 6 courts
- Leasing additional land for more courts.

#### **2. Achieving a younger membership**

- Club location too remote from colleges for after school involvement.
- No additional weekend daytime court capacity for students or workers.
- Twilight play can potentially kill both birds with the one stone.

#### **College Students Twilight Programme**

- Six colleges in Porirua area plus students who travel to out of area schools.
- Invited to enter teams to a maximum of 32 players
- Split across two twilight sessions per week during daylight saving. Court space for parents to play too.
- Comprehensive lesson plans for coaching, tournament and fun play throughout the programme.
- Parents as active participants in the programme. Student vs parent, student plus parent games.
- Use of Facebook and e-mail for communication purposes.
- Regional play-off tournament March 3.

- Club sponsored prize for successful College team (\$250 donation to College) and sponsored entry fees to National Secondary School Tournament.
- WCA sponsored travel subsidy for teams reaching the National final.

#### For students and parents returning next season

- Family membership subscription rate
- Chance to play an active role in the programme including:
  - Recruitment
  - Coaching & session management
- Opportunity for AC coaching
- Participation in wider competition

#### Regional involvement

Involvement is essential for a healthy Club and a healthy Region:

Offerings to other Clubs

- 170 green fee visitors during winter
- Invitation to our rules/coaching sessions
- GC rules quiz in 3 sessions. Attendees 42 PLM, 34 other clubs. (4 new referees, potentially 3 more next year.)
- AC Umpires course. 4 new umpires & 2 renewals. AC rules quiz in 4 sessions. 24 participants.
- Provision of GC coaching at start-up Club Muritai - located at Eastbourne
- Assisting Wainuiomata to introduce GC – skills refresher sessions, offer of support at “Have-a-Go” and GC lessons.
- Croquet OLE GC fun tournament 48 participants, 50/50 PLM/Visitors
- Creation last year of Easter GC tournament – 48 participants - 21 PLM.

#### Supporting regional activity

- 3 members on WCA Executive Committee
- Extensive involvement in interclub competitions (playing & court facilities).
- WCA representatives. Manawatu Exchange & Lower North Island teams.
- Several interclub tournaments, particularly with Kapiti clubs.

Involvement & contact between ‘ordinary’ members of clubs results in a sharing of ideas, opportunities and concerns.

#### Associations need to be supportive

- Not just regional tournament organisers
- Need to take greater interest in the health of Clubs to avoid Club failure
- Need to facilitate help and support when obviously needed
- Upper Hutt recently closed
  - Investigated possibility of a restart but too late and too hard
  - Earlier involvement may have helped

#### Some interesting NZ statistics

	Population	Members	%age	Courts	Potential @ 20/court
Kapiti Coast	25000	150	0.6%	9	180
Porirua City	52500	95	0.18%	4	80
Lower Hutt –	102000	140	0.14%	13	260
Wellington –	200000	130	0.065%	9	180

- How do your Clubs and Regions stack up?
- What potential do you have for Club expansion and membership growth?
- A member to population percentage of 0.15 to 0.2% could be a target.

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- **To complete the statistics picture: clubs**
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No of members	% of NZ clubs	Participation by code (% of members)		
		AC	GC	Both
20 or less	32	72	23	5
21 – 30	24	61	26	13
31 – 60	30	27	48	25
61 – 80	10	25	42	33
80 +	4		100	

What Clubs in your Region are in the danger zone?

#### Available resource material – how can we help each other?

- Recruitment lesson plans.
- GC & AC quiz questions and answers (cross-referenced to the rules).
- Plain language rules documentation.
- Coaching material.
- Schools programme (information for Colleges, parents and students, lesson plans).
- Croquet OLE spreadsheet. Does the draw & prints game cards showing partner & opponents names, what lawn and what ball colour – easy peasy.
- Copy of our presentation.

All available by e-mail – just ask.

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