

# Golf Croquet Rules Questions and Answers

Here are some questions which GC referees have sent to the Victorian Coordinator of Golf Croquet Referees (John van der Touw), and his responses. These are not official rulings: only the WCF can give those. If you have a golf croquet rules question you would like answered, send it in an email to [gcreferees@croquetvic.asn.au](mailto:gcreferees@croquetvic.asn.au).

The answers are based on the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the WCF Golf Croquet Rules which came into force in Australia at the start of 2019. Questions are grouped according to the rule they relate to.

## Golf Croquet Official Rulings

From time to time the World Croquet Federation publishes Golf Croquet Official Rulings. These are usually clarifications on the Rules of golf croquet, but occasionally an official ruling changes a rule or introduces a new rule.

Here is a link to [GC Official Rulings](#) on the World Croquet Federation website.

## 5. The Start

### Question 5.1

At the beginning of a game, is the ball in play the moment it is struck, or only once it is outside the starting area?

### Answer 5.1

The ball is in play the moment it is struck. That is the case even if a fault was committed. However, see Rule 5.3.2 about faults committed in one of the first four turns of the game.

### Question 5.2

After blue has been played at the start of game, red commits a fault. Blue and Black choose to have the red ball replaced. Can black now clear red? They might want to do that, for example, so that black was not offside even if it was past halfway to hoop 2 and the hoop was run before black played again.

### Answer 5.2

Yes. The red ball has been played in regardless of whether it is left where it stopped or replaced.

### Question 5.3

After blue has been played at the start of game, red commits a fault. Blue and Black choose to have the red ball replaced. The owner of black puts his ball in contact with the red ball and plays it like a two-ball association croquet shot. Is that allowed?

### Answer 5.3

Yes.

## 6. The Turn, Striking Period and Stroke

### Question 6.1

A ball which has gone out of bounds is placed on the boundary where it went out. When it is the striker's turn to play that ball, he casts his mallet over it and accidentally touches the ball with his mallet, moving it into the court. Does that count as a stroke? What if the accidental contact causes the ball to move immediately out of instead of into the court?

### Answer 6.1.

Accidental contact with the mallet is a stroke regardless of which direction the ball moves.

### **Question 6.2**

I was told the with the new rules an "air shot " would be considered to be a stroke, as in AC, and there would be no remedy. Is that so?

### **Answer 6.2.**

The rule covering air shots in GC has not changed. An air shot is not a stroke unless the player committed a fault in the attempt. That's just as it was in the old rules. See Rules 6.3.5.

## **7. Scoring a Point**

### **Question 7.1**

Has a ball which has passed through the next hoop in order scored that hoop even if it subsequently rolls back into the hoop?

### **Answer 7.1**

According to Rule 7.1.3, a ball completes the running of a hoop and scores the point when the whole of the ball clears the plane of the playing side provided it stops at the end of the turn clear of that plane. Rule 6.4.2 says that position occupied by a ball at the end of a turn is that in which it appears to have stopped for a period of at least five seconds or, if its position needs to be tested, the position that is agreed or adjudicated by the players (or a referee, if present). So, if the ball rolls back before five seconds, the hoop would not score unless agreement on its position had been made remarkably quickly. If the ball rolled back after at least five seconds, then the ball would have to be put back and the hoop would score.

However, things may not be quite that straight forward. Even if the players agree that the ball had been stationary for at least five seconds before rolling back, they may not agree on where it was before it rolled back, or they may both be unsure of its former position. If they both think they know where the ball was, but their opinions differ, a referee may need to make the decision, and he may need to apply Rule 15.1.4 to make that decision. If they were both unsure whether the ball had stopped in a position where it had completed the running of the hoop, then the ball should be left where it stopped after rolling back because it would be fair to say that (before rolling back) the ball had stopped in a position that needed to be tested, and they had not already agreed where it had stopped.

### **Question 7.2**

If the blue ball was in the jaws of the hoop and the red ball jumped the blue ball and went through the hoop leaving the blue ball still in the jaws of the hoop, does the red ball score the hoop? In the same scenario if the red ball jumped the blue ball and went through the hoop but the blue ball also went through the hoop who would score the hoop then?

### **Answer 7.2**

In the first case, the red ball would score the hoop. This is assuming that no fault was committed, nor a wrong ball played.

In the second case, the blue ball would score the hoop. This is assuming that no fault was committed, nor a wrong ball played.

Rule 7.3.1 says that if more than one ball runs the same hoop as the result of a stroke, only the ball that was nearest the hoop before the stroke was played scores the point. It doesn't matter which ball went through the hoop first.

## 8. Offside Balls

### Question 8.1

A ball that is past the half-way line when a hoop is scored is exempt from being offside if it reached its position as a result of contact with an opponent's ball. Does the exemption still hold if more than one hoop is scored since it reached its position? For example, suppose the red ball reached its position near hoop 13 as a result of contact with the black ball while hoop 11 was being contested. When it was Red's next turn to play, his ball was still in the same position, but both hoops 11 and 12 had been scored in the meantime. So, is the red ball exempt from being offside under Rule 8.3.3?

### Answer 8.1

Yes, the red ball would be exempt from being offside. That's because the exemptions in Rule 8.3 say nothing about how many hoops have been scored in the meantime.

### Question 8.2

Red attempted to clear blue but missed and finished past half-way to the next hoop. Black then played towards halfway but went too far and the black ball hit the red ball. After yellow played, blue ran the hoop. Am I right in thinking that neither of the balls (red and black) is offside even though they are both past halfway?

### Answer 8.2

You are right. Both red and black reached their positions as a result of contact with an opponent's ball. Rule 8.3 lists four exemptions from being offside for a ball past the half-way line. Reaching the position as a result of contact with an opponent's ball (regardless of who played the shot) is one of them. Reaching the position as a result of an opponent's shot (regardless of whether there was contact with an opponent's ball) is another.

### Question 8.3

When my ball was offside, my opponent directed that it should not be played from a penalty area but from where it lay. The next hoop was run before I played that ball and my opponent said that he now wanted me to play it from a penalty area. Was that allowed? Don't the Rules said that once a ball has been directed it could not become offside before it was played again?

### Answer 8.3

Rule 8.3.4 exempts a ball from being offside if it reached its position as a result of "being directed to be played from a penalty area". Being told to play a ball from where it finished is not the same as being directed to play it from a penalty area. To clarify the point, Rule 8.4.4 says that if an offside ball is not directed to be played from a penalty area it may become an offside ball if another point is scored before it is played again. It would not become an offside ball if the new half way line meant that it was not past halfway or if, before it was played again, it was moved in any of the ways mentioned in Rules 8.3.1, 8.3.2 or 8.3.3.

### Question 8.4

Could you explain rule 8.4.6: "An *offside owner* required to replay a stroke under Rule 8.4.5 is no longer entitled to give a direction under Rule 8.4.2 until after the next point is scored". Rule 8.4.2 says that it is the *offside opponent* who is entitled to give a direction, so why would the *offside owner* be entitled to give a direction anyway?

### Answer 8.4

The answer below might seem complicated, but all it is saying is that once the red ball was played, the side owning it lost its right to direct any offside balls (until the next hoop point is scored) regardless of whether they are made to replay their stroke or not.

If both sides are offside then, when dealing with the offside ball belonging to one of the sides, that side will be the *offside owner* and the other side will be the *offside opponent*. When dealing with an offside ball belonging to the other side, the roles are reversed.

Consider an example where blue ran the hoop and both red and black were offside but the red ball was played before direction was given for that ball. If it is decided to deal with the red ball first, then the side owning red and yellow is the *offside owner* and the side owning blue and black is the *offside opponent*. According to Rule 8.4.5, the *offside opponent* may require the red ball to be replayed from a penalty area. Let's suppose the replay option is chosen. Now it's time to deal with the offside black ball. The side owning blue and black is now the *offside owner*, and the side owning red and yellow is the *offside opponent*. The side (red & yellow) that was required to replay a stroke under Rule 8.4.5 when it was the *offside owner* is now, as the *offside opponent*, no longer entitled to give a direction under Rule 8.4.2 until after the next point is scored. The offside balls can be dealt with in any order. If they had been dealt with in the opposite order, it would have been the same outcome.

## 9. Interference

### Question 9.1

In a double banked game, the pink ball is marked and lifted to enable the first colours to play. Can the second colours continue while the pink is up, or should they wait until it is replaced?

### Answer 9.1

Provided the correct position of the pink ball (before it was picked up) is well out of the way of play for the second colours, play could continue for the players of those colours. Rule 17.2.2 says that a ball that is temporarily moved in this situation becomes an outside agency until it is replaced

### Question 9.2

When the red ball was cleared to the boundary the owner of red stopped it with his foot *after* it had crossed the boundary line. His opponent said that Red had committed a fault because he had not allowed the ball to come to rest before touching it. Was the opponent correct?

### Answer 9.2

No, it is *not* a fault to touch an outside agency. According to Rule 6.5 "a ball becomes an outside agency when it leaves the court, which occurs as soon as any part of it would touch a straight edge raised vertically from the boundary". The boundary is defined by the inner edge of any boundary marking. Even if the player had stopped the ball *before* it left the court, there would have been no penalty, provided the ball was clearly about to leave the court and the position of the ball, when replaced touching the boundary where it would have left the court, will have no tactical significance. See Rule 9.1.2(d).

### Question 9.3

If both red and yellow were boundary balls that were quite near each other, and it was red's turn to play, could he promote the yellow ball (by striking his ball such that it moved the yellow ball)?

### Answer 9.3

The answer is "no". The shot by red would be completely wasted because red would probably not finish anywhere useful, and the yellow ball, if it was moved by red's shot, would simply have to be put back where it was. The relevant rule is 6.5 which says:

A ball becomes an outside agency when it leaves the court and it remains an outside agency until it is next played into the game. Unless it is directed to be moved as an offside ball it should be played from the point where it crossed the boundary. Also see Rule 6.7.

### Question 9.4

Red was played into a position in front of the hoop, but it fell into a sprinkler head hole. The blue ball was quite close to red. After black and yellow had played, blue wanted to clear the red ball – a task that would be unusually difficult because of the sprinkler head hole. Even

with a good shot, the blue ball was likely to finish quite far away while barely moving the red ball. Did the owner of blue have the right to have the red ball moved out of the sprinkler head hole before playing his shot? Would it make any difference whether the owner of the red ball offered to allow his ball to be moved out of the hole?

#### ***Answer 9.4***

A sprinkler head hole is an example of an immovable outside agency on the court and is treated as damage that cannot be repaired. Any balls likely to be affected by the stroke to be played may be moved by the minimum amount necessary to avoid the damage so as to give the player no advantage. Obviously moving the balls will be to the striker's advantage, but it must not be advantageous compared to what it would have been if there had been no immovable outside agency. A ball so moved but not affected by the stroke is to be replaced in its original position immediately after the turn has ended. The striker does not need the opponent's consent if the referee's opinion is that the obstacle affects play. On the other hand, the players don't have to call a referee if they agree that it affects play.

#### **Question 9.5**

Can you please clarify this rule for us? If a striker's ball hits the stationary mallet of another player in the same game what is the remedy? We think it would be 9.2.3(b).

#### ***Answer 9.5***

According to Rule 9.1.1, the player has interfered with a ball. Since it was accidental interference by a player not playing or intending to play a stroke, Rule 9.1.4 applies. That rule says to treat it "as interference with a ball by an outside agency and Rule 9.2 applies". If the mallet was not being held at the time, Rule 9.2.3(b) would apply. However, it is more likely that Rule 9.2.4 was relevant because a player would not be treated as a *stationary* outside agency, and neither would their mallet if a player was holding it at the time. Since it's unlikely that the main intended outcome of the stroke was in doubt when the interference occurred, Rule 9.2.4(b) would apply, and the ball would be placed where the sides (or a referee, if present) judge that it would have stopped if there had been no interference.

## **10. Playing a Wrong Ball**

#### **Question 10.1**

Black played his ball in doubles when it was blue's turn to play. One person said that there was no penalty, but another said that the opponents could choose whether to leave the balls where they stopped or replace them, and that the opponent could then play next with either of their balls. Who was correct?

#### ***Answer 10.1.***

The person who said there was no penalty was closer to the mark. In this situation the opponents can choose replace-and-replay (where the balls are replaced, and the same side plays the next stroke with the correct ball played by its owner) or the ball-swap option. Either way the side that played the wrong ball does not lose a turn.

#### **Question 10.2**

What happens if it is blue's turn to play in doubles, but blue plays the black ball?

#### ***Answer 10.2***

Rule 10.3.1 applies and the non-offending side can choose replace-and-replay (Rule 10.4.1) or ball-swap (Rule 10.4.2). Except for the special situations relating to wrong ball play in the first four turns of a game, those two options apply for any wrong ball play where

- the ball was played by someone on the striker's side, and
- the ball belonged to the striker's side but was not the ball that should have been played.

**Question 10.3**

Red played when it was blue's turn to play but play was not stopped until black had played. All balls were played by their owner. Is it now yellow's turn to play?

**Answer 10.3**

Yes, it would be yellow's turn to play. It is too late to deal with the wrong ball play by red in the previous stroke. Since the red ball was played in that stroke, the black ball was the striker's ball for the last stroke. Thus, the last stroke was played by the striker with the striker's ball. So, it was not a wrong ball play and play continues with yellow to play (the ball next in sequence after black).

**Question 10.4**

Black played when it was red's turn to play but play was not stopped until red had played next. All balls were played by their owner. Who plays next?

**Answer 10.4**

It is too late to deal with the wrong ball play by black in the previous stroke. Since the black ball was played in that stroke, the yellow ball was the striker's ball for the last stroke. Since red played the last stroke with the red ball, the last stroke was played by a member of the striker's side using the partner ball of the ball that should have been played, and Rule 10.3.1 would apply. The owners of blue and black would have the choice of replace-and-replay or ball swap. If they chose replace-and-replay, the yellow ball would be played next by its owner. If they chose ball swap, the blue ball would be played next by its owner.

**Question 10.5**

For the following example I was told that the blue ball was not offside. How can that be if it did not reach its position in any of the ways described in Rule 8.3?

When it was blue's turn to play, the owner of black cleared the yellow ball with the black ball. After making contact with the yellow, the black ball hit the blue ball and both the blue and black balls finished past the halfway line. Ball swap was chosen as the remedy for the wrong ball play. Red ran the hoop in the next turn and, in doing so, did not make contact with any other balls.

**Answer 10.5**

Rule 10.4.2 (b) says that "A swapped ball takes the offside status of the ball with which it is swapped". After red ran the hoop, black would have been exempt from being offside under Rule 8.3.3 since it reached its position (before the ball swap) as a result of contact with an opponent's ball. Because the ball swap, the blue ball takes that exemption status and is not offside, but the black ball is offside.

**Question 10.6**

The owner of yellow played the yellow ball in doubles. The owner of black ran the hoop with black and then the owner of blue played blue. Play was forestalled. Rule 10.6 says that the non-offending side chooses whether the balls are left where they stopped or are all replaced. No balls other than black were moved by black's stroke, but the terms "the balls" and "they" indicate plural. Does that mean that if the balls are replaced then both black and blue are replaced?

**Answer 10.6**

Rule 10.6 says that the non-offending side can choose to have the balls replaced in the positions they occupied before *any* invalid stroke played by the offending side in that sequence of successive strokes. In this example, the strokes by black and blue were both invalid so if the balls are replaced, then both black and blue are replaced, and black's hoop would not score. However, that's not because "the balls" and "they" indicate plural. It's because both balls were moved in the sequence of invalid strokes.

If in the example the black ball had been played in the last stroke instead of the blue so that black was the only ball to move in the two invalid strokes, then only black would have been replaced (if replacement was chosen by the non-offending side). If only one ball has moved, then replacing all balls means replacing that one ball. Also, think of “they” as being shorthand for “it or they”.

#### **Question 10.7**

The owner of yellow played the yellow ball in doubles. The owner of blue ran the hoop with blue and then the owner of black played black. If red and yellow choose to replace would this only apply to black because blue had played a valid stroke? Does the hoop run by blue count?

#### **Answer 10.7**

Yes, only one of those strokes was invalid, and black was the only ball to move in that invalid stroke, so only the black would be replaced. Since the stroke with blue was valid, that hoop would stand. The subsequent invalid stroke by black would not change that.

#### **Question 10.8**

Does law 10.3.1 apply to both doubles and singles? I assume it does because it doesn't state otherwise.

#### **Answer 10.8**

Yes, it applies to both doubles and singles. To be precise, it applies to situations where the partner ball was played by

- the striker in singles (the most common wrong ball play of all), or
- the striker in doubles (note that the striker does not own the ball played in this case), or
- the striker's partner in doubles.

The *partner ball* is the ball that belongs to the striker's side but is not the one that should have been played in that stroke.

#### **Question 10.9**

The owner of the blue played the red ball when it was black's turn to play. So, the wrong player played a ball that their side did not own. If play is forestalled now, is the remedy replace-and-replay, so the red ball is replaced, and the black ball is played by its owner?

#### **Answer 10.9**

Yes, the remedy is replace-and-replay because the stroke was played by the striker's side. If they had played the “partner ball”, i.e. the ball owned by the side but not the one that should have been played, the opponents would have had the choice of replace-and-replay and ball swap. Since the striker played one of the other balls, it is replace-and-replay with no option.

#### **Question 10.10**

The owner of the blue played the red ball when it was black's turn to play. So, the wrong player played a ball that their side did not own. The wrong ball play wasn't noticed, and play wasn't forestalled until another stroke was played. Does the penalty area continuation apply?

#### **Answer 10.10**

The answer depends on which side played the last stroke. If the opponents (red/yellow) played it, then Rule 10.5.4 would apply and the penalty area continuation would be the remedy. If blue/black played the last stroke, then Rule 10.6 would apply because the same side would have played successive strokes.

## **11. Faults**

### **Question 11.1**

Suppose your ball is a boundary ball but you move it into the court in order to play it without a hampered backswing or uneven stance. In playing the shot, you damage the court with your mallet before the mallet reaches your ball. Have you committed a fault even if the damage would have been outside the court if your ball had been played from the boundary line?

### **Answer 11.1**

It is a fault. If you move your ball to avoid an obstruction, you are only moving your ball, you are not moving the court boundary with it.

### **Question 11.2**

When the red ball was cleared to the boundary the owner of that ball used her mallet to mark the spot where the ball went out. The next striker played a shot before the ball had been put on the boundary and the striker's ball hit the mallet on the boundary, making contact with a part of the mallet that was sticking into the court. Has a fault been committed and, if so, who committed it?

### **Answer 11.2**

Since the player whose mallet was hit was not attempting to play a stroke at the time, the situation is treated as interference with a ball by a player, not as a fault. The ball would be placed on the boundary where it would have gone out, and there is no penalty.

### **Question 11.3**

Red attempted a jump but put the blue ball through the hoop. Black then played towards the next hoop. The owner of red then noticed that she had caused court damage in playing the jump shot. Should the hoop point be cancelled? The referee ruled that it was too late to rule on the fault because the opponent had already played a shot. Was that the correct decision?

### **Answer 11.3**

The referee was correct. The hoop point counts and play simply continues. The actions after a fault are described in Rule 11.4. It says that if a fault is committed but play is not stopped because of the fault before a stroke has been played by the non-offending side, there is no remedy, and play continues as if the fault had not been committed. It would also have been too late to deal with the fault if the offending side had played a stroke provided the rules allowed them to play a stroke at the time. For example, it would be too late if played wasn't stopped until after red played one if his extra strokes in a handicap game. See Rule 11.4.1.

### **Question 11.4**

After scoring a hoop, the striker drops a scoring clip trying to put it on the hoop and shakes a ball. The opponent said it was a fault. The striker said it was not a fault because the clip was an outside agency. Who was correct?

### **Answer 11.4**

It was not a fault. Since the player was trying to put the clip on a hoop, it is clear that the striking period had ended, so it would not be a fault. Even if the clip had been dropped during the striking period it would not have been a fault because, according to Rule 4.2.6, a scoring clip not an outside agency when falling to or lying on the court surface.

### **Question 11.5**

Is it a fault if you hit the hoop with your mallet?

### **Answer 11.5**

It is not a fault to hit a hoop with your mallet unless, in the process, you cause a stationary ball to move or shake. See Rule 11.2.9.

**Question 11.6**

Is resting your chin on the mallet handle while playing a stroke a fault?

**Answer 11.6.**

No, it is not a fault. Except for not being allowed to touch the mallet head with a hand during the final forward swing of the mallet during a stroke, the fault rule does not place any restrictions on touching the mallet with your body.

**Question 11.7**

After hoop 12 was run by Black, the red and yellow balls were touching. The balls were quite near hoop 12, but if a line was drawn from the centre of the yellow ball through the centre of the red it would point roughly at hoop 13. The owner of yellow played what in association croquet would be called a pass roll. The result was very good for red and yellow because both balls finished quite near hoop 13, and the referee called it a clean shot even though the yellow ball stayed in contact with the mallet for quite a long time – probably long enough for it to have been called a push if it had been a single ball shot. Any comments?

**Answer 11.7**

It is openly acknowledged that that the two-ball croquet shot played as a “roll” will usually involve prolonged contact between the mallet and striker’s ball. The generally accepted practice in GC is that, if balls are touching and the shot wouldn’t be a fault in AC, then don’t call it a fault in GC. That doesn’t mean that a referee cannot call a fault for such a shot, but it means that the prolonged contact needs to be quite blatant.

Rule 11.3.3(b) is intended to deal with this situation, but it is not clear how that rule should be interpreted. For example, the meaning of “a stroke of the same type” is not clear.

**Question 11.8**

This question relates to the jump shot and the hammer shot played when hampered by the hoop. Is it a fault to touch the body with the mallet handle during the follow through?

**Answer 11.8.**

Obviously, a player is allowed to touch his mallet with his hands. I guess you are asking whether a player is allowed to touch any other part of his body with the mallet handle during a stroke.

It is not a fault if a player touches any part of his body or clothes with the mallet except as described in Rule 11.2.1 (which relates to touching the head of the mallet with a hand).

**Question 11.9**

Does the croquet ball always have to be hit with the full end face of the mallet or can you make a shot only using say half of the end face?

**Answer 11.9**

I would not rule a shot as a “bevel edge” fault if the first point of contact of the ball with the mallet was clearly on the face of the mallet, even if it was close enough to the edge that the area of contact might have reached the edge (due to flattening of the ball by the face of the mallet).

Also, note that striking a ball with the edge of the mallet is not a fault unless the stroke required special care because of the proximity of a hoop or the peg or another ball. Requiring special care for those reasons is usually referred to as being “hampered”.

### **Question 11.10**

The red ball is in the jaws of hoop 1 but not quite through, blue ball is tries to jump but in doing so takes out a large divot and hits the red ball through both hoop 1 and hoop 2. The striker said no hoop can be made from a fault. Is that correct?

### **Answer 11.10**

If this occurred before 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 (in Australia), then neither hoop would count. Under the 5<sup>th</sup> edition rules, both hoops would count if the non-offender chose to leave the balls where they stopped. but neither would count if they chose to have the balls replaced. Rule 11.4 says, “the non-offending side chooses whether the balls are left where they stopped or are replaced in the positions they occupied before the stroke was played. ... If the balls are left where they stopped, only a point scored for the non-offending side is counted. If the balls are replaced, no point is scored for any ball”. Where it says, “only a point scored for the non-offending side is counted”, it should be interpreted as “only points scored for the non-offending side are counted”.

### **The end of the striking period**

The rest of the questions in this Faults section relate to the end of the striking period. The striking period is defined in Rule 6.2, which says that the striking period ends when the player quits their stance under control. Usually deciding when the striking period ends is not critical or difficult, but sometimes it is. The decision can be important because if a player commits an act prohibited by Rule 11.2 before the striking period ends, then a hoop run would not score. This is the case even if the act that caused it to be a fault did not have any effect on whether the hoop was run. If the player commits the same act after the striking period has ended, the hoop would score. Unfortunately, there are no guidelines on what quitting under control means. It is not even clear whether “quits their stance” means “has started to leave their stance” or if it requires the player to have made substantial progress in leaving their stance.

### **Question ES.1**

The blue ball was in the jaws of the hoop when the Red (the striker) played a jump shot where the red ball ran the hoop. In doing so, the red ball knocked the blue ball backwards and it hit the owner of red on the foot. Does the hoop stand?

### **Answer ES.1**

The hoop counts if it is decided that the striking period had ended before the blue ball hit the striker, otherwise it does not count. If the ball hit the player before he left his stance, it would clearly be a fault. But if the player left his stance trying to jump out of the way of a ball, then had he left it *under control* when he was hit by the ball? Opinions differ on this. My view is that if the striker is hit by a ball that was moved by his stroke, then he has committed a fault, so the hoop would not be scored. Some referees are of the opinion that, if a player is able to jump out of his stance (as opposed to, for example, falling out of it due to loss of balance), he was under control when he left his stance. I don't know what the majority opinion is but, in any case, it needs an official ruling.

### **Question ES.2**

The striker's ball was in the jaws of the hoop. She was worried about doing a hoop crush, so she straddled the hoop, hit down on the ball (like a jump shot) and withdrew her mallet as quickly as possible after the stroke. In doing so, she stumbled forward and stepped on the ball that had just run the hoop. Is this a fault and does the hoop count?

### **Answer ES.2**

It is a fault in this situation and the hoop does not count. Although the striker had left her stance, she did not do so under control. The striker is not under control playing in an off-balance position and falling out of the stance.

### **Question ES.3**

When the striker took his stance, the red ball was about six inches in front of his right foot. Although it was close, it was not hampering his stance. As he played his stroke, he walked forward slightly and touched the red ball with his foot. Is it a fault?

### **Answer ES.3**

Normally it would not be a fault, but if walking forward appeared to be part of the player's striking action, then it would be a fault. Even if the player did not appear to have been in an off-balance position when playing the stroke, if there was no discernible time after he completed his stroke and before he started walking forward, that would suggest that he was not under control as he left his stance.

### **Question ES.4**

When the striker took her stance, the red ball was about six inches behind her right foot. Although it was close, it was not hampering her stance or backswing. She ran the hoop and looked to be under control as she stepped back, but her foot touched the red ball. Is it a fault?

### **Answer ES.4**

If quits her stance means "started to leave her stance", then the striker had left her stance under control, and it would not be a fault. That's the way I would view it, especially since the stroke was not hampered by the red ball. If the red ball was hampering her stroke, some referees would call it a fault, and some wouldn't. It needs to be clarified.

## **14. Advice**

### **Question 14.1**

Is the placing of a scoring clip on a wrong hoop considered giving incorrect information and could an opponent claim a replay if they acted on that information?

### **Answer 14.1**

It seems very unlikely in golf croquet that, after scoring a hoop, a player would put a scoring clip on a different hoop. It would be giving incorrect information to put a scoring clip on the current hoop in order to indicate that you had scored it if, in fact, you hadn't. A time when you might put a scoring clip on a wrong hoop, is when you and your opponent have been contesting the wrong hoop and you run that hoop, mistakenly thinking that you scored it. Rule 7.5 deals specifically with the situation where "one or more hoops have been competed for by both sides and run out of order", so it would apply here and take precedence over Rule 14.1.2 which deals more generally with the case where "a player acts on incorrect information given by the opponent".

### **Question 14.2**

It has been suggested that players carry rules books with them during a game and if there is a dispute during the game, refer to them to try and resolve any issue. My understanding is that whilst rule books can be carried, they should not be brought out during a game and only referred to after a game has finished.

### **Answer 14.2**

Players can refer to a rule book during a game if it is to clarify the rules that apply to a circumstance that has arisen. If a referee is available, the players should ask the referee rather than try to work things out for themselves. If necessary, the referee may refer to a rules book or ask another referee to help.

Ruling 14.2 says: "During a game, players are not permitted to refer to information in the form of printed, handwritten, electronic or other prepared material except for the purpose of clarifying the Rules that apply to a circumstance that has arisen or may be about to arise".

**Question 14.3.**

Blue knew that only one of his opponents had extra turns in a handicap doubles game but not which one. He asked Red who had the extra turns and she replied, "Would you believe it's Yellow?" Later, when Red said that she would take an extra turn, Blue objected saying that she had told him that Yellow had the extra turns, Red said "No I didn't. I said, 'Would you believe it's Yellow?'". Blue said he had been misled and called the referee. Red claimed that she had not misled Blue, but that she had simply made a joke and Blue should have understood that since Yellow was a much better player than she was. If you were the referee, how would you handle the situation?

**Answer 14.3**

I would rule that Blue had been misled even if I believed Red's claim that she had not intended to mislead. It is not obvious how the situation should be rectified because it is not exactly covered by the rules. It would be reasonable to give Red a warning under Rule 16. Before deciding whether to take further action I would ask Blue in what way being misled had affected his play. Depending on his answer, I might rule that Red could not take an extra turn now (and therefore it would be Black's turn to play), but Red could take her extra turn, or turns, later in the game. Rule 15.3 allows a referee to decide an issue "in a manner which best meets the justice of the case" if the situation "does not appear to be adequately covered by these Rules, or their interpretation appears to be uncertain in relation to a situation".

Note that this rule does *not* give a referee permission to ignore a rule simply because he thinks it is unfair. If a situation is adequately and unambiguously covered by the rules, those rules must be applied.

**Question 14.4**

Is it legal for a partner to stand immediately behind the striker and give line of sight advice such as "a bit to the left, no that's too much, back to the right, yep that's right" and then step away before the actual stroke is played?

**Answer 14.4**

Yes. It would be OK for the partner to give detailed advice as you described while standing behind the partner or, indeed, while standing on the spot where he wants the striker to put the ball. Rule 14.5 says that "partners may advise each other, and a partner may assist in the preparation for playing a stroke, including indicating to the player the direction in which the mallet should be swung". So, a player could even take hold of their partner's mallet, line up the shot and then place the mallet on the ground pointing in the direction they want the shot to be played. However, the person giving advice is not allowed to act as a marker while the stroke is played, so he would need to step away, if necessary, before the stroke was played.

If a player spends a long time giving detailed instructions to his partner, he could be given an official warning, under Rule 16, for time wasting.

**Question 14.5**

Is a player entitled to a replay if he is inadvertently deceived by the opponent in a situation such as the following? Yellow was the striker and called the referee to observe his jump shot attempt at hoop 7. The striker removed a yellow scoring clip from the hoop (having won hoop 2 earlier in the game) but his opponent did not see him do that. The jump shot attempt failed but the yellow ball finished behind the hoop. The referee stated that the shot was "clean" and the opponent said, "good shot". The striker put the scoring clip he had removed earlier back on the hoop. The opponent, thinking that hoop 7 has been scored, played his blue ball towards hoop 8. Yellow then asked his opponent if he had thought that the yellow had scored the hoop. Is the opponent allowed to have a replay under Rule 14.1.2?

### ***Answer 14.5***

The owner of the blue ball is not entitled to a replay because he was not given incorrect information by his opponent. The owner of yellow was simply replacing a clip that should be replaced. Mind you, it seems likely that Yellow knew that his opponent was under a misapprehension and could have told him that the hoop had not been run, even though he wasn't obliged to. A referee would have to rule that a replay was not allowed despite any thoughts he might have about sportsmanship.

## **15. Refereeing**

The "Refereeing" section was much larger in earlier editions of the GC Rules Book, but most of that information is now in a separate document called the WCF Refereeing Regulations which covers both golf croquet and association croquet.

### **Question 15.1**

Is a player required to own up if he knows he has committed a fault that no one else noticed?

### ***Answer 15.1***

There is a requirement for a player to say so if that player knows that he has committed a fault. Rule 15.1 says that the players in a match are responsible for the fair and correct application of these Rules and that the presence of a referee does not change the obligation on a player to follow fair and correct play. Regulation R8(a) of the WCF Refereeing Regulations says, "The presence of a referee does not relieve a player in a game of the duty to draw attention to an irregularity that he thinks the referee may have overlooked". That includes an irregularity committed by the player him or herself.

### **Question 15.2**

In a recent game, a player asked a referee to watch his jump shot attempt. His ball hit the outside of the hoop and finished beyond it. The striker walked away without comment and the referee also said nothing. The opponent then ran the hoop and put a scoring clip on it. The referee then stated that the hoop had been scored by the jump shot. Should the player who did the jump shot have told the referee that his shot had missed? Could the player have been sanctioned for not telling the referee? If the striker did tell the referee, could he have been sanctioned for not accepting a referee's decision.

### ***Answer 15.2***

Rule 15.1 requires a player to follow fair and correct play. So, if the striker was sure that his shot had missed, he should have told the referee. If he thought it probably missed but wasn't sure, it would be reasonable for him to leave it up to the referee to decide. As to whether the player could have been sanctioned for not telling the referee, how could the referee tell whether or not the player knew that his shot had missed?

It would be reasonable for a player to state his opinion (either way) about the outcome of a shot (e.g. "I thought I got that" or "I thought I'd missed"). He should not be sanctioned provide he did it politely and did not labour the point. If the player was rude or stated his opinion repeatedly, he could be sanctioned under Rule 16.2.6 for failing to accept a decision of a referee on a matter of fact or showing lack of respect for a referee.

The opponent who ran the hoop after it had been "scored" with the jump shot could have a case for being allowed to have replay on the grounds of having been misled into thinking the hoop had not been already been scored.

### **Question 15.3**

Could you clarify this one for me please? In Rule 15, which deals with refereeing in general, it says that “if there is a difference of opinion on a matter of fact, the opinion of the player with the best view is to be preferred, but if two views are equal, the striker’s opinion prevails”. I am somewhat confused with the wording “but if two views are equal”.

### **Answer 15.3**

Two views are equal means that there was *no reason* to think that their positions were such that one of the players was in a better position to see what happened.

## **16. Behaviour**

### **Question 16.1**

A player has been moving in front of the striker too often and a warning is given. If that player responds with bad language can he be given an immediate second warning?

### **Answer 16.1**

Yes.

### **Question 16.2**

What is the penalty for repeatedly behaving unacceptably? I assume that the first offence is simply a warning. What happens for subsequent offences?

### **Answer 16.2**

Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with under Rule 16 (Behaviour). Examples are given in Rule 16.2 and the three-step procedure for dealing with such situations is given in Rule 16.4. A warning may be given after the first offence, but the penalties escalate greatly for repeat offences. A repeat offence is a further occurrence during the same match of any unacceptable behaviour (not necessarily the same behaviour) by the same side (not necessarily the same player). The second offence would result in the loss of a turn and the third offence in the loss of the match.

If the referee decides that a contravention of Rule 16.1 is sufficiently serious, even if it is the first contravention in the match, they are entitled to stop the match and either rule that the offending side is to lose their next stroke or award the match to the opposing side.

## **19. Handicap play**

### **Question 19.1**

Is it too late to take an extra stroke after your opponent has addressed their ball?

### **Answer 19.1.**

No. The previous striker may claim an extra stroke any time before the next stroke has been played. If an extra stroke could not be taken after an opponent had addressed his ball, an unscrupulous opponent could avoid giving away extra strokes by always positioning himself ready to take his stance immediately. If a player doesn’t want to take his stance (and thereby disclose his tactics) before his opponent has indicated whether he wants to take an extra stroke, he can force the issue by asking his opponent if they are considering whether to play an extra stroke. Rule 19.5.5 allows a player to ask the question and it also requires to opponent to reply promptly (See Rule 16.2.8).

### **Question 19.2**

Could you please give us the correct way to work out the extra strokes in doubles? For example, what should happen when player A on hcp 8 and B on hcp 11 play against C on hcp 6 and D on hcp of 7?

### **Answer 19.2**

In doubles, extra strokes are received by the two highest handicapped players who may be on the same side or on opposing sides. The lower (smaller) handicap on each side is subtracted from the higher handicap on the other side, and the difference divided by two to give the “*half handicap difference*”. The extra strokes are received by the higher handicapped player in each comparison. In your example the comparisons are between players C and B and player B gets the extra strokes, and between players D and A, and player A get the extra strokes. The number of extra strokes is always a whole number, so if the half handicap difference is a fraction, it is rounded off. Generally, this means rounding up, but if (as is the case in your example) both players receiving extra strokes belong to the same side *and* the half handicap differences are both fractional, one is rounded up and one is rounded down. The players receiving the extra strokes can decide which one is rounded down. The calculations for your example would be done as follows (applying Rule 19.3):

- (1) Identify the player with the lowest handicap and the player with the higher handicap on the opposing side. Player C has the lowest handicap, and player B is the one with the higher handicap on the other side.
- (2) Calculate the half handicap difference. That is  $(11 - 6)/2 = 2\frac{1}{2}$ .
- (3) Calculate the half handicap difference for the other two players. That is  $(8 - 7)/2 = \frac{1}{2}$ .
- (4) Players A and B will receive the extra strokes. In this example, both players receiving extra strokes belong to the same side and for both of them the half handicap difference is fractional, so one will be rounded up and one will be rounded down. That means that
  - player A will receive zero extra strokes and player B will receive 3, or
  - player A will receive one extra stroke and player B will receive 2.

Players A and B can decide which way the rounding is done, and they must announce their decision before the game starts.

### **Question 19.3**

If both players on the same side have the same handicap and both will receive extra strokes, how are the extra strokes calculated? For example, what should happen when player A on hcp 8 and B on hcp 11 play against C and D who are both on hcp 6?

### **Answer 19.3**

Applying the method for calculating extra strokes given in Rule 19.3, one of players C and D would receive one extra stroke and the other would receive three, but which player would receive which? According to Rule 19.3.2(a), if two players on the same side have the same handicap and both will receive extra strokes, they are to announce before the game starts which of them will receive extra strokes based on the lowest handicap. Players C and D can decide for themselves who gets the three extra strokes and who gets only one.

Specific events can override this provided it is clearly stated in the event conditions. For example, a competition could use the player indexes to break ties if the handicaps are the same for both players on the same side.

### **Question 19.4**

In a handicap game, a player took an extra stroke to put his ball into the jaws of the hoop. His opponent claimed that doing so constituted a fault. Was the opponent correct?

### **Answer 19.4**

No. Putting your ball in the jaws of the hoop in an extra stroke, or even running the hoop in an extra stroke is not a fault. Rule 19.6 does not say that a player is not allowed to go for the hoop or try to put his ball in the jaws of the hoop in an extra turn. It simply says a player taking an extra stroke may not score a point for their side as a result of an extra stroke (but may score a point for the opposing side). If a player completed running the hoop in an extra

stroke while attempting to put their ball in the jaws of the hoop, their ball would simply be on the wrong side of the hoop without having scored the hoop.

### **Question 19.5**

In a club handicap competition, one of my opponents stated that her handicap was seven. We played two games and I lost both. Afterwards it was found that her handicap was, in fact, six. My opponent said that we would void the games and replay them with the right handicap. Is that the correct procedure?

### **Answer 19.5**

No that is not the correct procedure unless that was stated in the playing conditions before the competition started. If there was no such condition, the games should have been scored as 7:0 to you. Playing under the wrong handicap is considered to be a serious offence, even if done accidentally. It is covered under Regulation 12.2 of the Australian Tournament Regulations which says "... Every player bears the final responsibility for ensuring that they play at their correct handicap. Players who play in a handicap event at a handicap higher than their handicap or in a class event that their handicap does not entitle them to enter must be disqualified. In knock-out events in which the player has not been defeated, their place is taken by their last opponent. ...".

Tournaments in Australia do not have to be played under the ACA Tournament Regulations but, if not, they should state clearly what regulations are replacing the standard ones.

Note that the penalty for playing under the wrong handicap applies whether or not the offending player actually uses any extra turns they were not entitled to.

### **Question 19.6**

In a handicap doubles game one of our opponents received four extra turns and their partner none. After I had played my red ball in front of hoop 5, the opponent's better player played his black ball to the side of red, said that he would take an extra turn and hit my ball away. Should I have forestalled as soon as he said he would take the extra turn, or would telling him he had no extra turns be giving advice to an opponent? By playing his black ball twice in a row, has he committed a wrong ball play?

### **Answer 19.6**

You should have forestalled as soon as he said he would take the extra turn. Telling him he had no extra turns would not be giving advice to an opponent. Rule 19.7.2 can be applied in this situation. That rule is primarily intended for when a player with extra turns takes one when he shouldn't (e.g. after a wrong ball play), but the rule is also appropriate to the situation you described. The Rule says:

If it is discovered that an extra stroke has been played invalidly and play is stopped before the opposing side has played a stroke, whether valid or invalid, then the extra stroke is restored, and any balls moved are replaced in the positions they occupied before the extra stroke was played. Play then continues by the opposing side playing the next ball in sequence.

### **Question 19.7**

Time was called but because the score was 6:6 they played for the next hoop. One of the players had an unused extra turn left. Question: can the extra turn still be used whilst playing for the next hoop?

### **Answer 19.7**

Yes. Rule 19.4.1 says that, subject to Rule 19.7.1 (which is not relevant in this example), an extra stroke may be taken at any stage of the game in a new turn that follows the end of a turn in which they played a stroke. If the regulations under which the game is being played specify that play is to continue after time is called under certain circumstances, e.g. to break a tie, then that's just part of the game, so an extra stroke can be taken in extra time.

## Miscellaneous

### Question M.1

Is it encouraged to continue play in GC pennant singles games for the full thirteen hoops if the score was very uneven at a lesser score, e.g. 7 – 3?

#### *Answer M.1*

No. Although that is often done in social play, it is not encouraged in a tournament or pennant. Once a player has scored enough points to win the game, the game is over, so any hoops run after that would not count. By continuing you would, effectively, be playing a social game or a practice game. A tournament manager might prohibit it, for example, if he wants the court vacated as soon as possible so that another game can start, or if practicing between games is not allowed.

### Question M.2

Are you allowed to take an umbrella with you on to the court?

#### *Answer M.2*

There is no rule against taking an umbrella on to the court. You can be penalised for disturbing other players, so you would have to be extra careful if you were carrying a large object like an open umbrella. The umbrella would be treated as part of your personal property as far as Rule 11 was concerned. If a ball from your game hit your umbrella during the striking period as a result of a stroke you played, you would have committed a fault even if you were not holding the umbrella.

### Question M.3

The rules say that the placement of the Red hoop is stated to be located at the “final” hoop. What is meant by “final” hoop? The only references I can find are in AC documents nominating the position of hoop 12.

#### *Answer M.3*

The final hoop means the last hoop that would be contested in a game where all possible hoops were contested. This is defined in Rule 1.4.2. It is hoop 3 in a best-of-thirteen-point or best-of-nineteen-point game. It's hoop 1 for a best of seven point-game-point, but the red hoop would rarely be put there because hoop 1 usually has a blue crown. Rule 3.2.2 says that the final hoop *may* be coloured red. So, it's optional. That rule also says that it is permissible for the hoops to be coloured as required for Association Croquet. Some clubs always have the red hoop at hoop 5 (a.k.a. hoop 12) regardless of which form of croquet is being played and other clubs change the position according to the code played on the day. Both are acceptable.

### Question M.4

Is there a rule in golf croquet to deal with the situation where two balls (one from each side) are hampering each other and neither player is willing to allow the other to be the first to have a clear shot with their hampered ball? How many strokes should a referee allow to be played in such a situation before intervening?

#### *Answer M.4*

There is no rule in golf croquet covering that situation and, therefore, the referee should not intervene regardless of how many strokes have been played since the situation arose. There is a procedure described in the WCF Refereeing Regulations for what is called an “impasse”, but that procedure only applies to association croquet, not golf croquet. There is no need to intervene in golf croquet because, even with two balls effectively doing nothing, it is not a stalemate situation since the other two balls can still compete for the hoop. The situation will usually resolve itself after the hoop has been scored. I have only once seen such a situation last for more than one hoop in golf croquet, and never more than two.

### **Question M.5**

Our club is currently running its annual club competition and I believe they have incorrectly extrapolated the rule prohibiting practice during a competition. It has been deemed that, for the duration of a competition which is played over two months, no player may play a social game while waiting to play a competition game later the same day. This seems unfair as one player may have played several competition games in a day before meeting an opponent who only gets a five-minute warmup.

### **Answer M.5**

Neither the WCF Golf Croquet Rules nor the WCF Refereeing Regulations say anything about when practice is allowed, so it is not a refereeing matter. The Australian Tournament Regulations mention practice in Regulations 7.3.8, 7.14, 12.5 and 15.2.

Basically, the tournament regulations say that, apart from the five-minute warm-up before the start of the player's first game of the day:

- During the event, courts being used for the event may only be used for practice at the discretion of the venue manager. (For an event at a single venue, the venue manager is the tournament manager).
- In all cases the tournament manager has discretion to vary the arrangements.

So, like it or not, it's up to the tournament manager.

### **Question M.6**

I have always taught players that it is only necessary to perform a visual test to see if a hoop has been run (or can be run in its next turn if it came from the non-playing side). Section B4 of the ACA Golf Croquet Refereeing Manual (2015) gives a list of reasons why the string test should not be used. I could not find any statement in the GC Rules or the Refereeing Regulations saying that the string test should not be used. What is the situation?

### **Answer M.6**

It is not against the rules or regulations for a referee to use a string test. A visual test will allow the correct decision to be made with confidence in nearly all cases. So, the string test should be avoided, if possible, because of the slight risk of moving the hoop while performing the test. However, the string test can be used for a very close decision because it is more accurate.

I disagree with all of the reasons given in Refereeing Manual for not performing a string test except where it says there is a danger of moving the hoop, which would invalidate the test.

However, if the string test is performed carefully and properly, the hoop will not move even if it is loose. Before performing the string test, the referee should already have performed a visual test, so he knows what decision he would make if he did accidentally destroy the evidence while performing the string test.