

Croquet Instructions

Game Setup

A standard nine-wicket croquet game is set up using what is referred to as the "double diamond" pattern. Two stakes are placed at either end of the field of play, with two wickets set up directly in front of each stake. From there, two more wickets are set up well ahead of the stake, one off to the right, the other to the left and even with the far right wicket. This is done at both ends of the field. The ninth and final wicket is placed directly in the center of the playing area. When completed, the field should be as close to symmetrical as possible for the purpose of fairness.

Game Play

Since most sets come with at least four croquet mallets and four colored balls, the game can be played individually or in teams of two. Players must make their way around the course by hitting their ball through the wickets. They begin by playing through the two wickets in front of the stake, then navigating the third wicket, which is located in front and to the right. They then play through the center wicket, followed by the fifth wicket, located ahead and to the right. Once they play through the final two wickets, located in front of the opposing stump, they play their ball off the stump and head back the other way, following the same pattern until they return to their own stake. Each time a player clears a wicket, she is given another turn.

Scoring

The object of the game is to score the most points. One point is awarded for each pass through a wicket in the proper direction and order, and an additional point is given out for hitting the stake. On a nine-wicket field, each player must pass through seven wickets twice and hit both stumps for a maximum of 16 points. The winning team will always finish with 16 points, while the losing team ends up with 15 or fewer points. In doubles, points can only be scored if both players knock their ball through a given wicket.

Bonuses and Roqueting

If a player hits through more than one wicket in a turn, he is given two bonus shots, which must be taken immediately. The other way bonus hits are earned is through a roquet, which occurs when a player's ball hits a ball belonging to an opponent. A player can do one of several things on a roquet. He may use his two bonus hits right away, or move the ball a mallet-head away from the opposing ball and play two bonus hits. He can choose to place his ball next to his opponent's ball, hit both in one direction and then play one bonus shot. Finally, he can put the balls together, place his foot on top of his own ball, hit the ball with the mallet and send the opposing ball as far away from a wicket as possible.

Croquet Team Playing Instructions

1. Divide players into two teams: a "cool" team that plays the blue and black balls, and a "hot" team that plays the red and yellow balls of a croquet set.
2. Decide which team goes first. They will play the blue and black balls. Take turns in the order of the corresponding colors on the stake - blue first, yellow last.
3. Place your ball 3 feet south of the first wicket, and try hit it through. If you succeed, you earn a bonus stroke. Otherwise, your turn is over.
4. Take two bonus strokes if your ball comes to rest in contact with another player's ball during your turn. This is a "roquet."
5. Use this first bonus stroke to hit your ball so that both your ball and your opponent's ball move. Use your second stroke to hit your own ball toward the proper wicket.
6. Pass your ball through the wickets in the proper order: southwest 1, northwest 2, northeast 3, southeast 4, south-central 5, and north-central 6, followed by 2, 1, 4, 3, 6, and 5.
7. Remove your corresponding colored clip from the wicket when your ball passes through, and place it on the next one.
8. Become a rover once your ball has passed through all six wickets twice (in the proper order.) Take your rover ball out of play when it hits the final stake.
9. Roquet any other ball in play, but no more than once each a turn - unless your rover ball passes through a wicket (any wicket). Your rover, however, cannot roquet the same ball twice in succession, even if it passes through a wicket.
10. Win the game if your team is the first one to hit the final stake with both balls.

Tips & Warnings

- ✓ The directions north, south, east and west used above don't necessarily refer to geographic directions. The southwest corner of the croquet court is defined as the corner where the first wicket and starting area are located. The other directions follow from this definition.
- ✓ Orient the court north-to-south if possible to avoid having the sun in your eyes while playing.
- ✓ If each team has two players, each player plays one ball. If only two people are playing, each player plays two balls. If three people are playing, one team has only one player, who plays both balls for that team.
- ✓ Place the clip on the tops of the wickets the first time through (1-2-3-4-5-6) and on the sides of the wickets the second time through (2-1-4-3-6-5).
- ✓ In American croquet, a player cannot use his or her foot to stop his own ball from moving.