

# THE MAKING OF A CROQUET INSTRUCTOR

**A Cornerstone  
for the  
Successful Club**



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## PREFACE

The following guide is designed to aid Croquet Clubs that have a desire to improve their educational capabilities and format by creating a strong teaching staff. Certain Croquet Clubs have found that by offering better educational opportunities for their players, it not only attracts new members, but aids in the retention of older members. This guide is designed to be used with some flexibility so as to address the different needs and situations of diverse Croquet Clubs across the country. While it is primarily designed for the players of the American Six-Wicket Croquet game, there is no reason why many of the suggestions and principles could not be used for other forms of the game.

Initially the instructors and the individual players should be encouraged to follow the traditional forms of shot making as supported by the **United States Croquet Association (USCA)**. However, the need for some individuality and innovation as players develop their techniques and abilities should not be discouraged. The sport of Croquet allows players of all ages, all sizes and both sexes to play competitively and this very diversity may require different approaches to teaching the game. However, enjoyment of the learning process should have high priority and never be overlooked.



## MOTIVATION

### a. Inspiring members to become instructors:

Assuming that you have established a Board of Directors or a similar group that oversees the running of your Club, the first step is to develop a list of potential new members (after all there is no need for instructors if there is no one to teach!)

1. Encourage existing members to bring in new members.
2. Someone who has some speaking ability (preferably your President or Membership Director) can talk to your community clubs, or groups, about Croquet and the great benefits of the game. Talking points can include: all ages and both sexes being able to play as equals, great mental exercise, and moderate physical exercise. This is a game that even people with handicaps can learn to play and play well.
3. Have something to offer the potential new player, like free Croquet lessons... One Club offers four free lessons to anyone. No charge and no club membership requirement. At the end of the free lessons, a regular member of the Club (pick someone with an outgoing personality) gives a brief pep talk. This person should speak plainly about dues and costs of mallets but, make sure a positive comparison is made between Croquet and other sports, (Golf, Tennis, even Bowling) when you are talking about costs. The educational and social opportunities offered by the Club can be an important part of this talk.
4. Talk briefly about the **USCA** and acquaint new members with the facilities they offer. Mention that the **USCA** is the matrix which holds the clubs together by providing common rules, handicap guidelines and tracking for each individual member as well as publications, and a website. However, don't overwhelm the new member with details!

**b. Seminar approach to Instructor Training:**

Now that you have a list of potential new members and can set up some classes, you need to have someone to teach them. Start by setting a date for a Seminar type training session. The Seminar method is especially recommended if you do not have a qualified or experienced instructor to get the group started.

The difference between a Seminar approach and a traditional classroom approach is that in the Seminar type class interaction will be encouraged, usually by using a question and answer format. In the Seminar approach the Group Leader uses pertinent questions that inspire response and participation, whereas in the more direct method of teaching, the class leader prepares a lecture type format. A few examples of questions that could be used to lead into a discussion might be:

1. What goals do we need to set for the teaching of Beginners and Novice level players?
2. How important is consistency in teaching and establishing goals?
3. What are some of the difficulties you can foresee in teaching a Beginner?
4. How do you recognize “learning readiness” and how important is it?
5. Is there a difference in teaching adults verses teaching children?

**c. The importance of good instruction:**

It is vitally important that instructors take the time to learn the correct methods of teaching Croquet. There are several good manuals available through the **USCA** on the basic swing, stance and approach, as well as shot making. If the instructor candidates have not yet had these necessary basics in their own training then a special class (or classes) should be considered so that everyone starts their teaching from the same baseline. If a student is poorly instructed in the early stages of learning the game, it is much harder to undo what they have incorrectly learned after they have played awhile.

**d. Instructing vs. Coaching:**

Generally instructing involves teaching new or clarifying old, information. Coaching is used to reinforce and encourage good play, while at the same time pointing out better shots or strategies for a player involved in a game. A good coach can also spot flaws in a player's stance and swing.

## **SETTING UP THE INSTRUCTOR TRAINING CLASSES**

**a. Choosing a Lead Instructor or Group Leader:**

Not every club has the luxury of a qualified and experienced Instructor to start the Instructor Training Classes. Therefore, a Group Leader must be chosen. The qualities to look for in a Group Leader are such things as; an outgoing personality; good voice and enthusiasm for the subject; shot-making skills and a good understanding of the game. Experience with teaching (even in an unrelated field) is a definite positive but not essential.

**b. Timing:**

Instructor training classes should be scheduled just a little ahead of the dates for Beginner classes. It is a good idea to have the training fresh in the minds of the instructors, going into their first classes. However, it is also important to schedule classes when the maximum number of Instructor candidates will be likely to attend.

**c. Location:**

While the temptation may be to have Instructor classes on the Croquet courts, the reality is that it's usually easier to hear and have discussions in a relatively small enclosed area. Since demonstration is not usually a part of basic Instructor training, the need for courtside classes is minimal.

**d. Handouts and Training Aids:**

Handouts are always a good idea, even if it's just an outline of the material to be covered at the particular class in question. The really important handout for the Instructor is an outline of the goals for a typical Beginner's Class. This might include, not only what should be covered in each of the classes, but also some exercises to improve shot-making and encourage practicing. Visual learning is usually retained better and longer than audio learning, so the ability of the Instructor to demonstrate shots is important.

**e. Goals and Limitations:**

Each set of classes, as well as each individual class, should have a specific set of guidelines and stated goals that the Instructors will work to achieve. For example: At the end of the second class the Beginners should be able to play a game of Golf Croquet with each other.

Instruction should also have some limitations. For example, Beginners should not Be taught advanced shot- making. While demonstration is important, the Instructor should not try to show off his or her skills in an effort to impress Beginners. A reasonable amount of innovation is acceptable as long as the Instructor stays within the guidelines that have been agreed upon.

## **COMPONENTS OF INSTRUCTOR TRAINING**

**a. The Tier approach:**

The “tier approach”, in its simplest terms, accepts the concept that as Croquet players learn the game, they have an obligation to help and teach the newer players. This is a top-down approach. However, if a Club can develop a good teaching staff, the tier approach can and should be used to set up clinics or classes for different levels, allowing students to advance their learning as they lower their handicap level. This might be thought of as the bottom-up approach. Ideally there should be at least three instruction handicap levels. For example, after Beginners Classes, the next handicap level would be for Advanced Beginners (Novice) players with handicap levels that might range from 15 up. An Intermediate Clinic would offer more advanced instruction for handicap levels 10 to 14.

At this point students should be encouraged to enter Tournaments.

Further drops in handicaps after a player reaches a handicap of 10, must be made on the basis of Tournament Points won. (See **USCA** Rule Book page 72 for details). However, even tournament players will find classes or clinics valuable, if given by instructors experienced in tournament play and with a handicap of 6 or lower.

### **b. Understanding Learning Readiness:**

The instructor must learn to recognize and deal with “learning readiness”.

Learning Readiness is usually a little different for each student. For example, in a class of six you might have two students who absorb information quickly and want to move on, while at the same time there may be two students who are totally confused and lag way behind the rest of the class. This is where it is ideal to have two or three instructors or coaches. However, in many instances, this is a luxury not always available. So, consider using the students that are anxious to move on, to coach the students that are lagging. This usually works quite well at all levels but should be supervised by an Instructor.

## **TEACHING BEGINNERS**

- a. No matter what, make sure they are having fun.
- b. Make a real effort to get the students to like you. You are your Club’s ambassadors of good will.
- c. Make sure that the Beginner ends each session with a success. It may be as little as getting through a wicket from 2 feet or the roquet of a ball that is 5 feet away. Success has a very strong psychological effect in getting new players to stay the course. If a class ends with a player unable to have success AT SOMETHING, you may not see him back again.
- d. The encouragement that you give, as an instructor, means a lot to the new player. Congratulate the Beginners on every advance and give them easy goals.
- e. Croquet is, to a large extent, a psychological or “mind” game. It requires a lot of focus. Let’s look at some other things to think about in this context.



**Adults vs. Children:**

Children do not usually care too much if the weather is hot or cold and they are not particularly sensitive to noise. Not so with adults; they are much more sensitive to heat and cold. Also, noise in the vicinity of their play distracts most adults. In some cases noise distraction obsesses and upsets a player to the point that they cannot make their shot and may even become annoyed. A truck going by or another player talking loudly is more disturbing to some players than others. Older adults may tire more easily and are more prone to heat stroke in hot weather. An Instructor or Coach should learn the signs of heat exhaustion so that he may head off a problem by seeing that a player has plenty of liquids and rests sufficiently between games.

**Special Issues with Beginners:**

Usually Beginners have never held a mallet when they start their first class so they will be awkward in their first attempts to make shots. They also embarrass easily. In any case the instructor must be patient and never embarrass a Beginner by laughing at their attempts to play or making fun of them. Instead, try extra encouragement as it will go a long way in making the new player feel comfortable with you, the Instructor.

**SOLVING TEACHING PROBLEMS****a. The Disruptive student:**

You may have a disruptive or argumentative player in your class.

There are several things you, as the Instructor, can and should do:

1. Ask the student to control his issue until after the class is over, and you can give him special attention. (He may well forget all about it).
2. Assign him homework. Have him look up the details/ facts of his issue and bring it to class for discussion at the next session.
3. If the student's arguments or questions are irrelevant to the particular class you are giving, tell him so and suggest that his questions will be addressed at a future time. Avoid arguing with a student during class time, under any circumstance.

**b. The Handicapped Player:**

There are all sorts of handicaps that may make it more difficult for someone to learn to play well. Most of these problems can and should be dealt with so that the handicap can be overcome. For example, a player may have an eyesight problem that affects their aim. Remind them that the feet are an excellent aiming device and should be used by everyone. Or, they may have a knee or hip problem which prevents the traditional stance. Let them find their own method for overcoming this but make suggestions that will improve the shot. Deafness is a common problem with older players. Don't mistake it for indifference or, even arrogance. Make sure they have heard you or agree with them in advance on a set of hand signals.

It is important to note, however, that a student with physical problems should never attempt any stroke or position that causes pain. Usually, a problem of this sort can be solved by less conventional ways of shooting. (An inexperienced Instructor may need to seek help on this problem.)

**c. The Overwhelmed Player:**

Many new players are overwhelmed with the learning process and the complexities of Six Wicket Croquet. They may express their worry about being able to learn the game. Constantly reassure these Beginners that the learning process comes in small but rewarding steps.

**d. Learner's Block:**

It is not unusual for a player to have a mental block about a shot. This most often seems to occur with the take-off shot. If you find that even after many attempts to explain and demonstrate a particular shot, you are not successful in teaching it to one particular student, get someone else to try teaching it. Often a different approach will work.

**e. People who have come to the first class unprepared for the challenges of the Six Wicket Game:**

In one instance a woman brought her 93 year old father to a class thinking that he could learn a game that was "easy" and suitable for his frail physical state. Rather than hold up the rest of the class to give special attention to someone who may never be able to handle the game, mentally or physically, suggest that they observe a game first, before signing up. A little basic screening of Croquet class candidates

can often head off this situation. Age in itself should never be the deciding factor as many 80 and 90 year olds still play croquet and play it well! However, the game may be unsuitable for those with physical and/or mental conditions combined with age.

**f. Conversations between players during class:**

There always seem to be a few “chatty Cathy’s” who prefer to socialize rather than learn. This has to be controlled or it will be disruptive to the other players. The solution is usually to make them aware that they are the only ones making noise. First, try stopping anything you are doing and look at the offenders. This is usually enough. If not, ask them to share their conversation with the others in the class. This always works. If you do it in a nice or, even, a humorous way, it rarely creates an issue.

### **WHAT ABOUT RULES?**

- a. The **USCA** provides each **New USCA** member with a book of rules for Six Wicket Croquet. There is really no point in discussing rules (other than to indicate that there are “rules”) during any free, pre-membership lessons. In fact, most rules should be brought into the learning of Croquet very gradually and on an as-needed basis, under any circumstance. In regularly scheduled classes or “Clinics” a Rule-of-the-Week can be an effective way of introducing and discussing many of the more complex rules.
- b. However, learning the numbers and names of wickets, right from the start, can be of great benefit as the learning process progresses. In addition simple Board keeping should be part of the early training sessions. It is also advisable to work some of the “Courtesies” of the game, into the teaching format.
- c. While rules can seem complicated, once learned, they can be an important component in winning games.

## **TEACHING THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF THE GAME:**

### **Part 1: Beginners (see attached schedule)**

As noted previously, most Beginners have never held a mallet and have no idea how to play the game of Croquet. A few may have “back-yard” croquet experience. They must all be handled “gently”. A common base needs to be established early in their croquet experience.

### **Part 2: The Advanced Beginner/Novice**

This group has completed the basics and wants to move on. This is, perhaps, the most critical level in their Croquet experience. Every effort must be made to encourage and inspire the Novice. Now the instructor can begin to innovate so as to address individual needs. Shot-making instruction should be expanded to add technique to the basic but more demanding shots such as the split-shot, the take-off, stop-shots rolls and rushes. Hands-on exercises and challenges are essential. Ideally there should also be a coached game (either six-wicket or golf croquet) after the class itself. It may be advisable to split this class into two parts, so that the new Novice players coming out of the Beginners class do not hold back those who have advanced in shot-making.

### **Part 3: The Intermediate**

At this point the player has expressed a desire to be a better player. He understands all the rudiments of the game. He has developed some skills and wants to learn more. He wants to better understand the rules and realizes the importance of them. Some classes or clinics devoted to tournament play are a good idea. Most of all, at this level, players want to learn the strategies of the game.

### **Part 4: The Advanced Player**

The Advanced Player must learn by competing with his peers and then reaching out to play in tournaments with other clubs. Special one-time “clinics” offered by low handicap and experienced tournament players should be encouraged, particularly for those players who have handicaps of 8 or under.

There is no greater satisfaction than to watch the players you have taught, develop into top notch croquet players who have learned to play and love the game, as you have.

**The next step is to set up a schedule of classes**

One of the most successful ways of setting up classes for the aspiring Croquet player is to offer four free lessons and use loaner mallets provided by the Club. At the end of the fourth class the players are encouraged to join the Club with the promise of two more lessons after they become Club members. Once they join, they will order their own mallets. Classes should not be too far apart. Twice a week seems to be ideal.

In an effort to provide a common base for Instructors, the following pages will be devoted to an outline of six classes designed for Beginners. This is not intended to be followed word for word but, rather, it can be used as a format and a tool and provide ideas for successful instructing.

**Schedule**

	Date/Time	Date/Time	Date/Time	Date/Time
Lesson 1				
Lesson 2				
Lesson 3				
Lesson 4				

## Suggested Guidelines for Beginner's Classes

Ideally a Beginners Croquet Class should have between six and eight student players, an Instructor and a Coach. Smaller classes are certainly acceptable but having more than eight in a Beginners' class usually gets unwieldy. As you teach a Beginner, you are establishing a base to build on. Some innovation is certainly acceptable, but a common set of guidelines and goals should be used for all Beginners Classes.

### First Class:

1. Spend a little "warm-up" time getting player's names, talking about Croquet, and a little about your Club but don't overemphasize. Keep the talk up-beat. Ask the participants about themselves and how they got interested in croquet. Introduce them to each other.
2. Introduce the students to the object of the game (try "making wickets"). Walk them around the court. Talk to them about the rotation of play, the significance of the colors of the balls, the purpose of solids and stripes, and the colors on the stake, as well as the pattern of the wickets. Keep it basic. Do let the students know that every wicket has a number or a name. Encourage them to use the proper number/name for each wicket when they talk about their shots.
3. Distribute Practice Mallets: Demonstrate and talk about grip, swing and stance. Have students practice just swinging the mallets using the standard grip and stance. Discuss the aim line on the mallet and the need to keep the feet as close together and parallel, as is comfortable and yet maintain balance.
4. Mention the fact that there are other grips that players may consider using, and that these will be covered in later sessions.
5. Set up the balls and have the students strike the balls with the mallet until they can hit the ball smoothly. Impress upon them the need to hit the ball squarely with the face of the mallet as well as developing a smooth back and forth motion.
6. Set up two balls, for each beginner. Have the balls about two feet apart. Explain that one is the Striker Ball and the other the Target Ball. Have them swing their mallets so as to strike the Target ball with the Striker Ball. Gradually increase the distance between the two balls until the player has success in hitting a ball about six to eight feet away.

At this point be sure and emphasize the need for correct placement of the feet, both the distance from the striker ball and direction of the feet. You might use the analogy that feet to a croquet player are like skis to a skier. They need to be parallel and not too far apart laterally (staggered or even depending on choice). The distance from the striker ball depends on the grip, choice of mallet size and body type. The key is to be certain that the shaft is perpendicular to the ground at striker ball impact.

7. This exercise should be followed by a brief discussion on aiming techniques. An important part of aim is visualization of the striker ball leaving the mallet and hitting the target ball. This is best accomplished by using the technique known as “stalking”. To do this the player should walk up to the striker ball from a distance of six or more feet, with mallet extended in the direction of the target ball, all the while visualizing an imaginary line that runs from the aim line on the mallet, through the center of the striker ball and on through the center of the target ball. This is done before placing your mallet behind the striker ball in preparation for the shot.

If a player seems to naturally choose a casting stroke, rather than placing the mallet on the ground, this can be started during the “stalk”.

Stalking is useful for attempting both roquets and wicket shots. It is really the first step in achieving good aim and is used along with proper placement of the feet, a true outward swing of the arms ( body should be still) with head down. These are the components of good aim.

8. Go to the wickets. Demonstrate stance, aim and follow-through. Have one or two players practice at each wicket. Starting from a distance of about 9 inches from the wicket, have the beginner strike the ball through the wicket several times. Then increase the distance, in steps, until they can make a wicket from 3 feet.
9. Have a “positioning contest” Pick an object like the stake and see who can get closest to it from a distance of 15 to 20 feet.

Make sure each student has some successes and promise them a game for the next session

### **Second Class:**

Beginning with the second session, there should be some sort of game play at each class, if possible. Almost all classes and clinics should be followed by a game, often touted as “coached play”. If students have committed to a certain number of sessions and understand that they might not play a game until an acceptable level of proficiency is reached, that's fine. But, because Croquet is a recreational activity, played during leisure time, one should never lose sight that it is a game and not an exercise/work. Most players who have reached a good standard of skill got there out of their own motivation and realization that to get good at this game, one has to practice but, practice correctly. “Correctly” is the operative word, here. There will almost always be players who insist that they don't need lessons and that they want to learn by trial and error. Often these players then proceed to spend a great deal of time practicing the wrong things in the wrong way. Correcting the results of bad practice can be challenging and usually prolongs the period before a player gets proficient at the game.

1. Review what was taught in the first class. Demonstrate aim and stroke as much as necessary. Review the aiming techniques.
2. Teach the beginners the game of golf croquet. In its simplest form this will take only a few minutes and it will help the new player to learn shot-making and positioning. Play a short doubles game of Golf Croquet with each player playing one ball. Answer questions.

If your club has a regular day for golf croquet (and this is a very good idea), encourage the Beginners to show up and play with the more experienced players, as soon as possible.

3. Discuss the basic rules of "Six wicket" and how they differ from the game of Golf Croquet just played. Keep it very simple at this point. Discuss the bonus shots for going through wickets and hitting balls. Suggest to the class that while this is a game of greater challenge than Golf Croquet they will be able to play the game by the time they are through with their "Beginner Lessons".
4. Talk about "Continuation Shots" Explain that these are extra shots won by going through a wicket or hitting another ball. Let each Beginner play a couple of wickets just to get the feel of continuation shots and rotation of play.
5. This might be the time to have a demonstration of "breaks" or how to make multiple wickets in one turn. This demonstration should be relatively short and should not be done to showcase the instructors skills but, rather, to show, inspire and give new players goals.
6. Have a question and answer period at the end.

### **Third Class:**

1. Review previous class.
2. Practice shots and making wickets.
3. Practice positioning. Try another positioning "challenge" like hitting a ball from the border to the front of a wicket, so as to be in a position to go through the wicket with the next shot.
4. Talk about "Deadness" and demonstrate the Deadness Board for the game of Six Wicket Croquet. Again, keep it simple and basic. Make sure players understand what "Deadness" means. Talk about clearing deadness by going through a wicket and what happens when a player roquets a ball he is dead on. Explain risk verses reward as it pertains to getting dead on partner. You have one friend in your partner and two enemies in your opponents. Once you are dead on partner, you have no more friends to help you!



5. Demonstrate the “Take-off” shot. Explain that this is one of several shots sometimes referred to as the “Ball-in-hand” or Croquet Shot. Usually beginners have a hard time believing that the ball will go straight when you show that you have to hit into the Striker ball at an angle with the mallet. You may have to demonstrate this shot several times. Mention that the rules require you to hit into the ball and that the target ball must move or “wobble”.
6. Let each Beginner try at least two “Take-off” shots. Distance is not important at this point but the concept is.
7. Start a short game of Six Wicket Croquet. Rotate players if necessary. Encourage use of the “Take-off” shot. Answer questions as they come up in the game but try and keep your answers simple and directed to the question. Have four players participate while the others watch and comment on the game.
8. End class with a question and answer period.

#### **Fourth Class:**

1. Review previous class and “deadness” in particular. Introduce the “Clearing Wicket” (# 1-back) and the rules that allow your opponent to clear deadness when you go through this particular wicket.
2. Practice shots that are problems.
3. Demonstrate the “Rush Shot”. Explain that it expands from just striking the Target ball with the Striker ball, to hitting the Target Ball hard enough to “Rush” it a considerable distance. Explain its usefulness and that it actually acts as a bonus shot. Also explain that when rushing balls on good surfaces, a normal swing with follow through (when the balls are 12” or less apart) will usually produce good results. However, on hilly/bumpy surfaces a stop shot technique (demonstrate and explain that this shot will be practiced in a later lesson) will prevent an accidental jump. It should also be noted that for rushes to be successful the balls should be no further than 1 ½ to 2 feet apart. The further apart the balls are from each other, the less accurate the shot is likely to be. Have each player try a couple of rush shots.
4. Play a simple version of “Six Wicket Croquet”, using the deadness boards and explaining as you go along. Explain the importance of Rotation (thinking ahead three or four turns)
5. If you have offered free lessons so far, this would be the class to encourage Membership in your Club. Allow at least 30 minutes for someone from your Club to talk about Membership and Mallets. After a brief talk about mallet qualities, and choices, mallets should be ordered at this time. The **United States Croquet Association (USCA)** should be mentioned and the fact that Club dues may include membership in the national organization. Be up front about costs.

Talk about the benefits of **USCA** membership. Talking points might include;

**Yearly dues in the USCA break down to around \$5 per month which includes a rule book, a subscription to The Croquet News, management of handicaps and being able to play in USCA Sanctioned Tournaments, as well as a variety of additional benefits.**

At this point membership in the Club should be a requirement for any additional lessons with the promise of two more Beginner's level classes, after joining. This format has proved to be a successful one and its use encouraged, although the choice is optional.

### **Fifth Class:**

1. Review and demonstration of shots already learned.
2. Introduce the "Split shot". Explain that it is one of the 'Ball-in-Hand' or Croquet Shots and that its purpose is to separate the two balls so that the Croqueted Ball goes further than the Striker Ball and usually, although not always, at a different angle.
3. The greater the angle of the mallet head, lateral or vertical, the more power must be put into the shot. Introduce the Stop Shot and show how it can be used for close wicket positions.
4. Talk about Roll Shots, another of the "Ball-in-hand" or Croquet Shots, and the fact that the angle (front down, back up) of the mallet will be the major factor controlling the distance between the two balls when doing a Roll Shot. If time permits, demonstrate the various Roll Shots.

The most effective way to do this is to have the class seated so that they can view the angle of the mallet head in profile. The Instructor should then present the different roll shots but start with the Stop Shot ( mallet head up) then progress to the various Roll Shots, starting with the Quarter Roll (mallet head down slightly) and progressing to the Half Roll, the Full Roll and the Pass Roll. While doing this the instructor should explain how hand and foot positions change, along with the tilt of the mallet head, the angle of the mallet head increasing with the change in positions. Point out that the Striker Ball travels further, proportionately, with each progressive shot from the Stop Shot to the Pass Roll. Let the student know that future classes will address the dynamics and use of all the roll shots, as well as the methods for achieving them.

5. Use the numbers and names of the wickets, when teaching, as much as possible. Always refer to the balls by their colors (for example, "red stripe" or "black solid")

6. The power of a shot is determined by the amount of backswing. Demonstrate the amount of backswing that has to be used to get a ball out of bounds, from one end of the court to another, with a regular drive shot. Then demonstrate how little backswing is used when doing finesse shots such as balls that are close to the wicket or with certain border shots. The power of Croquet shots is determined by the combination of back swing and angle.
7. Play a short timed game of Six Wicket, answering questions on rules as you go along. Answer all questions as clearly and simply as possible and make sure the student player understands the answer.
8. The time limit can be as short or long as time permits. Discuss the end of the game when everyone gets one more shot (Match Time).
9. If time allows, briefly mention the Rover Game...simply that when a ball has made all the wickets (but not staked out of the game) they are considered a Rover with special rules that govern the Rover's ball.
10. Usually it will be quite some time before new players achieve 12 wickets in a game, and become Rovers, so teaching the rules and strategies of this part of the game can wait until the players are in a future class.
11. Allow time for questions, there may be many.

### **Sixth and Final Beginner's Class:**

1. Mallets must have been ordered by this time. Review shots learned in previous class.
2. Review what the new players have learned. Encourage questions. If you, as the instructor, have observed areas in the lessons that seem to be confusing or difficult for the new players to understand, use this time to go over them.
3. Explain Double Banking. Talk about marking balls, courtesies and rules.
4. This will be the graduation class. All Beginners will become Advanced Beginners/Novices. Make sure you congratulate each and everyone on their progress. You might consider telling them that Croquet is a game of patience. Not only patience with the game itself and its strategies but patience with your opponent and, most of all, patience with yourself as you learn.
5. Celebrate by having a regular coached game of Six Wicket! If you want a warm-up of Golf Croquet first, that is okay, too. Encourage some of the older Club members to attend and, to even, coach.

6. Make sure to invite the new members to all functions and encourage them to play both together and with the other Advanced Beginners/Novices at times indicated on the Club Calendar.

*Special Note:* At this point the new Croquet Club members may need special attention and encouragement to participate in clinics, socials and games. If possible, the Club might consider assigning several of the new members to a volunteer "Advisor" whose functions might include introducing the newer members to the rest of the Club, encouraging them to attend socials, clinics and play in games, as well as being available to answer any questions that may arise.

The next step is to provide a class or "clinic" for the new members as Novices. This has proven to be very successful in solving much of the problem of losing the new player, after they have finished their first six classes, but are not yet assimilated into the club.

*Let's Keep the Ball Rolling!*



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