

Challenging Optional Rules

All players in the game must consent to these optional rules before the start of the game. Any combination of options (none to all) may be chosen.

National or American Croquet Options

Option 1. Using Deadness

Deadness occurs after a roquet is made and the striker is unable to score his/her wicket. The consequences are that the striker is not allowed to roquet the ball(s) again until scoring the wicket. Once the wicket is scored, the striker becomes 'alive' and is able to roquet the ball(s) again. If a striker roquets a ball he/she is dead on, all balls are replaced to their positions before the shot, and the turn is over. Deadness carries over from turn to turn.

Option 1A. Special Relief of Deadness

A side may clear one of its balls of deadness when the opponent makes the first wicket after the turning stake (the 8th wicket) so long as that side is behind in points (not tied) at the end of the opponent's turn.

Option 1B. Clearing Deadness

A side may clear one of its balls of deadness when the opponent makes the first wicket after the turning stake (the 8th wicket) regardless of score at the end of the opponent's turn.

Option 2. Out of Bounds Play

A) A ball is considered out-of-bounds if it is more than halfway over the boundary line which is considered to be the inside edge of the boundary marking. If a striker sends any ball(s) out-of-bounds as the result of their shot, all balls shall be measured in 9" from the spot where they crossed the boundary line and the turn ends.

The only exceptions to this are when the striker's ball crosses the boundary line as the result of a roquet (where it is then lifted and placed either in contact or up to 9" from the roqueted ball) or a striker ball directly hits (not a cannon) any other ball out of bounds after it has roqueted a ball (any such ball is marked in and the striker takes croquet from the roqueted ball).

Additionally, any ball coming to rest within 9" of the boundary shall be marked in 9" prior to the next shot unless it is the striker ball and it has any remaining shots. Any balls within the 9" at the end of a turn shall be marked in 9" inches. A mallet head is normally 9" in length. Longer heads should have a 9" mark on it for the placing of balls.

B) If Option 1 is in effect and the striker roquets a ball out-of-bounds, the turn is over and the out-of-bounds ball is marked in 9". However, no deadness is incurred.

Option 3. Starting Deadness

May be used in conjunction with Option 1 regarding deadness. No extra shots are earned by hitting another ball until both the striker ball and the ball to be roqueted have cleared a designated wicket (typically #1, #2, or #3). A ball "not in the game" may have a ball(s) "in the game" marked and lifted for a shot – and vice versa. Balls "out" of the game are dead on balls "in" the game- and visa versa.

Option 4. Wired

If an opponent causes the striker ball to be blocked by a wicket or stake (wired) when the striker wishes to shoot at a ball it is alive on, the striker may move his/her ball a mallet head's length or up to 9 inches in any direction from its wired position to enable a possible open shot on that ball. The striker is not obligated to shoot at a ball from this new position and may take any shot he/she wishes. This optional rule does not apply if the striker's side placed the striker ball in its current position, only if the opponent placed it there. If moving the ball 9 inches in any direction does not present an open shot, the striker may move the striker's ball a greater distance (but no greater distance than needed) to create an open shot but must do so without shortening the distance between the ball they were wired from and the original position of the striker's ball. Additionally, they must shoot at the ball they are now open on.

Option 5. Blocked at a Wicket by a Dead Ball

If an opponent causes a ball to be blocked from scoring its wicket by a dead ball(s) for two consecutive turns, the blocked ball becomes alive on the blocking ball(s). The opponent must be responsible for the block, not the side claiming a block. A block must be confirmed by the blocking side in order to be counted as a block, in order to avoid disputes. In addition, the proposed wicket shot that is claimed to be blocked must be possible to make to count as a block.

Option 6. Rover Play

A rover may hit all balls once per turn; however, once the rover is dead on a ball(s), it must go through any wicket in any direction to clear its deadness on that ball(s). The rover does not get an additional (bonus) shot after going through this clearing wicket. If the rover goes through any wicket in any direction while dead on one or more balls (intentionally or not), the turn is over regardless of any additional shots remaining. Once a clearing wicket is made, the rover is alive on all balls in its next turn and may hit them in any order.

Option 7. Poison

A poison ball is one that has scored all the wickets but hasn't hit the finishing stake. A poison ball may hit any opponent ball and have it removed from the game. Conversely, if an opponent

ball hits a poison ball, the poison ball is removed from the game. If a poison ball fully passes through any wicket in any direction, it is removed from the game. A poison ball does not earn bonus shots for hitting other balls.

Option 8. Over Time Play

When a timed match has expired, each ball gets a last turn. If a ball has played its last stroke of the turn and is still rolling on the court when time expires, it will get another turn. If the losing side has played its last turns, the winning side may not play its last turn (aka last ball/last turn may not play). If the score is tied after the "last turn" round, the ball closest to its contested wicket gets an extra point for the win. A tournament director may choose to use multiple last turns rounds (ideally, no more than two rounds).

Option 9. Ball in Hand

From where the striker ball stopped after the roquet. If the striker picks up the striker ball, way #4 is no longer available and the striker must proceed with ways #1, #2 or #3 for taking the first bonus shot.

Option 10. Non Sequence Order of Play

On the opening turn the sequence is blue/red/black/yellow, after the opening turn a player may choose to play either of their balls on each turn.

Various Sets of 9 Wicket Backyard Rules Used In North America

Norwich Options (recommended you play options 21- 25 as a set)

Option 21. Non Sequence Order of Play

On the opening turn the sequence is blue/red/black/yellow, after the opening turn a player may choose to play either of their balls on each turn.

Option 22. Deadness

A player's ball is alive on all other balls at the start of every turn. If a player hits a ball they are dead on, the turn is over and all balls are returned to the original positions.

Option 23. Out of Bounds

A ball is out of bounds if it touches the boundary line. If a player hits their ball or another ball out of bounds, the turn is over and all balls come back in perpendicular 9 inches from the boundary line.

Option 24. Lift

When a player hits the turning stake, the opponent on their next turn may choose to pick up one of their balls and play it a mallet head (9 inches) from the turning stake or from the center wicket.

Option 25. Timed Game

All games are timed for 1 hour with sudden stop when the clock expires and there are no extra turns. If the score is tied in the “sudden stop” format, the ball closest to its contested wicket gets an extra point for the win.

Claremont Options

Option 31. Hand Roquet The Ball

Known as sending, the Claremont rules now prohibit footing the ball, but allow placing ones hand on the ball in the same fashion. If in so doing, the striker loses control of his ball, he is penalized by losing the rest of his turn.

Option 32. Wicketed Ball

When a ball, while proceeding in the direction of play, stops halfway through it object wicket, it is considered a wicketed ball.

The wicketed ball may be the player’s ball or a ball that has been propelled to the wicketed position by another player. If it is the player’s ball, the player loses the rest of his turn, a Minor Penalty. If the wicketed position has resulted from the play of another player, there is no penalty; all balls remain in the same position achieved by the play and play continues. If, in the ensuing play, another player strokes his ball into the wicketed ball, he loses the rest of his turn and his next turn, a Major Penalty. This other player may, however, displace the wicketed ball without penalty, either forward or backward, by hitting another ball with his ball, hand-holding his ball against the ball which has been hit and driving it against the wicketed ball. He might achieve the same result with a split-shot. A situation calling for such a play would be rare, however.

On his next turn, the player of the wicketed ball has three options;

- (a) He may stroke his ball forward, thereby, making the wicket, but his turn stops there unless by his stroke he has made another wicket or hit another ball, in which case, he receives the usual additional stroke(s).
- (b) He may stroke his ball backward. From the position thus attained he could, on his following turn, proceed through his wicket and get the usual stroke for so doing; or he might, on his backward stroke, achieve a hit on another ball and get the usual two additional strokes.
- (c) Finally, he might consider it the best strategy to take a tap for a stroke.

Option 33. Deadness.

When a player's ball hits a ball on which it is dead, the player loses the rest of his turn and all of his next turn. A player's ball is cleared of its deadness on all balls at the beginning of a new turn or upon gaining a wicket.

Option 34. Rover Ball

A partner becomes a rover when he has completed the course, with the exception of hitting the home stake. He continues to take his turn and can now devote his efforts to helping his partner. As no wickets are left for him to make, the deadness rule limits him to one hit a turn on the other three balls. . All the other balls are allowed to play off the rover and even send him through remaining wickets (some players leave at least one wicket to make it harder for opponents to stake him out of the game) and into the stake removing him from the game.

Option 35. Shot Time Limits

Players should be reasonable in the amount of time taken to analyze a situation and take the next shot; one minute, 60 seconds, is considered the normal amount of time necessary. In tournament play, the referee will use his judgement and take whatever steps are necessary to keep the game moving along.