

# USCA Nine Wicket Rules

## 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.

### **Option 1. Using Deadness**

When the striker's ball hits (roquets) another ball in the game and then takes 2 bonus shots, it is then deemed to be 'dead' on that ball. It will remain "dead" on that ball for bonus shots until it clears its next wicket. This is referred to as 'carry over deadness'. 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.

### **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 2A. Out of Bounds Play**

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. Except in two cases which will be described below, 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 two exceptions to this are when the striker's ball crosses the boundary line as the result of a roquet or a striker ball directly hits any other ball out of bounds after it has roqueted a ball.

### **Option 2B. Out of Bounds Play (only to be used when there is no carryover deadness)**

If a striker sends any ball(s) out of bounds (including the striker ball on a roquet) as a result of their shot, all balls that went out of bounds shall be replaced exactly on the inside edge of the boundary line where they went out and the turn ends. When two balls go out of bounds at the same spot, the first ball out is marked in and the second ball is placed 9 inches or less (but not in contact with) on either side of the first ball.

### **Option 3. Starting Deadness**

No bonus 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 “not in the game” are dead on balls “in the game” and vice versa.

### **Option 4. Wired (if Option #1 is being used)**

If an opponent causes the striker ball to be blocked from all live balls by these obstacles: a wicket, stake or a ball(s) it is dead on (known as being wired), the striker may move their ball up to and including 9 inches in any direction from its wired position to enable a possible open shot on any live ball. Blocked/Wired means the ability to roquet any possible part of the ball if the obstacle was removed. The striker is not obligated to shoot at a ball from this new position and may take any shot they wish. 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 gain an open shot on some live ball). This must be done without shortening the distance between their ball and the ball they wish to shoot at. Additionally, they must now shoot at that ball.

### **Option 5. Blocked at a Wicket by a Dead Ball (when Option #1 is used)**

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 (when Option #1 is used)**

A rover may roquet 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 roquet 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 roquet any opponent ball and have it removed from the game. Conversely, if an opponent ball roquets 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 roqueting other balls. Poison is most often used in “cutthroat” croquet.

### **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 a bonus 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**

If the striker picks up the striker ball (other than measuring in the ball on the boundary line), they must use ways 1, 2, or 3 in the Bonus Shots section and way #4 is no longer available for taking the first bonus shot.

### **Option 10A. Non-Sequence Order of Play**

On the opening turn, the sequence is Blue/Red/Black/Yellow (Green and Orange if six ball are used). After the opening turns have been completed, a side may choose to play either of their balls when it's their turn. The players must play the balls they started the game with. *Example: To start the game, Bill played Blue, John played Red, Fred played Black, and Mary played Yellow. After Yellow plays its first turn, the side may play either Blue or Black. If the side wants Black to play, it's Fred's turn.*

### **Option 10B. Non-Sequence Order of Play**

On the opening turn, the sequence is Blue/Red/Black/Yellow (Green and Orange if six ball are used). After the opening turns have been completed, a side may choose to play either of their balls on their turn and the players must play in the same sequence they started the game with. *Example: To start the game, Bill played Blue, John played Red, Fred played Black, and Mary played Yellow. After yellow plays its first turn, it is now Bill followed by John, Fred, and Mary. Bill may play either Blue or Black.*

### **Option 11. Wicketed Ball**

If the striker's ball becomes “wicketed” (stuck in the jaws of the wicket), the next player may not roquet the wicketed ball. If the opponent's ball roquets a wicketed ball, the balls are replaced and the opponents lose their next turn. The striker may cannon the wicketed ball with another ball without penalty. *Example: if Red is wicketed and then Black roquets Red, Red and Black are replaced, and then Yellow plays, Blue loses its turn, and then Red plays.*

### **Option 12. Lift**

When the striker hits the turning stake, the opponents on their next turn may place their ball 9 inches away in any direction from the ball that hit the turning

stake. *Example: Red hits the turning stake and finishes its turn on a side boundary. If the next side to play wishes, it may place their ball 9 inches from Red in any direction (but not place itself out of bounds)*

**Option 13. Roqueted Ball Becomes Ball in Hand**

After roqueting a ball, the striker may lift the roqueted ball and place it in contact with the striker's ball. *Please note the striker must strike only their ball.*