

New 9 Game

A new way to play 9-wicket croquet on long grass is described. This was received from a Northeastern player, Ford Fay, whom has been developing with his fellow club members of Norwich CT this version of the game for the past few years. I thank him for his submission of this interesting version of the game.

Stepping from the "backyard" game of 9 wicket croquet to the sport of four ball long grass 9 wicket croquet ...

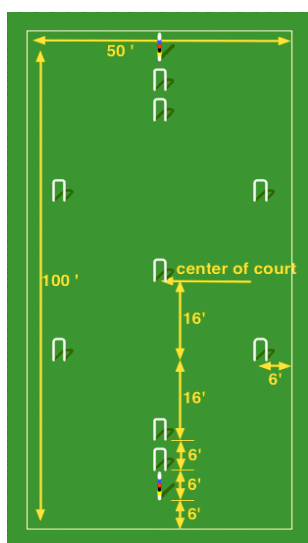
Welcome to the New 9 wicket four ball game of croquet

This is a quick synopsis of the New 9 Game. (a) Your ball is not in the game until it clears the first two wickets. (b) After all balls clear the first two wickets in sequence order, the order of play is non-sequence, you may play either ball. (c) When any ball goes out of bounds, turn over and all balls comes in on the boundary line. (d) After all balls clear the first two wickets and a ball becomes "wicketed", it is safe inside the jaws of the wicket, and cannot be hit by the opponent side on their next turn. If you hit a wicketed ball, all balls are returned and the striker's turn is over and that side loses its next turn. This is a double penalty. (e) When a ball hits the turn stake on the next turn of the opposite side, they may pick up one of their other balls and place it a mallet head distance where the striker's ball came to rest and take their turn. All the other basic rules are in play, i.e., rover ball and timed games.

This is a challenging game where all your skills and strategies will come into play.

Object of the Game

The object of the game is to advance your ball through the course scoring points for each wicket and stake in the correct order and direction. The winner is the first side to score 14 wicket points and 2 stake points for each of its balls, 32 points total. When the time expires, the team with the most points wins.



The court is a rectangle and may be adjusted to fit the size and shape of the space available. The standard court size is a 50' x 100' with marked string or chalk boundaries. Side wickets come in from the boundary lines six feet. The court is played on long grass about 2 inches or less is best.

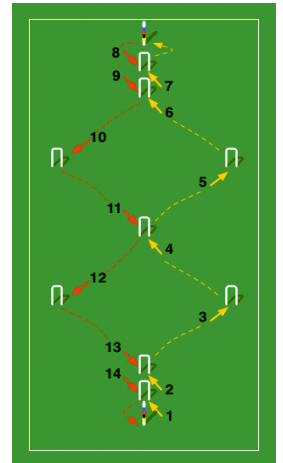
Wickets are gaped 4 inches wide and 12 inches high above ground. Two stakes show the order of play: blue, red, black, yellow. The balls are 3 ½ inches in diameter and weigh 10 ounces. Wicket clips are used to mark a ball's next wicket or stake. The clip is picked up when a wicket is scored, then placed on the ball's next wicket at the end of the turn.

Mallets The mallet ends are both the same. Only the striking face may be used to strike a ball and not the sides.

Rule 1. Start of Game—the side winning the coin toss has the choice of playing blue/black or red/yellow. The opening sequence of play is blue, red, black and yellow. On each subsequent turn, the striker is alive on all balls and may play either of their two balls. They must continue to play that one ball during that turn.

When you hit a ball, you become “dead” on that ball and must clear your next wicket before hitting it again on that turn.

At the beginning of your turn, you are "alive" on all balls.

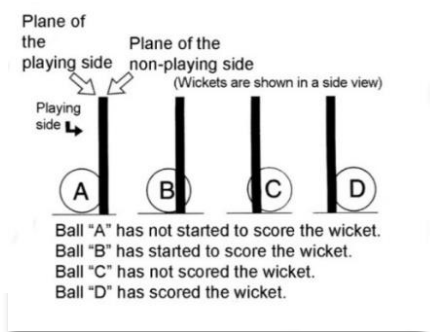


Rule 2. Opening Turn - the game begins by each ball placed on the ground, the striker’s mallet head distance from the first wicket. Your ball is “not in the game” until it clears the first two wickets. Your ball cannot hit or be hit, for extra points, by another ball until it clears the first two wickets. Once your ball clears the first two wickets it can hit and be hit by any other ball which is in the game. Any ball that fails to score the first two wickets and becomes an obstruction for other players entering the game that ball is marked and picked up to allow other players into the game.

Rule 3. Clearing wickets - each wicket scored in the proper order counts as one point. Each ball can score 16 points for its side; 14 wicket points and 2 stake points for a total of 32 points. You score points only by going through a wicket or hitting a stake in the proper order and direction. A ball caused to score its wicket or stake during another ball’s turn earns the point for its side, but no bonus shot is earned as a result.

A ball scores one wicket point when it comes to rest clear of the playing side of the wicket. If a ball passes through a wicket but rolls back, it has not scored the wicket.

If a ball travels backwards through its wicket to get position, it must be clear of the non-playing side to then score the wicket in the correct direction.



Rule 4. Bonus strokes—the striker earns one bonus stroke for clearing a wicket or hits the turning stake. The striker earns two bonus strokes for hitting another ball (a "roquet"). Conversely, if the striker ball scores the seventh wicket and hits the turning stake, in the same shot, two bonus strokes are earned.

When two bonus strokes are scored by striking another ball, the first of these two strokes may be taken in any of four ways:

1. From a mallet-head distance or less away from the ball that was hit ("taking a mallet-head").
2. From a position in contact with the ball that was hit, with the striker ball held steady by the striker's foot or hand (a "foot shot" or "hand shot").
3. From a position in contact with the ball that was hit, with the striker ball not held by foot or hand (a "croquet shot").
4. From where the striker ball stopped after the roquet.

The second bonus stroke, called a "continuation stroke", after a roquet, is an ordinary shot played from where the striker ball came to rest.

Upon scoring a wicket, hitting the turning stake, or roqueting another ball, bonus strokes are earned in the order of the incident, for example, if on a turn, the striker roquets a ball (first incident) and then hits another ball, the second ball hit is not a roquet and remains where it comes to rest (with no deadness incurred on that ball). The first incident counts and the striker takes two bonus strokes from the first ball hit.

If the striker takes a swing at their ball and misses it entirely, (hitting the ground) the miss counts as a stroke and the turn ends, unless the striker had a second bonus stroke.

If the striker's mallet accidentally hits another ball other than the striker ball, the shot must be replayed, but with no loss of turn.

If you hit a ball you are dead on, there is no penalty and all balls remain where they come to rest with the exception of a wicketed ball. See rule 6.

If the striker uses a hand or foot shot and the strikers ball moves from under foot, turn over.

Rule 5. Out of Bounds occurs when the striker sends any ball out of bounds, turn over and all balls are brought in-bounds and placed on the inside boundary line.

Rule 6. Wicketed Ball - after all players are in the game, having cleared the first two wickets, and the striker's ball becomes wicketed, (stuck in the arch of a wicket), the opponent side may not hit that ball on their next turn. The wicketed ball is safe. If an opponent's ball roquets a wicketed ball, turn over, and they lose their next turn. The balls are replaced to their original position. This is double penalty. The opponent side may try a jump shot or cannon the other sides ball to clear the wicketed ball without a penalty, but if the opponent ball hits the wicketed ball, in the process, they lose their next turn and all balls are returned to their original position.

Rule 7. Turning Stake—When a ball hits the turning stake, the adversary side, on their next turn, may pick up one of their balls (ball in hand) and place it a mallet head (9 inches) in any direction from the ball that hit the turning stake and take their turn.

Rule 8. Rover ball is a ball which have completed the entire course except for striking the finishing stake. Rovers may be staked out, that is, driven into the finishing stake with any legal stroke by any player. Rovers can roquet other balls once in a turn and receive two continuation strokes. Once the rover ball has been staked out, the rover ball is removed from the game and the partners play the remaining ball in rotation.

Rule 9. Game Time is 45 minutes. When time expires the game is over “sudden death”. If the score is tied, each player in the order of play, at the start of the game, gets a chance to clear its next wicket for the win. The first to do it is the winner.

Rules by Ford Fay of Norwich CT