

BEGINNERS' COACHING COURSE - NOTES

- Grip, Stance & Swing
 - Standard, Solomon or Irish
 - Mallet behind the ball, feet behind the mallet
 - Rhythmic follow through
- Hoop Running
 - Run a straight hoop
 - Demonstrate from 1 foot in front
 - Stalk the ball
 - Grasp mallet firmly
 - Mallet head behind the ball
 - Eyes looking at back of ball
 - Keep body as still as possible
 - Make a smooth swing through the ball using shoulders not wrists
 - Keep eyes on blade of grass under ball
 - Do not lift head to look up
 - Follow through with the mallet (stroke the ball)
 - Check to see ball has run the hoop
 - Exercise to run a straight hoop from 1 foot in front
 - Increase length when confident
 - Run an angled hoop
 - Demonstrate from 1 foot in front and not more than 30 degrees off straight
 - Exercise to run an angled hoop from 1 foot in front from both left and right of the hoop
 - Increase length when confident
 - Introduce order of hoops with aid of fellow club member
 - Demonstrate single ball exercise through first 6 hoops, counting shots taken
 - Exercise: Place a ball 30 cms./1 ft. in front of hoop 1 and count the number of strokes taken to run all 6 hoops and peg out.
- The Roquet
 - Explain 4 balls in a game, 2 per side (colours)
 - Running hoop entitles player to one more shot
 - Hitting a ball earns player 2 more shots (roquet, plus croquet & continuation shot) - on each of the other 3 balls
- The Croquet Stroke
 - The Drive – the 'bread & butter' shot
 - Demonstrate normal, straight croquet stroke with medium strength (as per hoop running)
 - Stance, grip, eyes on ball, head down, swing through
 - Make stroke by following through and count paces out (ratio approx. 1:3/4)
 - Demonstrate again with less strength to show same ratios apply
 - Explain that there is no 'correct' ratio (depends on weight of mallet, individual's method of producing stroke), it's up to each individual to know what ratio they get from this stroke and store it away as it will be useful to have some idea of positions that each ball will roll to from a standard position
 - Demonstrate a practical use for this shot
 - Take position in front of hoop to be run

- Roquet ball
 - Line up and drive front ball past hoop, approaching hoop with back ball
 - Run hoop
 - Roquet awaiting reception ball
- Demonstrate again, this time explain splitting the angle
- The Thin Take-Off
 - Explain the need, at times, to leave the croqueted ball roughly where it is whilst sending the striker's ball in front of the hoop
 - Demonstrate short take-off (arrow head or tangent) emphasising power of stroke as per hitting a single ball
 - Run hoop
 - Roquet waiting reception ball
- The Croquet Stroke
 - The Stop Shot
 - Explain that it is possible to control (within limits) positions of balls from a croquet stroke
 - Demonstrate normal, straight croquet stroke, achieving relatively little movement from the striker's ball
 - Take up normal stance
 - Make mallet grip higher and looser
 - Stand back a few inches to hit on the upswing
 - Use medium and soft strength shots to emphasis same ratio achieved (approx. 1:6/8)
 - Individual practise to see if they produce a higher ratio than the drive, using different strengths
 - Some beginners will stop the mallet before contact with the ball; explain that this counts as a shot and each player should show scrupulous honesty in observing the laws, being his/her own referee
 - The Half Roll Shot
 - Explain that it is also possible to make the striker's ball travel further than previously achieved in relation to the front ball, by giving the ball top-spin
 - Demonstrate a normal half roll shot, achieving relatively greater movement from the striker's ball
 - Take up normal stance
 - Make mallet grip lower and firmer
 - Stand forward so feet are level with back of the ball, tilt mallet forward
 - Address point of contact and hit on the downswing at 45 degrees
 - Bend knees and strike through the ball (do not push)
 - Use medium and soft strength shots to emphasise same ratios achieved (approx. 1:2)
 - Individual practise, to see if they produce a lower ratio than the drive, using different strengths
 - Thick Take-Off Strokes
 - As per thin take-off, just hit into ball a bit more
 - Split Croquet Strokes
 - Demonstrate relatively straightforward split drive shot
 - Choose targets on lawn and explain it is possible to place the croqueted ball close to one target and the striker's ball close to another target

- Demonstrate shot explaining that
 - When splitting the angle, a lesser ratio is achieved with a greater angle of split
 - To trust the striker's ball to get to its destination without guiding it with the mallet
 - Demonstrate using an angle of about 20 degrees and one of about 45 degrees (as the angle increases the striker's ball travels further while the croqueted ball travels less)
- Exercise: Round the Clock from 2 metres/6ft.
 - Begin at 6 o'clock
 - Aim croquet ball past hoop
 - Approach hoop with a half-roll
 - Run hoop
 - Roquet waiting ball
 - Repeat from 7 o'clock
 - Play as per 6 o'clock
 - Repeat from 8 o'clock
 - Aim croquet ball past hoop
 - Approach hoop with a split drive
 - Run hoop
 - Roquet waiting ball
 - Repeat from 9 o'clock
 - Aim croquet ball past hoop
 - Approach hoop with a right angled split drive (balls travel the same distance)
 - Run hoop
 - Roquet waiting ball
 - Repeat from 10 o'clock
 - Aim croquet ball past hoop by placing striker's ball outside of angle
 - Approach hoop with a thick take-off
 - Run hoop
 - Roquet waiting ball
 - Repeat from 11 o'clock
 - Aim croquet ball past hoop by placing striker's ball outside of angle
 - Approach hoop with a thin take-off
 - Run hoop
 - Roquet waiting ball
 - Repeat from 12 o'clock
 - As per 11 o'clock
 - Repeat from 1 o'clock to 5 o'clock
 - Mirror image of 11 o'clock to 7 o'clock
- Three Ball Break
 - Demonstrate 3-ball break to hoop 3
 - Set up a simple rush to hoop 1
 - Place a ball 4-5ft in front of hoop 2
 - Place clips on hoop 1
 - Roquet, croquet, run hoop, roquet awaiting ball
 - Ask where the balls should best be sent to
 - Play the shot, and so on

- Bisques
 - Explain that an extensive break is possible provided that the balls are all placed in suitable position initially and that shots all end up as planned
- Four-Ball Break
 - Remind players of 3-ball break, explaining the value of having an extra ball by your next hoop and the desirability of manoeuvring the ball into a useful position
 - Explain it is far simpler to use the fourth ball as a pivot in the middle of the lawn
 - Suggest ways to get the balls into the perfect start position for a 4-ball break using bisques
 - Lay out the balls for a 4-ball break and view from the sidelines
 - Get a club member to play the break slowly up to hoop 5, using bisques, with a pivot to take-off to the next pioneer, asking at each point a series of questions:
 - What is the first stroke? (Roquet)
 - Play the shot, ‘nudging’ the roqueted ball into a better position
 - How many strokes have been earned? (two)
 - What is the first stroke called? (Croquet)
 - Where should the croqueted ball be sent to? (past hoop 1)
 - What is the line of aim for the stroke? (split angle)
 - What type of stroke is it? (Drive, Half-roll or Stop-shot)
 - Play the croquet stroke
 - How many strokes remain? (one)
 - Where should the striker’s ball be sent to? (through hoop near reception ball)
 - Run the hoop
 - How many strokes have been earned? (one)
 - What is the next stroke? (Roquet)
 - Make a Roquet
 - How many strokes have been earned? (two)
 - What is the first stroke called? (Croquet)
 - Where should the croqueted ball be sent to? (Hoop 3) – explain why
 - Where should the striker’s ball be sent to? (near pivot ball) – explain why
 - What is the line of aim for the stroke? (split angle)
 - What type of stroke is it? (Drive, Half-roll or Stop-shot)
 - Play the croquet stroke
 - How many strokes remain? (one)
 - Roquet the pivot ball with striker’s ball
 - How many strokes have been earned? (two)
 - What should be the first stroke? (Croquet)
 - What type of stroke? (Thin take-off the pioneer at hoop 2)
 - Where is the ideal spot to send the striker’s ball? (close to pioneer)
 - Repeat process for the next 4 hoops
- Straight Rushes
 - The importance of taking croquet in front of next hoop
 - Some may have noticed the encouragement given by the instructors, continually saying to ‘nudge’ the ball to get closer to the next hoop to take croquet, during the past 4 sessions and the 4-ball break demo
 - Can be from a few inches to several yards
 - Need for a more suitable term to be introduced: the “rush” shot
 - Demonstrate with 2 balls about one foot apart aiming directly at a hoop a few yards from a hoop

- Ask them to observe that the striker's ball stopped almost dead with all the momentum being transferred into the roqueted ball
 - State that a rush is simply a roquet executed with a view of placing the ball into a more advantageous position, i.e. in front of the next hoop to be run
 - Repeat the demonstration with a rush of a greater length (half the length of the lawn) to bring out the point that a rush may be employed for long distances as well as short, emphasising
 - Take stance as for a normal drive
 - Take a small step back of a couple of inches without stretching too far
 - Hit the ball at the bottom of the swing or very slightly on the up
 - Keep head down not lifting head to see where it goes and, thereby, avoid topping the ball
 - Follow through
 - Demonstrate standing too close and making the striker's ball jump
- Cut Rushes
 - State that very few rushes will be absolutely straight and that there is a need to cut the ball to the desired target
 - Suggest that a ball needs to be rushed to the right a few feet and get students to volunteer where the roqueted ball should be struck
 - Place another ball in contact with this spot to indicate where the striker's ball should be aimed
 - Remove this ball, stalk this point and play stroke
 - State that cutting a ball requires extra strength to move it the same distance as hitting it in the centre
 - Some people may still mistakenly feel that the position of the striker's ball is relevant after this stroke; emphasise that it is a ball in hand to be picked up for the croquet stroke
- Exercise: Use of 2 balls on the yard-line
 - Set up demo of 2 balls together on the yard line, a foot apart and in front of hoop 1, explaining that it is not uncommon to find this situation in a game
 - Roquet partner ball some way across the lawn from the balls on the yard line
 - Take-off close to one yard-line ball
 - Roquet one of the opponent's balls
 - Take-off to a position that gives a rush on the other to your next hoop (hoop 1)
 - Play the rush (giving a clear demonstration of how useful it can be)
 - Students to practise a similar manoeuvre
- Use of rushes to make croquet strokes in a break easier
 - Demonstrate how croquet strokes may be used to set up a break by rushing a ball part way towards the pivot ball at the start of a 4-ball break, e.g. croquet a ball to hoop 2 getting a rush on a ball in the middle of the lawn to hoop 1