

South West Federation of Croquet Clubs

League Rules (Short Croquet)

(Incorporating changes made at the 2024 AGM)

1. Leagues and Entries

- a. The Federation shall organise a number of leagues, in which teams from Full Member Clubs may play matches against one another. The leagues currently supported are:
 - (1) the **Short Croquet League (Open)**;
 - (2) the **Short Croquet League (Restricted)**.
- b. **Structure of the Leagues.**

The **Short Croquet Leagues** shall each consist of two or more all-play-all blocks. The number of blocks in each league and the allocation of entrants to those blocks shall be at the discretion of the League Secretary, except that in a league containing 22 or more entrants that league shall be structured in a minimum of four blocks.
- c. **League Entry.** The Federation Secretary shall invite applications from clubs in the Federation for places in the leagues for the following year when notifying them of the agenda for the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- d. **Refusal of Entry.**
 - (1) A team that has conceded two or more matches in the most recent season shall, in the following season, be refused entry to the league in which it has defaulted, unless the League Secretary can be convinced that there were extenuating circumstances that prevented the matches in question from being played.
 - (2) Where the defaulting team has played fewer than half of its scheduled matches, the results of those matches that have been played shall be expunged from the block records; otherwise, any unplayed matches shall be treated as walkover wins by the opponents (as defined in Rule 11a(2)).
- e. The deadline for entries shall be ten days after the AGM.
- f. The entry fee for all leagues shall be the same.

2. Fixtures and Venues

The fixtures and their venues for each season shall be laid down by the League Secretary, who shall send out notification to each club of its league fixture commitment for the following season no later than one month after the AGM.

3. Fixture Dates

- a. It shall be the duty of all clubs concerned to arrange the dates for their fixtures and submit them to the League Secretary by 24th January. Appendix 1 is to act as a checklist for club tournament secretaries / team captains.
- b. No fixture shall be arranged for a date later than that specified for the relevant league by the League Secretary in the notification to clubs (*q.v.* Rule 2).
- c. It shall be the duty of the League Secretary to publish a full league fixture list, with details of dates and venues, and distribute this list to clubs.
- d. When the list has been distributed, a fixture date may be changed only in exceptional circumstances, with the agreement of both clubs and subject to immediate notification to the League Secretary.
- e. Where two teams from the same club are in the same block in a League, those teams must play the fixture(s) between them before any other fixture for either of the teams.

4. Eligibility

- a. Only current playing members of a club shall be eligible to represent that club. It is the responsibility of the team captain to know the current Rules that apply to the team, and to have a copy of them for reference.
- b. In any given league, no player shall play for more than one team, or for more than one club, during a season. This rule does not preclude a player from participating in more than one league during a season, or from playing for another club in a different league.
- c. **Handicaps.** On the day any match is played, each player shall comply with the appropriate handicap restriction from the following.
 - (1) **Short Croquet League (Open).** There is no handicap restriction.
 - (2) **Short Croquet League (Restricted).** At least half of the games played by each team must be played by players with Short Croquet handicaps of 6 or above, subject to (d) below.
- d. **Short Croquet League (Restricted).** Where a player has played for a team in at least half of the team's matches during the season but the player's Short Croquet handicap has improved to a level below 6, any games played by that player in a play-off or final match shall be counted as having been played by a high-handicapper.
- e. Every player must have a properly assessed Short Croquet handicap. Where a player does not have a Short Croquet handicap, the initial handicap is to be taken from the player's Association Croquet handicap according to Table 1 in Appendix 2. Each player is responsible for ensuring that the SC handicap on the Croquet England website is correct.
- f. Each player is required to play every game at the correct handicap. If it should come to light at any stage, during or after a match, that a player's declared handicap in any game was above the correct value, each such game shall be deemed to have been lost by the maximum margin.
- g. Where a player is a member of a team for which the player is not eligible under (a) to (d) above, all of the games involving that player shall be deemed to have been lost by the maximum margin.
- h. A National handicapper, being a member of a team, may not alter the handicap of a member of the opposition without that player's consent.

5. Size of Teams

The team size shall be four players, but this shall not restrict a club from substituting new players in a later round of the match, as described in Appendix 2.

6. Match Format

- a. A match shall consist of 16 games: the format is described in Appendix 2. A match may therefore result in an 8–8 draw.
- b. **Choice of Courts.** Where a club has two or more courts available, the visiting team captain shall choose the courts for each round of the match, avoiding double-banking where possible.

7. Game Format

- a. All games shall be played according to the Croquet England Laws for Short Croquet (*q.v.* Appendix 6 of the AC Laws).
- b. All games shall be 14-point Handicap Singles Play.
- c. In each game, the number of bisques received, or mandatory peels to be made, by a player is determined by the player's Short Croquet handicap. [Where both players in a game are entitled to receive bisques, the game format is additionally Full Bisque Handicap Play, using a Base Handicap of scratch.]

- d. The dimensions of the courts used shall be between 24 x 16 yds (Short Croquet court) and 28 x 17½ yds (half of a full-size court), as per Law A6.1.
- e. Players will be required to maintain a separate Short Croquet handicap card, following the rules published by Croquet England. The index trigger points are shown in Appendix 2, Table 1.

8. Time Limits

The time limit for each game shall be 75 minutes.

9. Pairing of Opponents

- a. In all leagues, it shall be the duty of the team captains to arrange the pairing of opponents for all games of the match prior to the start of the first round.
- b. The players in each team shall be ranked in handicap order, lowest to highest. Where two or more players in a team have the same handicap, the captain shall choose their order, which shall apply for the whole match.
- c. Each player shall play each member of the opposing team once, giving 4 games per player. The games shall be played in the order shown in Appendix 2, Table 2.

10. Reporting of Results

It shall be the duty of the home club to complete the appropriate Short Croquet League Report form and submit it to the League Secretary within seven days of the match. (The forms are available on the South West Federation website.)

11. Walkovers / Abandoned Matches

a. Walkovers.

- (1) Where a club fails to provide the minimum size of team for any fixture, the League Secretary shall be empowered to award a walkover win to its opponents.
- (2) A walkover win shall be scored 7–0, each game being scored as 14–7, for block position calculations.

b. Abandoned Matches.

- (1) **Definition.** A court is unplayable if:
 - i. both captains agree it is unplayable; or
 - ii. there is sufficient surface water on any part of the court to prevent a ball hit through it from reaching any one of the four boundaries.
- (2) **Options.** Where one or more courts are unplayable, the two captains may:
 - i. choose to continue the match; or
 - ii. agree to abandon the match; or
 - iii. disagree, in which case the match shall be abandoned.
- (3) Where a match is abandoned because one or more courts are unplayable, every attempt should be made to complete the match at a later date unless one team has already won more than half of the scheduled number of games. Failing this, the match shall be awarded to the team with the most wins in completed games; should the number of wins be shared equally, the match shall be declared a draw.
- (4) Where all the courts are playable but the two captains mutually agree to abandon the match for some other reason, the match score at the time it is abandoned shall be the recorded score.
- (5) Where all the courts are playable and one captain wishes to abandon the match but the other wishes to continue, any uncompleted games shall be awarded to the team that is prepared to continue.

12. Final Block Positions

- a. In determining the positions in an all-play-all block after all fixtures have been decided, teams shall be ranked according to the following hierarchy.
 - (1) Match points awarded. (Two match points are awarded to a winning team, or one match point to each team in the event of a draw.)
 - (2) "Who beat whom", using the nett games where teams have met twice.
 - (3) Where two or more teams are still equal, then for a mini-block of the equal teams:
 - i. match points awarded; then
 - ii. "who beat whom", using the nett games where teams have met twice; then
 - iii. nett games between the teams in the mini-block; then
 - iv. average nett hoop and peg points per game between the teams in the mini-block.
 - (4) Where two or more teams are still equal, they shall be ranked by their nett games in the entire block.
 - (5) Where two or more teams are still equal, they shall be ranked by their average nett hoop and peg points per game in the entire block.
- b. Should the above measures fail to resolve the equality in ranking, lots shall be drawn by the Committee.

13. Play-offs and Finals

- a. After the final block positions for each of the constituent blocks have been determined, in each block the team with the highest position shall be declared the Block Winner. For each league containing more than two blocks, the League Secretary shall arrange such play-offs between the block winners as may be necessary to produce two finalists.
- b. Should any block winner be unable to compete in the relevant play-off match or final, the League Secretary may deem the next highest-placed available team in that block to be the block winner. Similarly, should a team win a play-off match and then become unable to compete in the next play-off match or final, the League Secretary may reinstate the last team beaten by the unavailable team.
- c. Play-offs shall be staged at the venues of block winners. The block that is to provide the host and "Home" club shall be determined each year on a rotational basis and notified to clubs. Matches may be played on any date after the block winners have been decided, by arrangement between the clubs involved, but no fewer than seven days before the scheduled date for the next round. The host club must offer the visiting team three dates on which the play-off match could be played. It shall be the responsibility of both clubs in each match to inform the League Secretary of the agreed date.
- d. League finals shall be staged at venues (host clubs) and on dates decided by the League Secretary and notified to clubs. For each of the finals, the "Home" club shall be determined by the League Secretary.
- e. For each play-off and final, the host club shall:
 - (1) determine the number and size of the courts; and
 - (2) appoint a referee, **suitably qualified wherever possible**.
- f. Should a play-off or final match end with a game score of 8–8, the winning team shall be the one that has scored the greater number of hoop and peg points.
- g. Where the two teams have scored an equal number of points, the tie shall be resolved by a shoot-off. This procedure is described fully in Rule 14.

14. Tie-Breaker (Shoot-Off)

- a. Throughout this procedure, the following principle shall hold: no player may play a second shot until all players have played once; no player may play a third shot until all players have played twice; and so forth.

- b. **Target Hoop.** The hoop to be used shall be selected from hoops 1, 3, 7 and 9 on any available court. During the shoot-off, the players will attempt to run the target hoop with a single shot from the yard line in front of the hoop.
- c. **Method (Phase 1).** Four members from each team shall each play one shot at the target hoop; any ball that completes the running of the hoop shall score one point for the team that played it. The winning team shall be the one that has scored the greater number of points after the eight shots.
- d. **Method (Phase 2).** Should the scores be level after the initial phase, the tie-break shall continue by playing successive rounds of 2 shots only, one from each team. The winning team shall be the one that has scored a point when the other team has failed to score.

15. Matters in Dispute

The Committee shall have the power to resolve:

- any matter not covered by these rules;
- disputes over the interpretation of anything contained within these rules.

16. Amendments

These rules are subject to amendment at any General Meeting of the Federation by simple majority of those delegates present and eligible to vote.

Appendix 1

Step-by-step guide for arranging a League Match

STEPS		RELEVANT RULES
	Before 24th January	
1	Once you have been notified of your fixture commitments, you should contact your opponents and agree dates for the fixtures.	2, 3a, 3b & 3e
2	Notify the League Secretary of the dates agreed for your fixtures.	3a
	At least 7 days before the fixture	
3	Inform the opposing captain if your team includes any player for whom Safeguarding might be an issue, e.g. players under 18.	Appendix 3
	On Match Day	
4	Each captain should provide the opposing captain with a list of players' names and handicaps.	Appendix 3
5	The team captains shall arrange the pairings of opponents for all games prior to the start of the match.	9
	Not later than 7 days after the match	
6	The home club shall inform the League Secretary of the match result and the full details of the games, printed on the appropriate Short Croquet League Report form, obtainable from the South West Federation website.	10 & 11

Appendix 2

Short Croquet Handicaps and Match Format

Handicaps

AC Handicap	SC Handicap	Trigger Point	AC Handicap	SC Handicap	Trigger Point
-3 to -1	3 Peels	115	8 to 9	3	70
-1/2 to 1/2	2 Peels	110	10 to 11	3 1/2	65
1 to 1 1/2	1 Peel	105	12	4	60
2 to 2 1/2	0	100	14	5	55
3 to 3 1/2	1/2	95	16	6	50
4 to 4 1/2	1	90	18	7	45
5	1 1/2	85	20	8	40
6	2	80	22	9	35
7	2 1/2	75	24	10	30

Table 1: Handicap conversion and Short Croquet trigger points

Match Format

Identify the players on one team (in handicap order) as A, B, C and D and on the other team as P, Q, R and S.

The match is played in 4 rounds, with 4 games in each round as shown in the table, i.e. in Round 1 A plays S, B plays P, C plays Q, and D plays R, and so on.

	P	Q	R	S
A	4	3	2	1
B	1	4	3	2
C	2	1	4	3
D	3	2	1	4

Table 2: Match format for teams of 4

If a team brings an additional player as a substitute in later rounds, that player will be considered as taking over from another player but keeping the same letter. This does not alter the requirement, in the Short Croquet League (Restricted), that at least half of the games played by each team must be played by players with Short Croquet handicaps of 6 or above.

For example: in Round 1 A plays S and in Round 2 A plays R; player A then leaves and is replaced by a new player who will play, as A, against Q and P in rounds 3 and 4.

Appendix 3

Regulations

These regulations are intended to provide guidance for team captains on some aspects of match conduct, in order to reduce misunderstandings.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding of vulnerable players, including minors, is the responsibility of their team captain. The procedures described in the Croquet England Child Safeguarding Policy must be followed, and the Local Safeguarding Officer of the host club should be made aware when a vulnerable player is included in either team.

Handicaps and Bisques

At the start of the match, each captain should provide the opposing captain with a list of players and their handicaps.

The captains should be particularly aware of Rule 4, Eligibility.

The number of bisques claimed for each player should be clearly stated before each game.

Each bisque should be removed before the stroke is played, to ensure that there is no misunderstanding about the number remaining.

Warm-up time

A visiting team should always be allowed time for warm-up and to become familiar with all of the courts that will be used for the match. The time taken for warming up is not fixed, but **at least** ~~up to~~ 10 minutes should be allowed in the schedule.

This also implies that the visitors should arrive in good time to allow for this warm-up before the agreed start time.

Any hoop-running during the warm-up should be relatively gentle. This is not a practice period, and the purpose of hoop-running is to learn the ball clearance and feasible approach angles.

No further practice should occur, but a player who joins the match later should be allowed some time to get the 'feel' of the court before starting to play.

Refereeing

A match referee should be identified prior to the start of play. Where no qualified referee is present, an experienced player should be selected.