

South West Federation of Croquet Clubs

League Rules (Golf 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 **Level Play League**;
 - (2) the **Level Play 5+ League**;
 - (3) the **Handicap League**;
 - (4) the **High Handicap League**.
- b. **Structure of the Level Play League.**
 - (1) The **Level Play League** shall consist of:
 - i. a single 'Premier' all-play-all block of six teams; and
 - ii. two or more 'Regional' all-play-all blocks to accommodate the remainder of the entrants. The number of such blocks and the allocation of entrants to those blocks shall be at the discretion of the League Secretary.
 - (2) A team shall remain in the Premier block from season to season, subject to:
 - i. any displacement from the block under Rule 14b at the end of a season; and
 - ii. application for a place in the League under Rule 1d for the following season.
- c. **Structure of the other Leagues.**

The **Level Play 5+ League**, **Handicap League** and **High Handicap League** 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.
- d. **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).
- e. **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)).
- f. The deadline for entries shall be ten days after the AGM.
- g. 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. **Level Play 5+, Handicap and High Handicap Leagues.** In each of these leagues, 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. **Level Play League.** No player shall play for more than one club during a season. Where a club has entered more than one team in the League, the following shall apply.
 - (1) During a season, no player may play for:
 - i. more than one Premier block team
 - ii. more than one Regional block team.
 - (2) Where one of the teams is in the Premier block and at least one other is in a Regional block, the club should declare the Premier and Regional block team squads to the League Secretary before the club's first match of the season. Players not so nominated shall be assumed to be members of the squad of that team for which they first play.
 - (3) No member of a Premier block team squad may play for another team in the league.
 - (4) A member of a team squad in one of the Regional blocks may play in one match for a team in the Premier block whilst retaining membership of the Regional squad; however, should that member play in more than one match for a Premier block team, membership shall transfer to that Premier block team squad and that member may no longer play in the Regional blocks.

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.

- d. **Handicaps.** On the day any match is played, each player shall comply with the appropriate handicap restriction from the following.
 - (1) **Level Play League.** There is no handicap restriction.
 - (2) **Level Play 5+ League.** Players with handicaps of 5 or above, subject to (e) below.
 - (3) **Handicap League.** Players with handicaps of 10 or below, subject to (e) below. In addition, a team may field one player whose handicap is 11 or 12.
 - (4) **High Handicap League.** Players with handicaps of 8 or above, subject to (e) below.
- e. **Level Play 5+, Handicap and High Handicap Leagues.** Where a player has played for a team in at least half of the team's matches during the season and the team qualifies for the play-offs, that player shall be allowed to participate if the player's handicap is not more than one step outside the range for that league.

- f. Every player must have a properly assessed Golf Croquet handicap, and all players should have a completed handicap card. Each player is responsible for ensuring that the GC handicap on the Croquet England website is correct.
- g. Each player is required to play every game at the correct handicap. If the use of a wrong handicap should come to light, one of the following remedies shall apply.
 - (1) **Level Play and Level Play 5+ Leagues.** If any handicap errors are discovered during or after a match, the opposing team captain should be informed immediately so that corrections can be made to any affected handicap cards.
 - (2) **Handicap and High Handicap Leagues.** If it is discovered 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.
- h. Where a player is a member of a team for which the player is not eligible under (a) to (e) above, all of the games involving that player shall be deemed to have been lost by the maximum margin.
- i. 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

A team shall comprise a minimum of four and a maximum of eight players, except where the match is to be played as 12 games at a single-court club, when a team of three is permitted.

6. Match Format

- a. **Number of Games.**
 - (1) Where a fixture is to be played at a single-court club, the home team shall be allowed to choose to play a match of 12 games, comprising 2 doubles games and 10 singles games. Such a match may therefore result in a 6–6 draw.
 - (2) In all other cases, a match shall consist of 20 games: 4 doubles games and 16 singles games. A match may therefore result in a 10–10 draw.
 - (3) When a fixture is being arranged to be played at a single-court club, the home team must, at the time of fixing the date, inform the visiting team whether the match is to consist of 20 games on half-courts or of 12 games on the full court.
- b. Half-way markers are mandatory at all SWF Golf Croquet League matches.
- c. **Choice of Courts.**
 - (1) Where a club has two or more courts available, the home team captain shall choose the courts for the first and fourth rounds, and the visiting team captain shall choose the courts for the second, third, fifth and sixth rounds, avoiding double-banking where possible.
 - (2) The choices in (1) above may be made at the beginning of each round, or the captains may agree to choose courts for as many rounds as they wish at the beginning of the day, and subsequently as the need arises.
- d. The default format for a match is six rounds; however, if sufficient courts are available and the captains agree, fewer rounds may be used.
- e. The order in which the singles and doubles games are to be played shall be agreed between the captains; if no agreement can be found, the home team captain shall decide.

7. Game Format

- a. All games shall be 13-point games, played according to the Croquet England Rules for Golf Croquet on full-size, near to full-size (i.e. $\frac{3}{4}$ -size or larger), or small (i.e. less than $\frac{3}{4}$ -size) courts.

- b. Subject to Rule 6a above, games may be played on small courts only if full- or near to full-size courts are not available at the home club. In this case, the home club must advise their opponents that small courts are being used, for some or all of the games, at least seven days before the fixture.

8. Time Limits

- a. Games should be played without a time limit, unless it is believed that court availability will make it difficult to complete the games within the available time. In such a case a time limit, agreed by the captains and of not less than 50 minutes, shall be set (except as directed under Rule 13f). If the two captains cannot agree on a time limit, the shorter of the two suggested time limits shall be used.
- b. Should a game be held up because of double-banking, the clock in that game shall be stopped until the game can proceed.
- c. **Expiry of Time Limit.**
 - (1) **Level Play and Level Play 5+ Leagues.** When time is called, each side shall be entitled to four additional turns (the extension period). If the scores are level after this, then:
 - i. for singles games, play shall continue until the next point is scored;
 - ii. for doubles games, the game is drawn and each side shall have earned a ½ game point; there shall be no continuation of play.
 - (2) **Handicap and High Handicap Leagues.** When time is called, each side shall be entitled to four additional turns (the extension period). Extra Strokes may not be used during the extension period. If the scores are level after this, the game is drawn and each side shall have earned a ½ game point; there shall be no continuation of play.

9. Pairing of Opponents

- a. The two team captains shall exchange the names of their players in each round of the match **immediately** prior to the commencement of that round. During this exchange, one captain shall present the names of his players first, to which the other captain shall respond with his players' names, as follows.
 - (1) Before the first round, the home team captain shall present first.
 - (2) Before the second round, the visiting team captain shall present first.
 - (3) For subsequent rounds, this "right of presentation" shall alternate.

It is recommended that, to avoid unnecessary delay, the captains agree on the players for the current round and the next.
- b. **Restrictions.**
 - (1) No player shall play in more than two doubles and four singles games.
 - (2) No game shall be repeated, except as allowed under Rule 13f.

10. Reporting of Results

It shall be the duty of the home club to complete the appropriate Golf 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 9–0, each game being scored as 7–4, 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 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 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 (Level Play 5+, Handicap and High Handicap Leagues)

- 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 (subject to Rule 7b); and
 - (2) appoint a referee, **suitably qualified wherever possible**.
- f. Should a play-off or final match end in a draw (either 10–10 or 6–6), each team shall nominate any two of its players, who have already played in the match, to play one further game of doubles to decide the match. This deciding game shall be played with no time limit.
- g. The winner of the Handicap League final shall be invited to represent the South West Federation in the GC Federations Shield in the following season.

14. Outcome (Level Play League)

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. The outcome of the league shall be decided as follows.

- a. The winner of the Premier block shall be declared the winner of the Level Play League for that season.
- b. For the following season, the winners of each of the Regional blocks shall be promoted to play in the Premier block, displacing an equal number of those teams with the lowest positions in that block; the teams thus displaced shall be entitled to play only in the Regional blocks.

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 & 6a(3)
2	Notify the League Secretary of the dates agreed for your fixtures.	3a
	At least 7 days before the fixture	
3	Contact your opponents to state your team size. (Where a club has a single court, the home captain should remind the visitors whether the match is to be 20 games on half-courts, or 12 games on the full court: if the latter, a team of 3 is permitted.)	5 & 6a
4	Where relevant, the home club must inform the away club of the match format and the size of courts to be used.	6a & 7b
5	Inform the opposing captain if your team includes any player for whom Safeguarding might be an issue, e.g. players under 18.	Appendix 2
	On Match Day	
6	Each captain should provide the opposing captain with a list of players' names and handicaps.	Appendix 2
7	The team captains shall arrange the pairings of opponents for all games prior to the start of each round.	9
	Not later than 7 days after the match	
8	The home club shall inform the League Secretary of the match result and the full details of the games, printed on the appropriate Golf Croquet League Report form, obtainable from the South West Federation website.	10 & 11

Appendix 2

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 Extra Strokes

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 extra strokes claimed for each player should be clearly stated before each game. Whatever system is used for marking the number of extra strokes (e.g. beads, bisque sticks, etc.), the token should be handed over or removed before the stroke is played. All players have a right to be kept aware of the number of extra strokes remaining.

If an extra stroke is taken when the player is not entitled, the stroke is annulled.

Wrong Ball forestalling

~~It is recommended that the match referee invites all players to be Sequence Umpires, whether playing or not. Their responsibility is to forestall in any game if a wrong ball is about to be played or has been played.~~

~~The home team captain should ensure that spectators who are neither referees nor players do not forestall, but they can draw the attention of a Sequence Umpire to a wrong ball if they notice one.~~

The WCF GC Rules specify that all players and referees have the responsibility of forestalling play in any game where a wrong ball is about to be played or has been played. (In the SWF GC Leagues, a non-playing captain shall be treated as a playing member of the team.)

The home team captain should ensure that spectators who are neither referees nor players do not forestall, but they may alert an appropriate person to watch for a wrong ball if they believe that the play is out of sequence.

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.

Clock-stopping

The WCF Rules of Golf Croquet (Rule 19.4.5) allow for clocks to be stopped if two double-banked games interfere.

The other times when clocks may be stopped by mutual agreement are when delays occur that are not part of the normal game. Examples could be:

- a lost ball;
- a refereeing decision that is very slow because the Rules need to be consulted;
- a player called away to referee another game.

Note that time is not restored when a game is resumed with a penalty area continuation caused by the players having run a hoop out of order.

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.