

South West Federation of Croquet Clubs

League Rules (Short Croquet)

(Incorporating changes made at the 2025 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:
 - i) the **Short Croquet League (Open)**;
 - ii) the **Short Croquet League (Restricted)**.

2) Structure of the Leagues.

- a) 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.

3) League Entry.

- a) 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).
- b) Two clubs may enter a joint team subject to the following condition:
 - i) At least one player from each club must play in each match

4) Refusal of Entry.

- a) 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.
- b) 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 18)

5) **Deadline.** The deadline for entries shall be ten days after the AGM.

6) **Entry Fee.** The entry fee for all leagues shall be the same.

7) Fixtures and Venues

- a) 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 the date as published at the AGM by the League Secretary
- b) Host clubs shall provide drinking water, tea and coffee free of charge to players. If this is not practicable, visiting teams shall be informed at least three days before the match

8) 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 3).
- 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, including those set out in Rule 18 with the agreement of both clubs and subject

to immediate notification to the League Secretary.

- e) If, before 30 June, a club requests that a match be rearranged, the opposing club must agree to the rearrangement
- f) Where two teams from the same club are in the same block in a League, those teams must play at least one of the fixtures between them before any other fixture for either of the teams.

9) 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) A player may not play for more than one team in the same league during a season, except as specified below.
 - i) 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.

10) Handicaps.

- a) On the day any match is played, each player shall comply with the appropriate handicap restriction from the following.
- b) **Short Croquet League (Open)**. There is no handicap restriction.
- c) **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 10 (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.
 - i) 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.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) If it is discovered at any stage during or after a match, that a player's declared handicap in any game was below the correct value, no further action will be taken
 - iv) Where a player is a member of a team for which the player is not eligible under 4 above, all of the games involving that player shall be deemed to have been lost by the maximum margin.

11) Size of Teams

- a) 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.

12) 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.

13) Choice of Courts.

- a) 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.

14) 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 are subject to official rulings and CqE Tournament Regulations rules H (Handicaps), L (Approved Laws/Rules Variations), and R (Referees) www.croquet.org.uk/app/TournamentRegulations
 - i) All games shall be 14-point Handicap Singles Play.
 - ii) 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.]
 - iii) 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.
 - iv) 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

15) Time Limits

- a) The time limit for each game shall be 75 minutes.

16) Pairing of Opponents

- a) It is 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.

17) Reporting of Results

- a) 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.)

18) Postponement, walkovers, abandonment

- a) This rule should be read in conjunction with Rule 5 Fixture Dates.
 - i) SWF Leagues are run to provide a competitive and enjoyable environment, and the expectation is that each team will make every effort to ensure that games are played in

a sporting spirit and matches organised and completed having due regard to the health and safety of players.

- ii) Events may occur that prevent this happening and this rule sets out the actions to be taken in such situations.

b) Postponement

- i) This may be necessary before the event for the reasons set out below. In the event of such a decision, the League Secretary must be informed as soon as possible.

c) Walkovers.

- i) 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:
- ii) A walkover win shall be scored 16–0, each game being scored as 14–7, for block position calculations.

d) Health, safety or welfare of players is at risk

- i) We have a duty of care towards ourselves, other players, spectators and visitors – this overrides considerations about courts or completing matches
- ii) If a Government Severe Weather Warning or similar is in place for the location and date of any fixture, either of the clubs involved may postpone or abandon the fixture, and Government guidance should be followed
- iii) The decision to postpone or abandon a match will depend on a number of factors and may be made before or during the match
- iv) It should be made by the team captains in consultation with their teams giving priority to the welfare of their players, and the League Secretary should be informed of the decision or consulted for advice if necessary.
- v) If the match is re-arranged, the League Secretary must be informed
- vi) If a match is abandoned please refer to 18g below

e) Unplayable courts

- i) Matches may need to be postponed or abandoned if a court is unplayable
 - (1) A court is unplayable if:
 - (a) both captains agree it is unplayable; or
 - (b) 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) Where one or more courts are unplayable, the two captains may:
 - (a) choose to continue the match; or
 - (b) agree to abandon the match; or
 - (c) disagree, in which case the match shall be abandoned.
 - (3) If a match is abandoned please refer to 18g below

f) Matches abandoned for any other reason

- i) 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.
- ii) Where the two captains mutually agree to abandon the match for some other reason, please refer to 18g below

g) Abandonment

- i) Where a match is abandoned, every attempt should be made to complete the match at a later date.
- ii) If this is not possible, the following will apply:
 - (1) If one team has already won more than half of the scheduled number of games, or more than half of the completed games the score at the point of abandonment will be recorded
 - (2) If the number of wins is scored equally, the match shall be declared a draw and the score at the point of abandonment will be recorded
 - (3) In the event of no games being played, the match shall be declared a draw.

19) 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.
 - i) 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.)
 - ii) 'Who beat whom', using the nett games where teams have met twice.
 - iii) Where two or more teams are still equal, then for a mini-block of the equal teams:
 - (1) match points awarded; then
 - (2) 'who beat whom', using the nett games where teams have met twice; then
 - (3) nett games between the teams in the mini-block; then
 - (4) average nett hoop and peg points per game between the teams in the mini-block.
- b) Where two or more teams are still equal, they shall be ranked by their nett games in the entire block.
- c) 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.
- d) Should the above measures fail to resolve the equality in ranking, lots shall be drawn by the Committee.

20) 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.

- i) Play-off matches shall normally 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.
- ii) 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 home 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.
- iii) Where clubs are widely separated, it may be possible to arrange a more convenient venue. Appendix 3 indicates the conditions for this procedure.

21) **Finals.** 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.

- a) For each play-off match and final, the host club shall:
 - i) determine the number and size of the courts; and
 - ii) appoint a referee, suitably qualified wherever possible.
 - iii) Provide to players free of charge: drinking water, tea and coffee or the means for self-service
- b) 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.
- c) 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 22
- d) The SWF shall offer to pay the host club for court and equipment hire at the standard 'Base Rate' as defined by Croquet England, plus an agreed fee to cover refreshments to be provided free of charge to the players

22) **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.

23) **Matters in Dispute**

- a) The Committee shall have the power to resolve:
 - i) any matter not covered by these rules;
 - ii) disputes over the interpretation of anything contained within these rules.

24) **Amendments**

- a) 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
By the date as published at the AGM by the League Secretary.		
1	Once you have been notified of your fixture commitments, you should contact your opponents and agree dates for the fixtures.	8
2	Notify the League Secretary of the dates agreed for your fixtures.	8a
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 4
On Match Day		
4	Each captain should provide the opposing captain with a list of players' names and handicaps.	Appendix 4
5	The team captains shall arrange the pairings of opponents for all games prior to the start of the match.	16
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.	17

Appendix 2

Short Croquet Handicaps and Match Format

Table 1: Handicap conversion and Short Croquet trigger points

Relationship between Association and Short Croquet Handicaps			
Association	Short	Association	Short
-3	-5 (5 peels)	7	2.5
-2 to -2.5	-4 (4 peels)	8 to 9	3
-1.5 to -1	-3 (3 peels)	10 to 11	3.5
-0.5 to 0.5	-2 (2 peels)	12 to 13	4
1 to 1.5	-1 (1 Peel)	14 to 15	5
2 to 2.5	0	16 to 17	6
3 to 3.5	0.5	18 to 19	7
4 to 4.5	1	20 to 21	8
5	1.5	22 to 22	9
6	2	24	10

Automatic Handicapping Trigger Points for Short Croquet			
Handicap	Index	Handicap	Index
-5 (or 5P)	165	2.5	75
-4 (or 4P)	145	3	70
-3 (or 3P)	130	3.5	65
-2 (or 2P)	115	4	60
-1 (or 1P)	105	5	55
0	100	6	50
0.5	95	7	45
1	90	8	40
1.5	85	9	35
2	80	10	30

See also: www.croquet.org.uk/?p=games/association/handicapping/short

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

Procedures for arranging an alternative venue

If, in any match, teams are based more than two hours apart by road (according to Google Maps on a normal traffic day), either team may request that the match be played at an alternative venue somewhere between the two locations.

If the other team agrees, the requesting team shall become responsible for identifying a suitable venue and making all the arrangements with that venue.

The non-requesting team must agree to the final choice of venue.

If no suitable venue can be found within the league deadlines, the match must be played at the home venue within the league deadlines.

In the case of a play-off, the date for the match must be one of the three dates first offered by the home club. (See Rule 20ciii).

Where a charge is made by the alternative venue for court and equipment hire the standard Base Rate as defined by Croquet England shall apply, and that charge shall be paid by the requesting team.

The home team shall remain responsible for the provision of simple refreshments (hot and cold drinks, but not lunches) for both teams.

Appendix 4

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 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.