

WCF Rules of Golf Croquet

Principal Changes in the 5th Edition

General

This is a summary of major changes. More detail and explanations may be found in the *Rationale* document.

Offside balls

If a player plays an onside ball before a direction has been given about their offside ball, the onside ball cannot now be recalled.

Court and Equipment

The court boundary is now the same as for AC so a ball leaves the court when an edge crosses the boundary instead of its centre.

Scoring clips are now not Outside Agencies when attached to a hoop, so it is safe to leave them in place when attempting to run a hoop. However, either side can now require a clip to be removed before the stroke is played. Requirements for the adjustment of hoops and the peg are now set out.

Faults

Non-Striking Faults no longer exist. They are now treated as interferences, and corrected, but there is no penalty. Striking faults are now just *faults*.

Two faults have been removed. These are the ones relating to “resting” the arm on the ground, leg, or an outside agency. These are seen as occurring predominantly in strokes used in AC that are rarely seen in GC. The fault of touching the head of the mallet is now limited in time to the forward swing in which the stroke is played. This recognises that such touching after the swing is completed gives the player no advantage.

The Turn and the Striking Period

Turns now begin as soon as the previous turn ends. There is no gap. This change enables the striking period to begin before the ball is struck and, consequently, simplifies the fault rules.

The striking period now begins when the player takes up a stance with the apparent intention of playing a stroke. This means that some errors can now be treated as faults which were previously non-striking faults. It is possible to interrupt the striking period by breaking the stance, but this does not avoid faults already committed.

Strokes may now be declared to be played. A player declaring a stroke must say which ball would have been played.

Wrong Ball Play

The GCRC considered a proposal to apply the “full penalty” for all forms of wrong ball, not just playing an opponent ball, as was the case under the 2nd Edition from 2005 to 2008. However, it concluded that the emphasis should be on prevention of wrong balls by early forestalling and, when they do occur, obtaining a fair continuation of play rather than on punishment. Accordingly, the general remedy for all wrong ball situations, including playing an opponent ball, is now “Replace and Replay” which encourages players to forestall if they see the other side about to play a wrong ball.

However, because “Replace and Replay” can lead to “gift hoops” in some situations when a side plays its partner ball instead of the striker’s ball, the nonoffending side now has the option of a Ball Swap as well as Replace and Replay. If Ball Swap is chosen, the wrong ball is swapped with the offending side’s other ball (i.e. the striker’s ball that should have been played). The non-offending side then plays the next stroke with the ball that follows in sequence after the offending side’s other ball. Hence, if play goes Bab Blue, Ray Yellow, play stopped and Ball Swap is chosen by Bab, Yellow and Red will be swapped and Bab will then play Black.

Penalty area and penalty area continuation

The penalty spots have been replaced by penalty areas which are semi-circles of radius 1 yard centred on penalty spots D and E. This reduces the possibility of blocking tactics when two or more balls are to be played from the same penalty area.

The penalty area is now also used to continue the game in three rare situations where a neutral continuation process (called a “penalty area continuation”) is needed. The first is when it is discovered that one or more hoops have been run out of order (which is similar to the process in the 4th Edition). The other two are (1) in overlapping play where both sides are in error and (2) when a side has played a wrong ball because the previous turn was played by the other side with an opponent’s ball.

Communication of decisions

The rules now specify the obligations of the two sides to communicate decisions and to respond promptly to requests for information or decisions in relation to:

- offside ball directions;
- whether Replace and Replay or Ball Swap will apply;
- whether balls are to be replaced after a fault;
- the state of the game; and
- whether an extra stroke will be played in a handicap game.

Behaviour

Options available to referees to deal with misbehaviour have been increased.

Brian Boutel

Chairman, WCF Golf Croquet Rules Committee

17 June 2018