

AC Official Ruling

The WCF Association Croquet Laws Committee has issued the following Official Ruling in accordance with WCF Statute 132.5.4, which takes effect from 1st November 2025.

Law 48.4 – Playing out of sequence in Alternate Stroke Doubles (November 2025)

In Law 48.4.3, reference to Law 7.6 **Events causing the end of turn** is to be limited during out-of-sequence play to:

Law 7.6.7 - in any *stroke* the *striker* commits an *error* for which the penalty is end of turn (see Laws 26, 27, 28.4 and 29).

In addition, the following words are added to the end of Law 48.4.3:

“but may not attempt a *critical stroke* unless the *striker’s ball* was replaced in a marked position”.

Commentary

Playing out of sequence is an easy error to make, especially for those not accustomed to Alternate Stroke Doubles. It is desirable to minimise its impact on the game while ensuring that any other error that occurred during the out-of-sequence play is treated equitably.

Law 48.4, as the lowest priority error, can never govern what happens in situations where multiple mistakes have occurred in the same stroke. In this case, all fatal errors in laws 26,27, 28.4 and 29 take precedence over playing out of sequence.

Otherwise, if the discovery is within the limit of claims, the strokes in error must be analysed to determine how play continues. For this purpose, the strokes in error shall be treated as though the correct player played them. No points are scored, and all balls are replaced in their lawful position before the first stroke in error.

The ruling now provides that the turn ends only if it is identified that a fatal error (i.e. playing when not entitled (Law 26), playing a wrong ball (Law 27), taking croquet from a dead ball (Law 28.4) or committing a fault (Law 29)) occurred in one of the stroke(s) in error.

Examples of turn-ending events that now allow the correct player to resume the turn are:

- joining or laying up for the side’s next turn; or
- successfully pegging out the striker’s ball; or
- attempting to peg out the striker’s ball to win a game but missing the peg; or
- playing a roquet and missing the target ball; or
- attempting to run a hoop and failing.

In particular, if the stroke in error was intended to be the last stroke of a turn, the ruling restores the alternation of the players and ensures that the correct player’s partner plays the first stroke of the side’s next turn. This could matter if one player is a much better shot than the other.

The ruling is consistent with Law 24.3 and the Official Commentary, which sets out the sequence in which simultaneous errors are to be considered, and Law 48.4 occurs later in the Laws than the fatal error laws (Laws 26 to 29).

The second part of the ruling ensures that critical ball situations should be taken into account after rectification. The wrong player of a side may have played a non-critical stroke from an unmarked position, and after the error is rectified, the correct player wishes to resume the turn, adopting a different line of play and playing a critical stroke. Equally, if the wrong player had attempted a critical stroke without having the striker’s ball marked, after the error is rectified, the correct player may not attempt any critical stroke as the first stroke of the resumed turn. The same would apply if the position had been marked, but the markers removed prior to the realisation of an out-of-sequence error. The ruling limits the side’s options in these cases.

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