

Synopsis of Special Olympics Unified Sports® Croquet

Unified team croquet is played between two sides — the blue and black balls versus the red and yellow balls. Each team consists of a Special Olympics athlete and a partner. To accommodate the limitations of some athletes and level the playing field, the traditional U.S. Croquet Association golf croquet rules were modified.

The object is to score the most points (make wickets) within the 20-minute match time. A side scores a point when one of its balls is the first to pass through the next wicket in sequence, as shown by the illustrations. Each wicket is scored by only one ball, so that both teams are always contesting the same wicket. If at “match time” the score is tied, the teams play a “last round” tiebreaker.

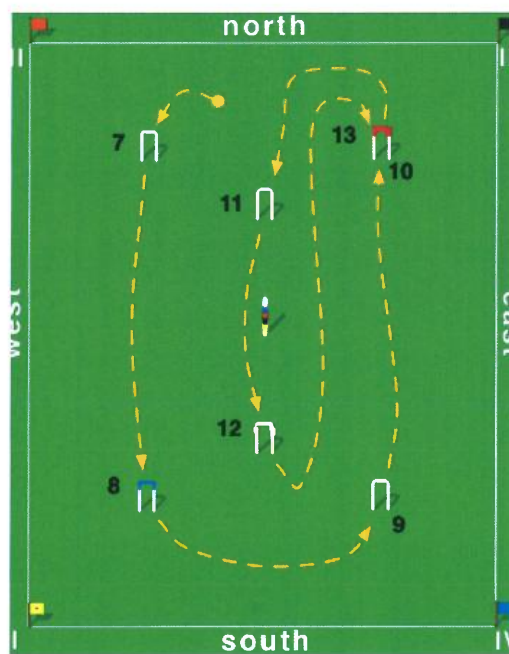
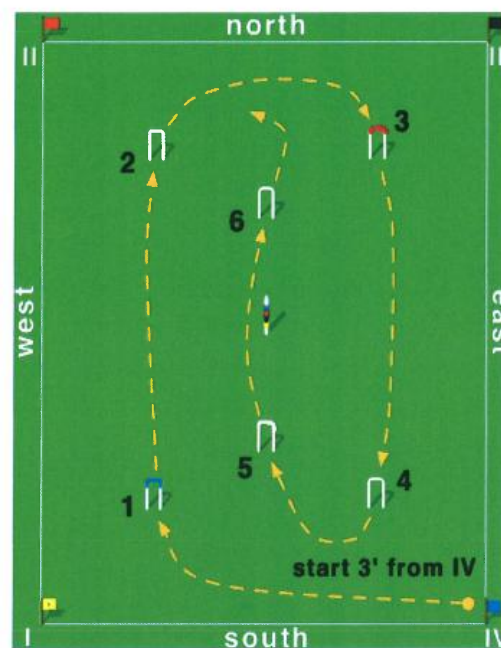
The team that wins a coin toss selects to play blue and black or red and yellow. The athletes play the blue or red ball. Partners play the black or yellow ball. Turns are played in the color sequence on the center stake: blue, red, black, then yellow.

To start, each ball is played into the game from any point on the court within a radius of three feet from corner IV. When double banking (two separate games played simultaneously on the same court), stripes play the same wicket order, but in the opposite direction (starting from corner II, heading for the red-topped wicket).

Play is made by striking a ball with a mallet. The player who is playing a turn is called the striker, and the ball in play for that turn is the striker's ball. The striker's mallet can only strike its ball once per turn. There is an exception for athletes with physical limitations whose ball is more than three feet from the contested wicket. The striker's mallet may never strike any ball other than the striker's ball. The striker's ball, by hitting another ball, may cause other balls to move and score points.

During competition, teams announce their wicket score to a boardkeeper/referee. The referee keeps the score and answers any rules questions. During the game, the referee cannot offer advice or strategy to any player. Competition is scheduled by team ability (novice, intermediate, or advanced) and, where applicable, age.

For more information on Special Olympics unified team sports, see www.SOCT.org.
For more information about croquet, see www.CroquetAmerica.com.



Special Olympics Unified Sports® Croquet Rules (Played in CT and RI)

Unified Team: Athlete and Partner and, if applicable, non-playing Coach.

The Court and Equipment. This game is played on a 50' x 40' court (Figure 1) or approximately one quarter of a USCA full court (depending on circumstances the size can be modified). The four corner wickets are measured in 10 ft. from each boundary. The two center wickets are measured 10 ft. from the center stake. The interior width of each wicket should be no more than 3 ¾ inches. There are four balls, six wickets, one stake, and four corner posts or flags. Each player needs a mallet or mallets can be shared.

It is possible to play on an ordinary lawn with an inexpensive croquet set. The typical USCA competition game is played with higher-quality equipment on the flattest lawn with the shortest grass available (resembling a grass carpet, golf putting green, or lawn bowling green). Look for a croquet set that has sturdy rectangular wickets, mallets sized for adults (approx. 30-36 inches), and heavy, solid balls. A 9-wicket croquet set can be modified for 6-wicket games.

An Outline of the Game. Unified croquet is played between teams: blue and black balls versus red and yellow balls. In competition, Athletes will always begin the game first. One Athlete plays the blue ball, with Partner playing the black ball, and one Athlete plays the red ball, with Partner playing the yellow ball.

Each player plays the same color ball throughout the game. One or more teams may have a non-playing Coach. During Tournament games, the non-playing Coach must stay off the court and cannot answer questions or assist any player. During Tournaments, a team Coach or a player may call a Referee or Tournament Director for assistance.

Players may use any mallet of their choice; however, only in the event of breakage, may a player change mallets during a game. Play is made by striking a ball with either striking face of the mallet, never with a side face or the shaft. The player who is playing a turn is called the striker. The ball in play is the striker ball. The mallet must contact the ball crisply; scooping, pushing, and hitting the ball more than once during the stroke are not allowed. The striker and striker's mallet must not strike any ball other than the striker ball. The striker's ball may cause other balls to move and score wickets.

Game Time. Games are timed at 20 minutes. The Timekeeper will announce "ready, begin," a "1 minute" warning before the end of the game, and "match time." The first Athlete to start a game may place the blue ball on the court in starting position before the Timekeeper calls "begin." Until the Timekeeper calls "begin," the first playing Athlete may not aim, swing, or hit the ball.

Miss-hit. The striker may swing the mallet multiple times to aim, but may only hit the ball once per turn. If, when the striker Athlete's ball is more than three feet from the wicket in play, an Athlete accidentally strikes or miss-hits the ball while aiming and the ball only wobbles or travels approximately the length of a mallet head, the Partner has the option to announce immediately "miss-hit," quickly replace the striker's ball, and allow the Athlete one hit to replace the miss-hit.

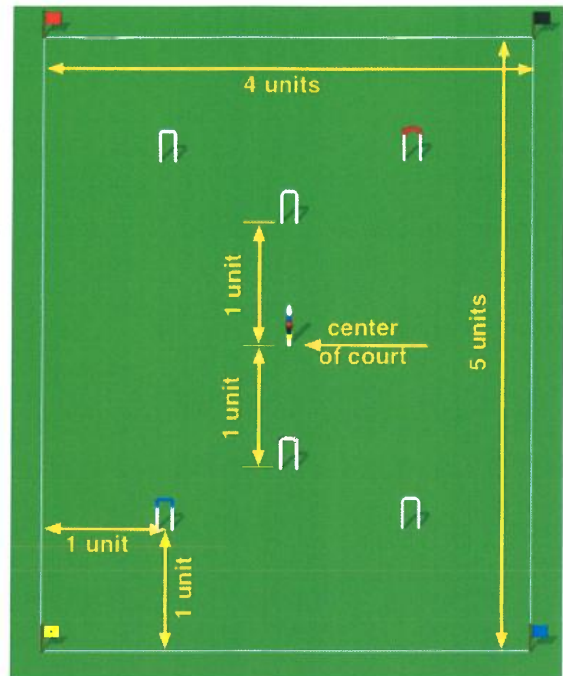


Figure 1: Court Setup

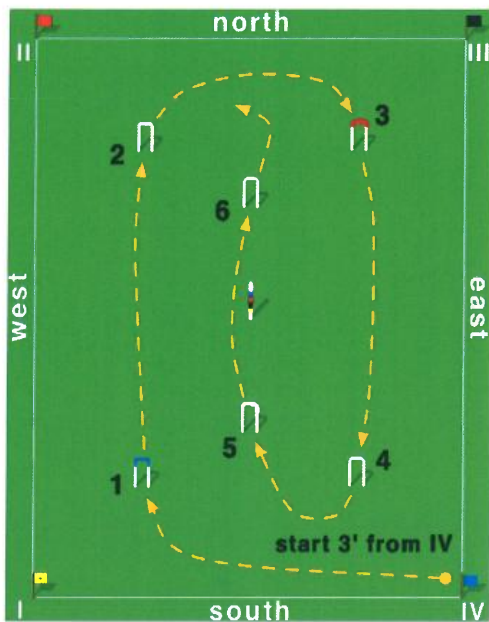
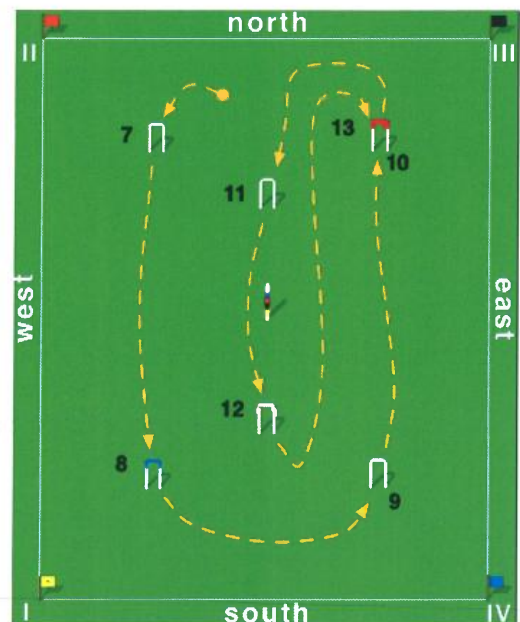


Figure 2:
Wickets & Shooting
Directions



"Make a square, go up the middle and turn left. Do it again." Special Olympics CT Athlete 2010

Starting the Game. The side that wins a coin toss chooses team colors. The starting coin will be tossed by a team Athlete or Partner and the opponent team Athlete will call "heads" or "tails," whichever coin side lands upright wins the toss. The winning team decides which color balls that team will play.

The blue ball plays first. Turns are played in the sequence of the colors on the stake: blue, red, black, yellow. Each ball is played into the game from any point on the court within a radius of three feet from corner IV (southeast corner) for solids and corner II (northwest corner) for stripes.

Each turn consists of one mallet hit on the ball. At the beginning of a turn, a striker may call "pass" (decide not to hit the ball on the striker's turn).

Scoring Points. Each wicket is scored by only one ball, so that all balls are always contesting the same wicket. A ball scores a point for its team by passing through a wicket in sequence (Figure 2). If the striker's ball causes another ball to pass through (run) the wicket, the point is counted for the team whose ball ran the wicket. If two balls pass through the wicket on the same stroke, the point is scored by the ball that first ran the wicket. If a ball is in motion when "match time" is called and that ball passes through a wicket, the point is scored.

A striker may shoot to the next wicket before the current wicket is scored. No portion of the ball may go into the next wicket or score a point by running a wicket until the proper wicket is scored.

A ball may run partially through to the non-playing side of a wicket; however, it does not score a point until the entire ball clears the wicket. To score a point, the entire ball must have originally started from the playing side completely out of the wicket. It may take two or more turns for a ball to run through a wicket. For example: 1) the ball originates from the playing side, stops partially within the wicket, and on its next turn is hit entirely through the wicket or 2) the ball is hit from the non-playing side entirely through the wicket so that on its next turn it originates from the playing side. Do not use a mallet head to see if a ball is through a wicket! If there is any question on a ball's placement or whether it is completely through a wicket, ask a Referee or Tournament Director.

Which Wicket Am I Shooting For (Double Banking)? Double banking is when two games are played on the same court at the same time in opposite directions. For the solid balls, wicket 1 is the wicket with the horizontal top painted blue and wicket 3 is the wicket with the horizontal top painted red.

For the stripe balls, wicket 1 is the wicket with the horizontal top painted red and wicket 3 is the wicket with the horizontal top painted blue.

Wicket 6 to Wicket 7. After scoring wicket 5, wicket 6 is scored by passing the stake on either side and running through wicket 6 in the direction of the boundary. Wicket 7 is scored by running through the wicket from the direction of the boundary toward wicket 8 (see Figure 2).

Match Time (No Tie Score). All play will stop when the Timekeeper calls "match time."

Match Time (Tie Score/Last Round). At match time, (1) the striker to play and each player thereafter may shoot one more time for that wicket. (2) If the wicket is not scored, each player shoots one more time to score the wicket. (3) If the wicket is not scored, the Referee will break the tie by deciding which one ball on the playing side of the wicket is both a) closest to the center of the wicket and b) reasonably capable of scoring the wicket.

Congestion or Playing Through and Accidental Interference (Double Banking). Be courteous. For example: When solids are at a wicket and stripes are now for that same wicket, a stripes Referee or Partner should announce to the solids Referee or Partners that, "Stripes would like to play through. Please complete your wicket." Solids Referee or Partner will reply with the status of their game at that wicket. The group at the wicket controls play around the wicket until a point is scored. If able to do so, stripes may hit closer to that wicket, but must not interfere with or hit solid balls. The same applies if stripes are at the same wicket that solids need to play through.

If it appears there will be a lengthy delay, a Partner, while raising a mallet, should call for a Referee or Tournament Director, who may direct that group to an alternate wicket.

If a striker's ball in one game accidentally hits a ball in another game, the striker's ball remains where it stops. The hit ball is immediately placed back in its original location by a Partner from any team or game.

Keeping Score. Each time a wicket point is scored, the Athlete or Partner whose team scored the point announces it to the Referee. For example: "Red solid scored the wicket" or "red stripe scored the wicket." Team points (wickets scored) are kept by a Referee. At the end of the game, both sets of Athlete and Partner will go to their Referee to verify each team's total wickets scored. All Athletes and Partners will shake hands, congratulate each other on a good game, and return their balls to the starting corner.

Boundaries. A ball is out of bounds as soon as any portion lies directly over or on a boundary line. When a ball goes out it is placed approximately a mallet head length inside the boundary nearest to the point where it went out. Boundary corners may be marked by blue, red, black, and yellow flags.

Helpful "Ask Yourself" Questions. What wicket am I shooting for? Can I shoot through that wicket? Can I hit my teammate through that wicket? Can I hit my ball at or in front of my opponent's next ball to play so that it can't score the wicket? Should I pass (not hit my ball)? Should I shoot for the next wicket (because my teammate is "in the wicket" or we cannot stop an opponent ball from scoring the current wicket)?

Questions or Rules. In the case of a dispute, all rules questions should be directed by a teammate or Coach to the Tournament Director or a Referee. This is done by a Partner raising one mallet head into the air and calling out for the Director or Referee. If a Referee's ruling is questioned during a Tournament, the Tournament Director will make the final ruling. If the Special Olympics rules do not address the situation in question, the Tournament Director will refer to the

most applicable golf croquet rule as established by the U.S. Croquet Association or World Golf Croquet Association.

Dangerous Play. When hitting the ball, strikers should try not to swing the mallet head more than chest height. Intentional "jump shots" are not allowed.

Court Etiquette. Everyone but the striker and striker's teammate should stand at least three feet from the wicket area or the striker. A striker should be ready to play his or her ball immediately after the previous striker's ball has come to rest. A striker should try to hit the ball within 30 seconds. Strikers may not place their foot on a ball or wicket and may only pick up a ball when placing it in bounds or at the end of a game. The striker's Partner may quickly assist an Athlete in preparing to shoot. Athlete or Partner may quickly point out a spot to shoot to (using the shaft or mallet head); once the striker has the point in sight, the teammate must quickly move away from the spot.

Please be quiet or whisper when another team's striker is up to play.

It is always polite to congratulate your teammate or opponent on a "good hit," "well played" or "good shot." Do not criticize your teammate or opponent. No swearing or cursing.

If your game is not going well, you may only laugh at your own mistakes. No waving or throwing mallets. No hitting wickets with your mallets. No throwing or kicking balls and wickets.

Player Wardrobe. Players and anyone on the courts must wear flat-soled shoes (sneakers or sandals, no golf or soccer cleats). Players must wear a white shirt (polo or golf style) and white or light khaki-colored shorts or pants. In the event of light rain, drizzle or cold weather, any color windbreaker or jacket is appropriate. Players may wear any color hat on courts; players may prefer a golf or baseball style cap.

Referees are not required to wear white; however, they must wear flat-soled shoes while on the courts.

Guest Etiquette and Tournament Wardrobe. Please try to whisper while strikers are at play, particularly when a striker is about to swing the mallet. Even the best croquet players can miss a shot if suddenly distracted by loud noise. Players and coaches should expect that in the spirit of enthusiasm, sideline guests may and probably will have bouts of spontaneous good cheer after a particularly well done shot. Guests do not have to wear white.

Thank you for your courtesy by showing respect for the players.

Questions Anytime:
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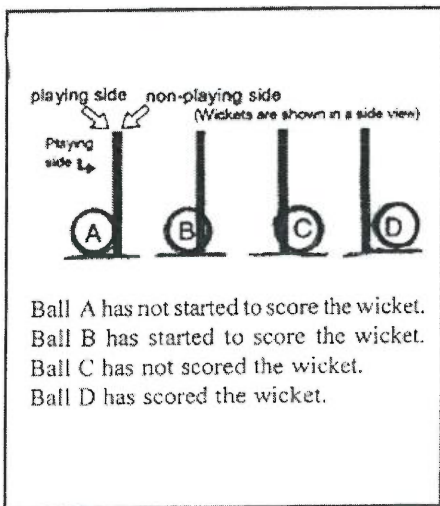
*Many thanks to Teddy Prentis IV and Bob Kroger, USCA Croquet Instructors,
and Beau Doherty, President Special Olympics Connecticut.
For other croquet game variations, see www.CroquetAmerica.com.
www.SOCT.org*

**Special Olympics
Unified Sports® Croquet Guidance for Coaches and Referees #1**

Croquet Officials (Referees). Officials with feet-on-the-court must wear flat-soled shoes or sandals. Referees do not have to wear white; however, because players are wearing “whites,” Referees may want to wear a white top and white (or light kaki color) shorts/pants.

Referee. When possible, a non-playing official will be available on the court during a game to keep track of each team’s score, answer Rules questions, and when double-banking to direct the game to an alternate wicket. The Referee cannot give suggestions or game advice during competition. When necessary, a Referee may also serve as the Timekeeper for that game.

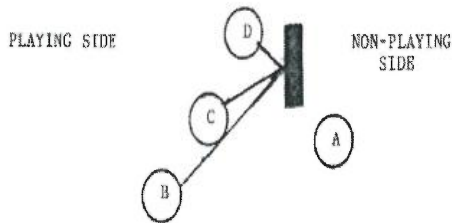
Timekeeper / Match Time. The Timekeeper will announce “begin” or “start” to begin the game and “match time” at the end of the game. The Timekeeper will announce a “1 minute” warning before match time.



Scoring a Wicket. The “playing side” is the front of a wicket as a ball is about to score the wicket in the proper order and direction. The opposite side is the “non-playing side.”

See Ball D. A ball scores a wicket point when it has originally begun completely from the playing side and passed through a wicket in the proper order and direction, coming to rest clear of the wicket (D). If the ball clears the wicket and rolls backward coming to rest beyond the non-playing side (see A, B or C), the ball has not made the wicket.

Match Time. Tie Score Measurement. If each player does not score the wicket after two rounds, the Referee may break the tie by deciding which ball on the playing side of the wicket is closest to the center of the wicket and has a reasonable chance of scoring the wicket in one shot (regardless of the order of play).



See Ball D. A is on the non-playing side and does not have a reasonable chance of scoring the wicket in one shot. B, C and D are on the playing side. Each ball has a reasonable chance of scoring the wicket. D is the closest ball to the center of the wicket (and the closest ball to the nearest wicket post).

The illustration shows measurement from the center of the wicket. The Referee may measure distance from the center of the wicket or the nearest wicket post, whichever is more practical at the time. If there is a question regarding the Referee’s decision as to the closest ball that can score the wicket, the Tournament Director will make the final decision.

Special Olympics

Unified Sports® Croquet Double Banking Guidance for Coaches, Players and Referees #2

If there is any question among players and Referee, immediately call the Tournament Advisor or Director for a Ruling (the clock is not stopped during this time).

Players and Referees Avoid Congestion! Before shooting to a wicket where another game is in play or appears to be heading, Partners should ask their Referee about an alternate wicket. The Referee should ask the other Referee if they expect to be at that wicket long. The game that arrives at the wicket first controls the wicket, resulting in the second game to arrive waiting (passing turns) until the first game scores the wicket or the second game hits away to an alternate wicket. Up to 13 wickets are contested in each game. To avoid congestion wickets do not have to be played in order. If before match time is called wicket #13 is scored and 13 wickets have not been contested, wicket contests may continue to a maximum of 13 contested wickets or match time, whichever occurs first.

Do Not Hit Ball into Another Game – Striker’s Turn No Shot Scenario – “Pass”. Blue solid hits into an area where the stripe balls are already at play. On its turn blue solid striker does not have a shot in any direction without hitting a stripe ball with its ball or with its mallet on its backswing.

Resolution. Without a shot, blue solid must pass until it has a shot. It does not “get a lift” to move a stripe ball out of its way. Rationale. The blue solid striker put the blue solid ball in this position (interfering with another game). This “pass” solution is for any color ball (Athlete or Partner).

Avoid Incoming Game Interference – Striker’s Turn No Shot Scenario – “Get a Lift”. Solids scored wicket #3. Yellow, blue, and red solid hit to wicket #4. Only black solid remains at wicket #3. On its next turn black solid is for wicket #4. On its last turn black solid stopped 10 inches directly to the side of the wicket #3 vertical support. Reasonably assuming black solid is shooting away shortly, and it is unlikely a stripe ball will interfere with black solid's next shot, the stripe game hits to wicket #3.

Red and yellow stripe balls stop close enough to black solid that, together with the wicket impediment (black solid striker does not have a backswing between the wicket vertical support and its ball), black solid cannot shoot toward wicket #4 without hitting one of the stripe balls with its mallet on its backswing. Even if black solid shoots backwards (away from the direction of wicket #4), the black solid ball will hit a stripe ball. Black solid has "no shot".

Resolution. Immediately at the beginning of black solid's turn, black solid striker asks a Referee or Tournament Director to have one stripe ball lifted, in this scenario, red stripe. If it is an Athlete striker (blue solid “no hit” situation), the decision on which stripe ball to lift may be made by the Athlete or Partner - make the decision quickly. A Referee or the red stripe Partner quickly lifts red stripe, the black solid striker immediately hits black away, and the red stripe ball is put back in place.

Examples.

- Blue solid Athlete (or black solid Partner) asks to have yellow stripe lifted; yellow stripe player (a Partner) lifts yellow stripe ball and replaces it after blue solid plays.
- Red stripe Athlete (or yellow stripe Partner) asks to have blue solid lifted; blue solid’s Partner (black solid) lifts blue solid ball and replaces it after red stripe plays.

Rationale. Black solid's "no shot in any direction" predicament was not created by the solids game or black solid. Black solid was already at the location and had at least one shot choice before the stripe balls arrived. But for the after-arrived stripe balls, the black solid striker could have hit the ball in one direction without hitting a stripe ball. This playing solution is for any color ball in a "no fault / no hit" situation (Athlete or Partner).