



Aussie Croquet 2

*A Mallet Sport For Schools &
Corporate, Business & Community Groups*

*Progressing the Game
To
Association Croquet*

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Aussie Croquet is the Introductory Game of Croquet. It is not one of the official tournament games of croquet. It is an ideal coaching medium given that players come to a club to PLAY A GAME.

- As an introductory game, Aussie leads players into Association Croquet, Golf Croquet and Gateball.
- Most clubs offer Association and Golf Croquet.
- The Asian team game of Gateball is being played in an increasing number of clubs around the world.
- Many Association players play Golf Croquet as it improves the single ball strokes in Association Croquet and because it contributes to your club being inclusive of all players and helps build social harmony.
- Social harmony and inclusiveness is essential ingredient in croquet clubs because most people take up croquet as a social pursuit as much as a means of exercise or the pursuit of technical and tactical skill. Being in a croquet club is not about a competition between the two versions of the game.

As Aussie Croquet is played with a Single Ball Stroke it can **branch into Golf Croquet very easily.**

It can be introduced like this: "Today we are going to turn Aussie Croquet into another game by only allowing you to have one stroke per turn. With that one stroke per turn the four balls – Blue, Red, Black and Yellow compete to be the first one to go through the next hoop in order. First through scores 1 point and the contest moves on to the next hoop. The first player or team to score 7 hoops wins.

As Aussie Croquet is Association Croquet without the Croquet Stroke, **it can progress to Association Croquet.**

PROGRESSING AUSSIE TO ASSOCIATION CROQUET

After a number of weeks playing Aussie and Golf Croquet it is time to add a new stroke to Aussie Croquet. This could be either a **Split Stroke** or a **Take-Off Stroke**. Both these strokes are termed a croquet stroke. The croquet stroke is the essence of Association Croquet. Understanding the principle of the croquet stroke can also be of benefit in playing Golf Croquet.

In the croquet stroke your ball must be placed in contact with the ball it hits. The way you place your ball in contact determines whether the croquet stroke is a split stroke or a take-off stroke.

CROQUET STROKES

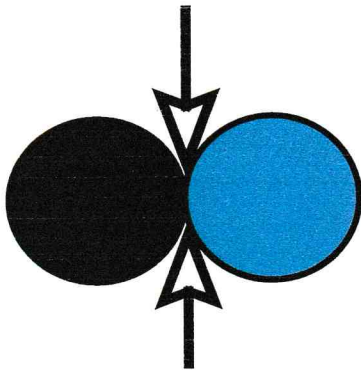
YOUR BALL BESIDE (Take-Off)

(Take-Off)

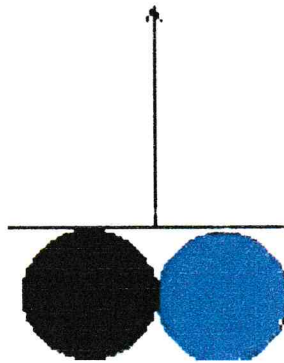


Your ball (the striker's ball) must move the ball it is in contact with (the croqueted ball) so you have to aim the mallet slightly towards the croqueted ball so it glances the striker's ball off the croqueted ball in the direction of the arrow

AIMING THE STRIKERS BALL IN A TAKE-OFF



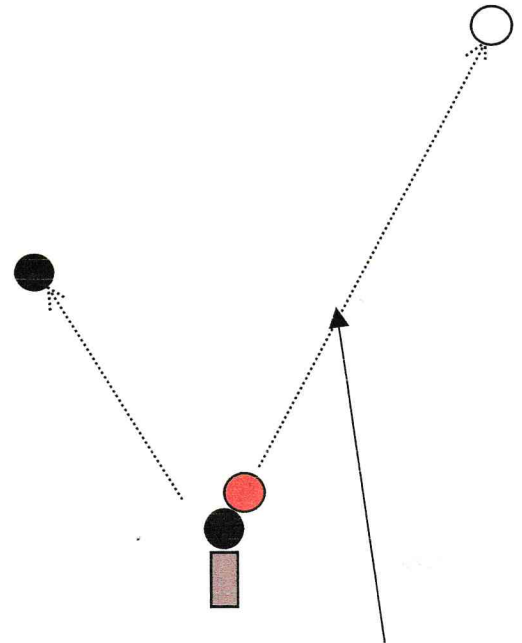
The gap between the 2 balls is shaped like the head of an arrow. If you aim that invisible arrow to your target the striker's ball will go in that direction even though your hit on the striker's ball is aimed slightly into the croqueted ball



OR set the balls at right angles to the direction you want the striker's ball to go

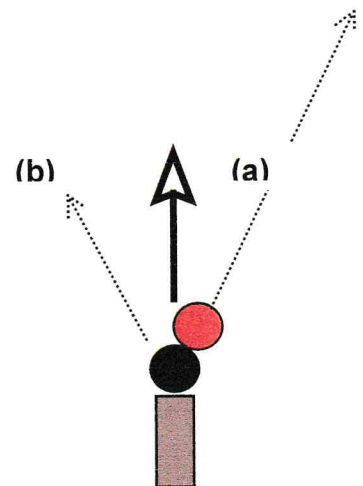
YOUR BALL BEHIND (Split Shot)

(Split Shot)



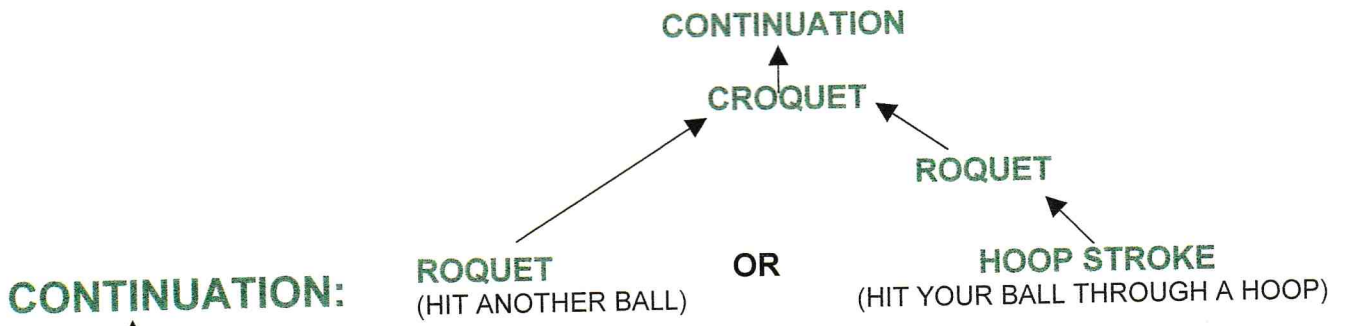
The pathway of the croqueted ball is determined before you even hit the striker's ball. It will be in the line through the centre of the 2 balls

AIMING THE STIKER'S BALL IN A SPLIT SHOT

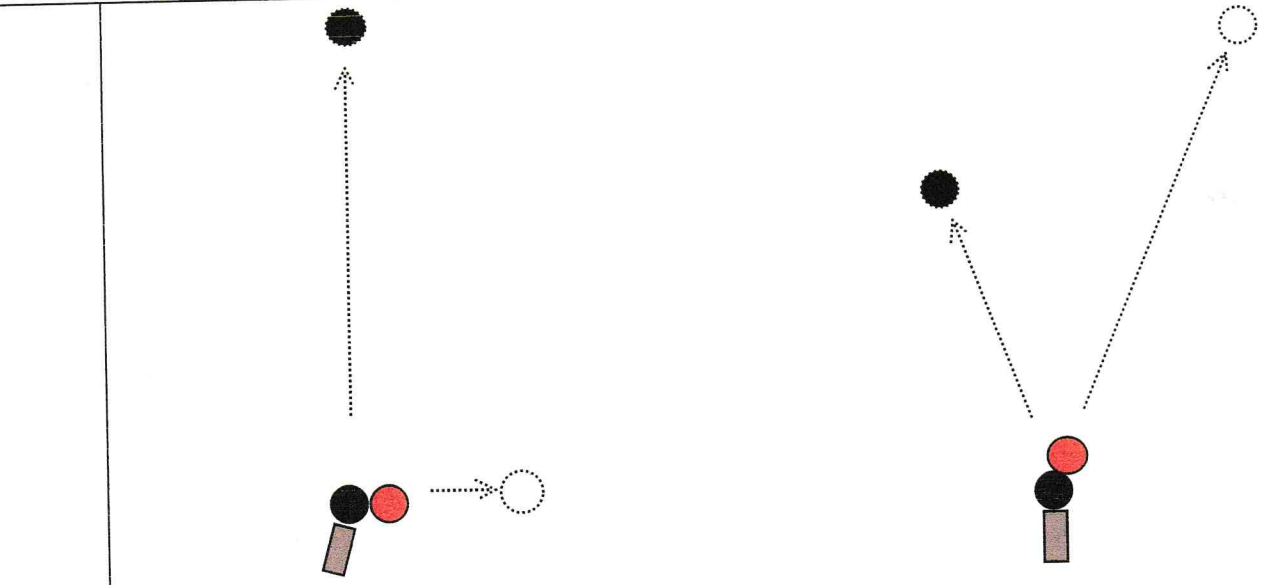


If you aim your mallet to hit the striker's ball halfway between the set direction of the croqueted ball (a) and the intended direction of the striker's ball (b), the striker's ball will glance off the croqueted ball in the intended direction towards (b)

AUSSIE TO ASSOCIATION - when the striker's ball now hits another ball the player earns not one, but two extra strokes. **The first of these is a croquet stroke; the second is a single ball continuation stroke** with the striker's ball from where it came to rest after the croquet stroke.

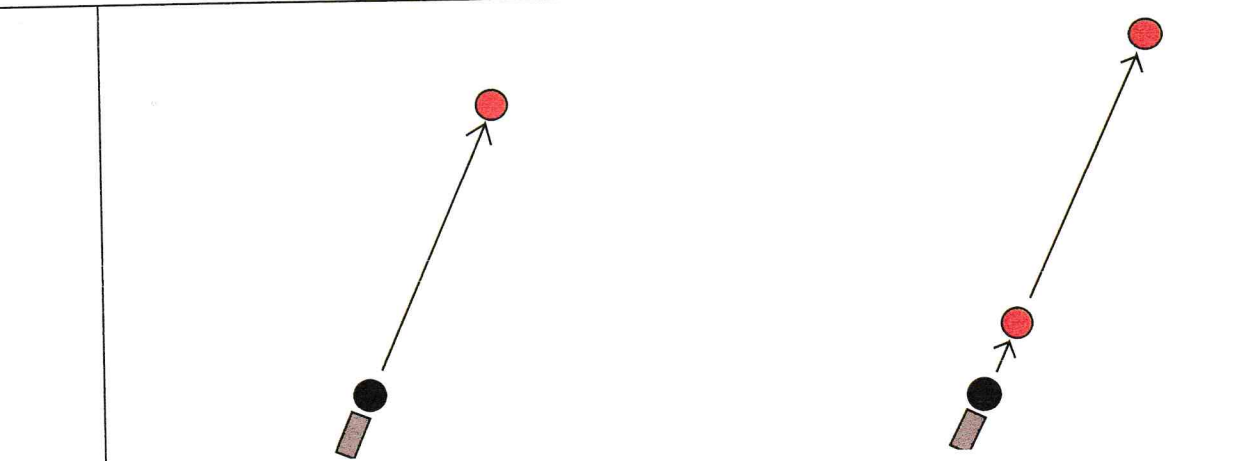


After playing a Take-Off or Split Shot croquet stroke you are entitled to a further (continuation) stroke



CROQUET: BESIDE (Take-Off) OR BEHIND (Split Shot)

When your ball hits any of the other 3 balls you must place your ball in contact with that ball



ROQUET: Hit your ball onto another ball OR Hit your ball into another ball to make it travel to a chosen destination

VARIOUS OPTIONS FOR INTRODUCING A CROQUET STROKE

Teaching Points:

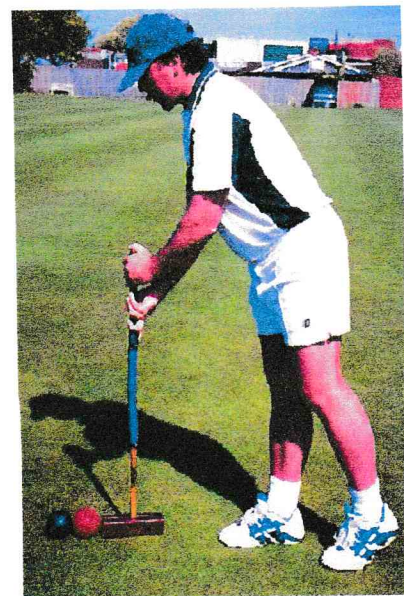
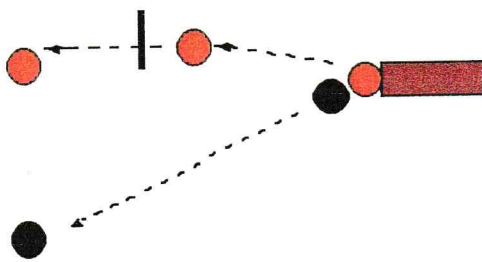
- It is important to progress slowly to give players plenty of time to absorb anything new. Suggest 4-6 weeks with Aussie & Golf before this next step.
- Because they will always be playing a game, players will remain interested.
- Teaching the stroke should take no longer than 10 -15mins - then put it into the game.
- It is a good idea to start a session with an Aussie croquet or Golf Croquet game for revision & warm up. This is important if you are going to be doing roquet-croquet-continuation sequences that slow down the rate of turns.
- Remind players of coaching points in a game – stalk the ball, watch the spot on the ball you are to hit, follow through, swing smoothly and evenly - but don't interrupt flow of game.
- You will find that roquet-croquet-continuation slows the game down and players are waiting longer for their turn. Options 1 & 2 below avoid this more than Option 2.

OPTION 1: Add the Split Shot only, as a hoop approach, as a first step.

Give reason for split shot as a hoop approach. "Have you noticed that when you go through a hoop there is no other ball to hit? This stroke looks after that". (Demonstrate).
Teaching method (Kenn Boal): reach both arms out from shoulders as if inviting a cuddle. Bring hands together in front. Arms out point the pathway made by each ball; hands together gives aiming point of mallet.

Teach as an **upright stance stroke** to project croqueted ball to other side of hoop and the striker's ball will travel only a short distance to the front of the hoop.

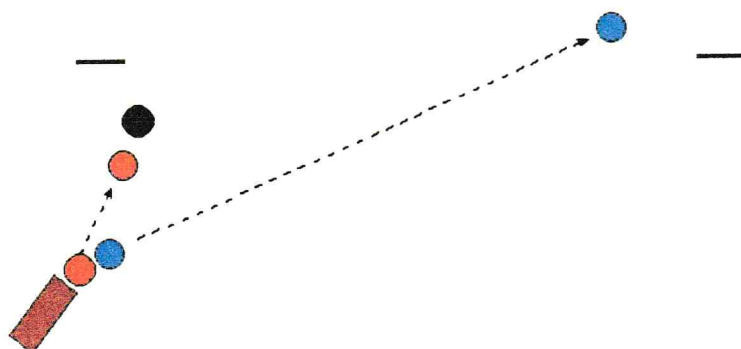
This upright stance stroke is called a **stop shot** because your mallet stops after hitting the ball and doesn't follow through. You will find there is no need to jerk to a sudden stop – just don't follow through.



To keep the game moving, restrict the split shot to the hoop approach with continuation to go through hoop + extra stroke earned by scoring the hoop. Keep the rest of the game to 1 extra stroke for a hit on another ball.

Full roquet-croquet-continuation can come next lesson or two. Then you can demonstrate how the Stop Shot can be used to project the croqueted ball towards the next-but-one

hoop while still keeping the striker's ball nearby to roquet another ball to approach the next hoop with a split stop shot:

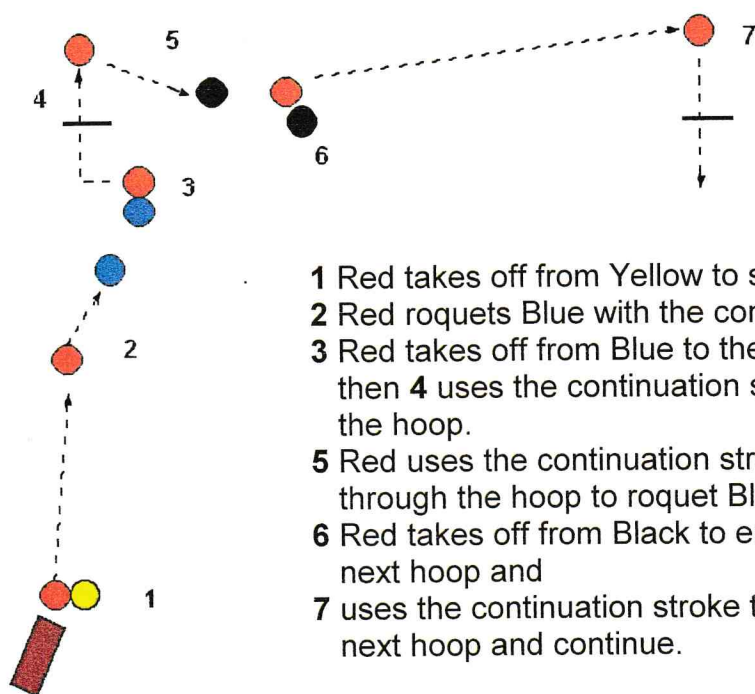


OPTION 2: Add the Take-Off as a first step.

Reason: The Take-Off allows you to easily progress the striker's ball any distance short or long.

Method: having a cardboard arrow head that fits in the gap between 2 balls can provide a concrete aid to visualizing the aiming procedure of the Take-Off; or use the right angle formed by the mallet shaft and mallet head to show the pathway of the striker's ball

Once taught, the ease of this stroke produces good roquet-croquet-continuation sequences to cement the process:



- 1 Red takes off from Yellow to stop near Blue
- 2 Red roquets Blue with the continuation stroke
- 3 Red takes off from Blue to the front of the hoop then 4 uses the continuation stroke to go through the hoop.
- 5 Red uses the continuation stroke earned by going through the hoop to roquet Black
- 6 Red takes off from Black to end up in front of the next hoop and
- 7 uses the continuation stroke to go through the next hoop and continue.

Once players get used to the Take-Off and the roquet-croquet-continuation process you can introduce the split stop shot as in **Option 1**

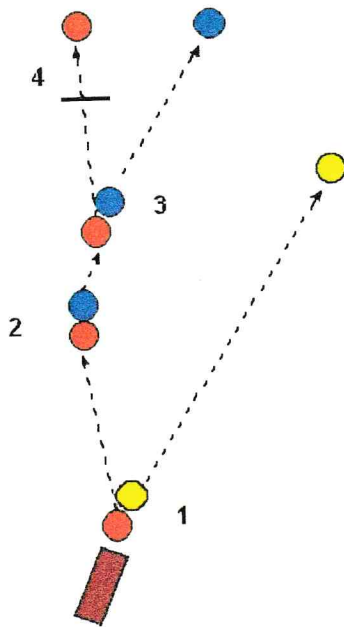
OPTION 3. Add the Split Shot without the Continuation Stroke.

Croquet Victoria's Sports Development Manager Kenn Boal uses this option.

Reason: the Split Shot is often regarded as the hardest stroke to master so Kenn teaches it (successfully) first.

Method: same as in **Option 1**. Kenn teaches it as a stop shot at first. Then, as players get used to it he teaches the various ratios. At this early stage the split shot isn't pin-point accurate but the player does learn the basic principle well which serves as a good basis for fine tuning the stroke as time goes by.

Without the Continuation Stroke. This reduces the length of each turn because the player has to roquet another ball with the striker's ball in the split shot which is hard to achieve. Reducing the length of turn at this stage means the other players are not waiting too long for their turn.

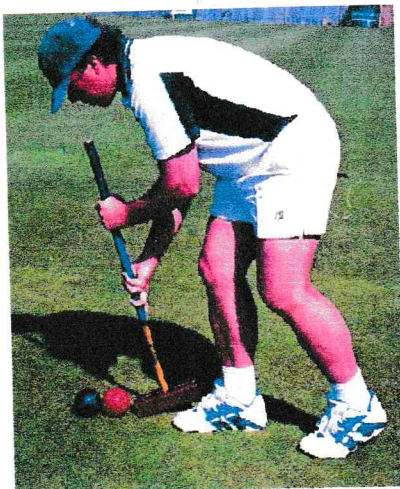


- 1 Red has roqueted Yellow. Player does a split shot aiming it for Red to run into Blue and for Yellow to be projected forward towards the next-but-one hoop.
 - 2 Red does hit Blue in the split shot so:
 - 3 Player does another split shot aiming Red to go through the next hoop and Blue is projected past the Hoop
 - 4 Red does go through the hoop & earns another stroke to continue.
- **If Red doesn't hit another ball in the split shot the player's turn ends.

Varying the Ratio between the Striker's Ball and the croqueted ball.

In all styles this means bending forward over the ball and having your feet come closer to the balls to keep a compact, comfortable stance.

Australian & Victorian Player Stephen Forster, a side-style player, demonstrates this below. Compared with his upright stance photo on Page 4, notice how his feet are closer to the balls and the mallet handle is tilted forward. The $\frac{1}{2}$ ratio stance on the left & the equal roll stance on the right show the different placement of the hands to enable the face of the mallet to strike higher on the back of the ball. This creates more roll on the striker's ball as well as the full follow-through in the swing.

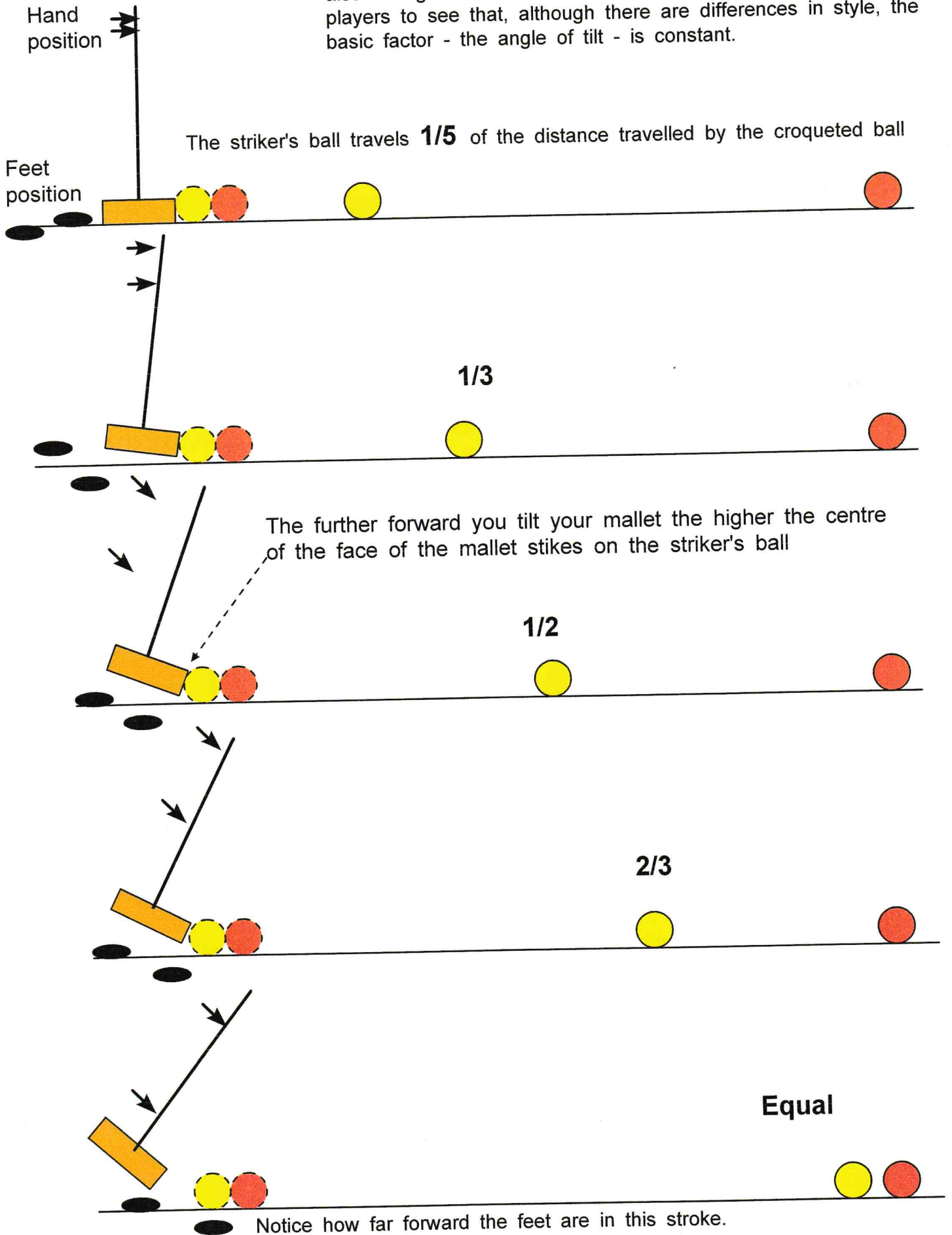


These basic principles apply to centre-style and with any grip.

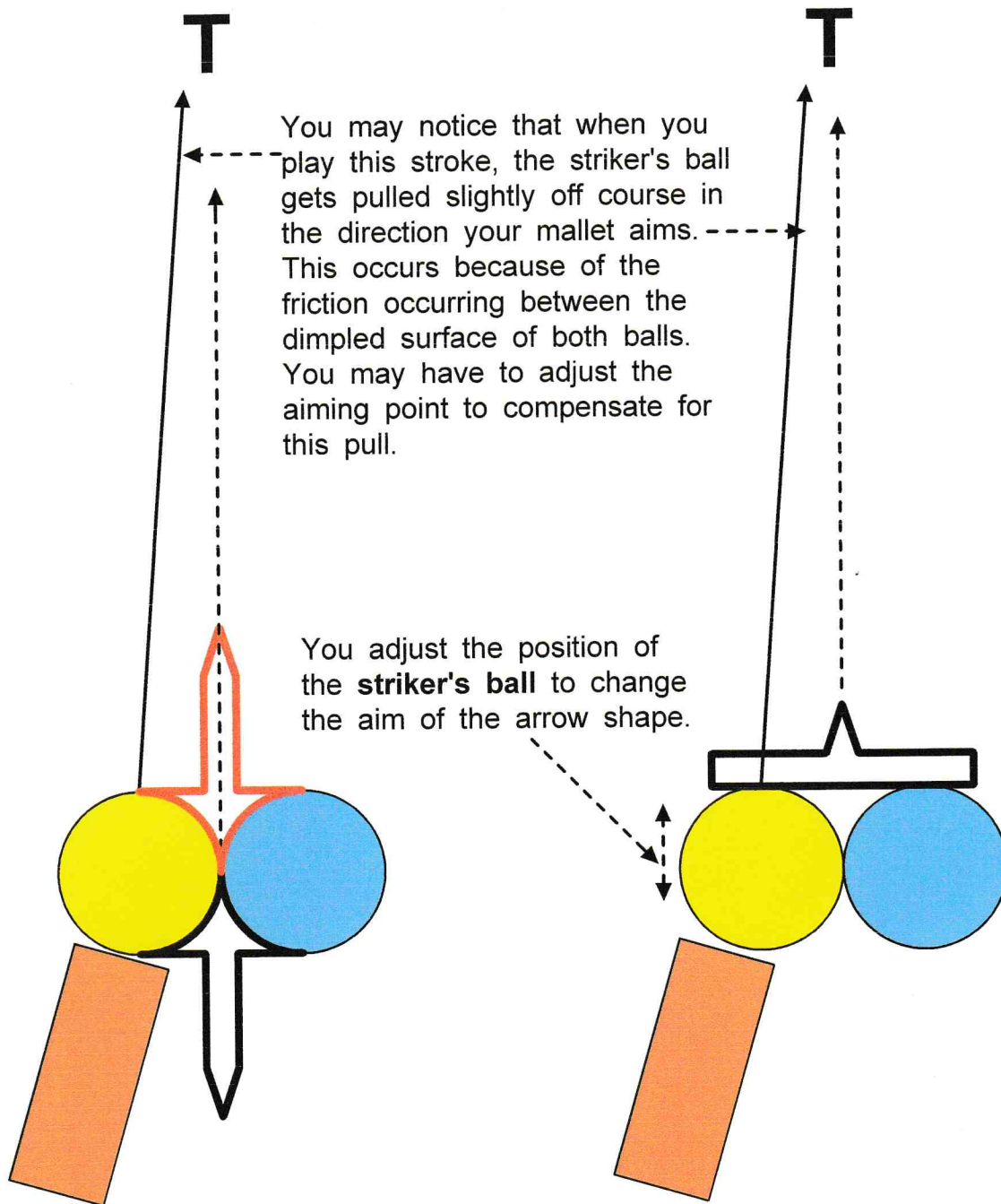
See next page for a diagrammatic representation of different ratios of the split croquet stroke.

CROQUET STROKE RATIOS FOR ROLLS OR STOPPED ROLLS

The angle of mallet tilt (causing the face of the mallet to strike higher on the striker's ball) is the basic factor in achieving the various ratios. To maintain the angle of tilt throughout the stroke you need your body further forward by having **your feet further forward**. Your hand position also changes to accommodate this move forward. Watch top players to see that, although there are differences in style, the basic factor - the angle of tilt - is constant.



HOW TO USE THE DIRECTION FINDER TEMPLATE



If you cut arrow shapes and stick them onto cardboard, you might find them helpful in eventually seeing the shapes used in aiming without the aid.

The black & red cardboard arrow on the left fits into the V shaped space between two balls to show how that space is shaped like the head of the arrow. The back arrow head points to the target (T). The shaft of the red arrow also points to the target. Some players can visualise the black arrow easiest, others the red arrow.

The black shape on the right is designed to help you get the feel of the target being at right angles to the side-by-side position of the two balls.

Good hitting. Enjoy the game whatever version or level you choose to play.