

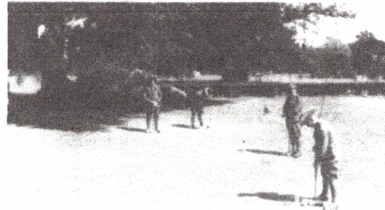
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Range Maleny

The Art of War... on the lawns.

Golf Croquet Strategy – Murray Tinker 2019

Croquet war is a complex business.



golf croquet tactics.

Canberra Club.

The war is only won when the game or match is over.

If you can't win by great shooting you will have to resort to superior strategy.

Strategy Definition: *a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall goal.*

Players can only reach the top if they embrace both the
Mental and Physical aspects of the game.

Start by knowing your skills. "The more you practice the luckier you will get". What info should you remember about your game? **Discuss**

Before the game:

- Have a practice on the lawn and make mental note of lawn and hoop characteristics. **Discuss**
Speed, slope, hoop areas (rabbit runs, hills and hollows, tightness etc.) important to play the hoop 13 approach, lastly play a few shots to hoop 1 (a great start gives confidence and rattle the opposition.)
- Make a mental or written list of opponent player / team attributes. **Discuss**
Examples are. Risky or risk averse, speed of play, weak or strong on tactics, power of shooting, jumping skills, Shooting distance accuracy, on court talk, do they have local knowledge, known weaknesses etc. Develop a strategy to improve your chances of winning.
- If you are playing doubles I think it is a great idea to work out who might be the stronger player and if the toss is lost consider playing that player after their strongest player. **Discuss.**
Also whilst it is great to discuss the shot to play always allow the partner to play to have the final decision on the shot.
- **Playing the next game after a Loss (what is a bounce back strategy?) Discuss**

- Liz's Lines: Liz Fleming told me about the power of seeing the imaginary line.... study real lines intently several times and for a few minutes each day and your brain will see them even when they are not there. Esp the line to the hoop. Practice hoop running with parallel strings.
- Wander over and study the grass at the hoop, select a blade as your target and block out the image of hoop
- Select a point in the distance directly behind the hoop and shoot for it. For some this will be far away (like the fence or a pole) for others it can be a spot on the lawn 1 or 2 yards behind.
- "Fluffy bums" Do your stalk....., step back an inch or 2 and look at the back of the ball imagine something that makes you smile.
- **Risk:** If you have a game lead and are deciding on a low % risky shot ...play to protect. If you find you are losing by a large margin or running out of time it's time to take the risks. If the odds are against you try some risky play if it comes off your confidence will rise and it will affect you positively and hopefully the opposition negatively.
- **Panic:** stop for a quick drink or a bathroom break if you can, do some slow heavy breathing, squeeze your mallet grip as hard as you can for a few seconds and relax. Feel the relief. Smile when you address the ball.
- **Jumps:** how risky they are for you? A failed jump will often clear the ball in the hoop giving the opponent the hoop and the all important first shot to the next hoop.

Strategy exercises:

(Just a few)

Hoop 1: Players walk the lawn and place their coloured flags (in order) where they would like to shoot to at hoop 1. Discuss the thinking. Offer some options for thought. Then have them play the 4 shots. Discuss the real options as each player shoots. Remember there are few wrong strategies. The worst outcome is no strategy at all.

↓ Low & follow through

Jawing and promotion: Help players with how to jawse, what are the risks, how to promote a ball to next hoop. Correction/clearance techniques.

The Cut shot: setup for cut shots, discuss risks, Play the shot at various hoops, discuss best hoops to use it at.

Promotion: distance vs. risk. Weight, slight angle, Stop shot positioning

During the game:

- **A Starting Strategy:** If first, (always aim to a spot on the lawn) many believe you should position slightly past the hoop 1-2 yards out, in a hoop running spot. Why...It gives you many options. Second ball (red) shoot to clear or to apply pressure without giving an easy stop shot clearance by blue. It is unlikely red will be left to get a clear shot at the hoop. Third ball (black) might put in a hoop running block on blue to protect and give options. If blue does not have a hoop running position consider blues chances at clearing red. Double loading is always a great objective. Forth ball (yellow) take your time and study your opponents options and what you can do with red. If you are blocked on a potential hoop running blue consider blocking the hoop, positioning behind hoop (it is amazing how many people bomb their first hoop), play to give red a rush on yellow to next hoop.
- **Odd hoops:** If safe to do so jawse your ball. The advantage of running a hoop and setting up the next is powerful. A well promoted partner ball is even better. On those odd hoops 1,3,5,7 etc. It is important to adequately clear your hoop shot. Consider running to next hoop. Hitting harder at hoops is hazardous (don't hit the ball stroke it). Standing a little back on hoop shots gives top spin which helps the ball through the hoop and gives improved distance.
 - **Tip:** always aim for a spot on the lawn. Your subconscious brain is always calculating and developing muscle memory. **Discuss**
- **Even hoops:** if a ball is in the hoop consider the cut shot. This is taking a roquet of the ball in the hoop (partner or opponent) to a position near the next hoop. This is worth practicing. Some players deliberately position their lag shots to the slight outside of the hoop in case this opportunity arises, it also is a better clearance position.
- **Hoop 13:** if you reach hoop 13 after winning 12 the odds are against you so you need to try to find advantage before you run 12. Consider a cut shot off an opponent (best done from the right side ie. hoop 8 side). Can you block their next ball from 13? Can you set up a rush? Can you clear your opponent to an awkward spot. (Lots to think about and practice).
 - **Tips:** If you are unfamiliar with the lawn you are playing to 13 on my tip is to aim further (left to miss hitting hoop) as more often than not croquet lawns roll to the corners. Don't rush hoop 13 you have time on your side. Avoid the risky shots, try to clear and stay (stop shots)
- **Speed of Play:** study your opponent if they are making mistakes or playing incredibly well and playing quicker I like to try speed up and slowing the game to throw the momentum or put them off further. To do this you need to be well in touch with the game. All balls and options considered and correct shot selected.
- **Step out of the box:** This I learned from Tiger Woods. Do not address your ball until you know what you are going to do with it. If when you are addressing it your mind wanders to other options, step away.
- **Hoop fear:** Everyone gets it. A few of tricks that can help.