

## The Range Croquet Club, Maleny Report 1105420

Openings in croquet games try to create a small advantage from the first four turns where all four balls are put into play from one of the balk lines. Chess, which croquet is often compared to, has many openings that have taken on the name of the player who made them popular. Birds opening, the Ruy Lopez, Alekhine's defence, are just a few. There are relatively few such openings in croquet. One is the "Duffer tice". A "tice" tries to give the opponent a shot that isn't usual, that must be thought about. It entices rashness.

Belying its apparent allusion to incompetence, the Duffer tice is a well thought out opening often employed in advanced play. It has made several appearances in the MacRobertson Shield (The Americas Cup of Association croquet) and Trans-Tasman competitions. In a further refutation of the idea that it is bad play the opening is named after a practitioner of it, Duff Matthews, a prominent Irish player of the 1800s.



Quoting from the Oxford Croquet web site: "a "Duffer tice" is when the player of the second ball sends it somewhere near hoop 6 [from B-baulk and a little to the east of hoop 6]. It's a tice length but not safe for the 3rd player to shoot at it hard as the miss goes into or near A-baulk. They usually ignore the tice as a trickle at it leaves a double target for the 4th ball."

In some rare action on our lawn, Ken Barker (pictured at B balk on the north yard line of Lawn 1) has decided to take a shot at the tice. The red ball is on the eastern yard line and blue is yet to play onto the lawn. If Ken roquets, he will take off to the red ball intending to rush it to hoop 1 and set up a three-ball break. The alternative, more defensive, strategy is to play into corner two and look for opportunities in later play.

Wallace Roy and Nick Cram have been working hard pruning the trees on the western boundary of lawn 2. Hopefully this will reduce neck and back complaints from craning necks, or falling from chairs to see the ball when it goes to corner 1. It is pleasing to see that this was a civilized trim unlike the severe approach taken by another member several years ago. Though rumours then that the heritage trees had been killed were, in the words of Mark Twain, "greatly exaggerated".

Our web address is: <https://rangecroquetatmaleny.org.au>

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Attached photo: Ken Barker being enticed by the Duffer Tice.