

Golf Croquet - Rules, Tips and Tactics No 5

“going half way”

We will all get into a situation where our opponents have managed to settle their ball in the jaws of the hoop. We have a look at it, and think that whatever we do we cannot stop the player from running the hoop at his next turn.

Before deciding to go halfway towards the next hoop, we need to think hard about alternatives. We might be in a position to get our own or partners ball very close to or in contact with the ball in the hoop sufficient that our opponent may fault by touching the adjacent ball when he tries to get his ball through the hoop. You may need to promote your partner's ball or your other opponent's ball to achieve this.

We may be able to play a jump shot and turn a “certain lost hoop” into an unexpected point for us. (There is little to lose). If neither of us is in a good position to play the jump shot, how about promoting your partner's ball so that he is? The worst that can happen is that we miss the jump shot and put our opponent's ball through the hoop. It was going to be a lost point anyway. The final position of the balls after the attempt, is a bit of a lottery but it could leave the opponent ball very close to the hoop and hamper his shot or your jumped ball may finish directly in his line to the next hoop.

You may be able to promote you partners ball to a position behind the hoop where he can get a shot to clear the ball from the hoop.

It may be possible to play your own ball directly into your opponent's line to the next hoop thereby preventing him from running the hoop and getting close to the next hoop and gaining a further advantage.

When you run out of ideas, you can always resort to a good hard shot at the metal work of the hoop. It is not uncommon for it to dislodge the ball.

OK let's go halfway.

Care is required when you play towards the next hoop. Hit the ball too hard and go beyond halfway, and you will visit the penalty area of your opponents' choice once their ball runs the hoop. This loses you what was otherwise going to be an attacking position.

You can avoid this by sending your ball out of bounds having checked where half way is on the boundary line. There should be white pegs on the boundary lines to show the halfway points. (I'm working on it!) but by doing this you can also improve your line to the next hoop.

Can I go beyond half way and not be penalised? Yes, you can, because if your ball contacts an opponent's ball and goes beyond half way it becomes on side so long as the hoop is run before your next turn. So actively look for an opportunity to use this rule to get you as close as possible to the next hoop. This does not apply if you hit your partner's ball.

If the opponent ball does not run the hoop you will have to return to the correct side of the half way point to avoid an off-side penalty if he runs it on his next turn. Some players may “deem” and deliberately delay running the hoop forcing you to come back or take a penalty. (They would send you to the penalty area of their choosing)

Sooner or later, we are going to have to get to grips with double taps and hoop crushes so we will go for that next time (Oh good!)

Graham