

L.L.Bean

Croquet Setup and Rules

Prepare the croquet court. A freshly mowed lawn of short grass is preferable. The court, when space permits, should be 100 feet by 50 feet, though you can adjust accordingly.

Croquet law calls for boundaries marked by string, or stakes to mark the corners. Place the wickets firmly in the ground within the court in a double-diamond, figure-eight shape (each wicket at a point of the diamond, at an even-distance apart). Two croquet wickets, close to each other, should be placed at the very top and bottom of the figure 8. A stake is then placed behind each top and bottom croquet wicket.

For a two to four player croquet game, you'll need four croquet balls; for a six-player croquet game, croquet law calls for six croquet balls. Each team plays with different colored croquet balls. Each player takes a croquet mallet and must only use the striking end, not the side, when moving their ball through the croquet wickets.

Hitting the croquet balls with a croquet mallet, you move through the course, scoring points for each croquet wicket and stake made in the correct order. You start at the bottom of the figure 8, moving the croquet balls counterclockwise around the diamonds (making sure to hit the stake at the top of the figure 8, then moving back through the top croquet wickets). Players take turns; at the beginning of each play, the player, or "striker," has one shot, hitting only the croquet ball she/he is playing that turn. The turn ends after that shot, unless a bonus shot is earned by scoring a croquet wicket or stake or by hitting another croquet ball. The play continues until there are no more bonus shots, or until the player hits the finishing stake at the bottom of the double-diamond, where play began.

To score a croquet wicket, croquet rules state that the croquet ball must go all the way through the croquet wicket and stay clear of it. (According to croquet rules, the point doesn't count if the croquet ball rolls back, and through the croquet wicket.) The team wins when it has all its croquet balls successfully moved through the double-diamond.

During the game, a player is entitled to two additional strokes if the player's ball strikes and opponent's ball (croquet). If the player's ball stays in touch with the opponent's ball after striking it, the player is allowed to put his foot on his own ball and with his mallet, drive it against the opponents ball and send it in any direction. The player can then take another stroke to continue the game of play. If the opponent's ball is driven from the field of play, it must be put back on the edge of the playing field where it went off.

