

Effective Practice

Objectives

In this module we will:

- Talk about the physiology and psychology of practice
- Look at what and how to practice
- Give you some ideas of how to put together practise schedules that suit you

What is Practice?

Practice is: performance and execution, as opposed to theory; custom or habit; systematic exercise for instruction; training.

Why Do We Practice

We practice to:

- Train our muscles and brain so that when we go out to play a stroke we “know” how to play it
- Learn new skills
- Maintain current skills
- Improve ☺

How Should We Practice

- By reading about the game and by watching what others do
- By putting a plan together – what we need to improve on
- On our own or with someone compatible
- During a game

What We Should Practice

- *Weather* – heat, cold, rain, wind, humidity.
- *Distractions* – people, noise, double-banking.
- *Fatigue*.
- *Attitude*.

For the above we need *coping* strategies – things to fall back on when these things get to us. This is sports psychology.

- *Single Ball Strokes* – roquets, hoop-running, rushes.
- *Croquet Strokes* – ratios, angles, peeling.
- *Tactics* – bisque use, how to play Aunt Emma, break construction & play, pegged out games.
- *Standard Patterns* – those positions that come up over and over in games (openings, leaves, cannons).

Putting a Practice Session Together

1. Plan ahead of time – one session, a week, a month, ...
2. Set **SMART** goals: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imed.
3. Feel and act positive throughout your practice session.
4. Treat each stroke as you would in a competition match.

An Example

Date: Monday morning

Time: 100 minutes

Aim: Work on 6 yard pressure roquets and load & hold croquet strokes

- (1) Start with single ball through 12 hoops to get the pace of the lawn and warm up. Aim to take less than 30 strokes and fail zero hoops. [10 minutes]
- (2) Practice 20 roquets from 3-4 yards. Aim to hit 100%. [10 minutes]
- (3) Practice 20 load & hold strokes from various positions on A-baulk – loading hoop 2 and running hoop 1. Aim to be able to run at least 75% and get the croqueted ball to within 6 yards of hoop 2. [20 minutes]
- (4) Break & drink. [10 minutes]
- (5) Practice 40 roquets from 6 yards. Aim to hit at least 90%. [20 minutes]
- (6) Practice 20 roquets from 6 yards and then play load & hold stroke. Aim for at least 75% success. [20 minutes]

Some Basic Drills

1-Ball Control:

- (i) From corner IV make all 12 hoops and peg out.
- (ii) From a random point on a yard-line take 8 balls and load each of them in front of a different hoop (eg. from the end of A-baulk load hoops 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 2-back, 3-back and 4-back). Success is being able to run the hoop.

2-Ball Break:

- (i) Do the hoops in the following order: 1, 5, 4, 5, 2-back, etc.
- (ii) From corner I make an all-round break. Use bisques – count them.

3-Ball Break:

- (i) Start at hoop 1, but do not take any rushes, practice split shots at every hoop.

4-Ball Break:

Take-offs:

- (i) With a ball on each corner spot, take-off leaving the croqueted ball in the corner.
- (ii) From a ball in corner II take-off to a ball on the West boundary opposite hoop 5 (a tice) and get a rush to hoop 1.
- (iii) From a corner ball take-off to, and roquet, a corner ball in the diagonally opposite corner.

Hoop Approaches:

- (i) From 1 yard away and angles of 0, 30, 60 and 90 degrees load the striker's ball in front of a hoop and the croqueted ball at least 2 yards on the non-playing side with a useful rush.
- (ii) Practice split shots from various angles and between 1 and 2 yards behind a hoop ensuring that you move the croqueted ball so that a useful rush is possible.

Hoop Running:

- (i) Run a hoop back and forth until failure.

Rush & Hoop Control:

- (i) Place two balls a yard apart on the West boundary level with hoop 1. Using a third ball (as the striker's ball) take-off from one ball to obtain a rush to hoop 1. Rush to the hoop and run the hoop obtaining a rush back to the West boundary. Repeat until failure – which includes failing to rush to the boundary. [If this is too easy, from the same position use hoop 5, and then hoop 4.]

Split Shots:

- (i) Practice the basic splits that you come across in a 3- or 4-ball break.
- (ii) From opposite the peg on the West boundary, on a croquet stroke split a ball into the lawn and obtain a rush on a yard-line ball 1 yard away to hoop 1.
- (iii) From south of hoop 4, practice loading hoop 6 in the croquet stroke while going to a ball one yard north, south, west and east of hoop 5.

Load & Hold:

- (i) Practice at hoop 1. Load hoop 2 from various positions on the south boundary.
- (ii) Practice at hoop 2. Load hoop 3 from various positions on the west boundary.

Cannons:

- (i) Corner I cannon, loading hoop 2 and going to hoop 1.
- (ii) Corner II cannon, "loading" hoop 2 and going to hoop 1.
- (iii) 4-Ball promotion cannon

Roquets:

- (i) Use a corner peg or a small ball on elastic as the target to learn to focus on small targets. From 2 yards make 4 roquets. Then move out to 3 yards, 4 yards, 5 yards and finally 6 yards. A miss at any distance means you have to go back to the previous distance to re-qualify.
- (ii) Practice 10 attempts on roqueting a ball at 5, 10 and 14 yards.

Gathering the 4th Ball in a Break:

- (i) Start at hoop 1 with a ball loaded at hoop 2 and the 4th ball in corner IV. Practice digging that ball out, and having the break under control before making hoop 4.
- (ii) Start at hoop 2 with a ball loaded at hoop 3 and the 4th ball in corner I. Practice having a 4-ball break under control by hoop 5.

Openings:

- (i) Standard opening with variations.
- (ii) Duffer Tice – how to respond if you hit the Duffer and where to go if you ignore it.
- (iii) Corner II Opening – how to respond if someone does it to you.

Leaves:

- (i) Practice setting up a NSL, OSL, DSL and Vertical Spread.
- (ii) Practice as the player who has the lift. Lift each ball in turn and consider your shooting options.
- (iii) Then play as the person who set the leave, consider how you go about establishing a 4-ball break if your opponent shot and missed.

Peeling:

... now that's a separate advanced weekend course!