

Canberra Croquet Club Coaching Plan

Aims

- To define a coaching policy for the Canberra Croquet Club
- To be the working document for the Come & Try Coordinator, the Coaching Coordinator and Coaches
- To define how coaching is presented to beginners and members

Overview

There is a structured coaching policy in place at the Club, with one person (the Coaching Coordinator) in charge of coaching under the guidance of the Playing Committee. The Coaching Coordinator is an appointed member of the Playing Committee.

The Club runs 'Come & Try' days to introduce people to Association Croquet. These are coordinated by the Come & Try Coordinator. A person wishing to learn Croquet must attend one of these days first.

Introductory coaching for beginners consists of six lessons each of two hours. These are given when a sufficient number of interested people are on the coaching list. Lessons are given by one or more of our members.

The initial lessons have a fixed format and learning objectives. Their content is predetermined. We keep the complexity of initial lessons low so that new people do not become bewildered early on, and gain confidence to continue with Croquet.

Once people complete their initial lessons and join the Club they receive further encouragement through a mentor. Saturday afternoon play (high-low doubles, pairing an experienced player with a new player) is one of the main draws available to help new members or others wishing to improve their play. In addition, there are other specially advertised draws (for example, the High-Rollers group).

Further coaching modules are made available for members of all levels to undertake to improve various skills.

The Coaching Coordinator

The Coaching Coordinator:

- is a single point of contact for new people interested in undertaking initial coaching. This person gathers information from prospective learners, and informs them of coaching procedures.
- is the person reporting to the Playing Committee on coaching matters.
- is the person scheduling coaching classes and interacting with specific coaches.

To successfully coordinate all aspects of coaching is too much to ask one person. The Coordinator leads a small management group who are responsible for the content and format of coaching material. Members of the coordination group do not necessarily coach.

The Coaches

Coaching is carried out by people who volunteer their services to the Coordinator. They do not necessarily have to be accredited coaches under the ACA Coaching scheme. However, they will be experienced players, who communicate well to beginners, and who can demonstrate the full range of strokes using correct form.

Come & Try Days

These days are held approximately once per month. They are designed to introduce people who have had no exposure to Association Croquet to the game. During the time people are given the opportunity to see Croquet played, to learn a little about it, and most importantly to swing a mallet and hit balls.

Persons who attend a *Come & Try* day and wish to take the introductory lessons fill out a form that is then passed on to the Coaching Coordinator.

Introductory Lessons

The Club offers a set of six introductory lessons to people from outside the Canberra Croquet Club who have indicated an interest in croquet. The initial contact is passed on to the Coaching Coordinator through the *Come & Try* days. It is the Coaching Coordinator who places these persons and a suitable coach in touch with each other to set up dates and times for the lessons. While we try to coordinate days and times of lessons to suit the beginners it is important that lessons fit in with Club activities and coaches availability.

The cost of the lessons is determined by the Committee.

Each coaching group should contain no more than four people per coach. A smaller number is better as it permits more personalised coaching.

At least one two-hour lesson per week is required. This is so previously taught skills do not need as much revision at the start of each new lesson. Some groups may find two lessons per week suitable. It is up to the coach and the group to decide.

People are encouraged to practice between lessons. Suitable times are made such that members can open the Clubhouse to let the learners practice their skills. Members are not encouraged to coach the players during practice sessions.

It may be possible to permit some beginners to borrow a mallet (provided it is not one used by other members) and a pair of old balls to practice away from the Club between lessons.

At the end of the initial coaching period we make it clear that coaching continues on within the Club to a high level, and that we have specific days and times for newer players to become integrated and practice their skills.

After the last of the six lessons the learners are encouraged to come along to one or two Club draws to play high-low doubles with suitable partners, and meet other members.

Lesson Format

Lessons consist of one or more *modules*. Each module has a single focus (for example, take-offs, cannons) and has written information associated with it. All modules are provided before the first lesson to be available for study. Students need to see ahead of time what they will learn at subsequent sessions.

Each beginner also receives a copy of the Chambers and Hall book as part of their coaching fee. That book is suitable for beginners and has basic information that complements the coaching notes. References to the Laws are not too out of date.

Coaches may decide to give out other information to the students from the Internet or other sources. If appropriate, students may be pointed at various web-based reference resources.

It is important that consideration of the "fun" and "enjoyment" aspect is maximised during the lessons for new players. After the first lesson or two it becomes clearer the skill level people will reach in their initial lessons. This can permit fast-tracking for some to more advanced play. Reiteration and extra practice of problem areas for slower players can also be planned.

For a coach, there are clearly identified teaching objectives and skill levels, for each lesson. Coaches are aware of the importance of following the lesson plan during initial lessons, so that new players get a basic grounding in this limited time. However, each coach will bring their own style and individuality to the lessons.

Coaching Available to Members

Intermediate and advanced coaching modules are available to members of the Club. There exists the possibility of offering some or all of these to members of other Clubs with the prior agreement of the Committee. There may be a charge for some of this coaching depending on the length and complexity.

This coaching covers most aspects of Association Croquet that is not covered in the introductory lessons. These sessions should be directed at small groups (ideally of 12 or less), and will run for about an hour. Where possible targeted handicap ranges enable a better-focused delivery of information. In most cases accredited coaches will run these groups.

Other Resources

In addition to formal modules it is important to remind members of other available self-help resources. These include:

- our library resources (books, videos and DVDs)
- the Club's web site
- other web sites (for example, the Oxford Croquet site and resources linked from it)

Members can be notified of these via the regular Club newsletter, email and by word of mouth.

Individual Coaching

From time to time members will approach other members to help them with specific problems or gain new information. Members should not feel obliged to help if they are uncomfortable or feel unable to. Instead they should direct the queries to a member of the Playing Committee or other member who they feel could help.

Accredited coaches may provide personal professional coaching and nominate a fee for their time. Recommended fees are suggested by Croquet Australia and listed on their web site. It should be noted that the Club requires professional coaches to contribute a set amount per court per hour for use of the facilities (see the *Membership Regulations* for details).

Mentoring

Most new members need much more assistance immediately after joining than can be presented in the initial lessons. To this end the Club provides a mentor to provide support for each new member to help them find their way around the Club, locate resources, assist with practice and play. The role of mentors and further information is provided in the document "*Mentoring New Members*".

Measuring Success

It is essential to determine the success of the coaching provided to beginners and members alike so improvements can be made as necessary. Suitable indicators are:

- Student participation rates
- Speed of progression of the students through the competency levels

Success is indicated by outcomes – measures of improved croquet playing standards:

- The progression of members through the grades
- The continued participation of new members

A yearly report is produced by the Coaching Coordinator on activities during the previous twelve months, with information regarding courses offered, numbers at courses, and feedback from players and coaches alike. This report forms the basis of discussions for any changes over the next year.

Summary

"The Canberra Croquet Club works to encourage potential new members, and to continually improve the skill levels of existing members, through a structured coaching program."

The Club provides coaching with the following values:

- To provide a quality service
- To work together as a team
- To value and respect our coaches and players
- to be are innovative and progressive in our methods
- To measure our performance
- To communicate effectively to our coaches and players
- To be committed to improving the level of play of our members, and increasing their enjoyment of croquet
- To operate professionally

Modules

Introductory Modules (Beginners)

The Introductory Modules are those that make up the six initial lessons. Copies of these are on the Coaching pages on the Canberra Croquet web site.

- The Lawn
- The Single Ball Stroke
- Aussie Croquet
- Golf Croquet
- Roquet, Croquet, Continuation
- Croquet Strokes: The Take-Off
- Croquet Strokes: Straight Line Strokes
- Croquet Strokes: The Split Shot
- The Rush
- Basic Tactics

Advanced Modules (Members)

The modules below are offered from time to time. There may be other topics of interest that are presented by members or other people (for example, nutrition, fitness, sports psychology, etc). Unless otherwise noted they are designed to be able to be presented in 60-90 minutes with no participant interaction. However, they can be expanded to give participants time to practice items covered.

- Forward Play
- Using Bisques
- Cannons
- Lifts & Leaves
- Openings
- Basic laws course (1/2 day workshop)
- Peeling (full day workshop)

GUIDELINES FOR THE COACHING CO-ORDINATOR

The Coaching Coordinator works through the Playing Committee, and relies on the resources of the Canberra Croquet Club on matters relating to coaching, with particular reference to the Club's Coaching Plan.

Some of the duties they are expected to carry out are:

- 1 To receive completed applications for beginner coaching from people who have attended *Come & Try* sessions and who wish to join a coaching class.
- 2 To follow up enquiries about beginner coaching and inform of the coaching procedures, the cost, required footwear and ascertain any disabilities, and arrange for them to attend a *Come & Try* session.
- 3 To record details in the coaching book of people who undertake the beginner lessons.
- 4 When a group of four or less is available at the same time notify the coach who is willing to take the group at that time.
- 5 To report regularly to the Playing Committee.
- 6 To produce a yearly report one month before the AGM on activities during the previous twelve months, with information regarding courses offered, numbers at courses, and feedback from players and coaches alike.
- 7 To arrange from time to time intermediate and advanced coaching for members by liaising with coaches.

GUIDELINES FOR COACHES

The Coaches liaise with the Coaching Coordinator and rely on the resources of the Canberra Croquet Club on matters relating to coaching, with particular reference made to the Club's Coaching Plan.

Specific tasks coaches are expected to carry out are:

- 1 Upon receipt from the Coaching Coordinator of the names and contact numbers of the people in the coaching group arrange a time for the first lesson.
- 2 At the first lesson collect the course fees and provide each with a receipt. The receipt book is kept in the Treasurer's box in the mallet room.
- 3 At the first lesson introduce everybody and give each player a copy of the Introductory Coaching Notes and the Chambers and Hall book. Copies of these are kept in the mallet room.
- 4 During the lessons the coach can discuss issues relating to Club Membership such as cost, playing days, key, social activities and newsletters etc.
- 5 At the final lesson present to each player a Certificate which congratulates them on their achievement and encourages them to join the Club.
- 6 Offer students a Membership Application Form.
- 7 Organise one or two times when the beginner will come along to a Club draw and play high-low doubles, and either come along or organise another club member to chaperone the beginner.
- 8 For any player who completes the Membership Application Form and who wishes to pay at that time check the amount to be paid. The annual fee is pro-rata (by the month) which can be paid in full, half-yearly or quarterly. Country membership, student and social security pensioner concessions are also available. Details are on the noticeboard.
- 9 Provide receipts for all payments. New financial members get a key to the Clubhouse (kept in the Secretary's box in the mallet room). Club hatbands and woven Club badges may be bought for \$5 each.
- 10 If payment has been made indicate in the "Official Use Only" section of the form joining fee, subscription, key etc.
- 11 Sign any Membership Application Form as the nominator and pin them on the noticeboard.