

Laws of Association Croquet 7th Edition

Changes from the 6th Edition

The following are the substantive changes from the 6th Edition of the Laws. Issues related to the style and structure of the Laws are covered at the end of this document.

Glossary

A glossary has been introduced defining a number of terms that are used in various places in the Laws. Terms defined in the glossary are identified by being italicised the first time they occur in each Law and in that instance and subsequent occurrences within the Law they have the specific meaning assigned to them in the glossary.

Elimination of the term “deemed roquet” (Laws 2.6.3, 18.1.2)

When the striker’s ball for the turn, or the ball the striker chooses to play at the start of a turn, is in contact with a live ball before a stroke the concept that a roquet is deemed to have been made on the live ball has been eliminated. Instead, the Laws state that the striker is required to take croquet immediately (which is what happens in practice) and are rewritten accordingly (with no change in practice intended). The fact that the striker may be entitled to take croquet immediately as the first stroke of a turn means that Law 2, summarising the turn, has been rewritten.

Tolerances on the positions of hoops and the peg (Law 4.4)

The permitted variation in the positions of the hoops and peg has been extended to 12 inches in any direction from their nominal positions, subject to certain alignments being preserved. This matches the variation permitted by the Golf Croquet Rules.

Adjustment of the height of a hoop (Law 5.2.3)

The striker is now explicitly entitled to require adjustment of the height of a hoop if any part of the hoop’s base wider than the uprights is projecting above the ground and would affect either the swing of the mallet or the passage of a ball. No consequential adjustment of the position of any ball is required. The 6th Edition Laws implicitly contain such a requirement by specifying that hoop uprights must have a uniform diameter above the ground.

Determination of the winner of a timed game (Laws 7.3 and 61.1)

Laws 7.3.2, 61.1.5 and 61.1.6 have been amended to make it clear that a player wins the game during the first or second turns of the extension period if that player achieves the objective of being the first to have both balls of the side pegged out during one or other of those turns. There had been claims that the 6th Edition Laws were ambiguous on this point. The changes to these Laws have no effect on the way the game is played.

When a stroke may be played (Law 8.1)

The 6th Edition’s Law (5(c)) has been made more explicit but not significantly changed in substance. A stroke may normally be played when all balls are at rest on the court or have been moved temporarily to avoid interference with another game. It is acceptable, however, for the striker to play a stroke before the preceding stroke has been completed provided the striker’s ball is at rest in a lawful position and the outcome of neither stroke would be affected. See also when a stroke may be declared, below.

Accidental contact between striker’s mallet and a ball (Law 8.5)

An *accidental contact* between the striker’s mallet and the striker’s ball during the striking period constitutes a stroke if it occurs in what the laws define as a *critical stroke* (see below). This does not apply if the striker’s ball has been marked by a referee or to the joint

satisfaction of the players before the stroke starts: in that case the stroke is treated as a *non-critical stroke*.

During the striking period of a *critical stroke*, an *accidental contact* between the striker's mallet and a ball other than the striker's ball means that a stroke is played and it is a fault.

A *critical stroke* is any stroke for which the striker's ball is in a *critical position* as far as the intended outcome of the stroke is concerned. A critical position is defined, as in the 6th Edition of the Laws, as any position where a minor change in the location of the ball could materially affect future play.

When the intended stroke is not a *critical stroke*, as defined above, an *accidental contact* between the striker's mallet and a ball before the striker intended to strike the striker's ball does not count as a stroke. Following such a contact, the striker must if possible avoid striking the striker's ball. Provided there is then no contact between the face of the mallet and the striker's ball when the striker intended to strike the striker's ball, the stroke is annulled. If the striker continues to swing the mallet following the accidental contact and contacts the striker's ball when intending to do so, however, the stroke is played.

The reason for introducing these changes is the concern that if the striker accidentally disturbs the striker's ball when it is in a *critical position*, any inaccuracy in its replacement may materially affect the difficulty of the stroke the striker is about to play. Bad feeling can result, as the opponent is generally not in a position to assess the accuracy of replacement. The striker has a specific duty of care in such circumstances and should be penalised if the ball is accidentally disturbed.

Extension of the striking period (Law 8.2)

To make sense of the law on *accidental contacts*, it has been necessary to extend the period defined as the striking period. The striking period (and a stroke) start when the striker takes a stance with apparent intent to play the stroke (a definition copied from the GC Rules).

Restriction on play following an accidental contact (Law 8.5.2.3)

When a stroke is annulled following an *accidental contact* in a *non-critical stroke*, as described above, the striker can start to play the stroke again once any balls disturbed have been replaced. The striker is not obliged to play the same stroke as had been intended the first time, but there is a restriction: in the replay the striker may not attempt any *critical stroke* that could have been an alternative to the one annulled.

Cancelling a stroke without contacting a ball (Law 8.4)

The 6th Edition's law on cancelling a stroke (5(e)(1)) has been extended by adding the option of the striker stepping away from the stance under control before the stroke is played. This is consistent with the 7th Edition's extension of the striking period (see above).

Cancelling and annulling a stroke (Laws 8.4 and 8.5.2)

The term "cancelled" has been used to describe a stroke that the striker voluntarily stops without having contacted any ball with the mallet. This usually happens because the striker realises that a problem has arisen or a mistake will occur if the striker continues. The term "annulled" has been used to describe a stroke that the striker stops after having accidentally contacted a ball in a *non-critical stroke*. In both cases, the striker is entitled to begin the stroke again after having replaced any ball that may have moved.

Declaration that a stroke has been played (Law 8.8)

The 6th Edition Law states that a stroke may be declared to have been played, but does not specify when this may occur. The 7th Edition allows a stroke to be declared whenever the striker is entitled to play the stroke (including before the preceding stroke has ended – see above). This may mean that if time is about to expire the striker can quickly declare a stroke

to have been played in order to gain an extra turn – as long as the striker's ball is at rest in a lawful position when the declaration is made.

The treatment of marginal positions (Laws 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 29, 36)

There are a number of static situations where a referee or other adjudicator or the players have to determine a matter of fact and a test carried out as accurately as possible shows that the position is on the borderline between two possible outcomes. These include:

- whether a ball is on or off the court (Law 13);
- whether a ball to be placed on the yard-line will be in contact with another ball (Law 15);
- in a wiring test whether the relevant ball is wired from a target ball (Law 16);
- whether a ball at rest has completed the running of its hoop in order or a ball placed in contact with another has begun to run its hoop in order (Law 20); and
- whether a ball on the non-playing side of the hoop in order for the striker's ball protrudes into the jaws of the hoop (Law 21).

There are three other situations where a borderline decision may have to be made:

- the dynamic question of whether or not a fault is committed (Law 29);
- the static question of whether a stroke the striker intends to play is a *critical stroke* (Law 36); and
- the dynamic question of whether or not a ball has been hit or has moved (Law 55).

The 6th Edition Laws provide explicit guidance on only three of these situations:

- the striker is entitled to the benefit of any doubt in an adjudication of whether or not one ball is wired from another (Law 13(e)(2));
- a stroke is to be declared a fault if an adjudicator or the striker believes it more likely than not that the law was infringed (Law 48(d)(4)); and
- when the question is whether a ball has been hit or has moved the positive opinion is generally to be preferred to the negative opinion (Law 48(f)).

The 7th Edition provides guidance on each of the above marginal situations based on what an adjudicator observes. The outcomes are:

Law 13: whether a ball is on or off the court
test: whether any part of the ball overhangs the boundary
comment: there may be difficulty in deciding the exact location of the boundary as well as determining the position of the ball in relation to the boundary;
outcome when marginal: the ball is off the court

Law 15: whether a ball to be placed on the yard-line will be in contact with another ball
comment: there is uncertainty in the location of the ball to be placed. Accurately determining its location on the yard-line can also be difficult in the absence of special equipment
outcome when marginal: the ball is to be placed on the yard-line not in contact with the other ball

Law 16: whether the relevant ball is wired from a target ball
outcome when marginal: the relevant ball is wired from the target ball

Law 20: whether a ball in the jaws of a hoop protrudes out of the jaws on one side
test: whether any part of the ball is visible protruding out of the relevant surface of the jaws
outcome when marginal: the ball does not protrude out of the jaws

Law 21: whether a ball outside the jaws of a hoop protrudes into the jaws
test: whether a gap is visible between the edge of the ball and the relevant surface of the jaws

outcome when marginal: the ball protrudes into the jaws (this also applies to whether a ball is considered to be wired under Law 16.3.4 and is consistent with the marginal wiring test and Law 20 outcomes listed above).

These rulings on marginal static positions must not be used as substitutes for careful adjudication. They are to be invoked only in the rare cases when a careful determination of a position shows that the position is on the borderline between the two possible outcomes within the limits of accuracy of whatever test can be made.

The 7th Edition Laws retain the principle set out in the 6th Edition on the standard of proof required for a fault (Law 29.6): a stroke is to be declared a fault if an adjudicator or the striker believes it more likely than not that the law was infringed.

The 7th Edition Laws (in Law 55.6.2) modify the principle set out in the 6th Edition that the opinion that a ball has been hit or has moved is generally to be preferred to the opinion that it has not by specifying that this is to apply only when the player holding the positive opinion is well placed to make a judgement.

The 7th Edition Laws specify (in Law 36) that if a referee judges, or the players jointly decide, that it is marginal as whether the stroke the striker is about to play is a critical stroke, then the stroke is to be considered critical.

Striker entitled to a lift able to create a three-ball or four-ball group on the baulk-line (Laws 16.1, 39.3, 40.3 and 11.2.2.1)

When the striker is entitled to a wiring, advanced or super-advanced play lift and the striker can place the lifted ball on the baulk-line in contact with another ball to create a 3-ball or 4-ball group, the striker is entitled to take croquet immediately from that other ball, playing a cannon with that other ball as the croqueted ball. The striker is not, however, entitled to take croquet immediately from any ball in the group that the striker's ball cannot contact when placed on the baulk-line. This is a more restricted choice than is specified in the 6th Edition's ORLC 16.4.1 and its following example.

For example, if R is entitled to an advanced play lift when B is on the first corner spot and K is in contact with B on the baulk line, R is entitled to play a cannon as the first stroke of the turn with K as the croqueted ball. R is not entitled to use B as the croqueted ball in the cannon, because R cannot be placed on the baulk-line in contact with B.

This same restriction on which ball the striker may take croquet from immediately applies in the admittedly unlikely circumstances where the player of the third or fourth turn of the game finds that at the start of the turn there are two balls in contact on or close to the baulk-line and the striker's ball to be played into the game can contact only one of them when placed on the baulk-line.

When the striker's ball scores a hoop point (Law 20.3)

The law has been made explicit that the striker's ball scores a hoop point for itself during a stroke in which it completes running its hoop in order not only when it comes to rest in a position clear of the playing side of the hoop but also when it leaves the court or as soon as it enters the jaws of the next hoop in order. This law change has no effect on the way the game is played. Instead it makes explicit cases that had previously been assumed.

Rover ball becomes dead when it is pegged out (Law 22.3.1)

A ball remains in play until the end of the stroke in which it is pegged out, but it becomes dead immediately it hits the peg. This means that it cannot thereafter be roqueted although it can influence other balls being roqueted or scoring points or the striker's ball making a roquet on another ball. This reverses a relatively recent ruling.

Multiple errors and interferences (Law 24)

This Law replaces the 6th Edition law on compound errors and generalises it to cover interferences as well as errors. It recognises that there are a number of situations where more than one error and/or interference occurs, whether in the same stroke or in different strokes, before play is halted in respect of any of them. The law is based on the principle that the errors and interferences are considered in the chronological order in which they occurred, with the following additional considerations:

1. Except in situations covered by Law 24.4 (see below), any error or interference that is past its limit of claims is ignored (Law 24.3.1);
2. If more than one error or interference occurred simultaneously when a stroke was played the interferences are considered first in the order in which they are listed in the Laws (Laws 31 to 38), followed by any errors in the order in which they are listed in the Laws (Laws 26 to 29) (Law 24.3.2);
3. If a stroke is materially affected by incorrect equipment (hoop and/or ball) and a fault occurs later in the same stroke, the fault must be dealt with if it was not caused by the incorrect equipment (Law 24.3.3);
4. If rectifying an error or remedying an interference results in play being cancelled or requires a stroke to be replayed, any remaining errors or interferences are ignored (Law 24.3.4).

Law 24.4 sets out the same principles as the 6th Edition Laws 30(b), 31(b) and 32(b). If an interference under any of Laws 31 to 33 is being remedied and in the course of doing so it is discovered that earlier errors had occurred, and those errors were within their limits of claims when play was affected by the interference, the Laws governing those errors must be applied as though the errors were discovered at the time play was affected by the interference. As those familiar with the application of the 6th Edition Laws 30 to 32 will realise, this can mean that the remedying of an interference results in play being taken back to an earlier time and then the application of the relevant error Law causes play to be taken back still further in time.

Playing when forestalled included in the law of playing when not entitled (Law 26.1)

The Law on playing when forestalled (6th Edition Law 32) has been included in the Law on playing when not entitled (6th Edition Law 25). In all cases, any strokes played by a player who is not entitled to play are cancelled if the error is discovered within the limit of claims. If the striker continues playing after being forestalled, the issue the opponent wishes to raise must be sorted out. Once the error of playing when not entitled has been rectified, the player who is then entitled to play resumes play. The limit of claims, the first stroke of the non-offending side's next turn, is unchanged. This amalgamation of the two Laws does not make any difference to play in any situation.

Playing a stroke before the previous stroke has ended affecting the outcomes of both (Law 26.1.4)

If the striker plays a stroke before the previous stroke has ended, there are two situations in which one stroke may affect the other:

- moving balls from the two strokes interfere with each other; and
- something occurs in the first stroke which causes the turn to end, meaning that the striker was not entitled to play the second stroke.

In either of these situations, the second stroke is treated as the striker playing when not entitled under Law 26. The balls moved as a result of the second stroke must be replaced where they were before the stroke and any ball(s) moving as a result of the first stroke that were interfered with by the second stroke must be placed where they would otherwise have

come to rest. In the first situation (but clearly not the second), the striker is then entitled to resume the turn.

Playing when a ball is misplaced by moving it to avoid interference (Law 28.2.2)

The Law on playing when a ball is misplaced now includes a provision permitting the striker to play a stroke knowing that a ball has been moved to avoid interference with a double-banked game. This implements an official ruling on the 6th Edition.

Purporting to take croquet replaced as a concept (Glossary and Laws 28.4 and 28.5)

The 7th Edition defines a croquet stroke as

“A *stroke* that is played with the *striker's ball* in contact with another ball, except in circumstances where the striker's ball is in a lawful position in contact with a *dead ball* and the striker is required to play a *continuation stroke*.”

With this definition:

- if the striker, entitled to continue a turn, has not made a roquet but places the striker's ball in contact with another ball (live or dead) and plays a stroke, that stroke is treated as a croquet stroke; and
- if the striker roquets a ball but then places the striker's ball in contact with a different ball (live or dead) and plays a stroke, that stroke is treated as a croquet stroke; and
- if the striker takes croquet from a ball and the two balls come to rest in contact but the striker then moves the striker's ball to a different position in contact with the other ball before playing a stroke, that stroke is treated as a croquet stroke; but
- if the striker takes croquet from a ball and the two balls come to rest in contact and the striker plays a stroke with the balls placed where they came to rest, that stroke is treated as a continuation stroke.

Using this definition, the concept of purporting to take croquet used in the 6th Edition is replaced by the concept of an unlawful croquet stroke (unlawful in the sense that the striker's ball is not in its lawful position). There are two errors and their consequences are unchanged:

- playing an unlawful croquet stroke involving a dead ball, for which the penalty is end of turn (covered by Law 28.4); and
- playing an unlawful croquet stroke involving a live ball, following which the striker has a conditional right to continue the turn (covered by Law 28.5).

Reintroduction of the term “hampered stroke” (Glossary and Law 29.2.3)

The 7th Edition formally uses the term “hampered stroke” in connection with some of the faults (see below for its use). This term had been used in earlier Editions of the Laws but was not formally used in the 6th Edition, although the idea was implicit in the faults law. The definition is:

Hampered stroke A *stroke* where the *striker* has to take special care because the swing of the mallet or the striker's normal stance is impeded by a hoop, the peg or a ball not in contact with the *striker's ball* nor intended to be roqueted by it.

The terms “critical stroke” and “hampered stroke” as used in the 7th Edition are distinct and used for different purposes. A stroke may be both critical and hampered: for example, an attempted roquet when the striker's ball is close to a hoop and the hoop obstructs the striker's backswing. A stroke may be critical but not hampered: for example, where the striker wishes to roquet a nearby ball but can see only a sliver of it past an obstructing hoop between the balls. It is unlikely that a stroke will be hampered but not critical.

Faults: hand or arm may not be rested against the legs during a stroke (Law 29.1.2)

The 6th Edition Law 28(a)(3) forbids resting a hand or arm directly connected with the stroke against the legs or feet. This has been felt by some to be open to different interpretations. The phrase “directly connected with the stroke” has been deleted.

Faults: hitting the ball not with an end face and lawn damage faulted in the same range of circumstances (Laws 29.1.5, 29.1.14 and 29.2.3)

The actions of hitting the striker’s ball with a part of the mallet other than an end face and causing damage to the lawn with the mallet are faults in the same range of circumstances:

- in a hampered stroke (as defined above);
- in a single-ball stroke in which the striker is attempting to make the striker’s ball jump; and
- when the striker’s ball is part of a group.

This extends the damage fault to some extent by making damaging the lawn with the mallet a fault if it occurs when the striker’s stance is impeded by a hoop, the peg or another ball. It extends the fault of hitting with a part of the mallet other than an end face to a significantly broader range of circumstances: in the 6th Edition it was a fault only in circumstances covered by the first of the above dot points.

Faults: touching the head of the mallet during a stroke (Law 29.2.1)

The extension of the striking period and the start of a stroke (see above) make it necessary to specify that the action of touching the head of the mallet is a fault only if it occurs during the final swing of the mallet towards the ball. The striker is permitted to touch the head of the mallet before that – e.g. for the purpose of cleaning mud from it. This is the same as in the Golf Croquet Rules.

Faults: multiple contacts between mallet and striker’s ball in strokes involving two balls in contact (Laws 29.1.6.1 and 29.2.5)

The 7th Edition clarifies the judgement that must be made in deciding whether a multiple contact fault has been committed in croquet strokes or continuation strokes where the striker’s ball is in contact with another ball. The criterion used in the Golf Croquet Rules has been adopted: a multiple contact is a fault only if an adjudicator, assisted if necessary only by spectacles or contact lenses, sees a separation between mallet and ball followed by a second contact.

Player misled by false information (Law 32.1.3)

The interference of a player being misled by false information has been extended to cases where the false information is supplied by a referee or someone authorised by the players to act as a timekeeper.

Player failing to adopt a different line of play in a replay when misled (Law 32.5)

The law dealing with playing when misled has been made explicit that if a player does not adopt a different line of play in a replay, then the player loses the right to the replay and the original play is reinstated. For the replay to be cancelled, the opponent must claim that the player has failed to follow a different line of play before the third stroke of the replay is played.

Using a ball that is an outside agency (Law 33)

This is now a separate interference, discovery causing play after an outside agency ball is erroneously brought into a game to be cancelled from the point where the outside agency begins to affect play. The outside agency may be either a ball from another game or a ball from the game that has not yet been played into the game or had earlier been pegged out and removed from the game. The limit of claims is the end of the game.

If a player inadvertently swaps a ball of the game for one of the same colour and type while both are off the court, the swap does not affect play in the player's game. When the swap is discovered, the ball that has been brought into the game is immediately replaced by the ball that properly belongs to the game and play continues. It is likely, however, that play in the game from which the ball was incorrectly taken will have been affected by the swap and, if so, when the swap is reversed play in that game will revert to the position where the swap first affected play.

If any error that occurred before play was affected by the use of the outside agency (in either game) is discovered while the interference is being remedied and that error is within its limit of claims at the point to which play reverts, the error must be dealt with.

Outside agency or player interfering with a ball during a stroke or interfering with the playing of a stroke (Laws 34.2.1 and 35.2)

In these two interferences, it has been made explicit that the striker must attempt the same stroke with the same objectives in a replay. Both also include the requirement that if the striker does not attempt the same stroke, the opponent may choose whether to accept the replay's outcome or require a further replay of the original stroke.

Interference with a ball between strokes (Law 36)

This is a new interference. A ball that moved or was unlawfully moved by an outside agency or a player other than the striker between strokes must be replaced. If the striker interferes in this way with the striker's ball and the next stroke is a single-ball stroke, the striker is not permitted to attempt any critical stroke (as defined above) in that stroke but is otherwise permitted to continue the turn. Likewise, if the striker interferes between strokes with a ball other than the striker's ball, and the next stroke would be a single-ball stroke, the striker is not permitted to involve that ball in the stroke if it would be a critical stroke, but is otherwise permitted to continue the turn.

These restrictions do not apply if the ball interfered with had already been marked before the interference, nor if the striker is entitled to lift or move the ball temporarily under Law 5.3.2 to wipe it, avoid interference or exchange it when it is faulty, provided the striker has first marked its position. They also do not apply when the striker has had to move a ball in emergency circumstances to avoid it being hit or moved by an outside agency, even if the ball had not first been marked.

When interference between strokes by the striker has occurred, whether or not the next stroke the striker intends to play is a critical stroke is a matter to be agreed between the players or decided by a referee. In marginal cases, a stroke is considered to be a critical stroke.

If the striker is about to attempt a critical stroke not permitted under this Law following interference, the opponent must forestall play and request adjudication. If the striker does attempt a forbidden critical stroke, the opponent is entitled to seek a remedy under the overriding law.

Stroke affected by incorrect hoop width or mis-shapen ball (Law 38.2)

The more commonly used variant of the 6th Edition Laws dealing with this subject (Law 53(b)(3)) is now the only option. A player who suspects that the stroke the player has just played was materially affected by incorrect equipment is entitled to get the equipment checked, and adjusted or replaced if necessary. If the ball is found to contact both uprights of the hoop simultaneously on some axis, the player may choose to replay the stroke provided the opponent or a referee agrees that the player had attempted to get the ball through the hoop and that there are plausible grounds for the player's claim that the outcome of the stroke was materially affected

A replay is optional, but if the player elects to replay the stroke, the player is obliged to attempt once more to get the ball through the hoop. If the player replays the stroke but does not attempt to get the ball through the hoop again, the opponent has the option of accepting the replay's outcome or requiring a further replay of an attempt to get the ball through the hoop.

Play affected by a ball striking a clip (Law 38.3 and Law 5.4)

The Law dealing with a ball striking a clip during a stroke has been extended to cover any clip, not just a clip from the game as in the 6th Edition Laws. There seems no logical reason for treating double-banking clips differently from clips of the game. Any clip is treated as part of the equipment while attached to a hoop or the peg, or of the striker when being carried, but as an outside agency while falling to or lying on the ground. This last point means it is no longer a fault if a clip being carried by the striker falls off and hits a ball, as was the case in the 6th Edition.

Super-advanced play (Laws 40, 41)

Super-advanced play has been added to the main body of the Laws as an option alongside advanced play, but without changing the Laws under which super-advanced play is currently played. This should not be interpreted as the ACLC attempting to encourage the wider adoption of super-advanced play.

Alternate-stroke doubles (Laws 48 to 50)

Alternate-stroke doubles has been added to the main body of the Laws as an option alongside ordinary doubles. Alternate-stroke doubles may be played with advanced, super-advanced or handicap doubles variants. The 7th Edition Laws are the same as those in the relevant Appendix to the 6th Edition Laws, apart from the addition of Laws specifying which player of a side is to play the next stroke either after an error or interference is dealt with and it cannot be determined which player played the last valid stroke or after a lengthy turn by the opponents and the players cannot remember which of them played the last stroke of their previous turn. This should not be interpreted as the ACLC attempting to encourage the wider adoption of alternate stroke doubles.

Shortened games: 18-point game (Law 51.2)

The option of playing with the centre hoops removed has been deleted from the Laws as it does not appear to be used.

Conduct of the game: responsibilities of the players (Law 55.1)

The Law no longer specifies that the players are joint referees of the game in the absence of an officiating referee, but instead states that the players are jointly responsible for the conduct of the game. A player who does not watch the game when not the striker ceases to have duties while not watching play. If the opponent is away from the court, the striker is obliged to consult a referee in circumstances where the striker would have the options of consulting the opponent or a referee (see below).

Consultation by the striker (Laws 5, 13, 15, 16, 20, 36, 37, 55)

There are a number of places in the 6th Edition Laws where the striker is obliged to consult the opponent. In all such circumstances, the striker's options have been extended: the striker must either ask a referee to become involved or consult the opponent and, when appropriate, involve the opponent in a test or other action. This change reflects current practice: the striker often calls a referee directly in circumstances where the Laws require consultation with the opponent.

If the opponent requests adjudication when consulted, the striker must involve a referee or, if none is available, arrange for someone independent or, failing that, the opponent to adjudicate.

Questionable strokes (Law 55.4)

The Law now specifies that before playing a questionable stroke the striker must either consult the opponent about the need for adjudication or call a referee directly. Should the opponent request adjudication, the striker must proceed as described above.

If neither the striker nor the opponent calls a referee to adjudicate a stroke before it is played, the Law gives the opponent limited options to have a fault declared by a referee. A referee called in after the event may award a fault if satisfied that one was committed on the basis of:

- facts about the stroke on which the striker and the opponent agree; or
- the evidence of the striker; or
- the referee's own observations of the stroke, its effects and its outcome; or
- the evidence of suitable neutral witnesses (not including the opponent) whom the referee chooses to consult.

The third of these four dot point enables a referee to take into account any physical evidence available after the stroke has been played (e.g. the positions of the balls and any damage to the lawn).

Conduct of the game: when the players' opinions differ (Law 55)

When a player disturbs a ball through carelessness, or fails to avoid interference by an outside agency that could reasonably have been foreseen, that player should normally defer to the opinion of the opponent as to the location of a ball that has to be correctly placed or replaced, unless the player is well placed to make a judgement while the opponent is not. This latter qualification is not in the 6th Edition Laws.

When the players differ over the matter of whether a ball has been hit or has moved, the opinion that there was contact or movement is generally to be preferred provided the player who holds that opinion is well placed to make that judgement. This qualification is also not in the 6th Edition Laws.

Both of these added qualifications to the issue of whose opinion should prevail are what players would generally consider to be reasonable in the circumstances. As such, they codify existing practice rather than changing it.

Addressing the issue of time wasting (Laws 56 and 63)

The Law now provides for action to be taken if a player fails to play with reasonable despatch or plays more slowly towards the end of a game.

The overriding Law (Law 63) provides specific options for action by a referee when a player or players have appealed to a referee who has then become satisfied that time wasting is occurring and has warned the players. The first option is to add extra time (a minimum of 10 minutes) to the time remaining when time wasting occurs towards the end of a game. This option is intended to deal specifically with a player who is ahead on points and deliberately plays more slowly towards the end of a game to reduce the opponent's chances of catching up. It is not intended to deal with habitually slow players by just allowing their games to take longer! The second option, described below, is better suited to dealing with unacceptably slow play.

As a second option, the referee may impose a cumulative time limit on each turn, at least until further notice. The cumulative time limit for a turn is initially 5 minutes, beginning at the start of the turn, with 3 minutes added for each point scored during the turn. Should the turn exceed the cumulative time at any point, the striker is then required to end the turn by playing not more than 8 additional strokes, which may include scoring hoop or peg points, within a three minute period. The manager of a tournament or event has the authority to vary these times and should the manager do so, the revised time limits will apply to all games in the tournament or event on which a cumulative time limit is imposed.

The referee is also entitled to adopt other (unspecified) measures at the referee's discretion.

Advice to players (Law 57)

The Law dealing with advice has been substantially extended, covering the following topics:

- a player must not seek advice and will be penalised if found to have done so (new);
- encouragement of spectators not to provide advice (new, accepting that the Laws cannot forbid someone who is not part of a game from doing something);
- what a player should do upon receiving unsolicited advice that an error or interference has been committed by the player or the opponent (as in the 6th Edition Laws);
- what the striker should do upon receiving unsolicited advice that the striker is about to commit an error or make some other mistake (new);
- a ban on using artificial aids (as in the 6th Edition Laws);
- restrictions on the striker's use of headphones or earplugs (new);
- bans on the use of marks or markers for certain purposes and on the use of a ball as a trial ball for any purpose (as in the 6th Edition Laws).

Player consulting reference material, seeking advice or seeking coaching during a game (Laws 57 and 63)

There are new prohibitions on a player

- consulting reference material, other than the Laws, refereeing or tournament regulations or event conditions when necessary; or
- watching, listening to or reading any commentary on the game; or
- seeking advice from someone who is not a participant in the game, except when the players agree to consult someone about what has occurred, the state of the game, or the Laws relevant to a situation; or
- seeking or accepting coaching from anyone other than the partner in doubles.

If the striker is found to have breached these prohibitions, a first offence causes the current turn to end after one further stroke, a second offence causes the current turn to end immediately and any subsequent offence during a match results in the immediate loss of the match. The penalties on the opponent are similar: next turn to comprise only one stroke for a first offence, loss of next turn for a second offence, loss of the match for any subsequent offence.

Spectators should not provide advice (Law 57)

A spectator who provides advice, or comments in a manner that could provide advice, may be asked to desist and/or move away from the players. The Law also permits the tournament manager or the tournament referee to take action in accordance with any measures specified in tournament regulations or event conditions.

If advice is provided, either deliberately or inadvertently, by team members or team officials when the game is part of a team competition, the player receiving the advice is not permitted to act on that advice.

Unsolicited advice that an error or interference has been committed (Laws 57, 63)

The 6th Edition Law concerning unsolicited advice to the players that an error or interference has been committed has been retained. Explicit guidance to referees has, however, been added on possible measures to restore the balance of the game. This guidance has been included in the overriding Law, which means that any action taken by the referee may be subject to appeal. The guidance is in the form of recommendations rather than being prescriptive.

Recommended measures vary according to the referee's assessment of how likely it would have been that the error would have been discovered had the advice not been given. The

measures range from permitting the striker to continue the turn without penalty or restriction after an error has been rectified and/or interference remedied to requiring that the penalty applicable to an error or interference take immediate effect.

Unsolicited advice that a mistake is about to be committed (Laws 57, 63)

The 6th Edition laws say only that a player should not take advantage of unsolicited advice. The 7th Edition Law goes further:

- if the striker receives unsolicited advice that he/she is about to commit a non-fatal error, or make some other mistake that does not carry an end of turn penalty, the striker is permitted to take advantage of the advice; and
- if the striker receives unsolicited advice that he/she is about to make a fatal mistake, the striker is permitted to act on the advice but if the advice is correct, the striker may not then score any further points in the turn; and
- if either side considers its interests have been unduly affected, a referee may be asked to restore the balance of the game.

A referee asked to restore the balance of the game is required to take into account the likelihood that the striker would otherwise have discovered the mistake before committing it and what advantage the striker would gain by acting on the advice. The actions then open to the referee range from confirming that the striker may act on the advice without restriction to imposing any appropriate restriction on how the striker may continue the turn. The latter may even include a direction to the striker to play the striker's ball into the type of neutral position specified by the referee. These actions are taken under the overriding Law, meaning that the referee's decision is always subject to appeal.

Other unsolicited advice (Laws 57 and 63)

If a player receives other unsolicited information or advice relevant to the game or the player's play (i.e. not concerning any mistake already committed or about to be committed) the player must inform the opponent. Such advice could include, for example, unsolicited coaching or advice about the course of play. Either side may then ask a referee to act to restore the balance of the game if it considers its interests have been unduly affected.

A referee asked to act in these circumstances is required to negate as far as possible any advantage the player would gain by acting on the advice.

Use of headphones and earplugs (Law 57)

The striker is not permitted to wear headphones or earplugs capable of receiving advice from an external source, unless the functionality for doing so is disabled, and is not permitted to use them in a manner that makes communication with the striker difficult. A referee is entitled to require a player infringing this Law to remove the headphones or earplugs, either on the referee's own initiative or following a request from a player that the referee considers justifiable.

Double banking: precedence to players (Law 59.2)

The order of the Laws specifying which player should normally be given precedence has been reversed, and a Law has been added giving precedence to the player whose game is closer to the time limit if it has less than 15 minutes remaining.

Marking balls (Law 59.3)

The Law about marking a ball from a double-banking game that is interfering with the striker's play but is in a critical position has been extended to reflect current practice: such a ball may be marked and then temporarily removed by a referee or a player after permission has been obtained from those players in the other game who are available to be consulted.

Time-limited games (Law 61)

All of the rules relating to time limits that have until now been included in tournament regulations have been brought into the 7th Edition of the Laws.

A change has been introduced into the Law specifying how it is determined which side is in play when time is called. The standard rule, specifying that a turn ends and the next begins simultaneously when the striker plays the last stroke of the turn is retained but with the following modifications:

- if it is discovered after the striker has played the last stroke of a turn that the striker has committed an error that is within its limit of claims, the striker's turn does not end until the error has been dealt with; and
- if a stroke has to be replayed to remedy an interference, the time remaining when the replayed stroke is played is set at what it was when the original stroke was played.

Time-limited games: when a timer may be stopped (Law 61.4)

A new Law has been introduced specifying the circumstances when the timer being used to time a game may be temporarily stopped. This generally follows the current UK tournament regulation. This has been an issue where practice has varied significantly, even within one country, and it is considered desirable to provide greater certainty. The Law specifies that a timer may be stopped only if play ceases because:

- a non-standard refereeing action such as resetting equipment or repairing damage is required. This does not include a referee being called to watch a stroke nor does it normally include a referee being required to carry out a wiring test; or
- a lost ball has to be located or replaced; or
- a player is unavailable due to official tournament duties or illness or injury; or
- there is an adjournment, including the game being pegged down or for a meal break; or
- there is a delay of at least 5 minutes for other reasons, including weather and disruption by double banking.

These rules about when a timer may be stopped may be varied in tournament regulations or event conditions.

Overriding law (Law 63.3)

As well as the proposed changes described above, the options available to a referee in dealing with emergency situations have been extended to include directing that a player forfeit a game or match (a very serious option, but less so than the existing option of disqualifying a player).

Impasses

The current rules for resolving an impasse are included as an appendix to the Laws. (Appendix 7)

General comments: style and structure issues

The Official Rulings and commentary associated with the 6th Edition identified the following among a list of issues to be taken into consideration in the future:

- shortening and simplification of the Laws
- gender neutral language
- reduction in number of cross references
- definition to be given before use of a term
- consistency and simplicity of language
- improvements to the index

- a summary of limits of claims

The 7th Edition of the Laws have been rewritten entirely in gender neutral language. This is a major change of style: the striker is no longer “he”, nor is “they” used as an alternative singular pronoun. One of the consequences is the necessarily more frequent repetition of the terms “striker” and “player”.

The ACLC is of the opinion that shortening of the Laws and simplification of the Laws are not necessarily compatible objectives. We have accordingly opted for what we hope will be considered to be greater clarity and simplification of language. In the interests of retaining the completeness of the Laws, however, we have not attempted to make them shorter nor have we attempted to eliminate coverage of some of the difficult issues that make the Laws complex.

A glossary defining the meanings of a number of commonly used terms has been introduced, as explained at the beginning of this document. The italicisation of defined terms wherever they occur within the body of the Laws, signifying that they are to have the specific meanings assigned to them in the glossary, is a further measure aimed at clarifying the Laws.

We have not attempted to reduce the number of cross-references, but we have clarified them where possible by stating the subject of each cross-reference as well as giving the Law number that is referred to.

Significant features of the 7th Edition are the inclusion of a table summarising the limits of claims and remedies for all of the errors and interferences and a greatly expanded index to assist players and referees in locating where topics are covered in the Laws.