



Northampton Croquet Club

Club Handbook

Revised January 2019

Northampton Croquet Club extends a warm welcome to all newcomers, and coaching is available. The club was founded in 1986 when it used to meet in Becket's Park, and moved to St Andrew's Hospital grounds a few years later.

There are three officers and usually four other committee members. They are there to help you.

Contact them if you have any suggestions or complaints. Please respond to their requests for assistance and cooperation.

The Committee (2019)

Chairman	Lionel Tibble
Secretary/Tournament Secretary	Mike Hills
Treasurer	Richard Cain
Ex-officio chairman	Nick Evans
Committee members	-

Other club posts:

Membership secretary	James Skelton
Archivist	David and Gill Higgins

Our club belongs to the Croquet Association.

The following description is taken from the CA website www.croquet.org.uk:

The CA is the national governing body for the sport of croquet in the UK and is responsible for promoting and regulating the game. It is a non-profit making organisation, funded through club levies, individual subscriptions, and donations.

Northampton Croquet Club maintains full club membership of the CA and has benefited from that membership in a number of ways, including legal advice and entry into national inter-club tournaments. Individual club members have the choice of paying to be a Premium member or becoming a Standard member at no cost. Everyone is encouraged to become at least a Standard member of the CA so they may participate fully in the CA's activities. Further details are available from the Membership Secretary. The main advantage of becoming a Premium member is that you have priority and cheaper entry into CA tournaments. See www.croquet.org.uk > Welcome page > Members area > Join the CA.

Equipment and Facilities

Lawns

The lawns are numbered 1 to 4 anti-clockwise: When facing the main hospital building, lawn 1 is on the right, nearest the clubhouse and first equipment shed. Lawn 2 is beyond it. Lawn 3 is on the left nearest the main building. Lawn 4 is on the left near the second shed.

Lawns 1 and 2 are laid out as both full-size and short croquet (i.e. half-size) lawns.

In winter a smaller lawn in the middle (5) is mowed to enable us to continue play in winter. It is always to be used first.

Care of Lawns

In order to even the wear on the lawns, try to rotate the lawn you play on – in particular do not always play on lawn 1. In winter observe the lawn rotation notice displayed on the equipment shed doors, but always using lawn 5 first.

Treat the grass with care: e.g. do not drag hoops across the turf; do repair divots, (repair tools are available to buy); do not play when the ground is frost-bound or water-logged; observe any temporary restrictions which the committee may impose - usually in winter or during a dry summer.

Clubhouse and Sheds

Keys for the clubhouse and sheds are available from the treasurer. They should be returned on cessation of membership. The equipment is stored in the two sheds. Tea and coffee are available in the clubhouse. Members are responsible for setting out lawns correctly and for returning all equipment in a clean and dry condition to its proper place in the shed after play. Always lock the clubhouse and shed doors. Ensure all lights, kettles and heaters are switched off before leaving.

- Ensure also that the fridge door is left open (unless otherwise indicated).
- Please do not dump donated items in the clubhouse or sheds without asking the committee's approval.
- There is an accident book in the clubhouse which needs to be filled in when necessary in order to comply with our insurance policy. A first aid box is kept on the shelf in the clubhouse.
- A small library of books is kept in the clubhouse for members to borrow.

Balls and Clips

Balls are in matched sets and must not be mixed up with other sets of the same colour. Clips should be returned to their trolley compartment or appropriate bag in the main equipment shed. A bag of clips for association croquet play (one of each colour) should be kept on each trolley.

Hoops

It is important to use the hoop set that is allocated to the lawn you are using. The blue-topped hoop is for hoop 1, and the red-topped hoop for hoop 5 (in golf croquet) / hoop 12 (in association croquet).

All lawns should have two sets of hoop holes. The set nearest the hospital main building is for golf croquet use; the set furthest away is for association use.

If you need help inserting hoops into the ground, use the rubber-headed mallet. Never use a metal-headed hammer to firm hoops, otherwise the hoop coating will chip. Hoops just need to be firm in the ground.

If the hoop is difficult to remove, use the hoop extractor. Do not wriggle hoops, as this enlarges the holes, making the hoop loose next time.

Corner posts

Coloured corner posts are used in association play and one set needs to be kept on each trolley.

Short white posts (for marking the yardline by the corners in AC competitions) is kept in the main equipment shed.

The centre pegs need to be handled carefully as each has a loose top piece that can easily fall off and get lost when being carried back to the trolley. (This piece is needed in association croquet for holding clips.)

Chairs

Chairs should not be placed within one metre of the lawn boundary or between lawns 1 and 2, or lawns 3 and 4. This is to avoid damage to the turf, which might become part of the playing area the next time the lawns are marked out. Please return chairs to the hut where they were taken from.

Clothing and Footwear

It is essential to wear flat soled shoes, ideally trainers. St. Andrew's has asked us to avoid wearing clothes such as bright tracksuits.

If you play in a friendly or league match against other clubs, please wear white or light coloured clothing.

Toilets

The club is permitted to use the visitors' toilets inside the main hospital building. Go straight through the main lobby, avoiding the staff toilets.

Parking

Members need to obtain a parking permit from St. Andrew's Security Office (in the main building behind Reception) and display this on their windscreen. Weekend parking does not require a permit.

Visitors during the working week will need to obtain an informal sticker from the black box-file in the clubhouse to leave in their car. The organiser of midweek matches should send out the club's informal stickers in advance.

Smoking

St. Andrew's has a no smoking / vaping policy in their grounds. Smokers are asked to use the shelter near the main gates.

Guests and Children

No person under the age of 18 is allowed in St. Andrew's grounds.

Guests over the age of 18 may be brought along on paying a visitor's fee of £5 per session (2019). It is the member's responsibility to fill in the visitors' book and hand the fee to a committee member, preferably the treasurer.

Newcomers interested in joining are entitled to two initial visits without charge, before applying. Thereafter, until their application is accepted, they pay the guest fee of £5. The visitors' book must be filled in for these newcomers.

Playing Arrangements

Normal hours of play are 12 noon to dusk, except Saturday when play can start at 10 am. Competitions and matches may have extended hours. Please check the club programme to find out if a tournament is being held on a particular day, as there may be no lawns available in these circumstances. The club programme is distributed to all members annually and is also available on the club website: www.northamptoncroquet.org.uk.

Any recent or last minute changes will be notified via the noticeboard and website calendars. Click on Programme > View online calendar. Please check the calendar for the latest news on when lawns have been reserved for matches or visiting groups.

Coaching

Coaching courses are usually available within the club. Please see the club programme or noticeboard for details.

Club afternoons

Club afternoons are Tuesday and Wednesday. Play usually starts after midday. Members may just turn up. They are

expected to mix in, and the afternoon is supervised by a senior club member. On Tuesday the emphasis is on golf croquet, although one lawn will be made available if anyone wishes to play association. On Wednesday the emphasis is on association croquet.

If a pre-arranged game needs to be played on a club day, i.e. a competition match, please consult the senior club member on the day. The club tries to avoid arranging inter-club matches on club days, although on occasion, GC friendlies with other clubs may be arranged on a Tuesday.

Double banking

When all lawns are in use, members will have to share a lawn. Please ask permission from all players already using the lawn. It is not practical for golf to be played alongside association croquet.

Short croquet

Members wishing to play short croquet have to use lawns 1 or 2 as these are the only lawns marked out for this. They have priority to do so during club afternoons and may ask for members already playing golf or association on these lawns to move to lawns 3 or 4.

Handicap cards

Croquet handicaps are maintained by players using handicap cards to record points gained or lost during official singles matches (i.e. in club, Croquet Association, East Anglian Croquet Federation (EACF) or other inter-club competitions). There are separate handicap cards for association and golf croquet. The cards are provided by the CA and are available from the club secretary. New members will be allocated a handicap by the club handicapper once they have settled in. Handicap cards must be submitted for an annual review by the club handicapper. Members leave their cards in the marked pigeon hole in the clubhouse. This usually takes place early in the New Year.

Club Competitions and Tournaments

Various club events open to members take place during the summer season (April to October).

The association croquet season opens and closes with an association and a short competition. These are usually held around Easter and in September. They are played on a handicap basis and are open to all. Trophies are awarded. See the club programme for details on how to enter. The golf croquet season starts and ends with a handicap competition.

Ongoing club competitions

Association competitions include the Ladder, May Jack, Advanced and Doubles tournaments. You enter the May Jack and Advanced tournaments by ticking the appropriate box on the subscription form. The deadline for each round of the knock-out competitions should be observed.

The Ladder is suitable for all members, and players decide the type of game – association, short or golf. If there is no agreement, the type of play is decided by the toss of a coin. The ladder of names is put up on March 1st and runs until October 31st. As it is a handicap competition, the order of names is random, selected by picking names out of a hat. The Ladder winner is the person at the top of the ladder on the closing date. The rules for the Ladder are on the clubhouse noticeboard.

The May Jack was started by the club's founder. She donated the trophy and was keen that all club members take part. It is a knock-out association handicap event which takes place during the season. Players may play association or short croquet. If there is no agreement, the type of play is decided by the toss of a coin.

The Advanced is another knock-out association competition which takes place during the season, but is suited to the more experienced players as it is played according to advanced rules, with no handicaps.

The Doubles association competition is held either on one day or runs during the season. See the noticeboard. You can put your name down even if you have no partner, as it may be possible to pair you up with someone.

Golf competitions include the Ladder and a level-play competition.

The Golf Handicap Knockout runs throughout the season.

Pirates: The club holds an annual Pirates competition on a designated day according to the published annual club programme. Pirates is a fun game for all abilities and easy to pick up.

There are also several C.A. competitions (for members of the Croquet Association). For these, entries always need to be booked and paid for in advance. Apply to the tournament secretary or online. To avoid disappointment please book early for the popular C.A. golf 'A', 'B', and 'C'-level competitions.

Croquet Etiquette

Applicable to both association and golf croquet

1. Do not practise on the lawn before a match (unless the event manager has given his agreement) or even before a game commences (unless your opponent is agreeable). You are however allowed a 10 minute warm-up practice session prior to a tournament game or important club match or game, in line with CA tournament regulations.
2. Turn off mobile phones during a game.
3. Before the game it is customary for the player with the lower handicap to toss the coin and be responsible for setting up bisques. In association croquet the player who wins the toss has the choice of colours or alternatively, the order of play. In golf croquet, the winner must play blue and go first.
4. Try to be conversant with the laws. If you are about to make a stroke where there is a possibility of a fault being committed, ask your opponent to watch. If you are aiming to hit a ball in the jaws of a hoop, have someone watch it to ensure that contact is made. In a tournament, call a referee by raising your mallet vertically (head uppermost). If you are unsure of the rules applicable to the shot to be attempted, consult an experienced player. Copies of the booklets 'The Laws of Association Croquet' and 'The Laws of Golf Croquet' are available for reference in the clubhouse.
5. When double-banking and you need to move a ball from the other game in play, first ask the person in play for permission. Use the correct type of marker as supplied by the Club and place it behind the ball to be marked, in line with the centre peg. (Coins should not be used because, if left on the ground, they will cause expensive damage to mowers.) Inform the players when the balls have been replaced.
6. When double-banking you will sometimes need to decide when to wait for the other game to complete a turn and when to carry on playing. In this situation in association croquet give priority to a player who is playing a break.
7. While out of play be aware of the state of any other games in progress and stand still if you find yourself in the line of play, or near a player about to shoot.
8. Play as quickly as possible. Try to decide, before your opponent has finished his/her turn, what you are going to do next, to avoid wasting time. In doubles, avoid long discussions with your partner when it is your turn to play.
9. After your turn, in golf croquet try to avoid standing in the hoop area to minimise wear, unless you are about to take a shot. In association croquet you should leave the lawn as soon as your turn is finished.
10. Do not accept advice (or offer it), but query any point of law, if uncertain. The only person allowed to give advice to you during a game is your partner in a doubles match.
11. After play it is customary for the winner to clear the balls from the lawn, remove clips from the hoops and return the bisques.

APPLICABLE ONLY TO ASSOCIATION CROQUET:

12. When replacing a ball on the yard-line, keep your back to the lawn. This is to show that you are not putting the ball in a position to your advantage.