2. Hitting a ball away

Sometimes you will strike your ball so that it hits another ball. This is commonly known as a "roquet" (pronounced row-kay or row-key). The term "roquet" comes from association croquet. Usually that other ball will be an opponent's ball and your aim will be either to prevent it from being able to run the hoop or to prevent it from knocking one of your balls away. Occasionally, however, you will roquet your partner ball in order to put it in a favourable position when getting it into such a position quickly is important.

Roquets can be divided into three types: stun shots, long roquets and other. A *stun* shot is one where the striker's ball doesn't travel very far but the other ball travels an appreciable distance. It is often called a *stop shot* because you want the striker's ball to stop as soon as possible[1].

How to do a stun shot. If you want the struck ball to stop quickly after it hits the other ball you must make sure you hit the other ball dead centre. At the moment of impact, the mallet head should either be parallel to the ground or slightly rising. To achieve this, take stance which is slightly further back from your ball. The reason the mallet head should not still be descending at the moment of impact is that such an action will impart too much spin on the struck ball, causing it to keep moving more after it hits the other ball. A short follow through also helps to get the struck ball to stop quickly, but this is much less important that hitting accurately. However, if he striker ball and the other ball are close to each other at the start, then a short follow through is important in order to avoid a double tap[2].

The danger of a double tap. If the two ball are less than 5 cm apart (but not touching) at the start of the stroke, a double tap will result, no matter how careful you are, unless you play at an angle to the line of centre of the ball. In other words, if the ball are too close, do not attempt a stun shot. Even if the balls are 15 cm or more apart at the start, a double tap can result if you use too much follow through.

Longer roquets. If the two balls are more than 30 cm apart at the start it is difficult to do a good stun shot. From greater distances it is impossible to get the striker ball to stop abruptly even if it hits the other ball dead centre. Since you usually want your ball to stop soon after it hits the other ball, strike your ball only as hard as necessary to knock the other ball to where you want it.

Other roquets. Even when you are close to the ball you want to hit with your striker ball, you may not want to do a stun shot. This is illustrated in examples 4 and 5 below. For these shot you may want to hit the other ball with a glancing blow.

Getting the angle right is difficult. If you want to do them well then, as with any shots, you must practice. The diagram may be of some help. The balls will travel approximately in the directions of the thick lines. Friction between the balls will take them both a bit closer to the line of swing.
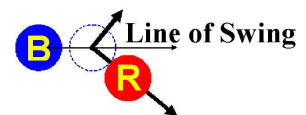
Key points

1. For a stun shot it is very important that the striker ball hits the other ball dead centre.
2. For most roquets the mallet head should be flat or rising when it strikes the striker's ball.
3. When hitting a ball away a firm shot is often needed but don't use more force than necessary.

---

[1] Some people insist that the term *stop shot* should only be used for the case where the striker's ball and the ball you want to hit away are already touching before the stroke.
[2] See Golf Croquet rules on striking faults: Rule 13(a)(6)

In each example the playing side, from which the hoop must be run, is towards the bottom of the page. Blue to play next in each case

**B** = Blue, **R** = Red, **K** = Black, **Y** = Yellow

Example 1: This is a perfect opportunity for blue to hit red away with a stun shot. If this is hoop 1, blue could hit red a long way away. If it is hoop 2, then the boundary is only seven yards behind the hoop, so blue should strike the ball just hard enough to get red to the boundary whilst ensuring that blue finishes near the hoop.
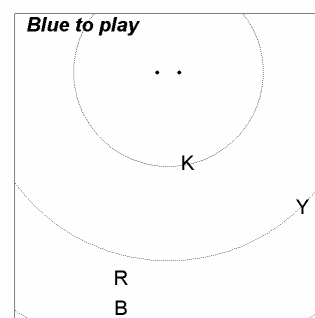
Example 2: Blue must hit red away otherwise it will run the hoop. If red returns to a hoop running position then, unless blue has stopped reasonably near the hoop, you must go for the hoop with black even though (for most players) this would have less than 50% chance of succeeding. If blue was struck just hard enough to knock red about 10 yards away then, with a direct hit, blue would finish near enough to be able to hit red away again. You could then use a stun shot to hit yellow away with black instead.
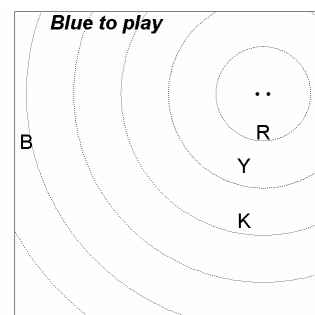
Example 3: If black were closer to the hoop, blue would hit red as far away as he could, but since black is far from a certainty to run the hoop from there, blue should not use excessive force. A stun shot on red with blue is possible but difficult since red is almost a metre and a half away. Red only needs to be hit 5 or 10 yards past the hoop. Having blue finish near the hoop, preferably in a hoop running position is more important in the case than to knock red a long way away.
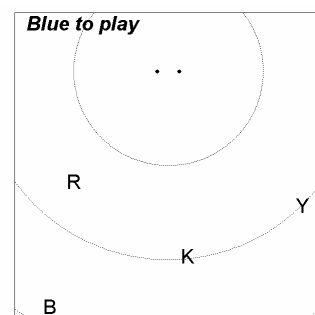
Example 4: Neither blue nor black can hit yellow from where they are to prevent it from running the hoop. The blue ball could, however, hit black with a glancing blow to put it in front of the hoop. A really good nudge would allow black to run the hoop before it was yellow's turn. At the very least, black could be put into a position where it can hit yellow away. Either way, it is important that black be put where it cannot be hit away by red.
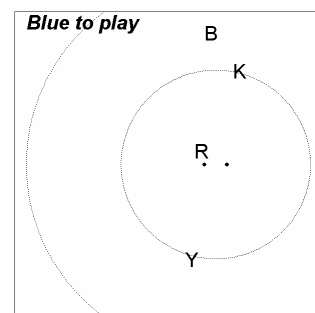
Example 5: As in the first example, here is a good opportunity for blue to hit red away. If you wanted to be cautious, you would use a stun shot to make sure blue stayed near the hoop. If, however, you wanted to be ambitious, you could hit red with a glancing blow to not only hit it far away, but to also have blue finish near the next hoop (e.g. near hoop 2 if this was hoop 1). Then, provided red did not knock black away, it could run the hoop and blue could stay where it was to get a head start for the next hoop.

Blue to play

Blue to play

Blue to play

Blue to play

Blue to play