

How to play ADVANTAGE Golf Croquet

- incorporating recommendations arising from 2021 trials

RULES OF PLAY

Advantage GC is a simple way for players of differing abilities to play each other using level play rules and with each having an equal chance of winning. Extra strokes are no longer used; instead the players will usually start the game with a score other than 0:0. Stronger players may start with a negative score and weaker players with a positive one.

Advantage play is included at Rule 21 in the proposed 6th Edition WCF Rules of Golf Croquet due for publication early in 2022.

As usual the game ends when one side reaches a score of 7 (as in a normal 13-point game).

It should be appreciated that the winner will have *physically run* more than 7 hoops (from a negative start) or will have *physically run* less than 7 hoops (from a positive start). The winner will only have *physically run* exactly 7 hoops if their starting score was zero.

Hoops are played in the same order as usual for a 13-point game with occasional extension to hoop 14 (hoop 4) and exceptionally to hoop 15 (hoop 1). *Advantage games can end at any hoop from 5 to 15.* If the score reaches 6:6 play continues with the deciding hoop being *the next hoop in order*.

USE OF 2022 TABLE OF STARTING SCORES

Ensure you are using the **latest revision** of the first-to-seven starting scores table. A separate table is available for first-to-ten games and these notes can be readily adapted to suit.

Players should reference the table by using their handicap. Those without handicaps should use their current Dgrade.

The starting score for a game is found at the intersection of the corresponding column (stronger player) and row (weaker player) and is listed as Stronger : Weaker.

Trials have confirmed that handicap games between players of widely different abilities are not ideal and such Advantage games, shaded in grey in the table, are not generally recommended. A single suggested starting score is given which will lead to a more unbalanced game as differences increase further.

Starting scores are fixed and must NOT be changed.

KEEPING SCORE

In most competitive play the current game score should be:

- ◆ Known by both teams
- ◆ Capable of interpretation by an off-court observer without intervention
- ◆ Capable of correction in the event of an error.

To achieve this players MUST adhere to Rule 7.4 in full by BOTH:

- ◆ announcing the score after each hoop has been run
- ◆ using scoring clips (in the suggested manner).

Players who were unfamiliar with this protocol during the 2021 trials easily became confused and distracted during the game.

Some detailed help and advice is included in the APPENDIX to this document.

The following recommendations have not been the subject of organised trials and feedback would be welcome along with any suggestions for improvement.

DOUBLES PLAY

A doubles game can be played by calculating the mean handicap for each team (half the sum of the two handicaps) with halves rounded up. We suggest that players without handicaps could first use the table to convert their DGrade to handicap. The starting score for each team can then be obtained from the table using the mean handicaps.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

Time Limits

Most forms of time-limited handicap games are intrinsically unfair and we strongly advise that time limits are **NOT** used in Advantage GC for that reason.

Should the need arise to terminate unfinished games the winner should *not* be decided on the current score. We suggest a fairer method is to compare, for each player, the *ratio* of hoops actually run to the total number needed to win at the start, the player with the higher ratio being declared the winner.

Ordering of Tournament Blocks

Players tied on number of wins in a tournament block could be ordered by considering the ratio as above but applied to all games played in the block by each player.

CroquetScores Website

Negative scores unfortunately cannot be accepted on CroquetScores. We recommend that any negative final scores are recorded as zero.

Roy Tillcock
January 2022

APPENDIX

SCORING ADVICE

— for first-to-seven but adaptable for first-to-ten games.

It is strongly recommended that players new to the game should practice keeping score before taking part in competitive play and should clearly understand the principles involved.

When announcing the score after each hoop the recommended convention is to **state the stronger player's score first, followed by the weaker player's score.**

It is fundamental here to realise that counting up from a negative score to a positive one includes the score of zero (as on a thermometer scale, minus two, minus one, zero, plus one etc.).

[a player with a starting score of minus 2 must run 2 hoops MORE than normal (9 rather than 7) to win the game]

USE OF SCORING CLIPS

To aid visibility and avoid confusion primary coloured clips should be placed on the crown of the hoop and secondary colours on the hoop upright(s).

In order to establish the game score at any time there are two requirements.

- ◆ To **count the hoops** scored by each player
 - achieved as normal by adding a clip to the hoop as it is run
- ◆ To have a permanent reminder of the **starting score**
 - the original method uses clips on the centre peg and hoop 1 and is explained more fully with examples below.

At any time a player's score is the number of their hoop clips combined with their starting score.

[with 3 hoop clips and starting at plus 2, the player's score is (3 plus 2) = 5

with 3 hoop clips and starting at minus 2, their score is (3 minus 2) = 1]

HOW MANY CLIPS

Using the original method (a positive score is indicated on hoop1 and a negative score on the centre peg) the following table shows how many clips you will need at the start of the game for any specific starting score and where they should be placed.

(the normal convention used is that players do not carry a scoring clip for their final winning hoop – when all clips have been used one more hoop must be run to win the game)

Your starting score	Total number of clips needed	Add this number to hoop 1*	Add this number to centre peg	Carry these to use for hoops run
2	6	2		4
1	6	1		5
0	6			6
-1	8		1	7
-2	10		2	8
-3	12		3	9
-4	14		4	10

***A useful variation to avoid overloading hoop 1 is to place positive clips on a stand-alone scoring post situated beside the court. This enables the hoop clips to be used solely for counting the number of hoops run as is normal, and the starting score(s) to be visible separately.**

CHECKING THE SCORE AGAINST THE POSITION ON THE COURT

In conventional play it is common practice to confirm the score or position on the court by using the relationship:

$$\text{total of current scores} = \text{last hoop run}$$

In Advantage this relationship becomes:

$$\text{total of current scores} = \text{last hoop run} \textit{ adjusted by the total of starting scores}$$

<i>[Starting score -2 : 0</i>	<i>total = minus 2</i>
<i>After running hoop 5</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Hence total of current scores should be</i>	<i>5 minus 2 = 3</i>

<i>Starting score -1 : 2</i>	<i>total = 2 minus 1 = plus 1</i>
<i>After running hoop 5</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Hence total of current scores should be</i>	<i>5 plus 1 = 6]</i>

Knowing the total of starting scores at the beginning of a game is recommended. It is then a simple matter to reconcile the current score in the usual way by using the adjusted hoop number.

[Starting at -2 : 0 — use the hoop number which is two before the last hoop run
Starting at -1 : 2 — use the hoop number which is one after etc.
Starting at -1 : 1 or -2 : 2 or 0 : 0 for example requires no adjustment at all]

If this relationship fails the most likely reason is the result of a clip counting error or faulty clip placement.

In play when you have no clips left you would expect to need to run one more hoop to win BUT be warned about counting clips on your jacket or in your pocket – they do fall off, get lost, or you may have taken the wrong number at the start!

This is why it is so important to verbally agree the score after each hoop.

