

Croquet Australia

Handicapping Regulations (Association Croquet)

Effective: 15 March 2010 (reviewed September 2021)

These Handicapping regulations apply to all Association Croquet competitions conducted within Australia and all accredited international matches.

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The Regulations

1. Definitions:

- a. **AHS Card** means the Automatic Handicapping System Card issued by Croquet Australia. The cards are available on the Croquet Australia website for printing as needed.
- b. **A State, Club or Tournament Handicapper** is an Official Handicapper who has been elected or appointed to that position by the agreed procedures of the relevant State or Club, or by Croquet Australia.
- c. Association Croquet **players** in these regulations are members of croquet clubs in Australia who play Association Croquet and are affiliated through their Club and State to Croquet Australia. They are herein referred to as players. Players will have only one ID number which they will retain even if move to another state.
- d. A **tournament** is an Official Tournament organised and run by Croquet Australia, State Association or Club. A tournament may consist of a single event or several events (eg. Men's Singles, Women's Singles, Open Doubles).
- e. An **event** is a single competitive event, open to a defined range of players, and expected to have a single winner. Social events are excluded. An event may be a part, or independent of a tournament.
- f. A **match** is either a single game or a best-of-X games.
- g. **Competitive singles games** are those which are part of an event. They are governed by Tournament Regulations and the Laws of Association Croquet, and include but are not limited to

- Tournament games
 - Interclub, interstate and international games; and
 - Club competitions
- h. A player's **handicap** is a number used to determine the number of bisques to be given or received in handicap play (Laws 42 & 53). It may also determine whether the player is eligible for a particular event.
- i. A player's **index** is a number recorded on the AHS card, which changes after each competitive singles game. When an index changes sufficiently it will trigger a change in handicap.

2. Handicaps:

- a. These Regulations govern the administration of player handicaps under the Laws of Association Croquet.
- b. National handicaps for players shall be on a scale with a range from -3 to 20 with steps as set out on the AHS Card. Handicaps higher than 20 may be used internally within clubs. The highest handicap a player can use in an event for national handicapping purposes is 20.
- c. Every player shall have an official handicap determined as below in paragraphs 3, 4 and 10.
- d. All players will be given an initial handicap by their Club Handicapper when they start playing. Thereafter their handicap will change as described in paragraphs 3 and 4 below.
- e. In handicap play the handicap shown on the card at the start of a game is used to determine bisque entitlement.
- f. For non-handicap singles players use the handicap shown on their card at the start of the game to determine the index change after the game.
- g. Any player wishing to enter singles or doubles competitions or play competitions singles or doubles matches shall be entitled to do so only if they comply with these Regulations.

3. Automatic Changes of Handicaps:

- a. The Automatic Handicapping System (AHS) is the primary method by which handicaps change.
- b. Whenever players play a competitive singles game, they update their AHS card according to the instructions on the card. In all cases this will result in a change to their index. When the index changes sufficiently that will trigger a change in the player's handicap.
- c. Indexes do not change as a result of doubles play, except as in paragraph 4.
- d. A player's handicap will change immediately the index has reached or passed the trigger point for a new handicap.

4. Non-Automatic Changes of Handicaps

- a. 10 competitive singles games over a six month period will be, in most circumstances, sufficient to allow handicaps to change automatically.
- b. In some situations, the AHS is unable to respond quickly enough to changes in player's ability. The situations include where:
 - The player plays very few competitive singles games
 - The player's play improves or deteriorates so rapidly that the AHS cannot keep up.

In such situations handicappers are empowered to change players' handicaps. Otherwise players' handicaps should be left to change automatically.
- c. In making these changes, handicappers must be guided by considering what handicap the player needs to be on to compete effectively with other players who are playing sufficient competitive singles games for the AHS to be effective.
- d. Non-Automatic changes are not made during a match that is the best of a number of games.

5. Players shall:

- a. Complete an entry on an official Croquet Australia AHS Card for each competitive singles game played.
- b. Maintain an accurate record on their AHS cards of all competitive singles games they play and report their current handicap and index to Tournament or Competition Managers at the start of an event.
- c. If their handicap changes as a result of any game played during an event, have the Official Handicap check and sign their card confirming the change before playing any other games as soon as practical.
- d. Immediately advise their Club Handicap of handicap changes.
- e. Show their official AHS card to Tournament Managers and Handicappers on request.

6. State Handicappers shall:

- a. Assist Club Handicappers in understanding the handicapping system and these Regulations.
- b. If required, liaise with Club Handicappers when they are making non-automatic handicap changes to ensure that a uniform standard applies throughout the State Association. This is particularly important when the player is playing in competitive events which may not qualify for AHS inclusion.
- c. Where operating as a Tournament Handicapper, fulfil all duties in paragraph 9.
- d. Carry out any other AHS-related functions as required by their State Association.

7. Club Handicappers shall:

- a. On a regular basis review and make any required non-automatic changes for players within their club and notify the State Handicapper of the handicaps of these players when the changes are made or as required by the State Association. Any such changes must be in accordance with paragraph 4, and shall be effective immediately.
- b. Check and sign AHS cards of players whose handicaps change automatically as a result of games played in events. Such changes will be notified to the State Handicapper as required by the State Association.
- c. Observe the play of club members during club or inter club competitions.
- d. Provide a letter to accompany a club member who is about to enter an external event and is improving rapidly, addressed to the Tournament Manager, suggesting that the player's handicap should be kept under review.
- e. Keep a record of the current handicaps of all players within their club and provide assistance to those players requiring help in maintaining an accurate official AHS card. Certify, and carry-over, the handicap and index points when a player begins a continuation handicap card.
- f. Assign handicaps to new players in accordance with paragraph 10 below.

Guidelines:

- *In making non-automatic handicap changes, Club Handicappers shall use handicaps of other players with similar skills as benchmarks.*
- *Club Handicappers will not need to seek approval from elsewhere for any decisions they make about non-automatic handicap changes. However, advice may be sought from the State Handicapper if the Club Handicapper wishes, and must be sought if the player is going to play external competitive games that may not qualify for AHS, eg. intercoms doubles.*
- *Clubs may require that non-automatic changes for club members be determined by committee and in this case the Club Handicapper shall comply with the committee decisions.*

8. Tournament Managers shall:

- a. Cooperate with the Tournament Handicapper to check that player handicaps are accurately recorded at the time they commence play in an event.

- a. At the end of an event record on an AHS1 Form the details of any player whose handicap has changed during the event and immediately forward to the State Handicapper if required.

9. Tournament Handicappers shall:

- a. At the start of an event assist the Tournament Manager in checking and accurate recording of player handicaps.
- b. Be responsible for all handicapping issues during an event.
- c. Sign off the AHS cards of all players whose handicaps change during an event.

Guideline:

- *When signing off a card for handicap change a Handicapper should check the calculations leading to the changes in handicap and ensure recent games have been properly entered on the card.*

- d. During events have discretion to make non-automatic handicap changes for any player in accordance with paragraph 4.
- e. Record and initial on a player's card non-automatic handicap changes as they are made.
- f. Ensure that an Assistant Manager or other person is designated to perform the duties of Tournament Handicapper at subsidiary tournament events.

10. New Players:

- a. Club Handicappers shall assess each new player when they have joined the Club as an affiliated player and are admitted to general club play, and assign them a handicap based on the level at which they are best likely to compete.
- b. Their starting AHS index will be the one corresponding to their starting handicap. The Club Handicapper must sign their card after signing their initial handicap.

Guidelines:

- *To assist Club Handicappers in their assessment, they should encourage the use of AHS cards by new players for friendly games before they begin competition.*
- *Full Bisque Play and Coaching:*
State Associations and Clubs should encourage the use of full bisque handicap play (see Appendix, Australian Laws Book) particularly for players of handicap 10 and above, in order to enable them to learn, and enjoy, the use of bisques in competitive games.

11. Overseas Players:

- a. UK players will retain their UK handicap and index. NZ players retain their index, but generally add 2 to their handicap (eg. -3 becomes -1, 4 becomes 6, 14 becomes 16 and so on). Players with indexes above 2800 will have an Australian handicap of -2.5, and over 3050 a handicap of -3. Otherwise, overseas players will be assigned an initial handicap based on the handicaps of Australian players of similar World Ranking.
- b. This will be calculated and assigned by the Tournament Handicapper of the first event they enter.
- c. Following that assignment, they shall be treated as any Australian player to whom the AHS applies.

12. Handicap Card Use When Playing Overseas:

Croquet Australia, the New Zealand Croquet Council and the UK have agreed to allow Australian cardholders to use their Australian cards when playing in overseas tournaments.

- a. When playing in the UK players use their cards exactly the same as in Australia.
- b. When playing in NZ, Australian players retain their index but deduct 2 from their handicap (eg: -2 becomes -4, 3 becomes 1, 20 becomes 18 and so on)

13. Shortened Games & Other Variations:

The provisions of these Regulations shall apply to shortened games played under any of the official variations in Laws 44-46. For 14-point games index points shall be half those for a 26point game with fractions rounded up. For shortened games greater than 14-points index points shall be the full amount.

Full Bisque Handicap play (Appendix 3, Australian Laws book) and Advanced Handicap play (Appendix 5, *ibid*) are treated as regular handicap play for handicap purposes. One ball play (Appendix 6, *ibid*) is not used for handicapping purposes.

14. Players Not Complying With These Regulations:

- In the first instance the player is to be informed that it is a requirement under the National Handicapping Regulations for a Croquet Australia AHS Card to be carried and filled in and it has been noted that this has not been followed. The incident will be reported to the National Handicapper.
- If the behaviour is repeated at a subsequent event, the player will be reminded once more and informed that a future tournament entry may be rejected. The incident will be reported to the National Handicapper, who will report it to Croquet Australia.

FURTHER GUIDELINES

The AHS Card

- *Instructions for the use of the card are printed on it.*
- *Handicap cards can be printed from the Croquet Australia website.*

Aim of the system

- *The aim of the Automatic Handicap System is to ensure that two players in a handicap game have an equal chance of winning when they play each other.*

Index Points

- *Each player maintains an AHS Card which records the result of every competitive singles game played and the index points added or subtracted.*
- *Index points increase after each win and decrease after each loss. The winner adds the number of points to their index as shown on the AHS card for the handicaps of the two players involved. The loser subtracts the same number from their index. The number of points depends on whether the game is played handicap or not.*
- *For handicap games the number of points is always 10.*
- *For non-handicap games the number of points varies depending on the handicaps of the two players.*

Handicap Changes

- *Winning games and thus accumulating index points can result in a player reaching or passing the “trigger point” for a handicap different from the player’s current handicap, at which time their handicap will reduce.*
- *Losing games and thus losing index points can result in a player reaching or passing the “trigger point” for a handicap different from the player’s current handicap, at which time their handicap will increase.*
- *Handicaps will change if:*
- *the index has reached or passed the trigger point for a handicap different from the player’s current handicap at the end of a game; or*
- *if a non-automatic change is made to the handicap of a player.*

Players whose index falls below 900

Players indexes may not fall beyond 900. Should they do so they are immediately reset to 900.

Players withdrawing from an Event

For handicapping purposes, all games completed or started are entered on to the cards of the two players concerned. If a withdrawal occurs during a game, that game should be recorded as a loss to the person who withdraws.