

Croquet for piecepack

A Good Portsmanship game for the piecepack by Dan Smith

Based on Croquet (Traditional)

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2-4 players, 60 minutes

Equipment: one basic Piecepack

Outline

Croquet is a nasty game played on polite well-mown lawns by polite vicars and their well-mown spouses. It offers unrivalled opportunities to be quite vicious while remaining unfailingly courteous. It is quintessentially English.

It is a game for two teams (Black and Blue versus Red and Green), with each team having between one and two players. If a team has two players, each player takes one colour each.

Tip: teamwork is vital, and discussions between teammates on tactics is often highly beneficial.

Object

The object for each team is to get both their balls through all six hoops on the croquet lawn in the prescribed order, and then to hit the central peg. If a ball has gone through all six hoops and hits the central peg, it is removed from the game. The first team to get their second ball removed from the game wins. On the way, each team is well-advised to disrupt its opposing team's plans as much as possible.

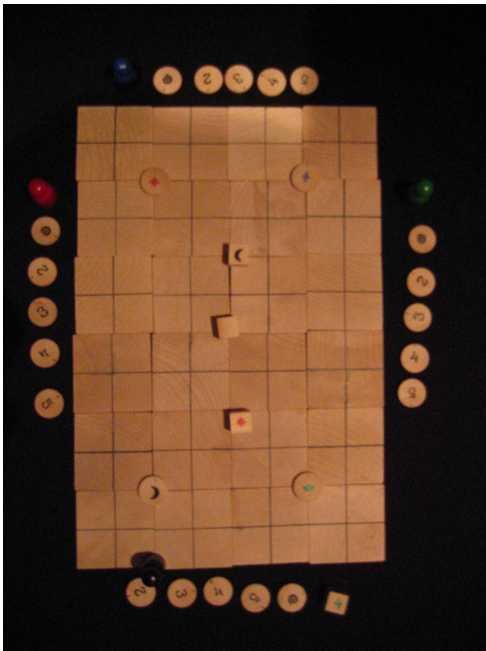
Set up

Set up the tiles in a 4 x 6 formation grid-side up, forming a grid of 8 x 12 squares (the game is played on the 9 x 13 intersections). This is the

croquet lawn. The hoops are represented by the four blank coins and two of the dice, as follows.

For each corner tile, place one of the blank coins suit side up on the inside corner, so that the four coins are at the corners of the 2 x 4 set of the 8 interior tiles. From bottom left, the suits go clockwise Black, Red, Blue, and Green. The colours of the hoops do not affect game play, but they are a convenient reminder of the order of play. Ensure that the marker lines on each coin points upwards (i.e. towards Red and Blue). The marker lines will keep a record of which hoops that colour ball has gone through.

Place three of the dice on the three intersections of the interior 8 tiles. The Black symbol uppermost on the top die, the Red symbol uppermost at the bottom, and the central die blank. The symbol dice represent the central hoops (the symbols themselves do not affect game play: they simply represent the two teams) and the blank die is the peg. These dice never move.



The remaining die is used as a die.

Each player takes his colour pawn, representing her ball, and places it off the lawn below the black hoop. Each player also takes the remaining five coins in her colour, and places them number side up in front of her.

Note: for ease of terminology in the rules, the active player is female, and her opponents are male.

Play

This is an overview of a game of Croquet. The detailed rules of how shots are taken are set out below.

Play proceeds in rounds of Black, Red, Blue, and Green each player taking her go in turn. In a player's go, she hits her ball on a specified route for a specified distance. However, the further the distance, the trickier the shot and the more likely it is to fail. Balls are always located on the intersections on the grid.

Balls must proceed through the hoops in the following order and direction: black coin going upwards; red coin going upwards; blue coin downwards; green coin downwards; red dice upwards; black dice upwards - approximately a spiral. After all that she must hit her ball onto the peg, from any direction. Going through a hoop out of turn or going through a hoop in the wrong direction has no effect at all.

If her ball ever occupies the same position as another ball (either her teammates' or her opponents'), they collide - this is a Roquet, pronounced "ro-kay" - and she gets the chance to wallop it in any direction (called a Croquet) and then take a Continuation Shot to proceed with the rest of her go. A player may Roquet each other ball only once in her go, but may start Roqueting afresh on her next go. Additionally, if the player's balls goes through her next designated hoop, she takes a bonus shot and may also immediately Roquet every other ball again in the same go.

Tip: it is at least as important to use Roquets to send your teammate's ball onwards as it is to disrupt your opponents' balls

The starting round

The balls enter play when the relevant player takes her first go. For the first round, as each player takes her first go, she places her ball on the

edge of the lawn in one of three intersections: either on the intersection two squares directly below the black hoop, or on one of the intersections immediately to the left or right. She then takes her first go.

Movement

A ball may travel in orthogonal or diagonal lines, in either case counting one Difficulty for each movement from intersection to intersection. Consequently, it is slightly more efficient to move diagonally. A player may try to send her ball by a combination of orthogonal and diagonal moves, subject to the following restrictions:

1. A ball cannot move in a leftwards direction and then later rightwards, nor upwards then downwards (and, of course, vice versa), e.g. it cannot move diagonally up and right, then up, then diagonally up and left.
2. A ball may not move in a direction 90 degrees to any previous move along its route, e.g. it cannot move up, then diagonally up and right, then right.

A destination may have a number of possible routes, and the player must specify the exact route.

Tip: you may specify a particular route to hit or avoid hitting a particular ball, or to minimize the directional effect of a Misshot (see below)

Hitting the ball

All moves are based on distance and risk: the further the shot, the less likely it is to succeed and the further off course it might go on a Misshot. The player announces the exact route which she want her ball to take, counting one Difficulty for each intersection along the route of the shot. She then rolls the die.

1. If she rolls *equal to or higher* than the Difficulty, then the shot succeeds and the ball moves to its destination. An ace always succeeds, no matter how Difficult the shot (thus, the Difficulty can exceed 5).

2. If she rolls a *lower* number, then there is a Misshot. The consequence is that the ball veers off course during the shot. The player moves the ball along its route up to the number on the die. For the remaining number of movements, the player notes the direction of the next movement and rolls the die once more. On a roll of blank or 2, the ball stops one space before the end of the chosen route. On a roll of 3 or 4 the ball's last movements are a straight line 45 degrees to the left of the intended next movement. On a roll of 5 or symbol, the ball's last movements are a straight line 45 degrees to the right of the intended next movement.

Tip: specifying a route one more than you really need to go to hit another ball will give you a slightly better chance of hitting it anyway on a Misshot (on a blank or 2), but more chance of going further off course (on a 3-symbol)

3. If she rolls a *blank* then there is a Disastrous Misshot. The consequence is that the opponent whose turn preceded hers get to choose where the Disastrous Misshot goes: a) he may place the ball *anywhere* along the specified route OR b) he may place the ball its *full* distance in another direction. This direction is determined by considering the *first movement* along the player's specified route. He may send the ball its full distance in either that direction, or 45 degrees to the left or the right, in each case travelling *in a straight line*.

Hitting another ball

If at any point any ball occupies the same location as any other ball, there is a collision. This often occurs by design but can also be the result of a Misshot.

In a collision, the first ball stops where the second ball was, and the second ball moves in the direction the first ball was last moving. The distance the second ball moves is half the remaining distance of the first ball's route rounded up. If the first ball collides right at the end of its route, the second ball does not move, and the first ball stops on the previous intersection.

If the second ball hits a third ball, carry out the same calculation using

the remaining distance of the second ball.

Roquets

Skilful Roquetting ("ro-kaying") is at the heart of Croquet. If the player's ball hits another ball for the first time that go, then the other ball is Roqueted ("ro-kayed"). A player may not Roquet any other ball until she has gone through the first hoop.

When it has Roquetted another ball, the player's ball is picked up, placed next to the Roqueted ball, and usually used to whack her opponent's ball in a direction of the player's choosing - the Croquet shot. The player's ball is therefore likely to move in a similar direction, but it need not - this is the player's choice. The detailed options are set out below.

When a Roquet occurs, the player temporarily removes her ball from the croquet lawn, and announces where she wants to send the Roqueted ball and where she wants to send her own ball.

A player need not try to move the Roqueted ball. She may use the Croquet simply to Play Off the side of the Roqueted ball. When Playing Off, the Roqueted ball does not move, and the player simply take a normal shot as set out above, followed by her Continuation Shot.

Tip: if a player decides to Play Off an opponent's ball instead of trying to move it, she would therefore effectively get two extra shots: one when Playing Off as part of the Croquet, and one Continuation Shot. This is very handy if she just wants to race ahead to the next hoop.

Alternatively, the player may use the Croquet to move her opponent's ball. In this case, the direction of the Croqueting is more basic than an ordinary shot. The player simply announces any orthogonal or diagonal direction for the Roqueted ball to move, and a distance for it to move: the Difficulty of the shot.

The player must also announce where she wants her own ball to end up, calculated from the same location as the Roqueted ball. She can either announce a Stop-Shot, or a Follow-Through. If she tries a Follow-

Through, she must also announce a direction: either the same direction as the Roqueted ball, or 45 degrees to the left or right. The distance of a Follow-Through is always half the Croqueted distance, rounded up.

She then rolls the die.

1. If she rolls *equal to or higher* than the Difficulty (or rolls an ace), then the shot succeeds completely. The Roqueted ball and the player's ball move to their specified destinations.

2. If she rolls a *lower* number, there is a Croquet Misshot. The consequence is that the Roqueted ball moves only the first movement in the route. However, if she went for a Follow-Through, the player also rolls to determine whether the Follow-Through succeeds. This succeeds unless she rolls a blank or coin. If she fails, her ball is moved the announced distance by the preceding opponent in a direction of his choice: either the announced direction, or 45 degrees to the left or right. A Stop-Shot is unaffected by a Croquet Misshot

3. If she rolls a *blank*, there is a Disastrous Croquet. A Stop-Shot remains unaffected, but a Follow-Through fails automatically (with the consequences set out in 2 above). In addition, the preceding opponent also gets to choose where the Roqueted ball goes: a) he may place the Roqueted ball one movement in one of the alternative directions (i.e. 45 degrees to the left or right) OR b) he may place the Roqueted ball the full intended movement in one of the alternative directions

Whether the Croquet succeeds or not, and whether the player's ball succeeds or not, the player always gets an extra shot - known as the Continuation Shot. This is carried out in exactly the same way as a normal shot as above.

Tip: it is a common tactic to try to Roquet another ball at this stage

A Croquet may cause an immediate collision of the player's ball with another ball, as described above. If the player's ball collides with a ball she hasn't yet Roqueted that turn, then there is an immediate Roquet of that second ball leading to an immediate Croquet, i.e. the player does not get to store up her Continuation Shot from the first Roquet.

The boundary

A ball may leave the boundary of the lawn. A ball on an edge intersection is considered to be still in play. Once any ball leaves the boundary by any means, it is temporarily removed from play until its player's turn - place the pawn next to the edge intersection where it left the lawn. Once that player's turn comes round, the ball is replaced on the relevant intersection, and the player proceeds with her go as normal. If the relevant intersection contains another ball, the player must place her ball on either of the adjacent intersections.

If a Roqueted ball is knocked out of play, the Croquet simply does not take place, and the player's go automatically skips to her Continuation Shot.

The hoops

Balls progress through the game by going through hoops in the correct direction. A player may try to shoot her ball through a hoop by entering it either straight on or from a diagonal direction. This is determined solely by the last movement by which it enters the hoop: a ball may enter a hoop straight even if it previously moved diagonally.

A straight shot goes through the hoop automatically.

A diagonal entry is more difficult. For a diagonal shot, the player must roll the same Difficulty a *second* time. If the player is successful a second time, her ball goes through. If she fails, then the ball stops on the hoop, and does not go through.

If a ball ends up on the hoop intersection, it has *not* gone through. However, a collision from any of the three directions from behind may knock it through. Similarly, a collision from any of the three directions in front may knock it back out. A ball on a hoop may aim in a diagonal direction when leaving the hoop intersection, and in doing so go through the hoop.

Once a ball has gone through any hoop, the player rotates her ball's coloured hoop coin by 45 degrees to mark its progress across the lawn.

This allows all players to see at glance the progress of each ball across the lawn.

There is a bonus for hitting your own ball through a hoop on your go. Once a ball has gone through a hoop on its go, it may immediately take another Bonus Shot. In addition, it may immediately re-Roquet all other balls in play again, even if it has already Roqueted those balls already that go. The ability to re-Roquet is triggered as soon as the ball goes through the hoop, so if in that shot it hits another ball on the other side of the hoop, that counts as an immediate Roquet. If a ball goes through a hoop on a Croquet Follow-Through, then the player proceeds to her Continuation Shot and does not get a Bonus Shot.

If a ball goes through a hoop during another player's turn by any means then this still counts. The coloured marker is rotated, but that ball's player does not get a Bonus Shot when its turn comes round.

Tip: frequently, a player's ball is knocked through a hoop by her partner's ball, either by a collision or a friendly Croquet. It is entirely possible, through good teamwork, for a ball to end the game without having ever gone through a hoop on its own go.

All hits onto the side of a hoop cause the ball to stop on the intersection immediately *before* it hit the hoop - no matter how hard the shot was. Any balls on the hoop itself are unmoved.

The peg

If any ball hits the peg *after* it has gone through all six hoops, it is "pegged out" and permanently removed from the game. That colour player plays no further part in the game and her place in the turn order is skipped.

Tip: it is highly advisable for your team's balls to work together closely - it can be a tactical disaster to peg out one ball in your team when the other ball still has hoops to go through, because the opposing team then take two goes in a round compared to your one.

If at any time any ball hits the peg *before* it has gone through all six

hoops, it is "pegged", which means that that ball must return to the starting position and go through all the hoops again. A player's ball may be accidentally pegged by a Misshot.

Tip: pegging an opponent's ball by means of a collision or a Croquet is a legitimate dirty tactic - but beware of leaving your ball too close to the peg at the end of your go...

In order to hit the peg, a ball must pass onto the peg intersection, but this is not in itself sufficient because the peg is relatively narrow. The active player rolls the die once more to determine whether the ball in fact hits the peg. The result depends on whether the ball is being hit directly and deliberately (i.e. the player's ball), or is another player's ball (i.e. after a collision or Croquet) or a Misshot: a) Another player's ball or a Misshot is pegged only on a roll of a blank or a coin. b) If the player is trying deliberately to hit her own ball onto the peg to remove it from play, the result of the roll is reversed: in this case, the ball is pegged on a number roll, and misses on a blank or coin.

If a ball misses the peg, it continues on its route as if the peg weren't there. If another ball misses the peg, it is entirely possible for the player's ball to Follow Though and land on the peg intersection, with the chance that it too might hit the peg. However, if the other ball hits the peg, the player's ball does not follow through, but instead stops on the previous intersection (because it's collided with the pegged ball).

Special shots

A player can summon occasional concentrated bursts of skill to help her, represented by the five coins in her colour/suit. Before any of her own die rolls, the player may fix the result of the roll by flipping the relevant numbered coin over to show the colour/suit side rather than the number/ace. Thus, during the course of the game she may fix one roll each of 2, 3, 4, 5, and ace.

Tip: the ace coin is the most powerful special shot, as it can be used to achieve a shot with an extremely high Difficulty (potentially across the whole lawn if necessary).

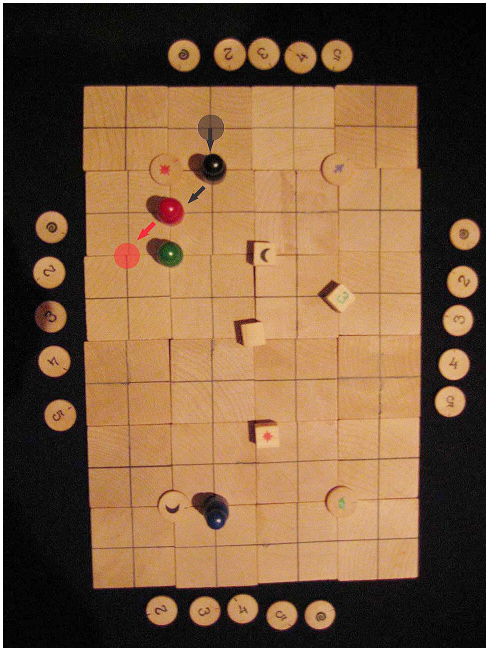
A coin may not be used to influence the roll to determine whether another ball hits the peg.

Tip: although it has other uses, you may wish to save your 2 coin for your own final shot at hitting the peg.

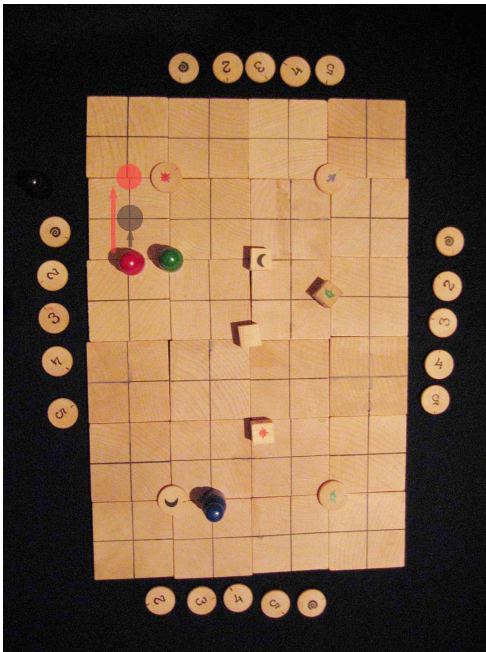
Croquet for Piecepack - Example Turn

See diagrams 1 to 8.

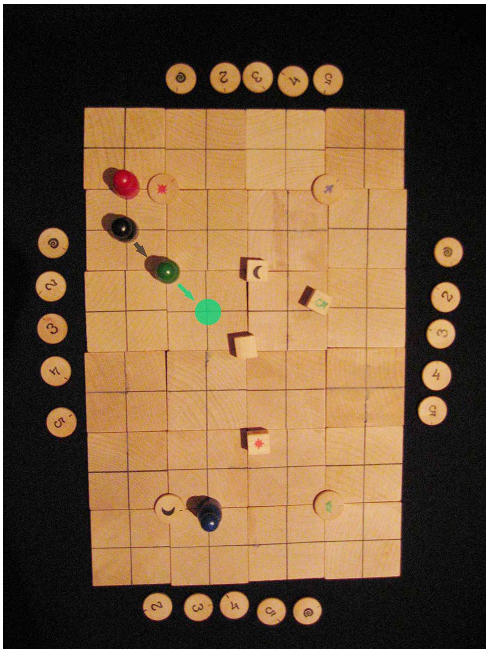
It is Black's go. Black and Green have been through the second hoop, Red and Blue have been through the first hoop.



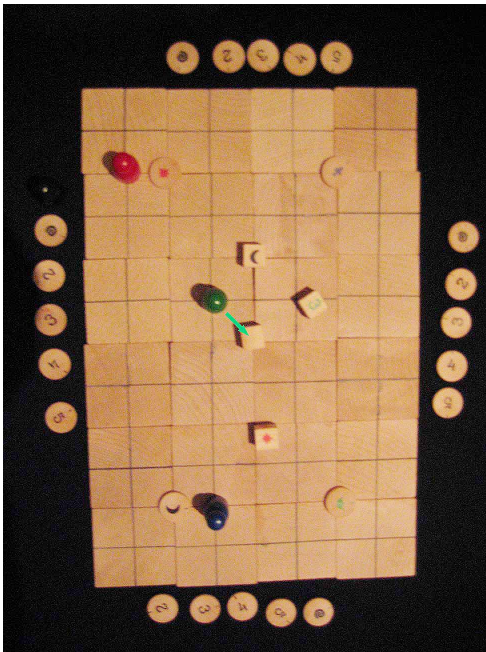
1. Black is currently too far away to help her partner Blue, so she attempts to Roquet her opponent Red. The Difficulty is 2. She rolls a 3: the Roquet succeeds, and Red is knocked on one.



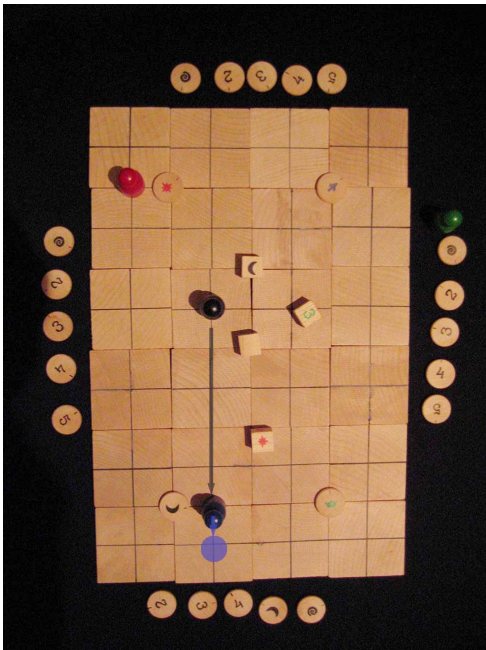
2. Black decides to Croquet Red two intersections directly upwards, with a follow-through straight on. She rolls a symbol: the Croquet succeeds. Red is moved two upwards, and Black one upwards.



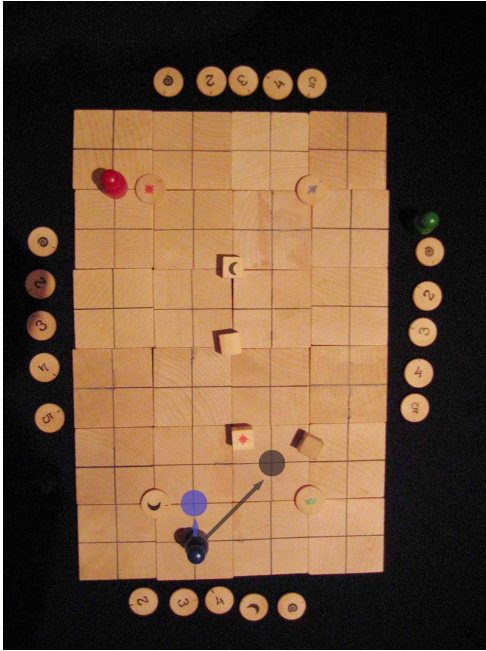
3. For her Continuation Shot, Black attempts to Roquet Green. An easy shot of Difficulty 1. She rolls a 5: the Roquet succeeds, and Green is knocked on one.



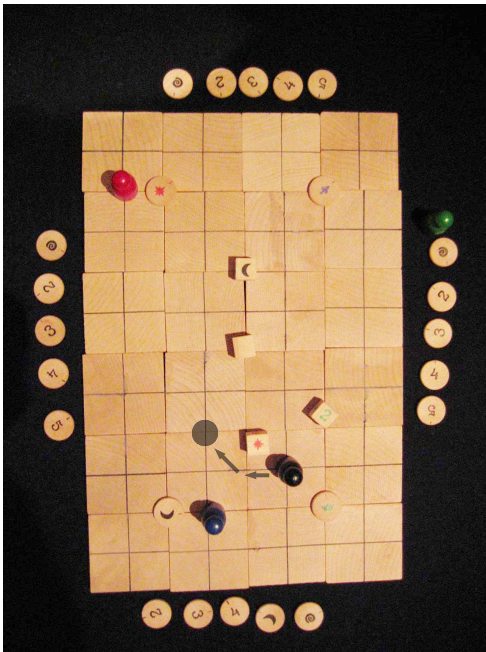
4. Black attempts to use her Croquet to peg Green, with a stop-shot on her own ball. Green is in a direct diagonal to the peg, so this can be done. The Difficulty is 1, and Black rolls a 3. Green rolls onto the peg intersection. Black rolls again to determine whether Green hits the peg. She rolls a symbol, so Green has been pegged out! Green is removed from play and the green coin is rotated to the 12 o'clock position, but since Green has not gone through all six hoops, Green will return.



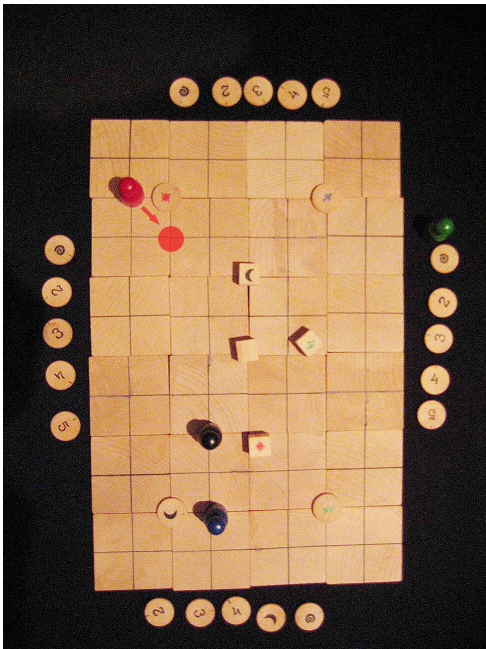
5. For her Continuation Shot, Black attempts a long shot to Roquet Blue. The Difficulty is 5, and Black decides to flip her 5 counter to play a special shot, so the shot succeeds. Blue is knocked on one (Note: if Black had hit Blue with Difficulty 5 at a distance of 1, Blue would have been knocked $(5-1)/2 = 2$ intersections further on).



6. Black decides to use her Croquet to hit Blue four intersection up, with a follow-through straight on. The difficulty is 4. She rolls a blank: a Disastrous Croquet! As the preceding player, Green gets to move the balls. Blue is moved one intersection up. Green has the option of sending Black 45 degree to the left, which would mean that Black would stop on the first hoop, but instead Green sends Black two intersections 45 degrees to the right of the intended direction.



7. For her Continuation Shot, Black opts for a simple shot of Difficulty 2, in order to leave her easy to hit in Blue's next go. Black rolls a 2, and the shot succeeds. This is the end of Black's go.



8. It is now Red's go. Without her partner Green on the lawn, there is little for Red to do but try a simple shot of Difficulty 1 to line herself up for the hoop next go. She rolls a 4, and the shot succeeds.

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