Tabletop Croquet
Adapted as a flicking game for the piecepack
by Mark A. Biggar

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2-10 players (possibly in two or more teams), 40-60 min
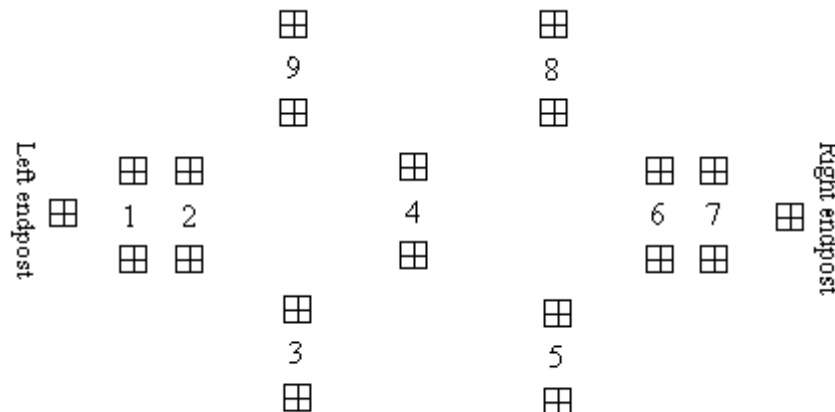
Description
This is an adaptation of the lawn game Croquet to the piecepack game system as a tabletop flicking game.

Definitions
Flick   (verb) to propel a game piece (such as a piecepack coin) across the playing area with a single finger. A flick is not a sustained push, but a sudden snap. A proper flick is performed by resting a single fingertip on the playing surface with the fingernail against the game piece, then either (1) straightening the finger with the hand held motionless, or (2) straightening the whole hand at the wrist with the arm held motionless.

Game setup
Set up a croquet course using suit-side down tiles as shown in the following diagram:

The two endposts are stacks of three tiles. The pairs of tiles that form the wickets should be about 2 tile widths apart. The distance between the endposts and the closest wicket should be at least 3 tile widths, while the paired wickets (1 & 2 and 6 & 7) should be 1 _ to 2 tile widths apart. Build the course as large as you want, but I have found that a course about 4 feet long and half as wide makes for a good game (and also tends to fit on the table). You want to use a smooth surface seamless table that allows the coins to slide freely when flicked.

Each player chooses a coin showing a unique face. This allows for up to 10 players (4 suit faces, and 6 non-suit faces.) Just like in lawn croquet, where the playing order is traditionally determined by the color rings on the endposts, the players play in a standard coin order: black, red, blue, green/yellow, null, ace, 2, 3, 4, then 5. It is suggested that players determine a player order using some mutually agreed method and then take the coins in the order above.

Player turns
Each player, in the standard order, starts play by placing their coin within one tile width of the left endpost, between that endpost and wicket 1, and then taking their first flick.   A player's goal is to flick his coin through the wickets in the standard croquet order as follows: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, hit the right endpost, 7, 6, 8, 4, 9, 2, 1, hit the left endpost. The first player to complete the course in that precise order wins the game.

A coin is deemed to have passed a wicket if the center of the coin passes the line formed by the center grid lines of the tiles forming the wicket and it goes through in the proper direction of travel. The proper direction to go through a wicket is in the direction toward the next endpost to be hit by that coin; i.e., relative to the above diagram, until striking the right endpost, a coin must pass wickets from left-to-right, after a coin hits the right endpost (assuming it correctly passed wickets 1 through 7), that coin reverses direction and now must pass wickets from right-to-left.

A player always gets one free flick on his turn. Each time the active player's coin passes the next correct wicket, in the above order, the player earns an additional flick for this turn. Hitting the right endpost (after correctly passing wicket 7) also earns an additional flick. Passing a wicket in the wrong direction or out of order or hitting the right endpost out of order, does not earn a player an additional flick.

If the active player's coin hits another coin, then the player earns two additional flicks. The player must take one of the following actions:

1. Continue flicking his coin around the course from his coin's current position.

2. Move his coin to any position not more than one coin width from the hit coin and then continue his turn flicking his own coin from its new position.

3. Use one of the earned flicks to flick the hit coin in any direction and then continue his turn from his coin's current position.

4. Move his coin to any position not more than one coin width from the hit coin, then use one of the earned flicks to flick the hit coin in any direction and then continue his turn from his coin's new position.

Once a coin has been hit, a player cannot earn more flicks by hitting that same coin again this turn until his coin has successfully passed at least one more wicket or hit an endpost. There is no limit to the number of flicks a player can earn during a turn, but a player must use all the flicks earned during the current turn; there is no carryover between turns. Note that if a player flicks or knocks another player's coin through its next correct wicket, then this does count toward the other player's completion of the course, but does not earn an extra flick for either player.

Fouls
If a player flicks his coin off the table, he looses any remaining flicks for the current turn and just places his coin back on the edge of the table at the place it fell off, one coin width in from the edge. If a player knocks or flicks some other player's coin off the table, it is just placed back on the table at the place it fell off, one coin width in from the edge.

If a flicked coin causes one of the wicket tiles to be misplaced, the tile should be restored to its original position before the next flick. Coins must be flicked from where they lie, even if touching a tile or another coin. If a player flicks a coin that is touching another coin and the other coin moves, this does not count as hitting the other coin.

Winning
The first player to flick his coin through the complete course in the given order and hit the left endpost wins the game.

Option rule: Team play
With 4, 6, 8, 9 or 10 players, the game can be played in teams. Choose up teams of equal size then order the players so that players in different teams alternate in the obvious way. Play is as above with the following exceptions:

1. The first team with all members (including rovers, see below) completing the course wins the game.

2. A player does not earn extra flicks by hitting coins belonging to teammates.

3. Once a player's coin has passed the last wicket, he has a choice: either hit the endpost and leave the game or declaring his coin a "rover". A player with a "rover" now plays to help his teammates and hinder his opponents under a special set of rules:

   - A rover earns an extra flick by passing any wicket in either direction, but only once per turn per wicket.
   - A rover earns the extra flicks for hitting opponent's coins, but only once per coin per turn. He does get to make his choice of one of the four actions above.
   - Any player may use one of their flicks during their turn to flick a rover so as to hit the left endpost and force it to complete the

course and leave the game, but may make only one attempt per rover per turn.

Optional Rule: Poison (for non-team play)
Once a player has completed the course by passing all the wickets and has hit the left endpost, he must declare his coin "poison". His goal is now to eliminate all the other players by hitting their coins with his own coin. Each coin he succeeds in hitting with his coin is killed and immediately looses the game. The player does earn the two additional flicks. Only the active player's coin is "poison", if it hits another "poison" coin, only the hit coin is killed not the active coin.

Design Notes

1. The rules are loosely based on the U.S. Croquet Assoc. official Nine-Wicket Croquet rules.

2. Luckily there are just enough tiles in a standard piecepack to construct a Croquet field: 9 pairs for the wickets and two stacks of three for the endposts.

3. Tournament Nine-Wicket Croquet only allows a player to have at most two extra shots save up at any one time, but more informal play allows for any number so I used those rules.

History

20020914	0.5	mab	Original version
20021012	0.6	mab	Clarifications and tweaks in response to playtest comments
20030322	1.0	mab	update for web page
20040807	1.1	mab	annual update and added design notes

Thank you for playing my game. Please report rules problems or variant suggestions to mark@biggar.org.