

Laws of Association Croquet

Where should a referee stand and why?

Short answer: as close as possible.

Long answer: ask the player their intention, and stand

- a. close,
- b. not obstruct or distract the player,
- c. not obstruct the path of a ball, but
- d. where the referee can observe the fault and/or activity to be observed.

It is important to evaluate the situation and stand where the action can be seen clearly and easily.

For example, if a player is attempting a hampered hoop shot – one where the ball is close to an upright – the referee has to evaluate the situation and decide if a crush or a double tap is more likely. The answer tells the referee where to stand.

If the ball is against the upright, then the referee must stand in a position to observe the player hit “away”. This typically will be either directly behind or in front of shot to observe the direction of the face of the mallet as it strikes.

However, if the ball is even a few millimetres from an upright the referee should stand beside the shot and very close to observe any double tap. Note that it is very close and beside the stroke.

Did that ball move?

We recently conducted an experiment with experienced referees. Five lined up behind a player conducting a very thin take off croquet shot, and one referee stood only five feet to the side, on the side of the croquet ball.

A thin take off only moves the croquet ball (CB) very slightly. Remember the law requires the CB to merely move, or shake, and not move a long distance.

In this experiment the take-off was performed and the five referees standing behind the striker all confirmed that the CB moved. The surprise? The referee to the side, only five feet away declared that they did **not** see the ball move.

Was this a fault? NO! The ball did move as required by the laws, but this referee was not situated so as to see the movement. The CB travelled directly towards the referee and so its movement was hard to see.

If a qualified referee cannot see a ball move from five feet away, you have no chance from the other side of the lawn!

Note: the player must also “hit into the ball”, but that is the topic of another article and does not affect the above discussion.

Conclusion

Referees have to position themselves so they can see the action. Stand close and observe.

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