

Proposed Guidelines for Marking Balls in Double Bank Play

The availability of lawn courts necessitate that many croquet matches be played under double bank conditions. During double bank games, it is necessary to mark and lift ball(s) from one of the double-banked games. *Rule 14.1 Marking Balls, The Official Rules of The United States Croquet Association-Revised 2006*, provides the only rules related to marking, lifting and replacement of balls.

14.1 Marking Balls

- a) All players shall carry ball markers to be used when marking the position of any ball that needs to be lifted, as in rule 14 B. In doubles play the striker's partner should be prepared at any time to mark balls in either game.
- b) A ball may be marked and lifted, with the consent of the players of that ball's game, when it is felt to be interfering with the other game on the court.
- c) A lifted ball shall be replaced as soon as it no longer interferes with the play for which it was lifted.
- d) A ball in a critical position (i.e. in or near a wicket, wired positions, and some position on or near the nine inch line) shall not be lifted, but shall be allowed to play while the other game takes a double banking time-out (as allowed for in the tournament's guideline), provided the delay will not be excessive.

Although the above rules are easy to understand they are not very helpful in their application. Frequently, the ball marking processes are inconsistent and disruptive to play. Major concerns are: 1) the time element employed in marking and lifting process and 2) the disruption of the "rhythm" in break play. The Proposed Guidelines for Marking Balls in Double Bank Play is provided to to facilitate application of *14.1 Marking Balls*.

Proposed Guidelines for Marking Balls in Double Bank Play

- 1) The only time a striker should mark, lift, and replace a ball is if the time required by the striker is not significantly longer than if another player had done the same.
- 2) A ball not in a critical position may be lifted by any player in either game.
- 3) A ball in a critical position should only be lifted by a disinterested person, i.e. an official or a player from the other game. For example, only a solid player should lift a stripe ball that is in a critical position.
- 4) After marking and lifting a ball, the “lifter” should stand close to the position where the ball that was marked and lifted, but far enough away not to interfere with the striker or in the line of sight of the striker.
- 5) A lifted ball should not be tossed aside on the ground. The lifted ball should be held by the “lifter” to assure that the players in both games realize that a ball has been lifted.
- 6) The player that marked and lifted a ball should replace the ball immediately after the interference has been alleviated.
- 7) If one game is in the period that permits an interference time out, this game should use the interference timeout and defer to the other game.
- 8) If the strikers in both games are in “break play”, the game ball that should be lifted is that which would take the maximum number of strokes to alleviate interference.
- 9) If it is not immediately obvious which game should have their ball lifted, one game should volunteer to have their ball lifted. (Ball lifting need not take significant amount of time. Frequently, the time to lift a ball can be less than the time to try to decide which game should have their ball lifted.)