

## What is Poison Croquet?

In some areas of the Western United States a simple form of croquet is being played, one different than the traditional competitive forms of croquet. This type of croquet is often called Poison, and is a favorite of amateur or casual croquet players.

Poison croquet is played with the standard nine wicket croquet set. It can be played by 2,3,4,5, or 6 players. It has similar rules to American backyard croquet; however, it differs from other styles of croquet, in that no points are scored. The players all start at the same end of the nine-wicket croquet playing field, instead of having an equal number of players beginning at opposing sides. The order of the game follows the order of the colors on the croquet mallet with the corresponding ball color of each player. Rather than competing for points, or which "team" can complete the course first, with all of their croquet balls, the players compete to see who can become poison first, and eliminate all of the other players.

A player becomes poison by hitting his or her ball through all nine wickets and striking the stick at end. Once a player's ball becomes poison, any ball that they hit with their "poison" ball, is eliminated from the game. The goal is to eliminate all of the other players from the game by hitting them with the poison ball. The last player left in the game wins.

Other traditional rules of backyard or American croquet still apply. The ball must be hit forward through each wicket, rather than going through from the back end or from the opposing direction. An extra hit is gained for each wicket, through which a ball is hit; only one extra hit can be gained from each wicket. An extra hit is also gained by hitting the ball of another player. After the other player's ball is hit, the player who hit the other player's ball has two options: he may place his ball next to the other player's ball, put his foot on his own ball, and knock the other player's ball out of play by striking his own ball; or he may simply take another hit towards the next wicket.

Once a player has become poison, the other players can still become poison and win the game, although it is much more difficult. The other players still just have to finish the course and hit the stake at the end with their ball, but must do it without allowing the player who is currently poison to strike their ball with his or hers. If two or more players are poison, the player who hits his ball into the other's first, wins (similar to marbles); or at least that player who was hit by a poison ball is out of the game. Once all players are eliminated, except one, the game is over and the final remaining player wins the game.

Poison croquet is popular among amateur croquet and yard game players because of its casual play and simple rules. One advantage of poison croquet is that it can be played on nearly any type of terrain. Like American or backyard nine-wicket croquet, poison croquet is traditionally played in any grass field, long or tall, thick or thin. However, poison croquet can also be played on other terrains to make it more interesting or to just change things. It can be played on a more rugged terrain or playing field with obstacles rather than being limited to a professional or well-groomed playing field.

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