



CROQUET IN THE EASTERN REGION



A plan for development
by the East Anglian
Croquet Federation



A Memorandum to the Eastern Council
for Sport and Recreation



Produced by the Sports Council
(Eastern Region)
in co-operation with the
East Anglian Croquet Federation



A PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT BY THE EAST ANGLIAN CROQUET FEDERATION

1987 - 1989

This report is submitted as a memorandum to the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation for the following reasons:

- 1.** To bring to the attention of the Council the requirements of croquet in the Eastern Region.
- 2.** To seek acceptance of the Report by the Council and to request its assistance, when appropriate, in matters relating to the development of croquet in the Eastern Region.
- 3.** To draw the attention of the Council, when recommending the allocation of funds for grant aid, to the sport in the Eastern Region.
- 4.** To encourage a greater awareness of the needs of croquet by Local Authorities and other relevant agencies, to assist in the further development of the game in the Eastern Region.

This report was produced by the East Anglian Croquet Federation and the Sports Council (Eastern Region).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Croquet is a game of skill and tactics. It is played on a smooth grass court where the players have to propel balls with the aid of a mallet through a series of hoops in a pre-ordained order. The game was introduced to Britain in the 1850s from Ireland. A National Championship was first held in 1867, with the formal establishment of rules in 1870.

1.2 In early 1983, the governing body for croquet in England, the Croquet Association (CA), launched a national initiative to encourage further development in the game. Its main aim was to encourage more people to play croquet, particularly since it is an activity which commends itself to people of all ages. This initiative was followed up by the production of a National Forward Plan for croquet at the end of 1984.

1.3 One of the key elements in the CA 1983 initiative was the appointment of voluntary Development Officers in each region. These individuals were given the brief for promoting croquet as widely as possible. In order to channel developments in the Eastern Region in a programmed manner the Development Officer, Judy Anderson, produced a development plan for the period 1983-1986. This set out a number of proposals for promotional initiatives and formed the basis of an application for financial assistance from the Sports Council to support the programme.

1.4 The original development plan, which was never published, has now completed its lifespan. The East Anglian Croquet Federation (EACF), which was formed as one of the developments arising from the original plan has decided to produce a development plan for the period 1987-1989. It is intended that it should serve the following functions:

- To highlight the regional developments proposed in the National Forward Plan produced by the CA and to relate them to the Eastern Region.
- To act as a checklist to the EACF and its constituent clubs with regard to the future development of croquet.
- To underline those developments in the game where assistance will be required from other agencies involved in promoting participation in the sport and to make such bodies aware of current and future needs.
- To provide a framework within which applications for financial assistance may be made by the EACF and may be considered by those agencies in a position to offer grant aid, most notably the Sports Council (Eastern Region) and the local authorities.

2 THE CROQUET ASSOCIATION

2.1 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Croquet Association was founded in 1896 and is currently administered by a council of 24 members elected for a three year term. Its sub committees deal with the specialist areas of publicity and development, tournaments, laws, handicap co-ordination, international selection, equipment, editorial work on the CA magazine and finance and general purposes. The sub committee responsible for the 1984 National Forward Plan is the Publicity and Development committee and all the Regional Development Officers report to this group. The CA employs an

Administrative Secretary and a National Development Officer.

2.2 COACHING STRUCTURE

With the assistance of the National Coaching Foundation, a national coaching scheme is now being operated. Regional Coaching Advisers have been appointed to administer coaching development in their areas and courses are run at club, regional and national level.

The national coaching scheme has three grades of coach —

Grade 1 — For coaching beginners and high handicap players

Grade 2 — For coaching mid range handicap players

Grade 3 — For coaching low handicap players, also with a responsibility with to instruct and assess Grade 1 and 2 coaches.

(Grades 2 and 3 coaches must also be qualified referees)

On a national basis the CA is seeking to train 60 Grade 1 coaches, 20 Grade 2 coaches and 10 Grade 3 coaches by 1989.

The Croquet Association proposes the formation of croquet Centres of Excellence in each region, with the assistance of the Regional Coaching Adviser. These will operate along the same lines as Centres of Excellence in other sports, whereby they will be administered by the national governing body and participants will be people who have the potential to reach international level within three years. At a lower level, a pyramidal structure of coaching opportunities will be provided, to allow players to progress from beginners to advanced standard in a more structured way than at present.

2.3 COMPETITIVE STRUCTURE

Competitions run throughout the croquet season which extends from April to October. The CA controls all tournaments, including international fixtures, an inter-county championship, inter club competitions also involving schools and universities and tournaments for individuals (championships exist for men, women, veterans and under 18s). Current plans include the introduction of a national under 21s competition. The handicapping system enables beginners and less skilled players to compete against the best players with an equal chance of winning in handicap competitions.

3 THE EAST ANGLIAN CROQUET FEDERATION

3.1 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The East Anglian Croquet Federation (EACF) was formed in April 1986 with the aim of promoting croquet in the Eastern Region and to co-ordinate the activities of clubs in the area. The Federation is administered by an Executive committee elected by representatives from the 20 clubs in membership. Coaching and competition at regional and county level are organised by the EACF.

3.2 COACHING STRUCTURE

The CA Regional Coaching Adviser organises coaching courses in the region on the format set out in Section 2.2 above and according to identified demand. In addition, clubs organise some coaching activities for their own members. There are currently 14 Grade 1 coaches, three potential

Grade 2 coaches and no Grade 3 coaches in the Eastern Region.

3.3 COMPETITIVE STRUCTURE

A hierarchy of competitive opportunities exists within the Eastern Region.

3.3.1 Regional Events:

Owing to the size of the Eastern Region and the consequent long travelling distances, the area has been divided into three parts for EACF competitive purposes. The Eastern area includes Essex and Suffolk, the Northern area includes Norfolk and Cambridgeshire and the Western area includes Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. Each of the three areas runs competitions, and from 1987 onwards, area winners will progress to a regional final and the winners of this to a national final.

3.3.2 Club Open Events:

The larger clubs (Colchester, Ipswich, Hunstanton and Wrest Park) run tournaments which are open to individuals and clubs from all over the country.

3.3.3 Club Local Events:

These are organised by clubs primarily for their own members and often operate on an ongoing basis throughout the season.

4 PARTICIPATION IN CROQUET IN THE EASTERN REGION: THE CURRENT SITUATION

4.1 The number of registered participants in croquet in the Eastern Region is just under 500, playing at 27 venues. Significant increases have been achieved since 1984 both in the number of people playing and in the number of clubs catering for them. In the main this is as a result of initiatives taken in line with the Regional Development Plan. Fourteen new clubs were formed in the period 1984 to 1986, catering for a total in excess of 300 new participants. Of particular significance has been the emergence of clubs in the central parts of the region where previously there was no formal opportunity to play croquet. Appendix 1 summarises the current position.

4.2 Of the 27 clubs in the region, 16 have fewer than 20 members. Clearly, if clubs are to function on a more viable basis they will require an increase in membership and in turn the clubs should serve as the basic building blocks for increasing participation. In most cases, a shortage of facilities is not the reason for restricted membership and therefore capacity exists for attracting new participants.

4.3 In addition to the participants recorded above, many hundreds of people are introduced to the game through inter college competition at Cambridge University and via the 14 schools throughout the region who play croquet on a regular basis. A number of clubs in the region have participated in the 'Adopt A School' campaign, promoted by the EACF. One result of this was that Colchester High School, adopted by the Colchester Croquet Club, won the National Schools Championships in 1986.

4.4 At the other end of the age spectrum, a number of local authority Motivators for the Active Retired, have introduced croquet into their activity programmes, thus encouraging

participation in a game which has much to commend it to older people, particularly since the handicapping system enables them to compete with younger people on an equal basis.

4.5 Demonstrations and 'Come and Try It' events, have taken place as part of the Sports Council's Womens Institutes' National Demonstration Project in Cambridgeshire and at a number of National Trust properties in the region. Although no figures are available to show how many women play croquet, in common with many other sports, fewer women participate than men. For this reason positive steps are needed to attract more women into the game.

5 PARTICIPATION IN CROQUET IN THE EASTERN REGION: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS:

5.1 The following proposals take account of the need to consolidate the progress made in the Eastern Region in the period 1983-1986 and also of the objectives set out in the CA's National Forward Plan.

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 1 — The Publicising of opportunities to participate in Croquet:

5.2.1 The Croquet Association Forward Plan aims to increase participation in the game by around 10% each year in the period 1985-1989 and proposes the following measures for achieving this.

- The preparation of new promotional literature and audio visual programmes at national level.
- The production of a guide to clubs on developing media outlets to publicise their existence and activities.

5.2.2 ACTION AREAS

- EACF to ensure circulation of national and regional publicity materials to Local Authority Recreation Departments, Libraries and other suitable outlets.
TIMESCALE: May 1987
- EACF to compile a comprehensive directory of opportunities to play croquet for use in conjunction with the Sports Council's 'What's Your Sport?' initiative.
TIMESCALE: Spring 1987
- Videos and display boards will be loaned by EACF to clubs to mount displays in libraries, schools and other suitable public places.
TIMESCALE: October 1987 onwards
- A 'Why Not Try Croquet' poster will be produced by EACF in conjunction with the Sports Council, with details of club contacts and playing opportunities and it will be circulated widely throughout the region.
TIMESCALE: May 1988

5.3 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 2 — The Promotion of Junior Participation in Croquet

5.3.1 ACTION AREAS

- EACF to encourage all clubs to participate in the 'Adopt A

School' scheme. (see Section 4.3)
TIMESCALE: May 1987 onwards

- EACF to organise area competitions for juniors (U18s)
TIMESCALE: April 1988

5.4 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 3 — The promotion of Croquet for the over 45s

5.4.1 ACTION AREA

- EACF to encourage member clubs to forge links with local authority Motivators for the Active Retired and with 50+ sports clubs. Promotional material on croquet will be distributed to the motivators and to 50+ sports club organisers.
TIMESCALE: Summer 1987

5.5 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 4 — The promotion of Womens' Participation in Croquet.

5.5.1 ACTION AREAS

- EACF to encourage member clubs to make contact with local women's organisations such as the Women's Institutes and the Towns Women's Guilds. Clubs will be encouraged to run a programme of 'Come and Try It' events specifically for women.
TIMESCALE: Summer 1987 onwards

5.6 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 5 — Increasing Club Membership

5.6.1 ACTION AREAS

- Details on clubs will be publicised via the 'What's Your Sport?' Initiative, a 'Why Not Try Croquet' poster and by the distribution of locally produced publicity materials. 'Come and Try It' events will be organised to stimulate additional membership.
TIMESCALE: May 1987 onwards

5.7 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 6 — The formation of new clubs

5.7.1 Whilst expanding the membership of existing clubs is clearly important, new participants to any sport are normally reluctant to travel long distances to take part. For this reason, where gaps exist in the coverage of the region by existing clubs, promotional activity will be initiated to stimulate the formation of new clubs.

The procedure for establishing clubs will involve widespread publicity for a series of 'Come and Try It' events over a six week period. Once this is completed, equipment will be loaned to a new club and individuals identified to perform organisational functions. Coaching support will continue to be offered by the nearest established club for as long as is required. The new clubs will seek to attract a membership in excess of 30 people. This process worked extremely successfully in the period 1983-1986 and it is proposed to undertake similar promotional activity at the locations listed below between 1987-1989.

5.7.2 ACTION AREAS

- The formation of three or more new clubs per year will be encouraged in the region with priority given to the following areas:

Luton, Huntingdon, Bottisham, Braintree, Epping, Letchworth, Downham Market, Thetford, Diss, Sudbury.

In some instances, initial interest has already been shown at these locations.

TIMESCALE: May 1987 onwards

5.8 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 7 — The Development of Excellence

5.8.1 ACTION AREAS

- EACF to liaise with the Croquet Association regarding the establishment of a regional Centre of Excellence.
TIMESCALE: Spring 1988
- EACF to encourage all clubs to hold beginners and improvers courses each year according to demand. One course for advanced players will be run in the region each year by the Regional Coaching Adviser.
TIMESCALE: Spring 1988 onwards

5.9 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 8 — The Development of Coach Education

5.9.1 ACTION AREAS

In line with the above recommendations the EACF will seek to achieve the following by 1989:

- At least one grade 1 coach per club
- At least one grade 2 coach per area
- At least one grade 3 coach in the region

An appropriate programme of courses will be run in conjunction with the Croquet Association to achieve these objectives.

TIMESCALE: September 1987 onwards

6 FACILITIES FOR CROQUET IN THE EASTERN REGION

6.1 The basic facility requirement for croquet is a standard croquet lawn measuring 35 yards by 28 yards. It should consist of a flat area of grass edged with a white line (see diagram in Appendix II). A distance of at least one yard is required beyond the boundary line to provide room for swinging a mallet to hit balls which have come to rest near the line. At least two lawns of this size are normally required for hosting Croquet Association tournaments and for playing matches against other clubs.

6.2 A short croquet lawn is 24 yards by 16 yards (the same size as a tennis court) and a slightly modified version of the normal game can be played on a lawn of this nature. The short croquet game was specially devised to enable croquet to be played on tennis courts and to reduce the time taken to play a game.

6.3 A flat, firm grass playing surface is required, free from hollows and bumps. The grass should be short as on a bowling green and because croquet does not involve rapid movement lawns rarely wear badly, even under heavy usage.

6.4 Each lawn requires six hoops, a centre peg and corner flags. The players will require a total of four balls, a mallet

each and scoring clips. A ball stop is normally required around each lawn, the simplest form being 10 foot lengths of 2" x 2" timber with 9" cross pieces of the same material, to keep the timber off the ground. When in position, this provides a 4" high ball stop which is inexpensive and easily moved for mowing purposes.

6.5 Ancillary Facilities:

A small hut or pavilion is desirable, both as a meeting place and as a store for equipment. It is needed to accommodate officials and players for matches and tournaments and to provide at least rudimentary facilities for changing and refreshments. Ideally, croquet lawns should be enclosed by

a low hedge or fence to protect them from casual walkers.

6.6 The routine maintenance required for croquet lawns is somewhat less than the attention needed by bowling greens to maintain a good surface.

6.7 Tennis courts and bowling greens which have fallen into disuse can be made into croquet lawns of a reasonable standard fairly readily. Other flat grass areas can make good conversions, but may require reseeding to ensure a good playing surface.

6.8 The map below shows the location of existing facilities in the Eastern Region.

CROQUET CLUBS IN THE EASTERN REGION

Bedfordshire

- 1. Wrest Park (Silsoe)
- 2. Colworth House (Sharnbrook)

Cambridgeshire

- 3. Thomas Cook (Peterborough)
- 4. Werrington
- 5. Cambridge

Essex

- 6. Newport
- 7. Beechams (Harlow)
- 8. Bancroft RFC
- 9. Bentley
- 10. Havering
- 11. S.E. Essex
- 12. Ingatestone
- 13. Colchester
- 14. Wivenhoe
- 15. Frinton
- 16. Harwich and Dovercourt

Hertfordshire

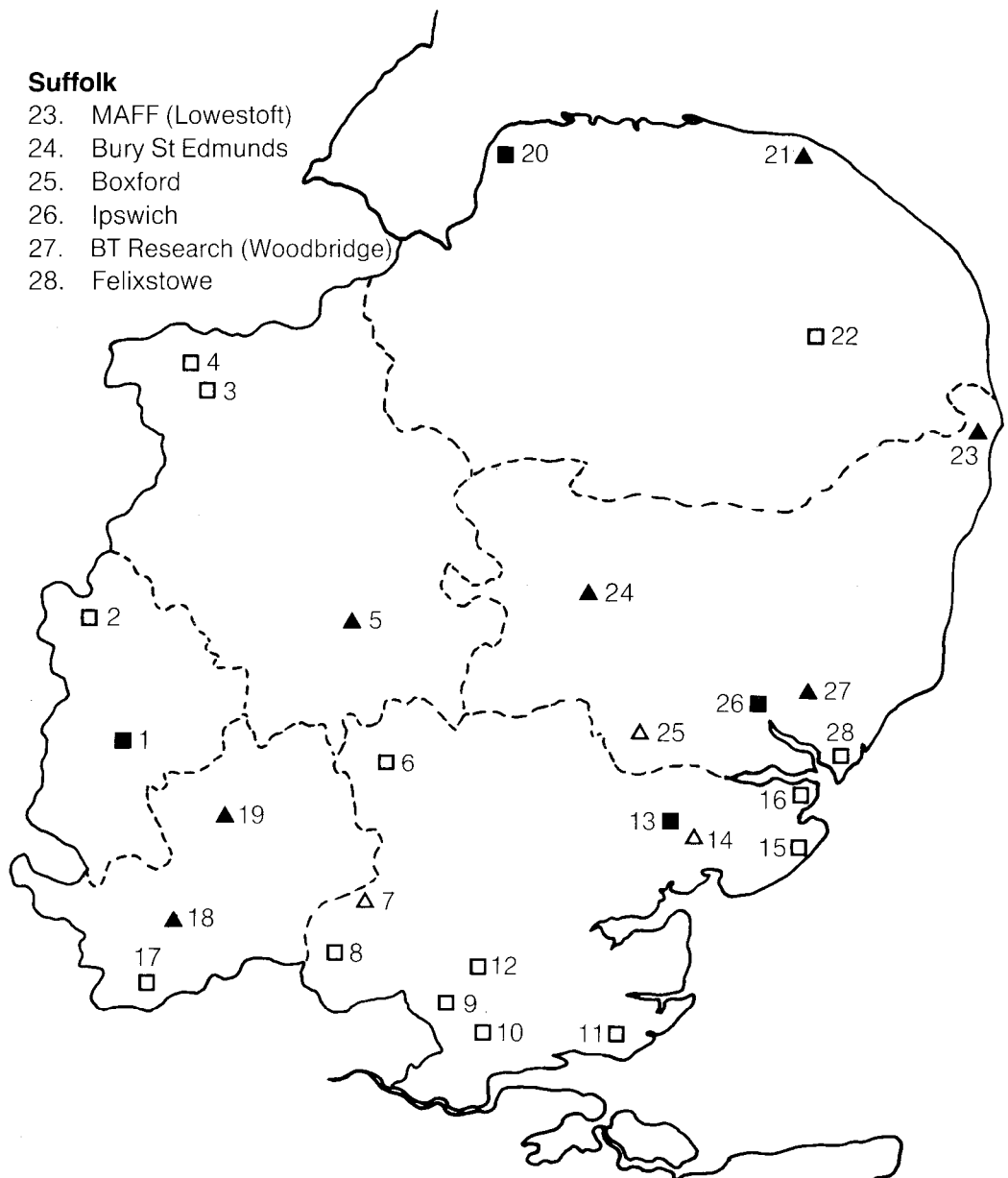
- 17. Cassiobury (Watford)
- 18. St Albans
- 19. Stevenage

Norfolk

- 20. Hunstanton
- 21. Cromer
- 22. Norwich

Suffolk

- 23. MAFF (Lowestoft)
- 24. Bury St Edmunds
- 25. Boxford
- 26. Ipswich
- 27. BT Research (Woodbridge)
- 28. Felixstowe



Key

- Clubs with Full-size Lawns able to hold Tournaments
- Clubs with 2 or Less Full-size Lawns (and possibly other small Lawns)
- ▲ Clubs with Small Lawns
- △ Private Lawns used by Clubs

6.9 The above map illustrates that at present only four clubs have sufficient lawns to host a tournament of regional or wider significance and that only five more clubs have two full sized lawns which are normally required for formal inter club competitions. This means that 18 clubs operate with facilities which are below the standard required for inter club play. Clearly this restricts competitive opportunities in the region and should be rectified as an important priority.

7 FACILITIES FOR CROQUET IN THE EASTERN REGION: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS

7.1 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 9 — The extension and upgrading of existing facilities

7.1.1 The East Anglian Croquet Federation considers that the following facility extensions and upgradings are required to meet essential facility requirements in the region.

Regional facilities: Extension to provide at least two lawns is required to enable the following clubs to host coaching and competitive needs at regional level —

Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, Newport (Saffron Walden), Havering.

County Facilities: Extension to two lawns is required to enable clubs at the following locations to host coaching and competitive needs at county level —

Southend (South East Essex), Stevenage, Cambridge

Local Facilities: Facility extensions, ideally to provide two lawns, should be made at the remaining clubs in the region to enable them to host inter club competitive matches.

7.1.2 ACTION AREAS

- EACF in conjunction with the Sports Council (Eastern Region) will bring the above facility deficiencies to the attention of the local authorities in the districts concerned, and will seek their assistance in identifying ways of providing additional facilities for croquet.

7.2 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 10 — The development of new facilities

7.2.1 Section 5.7 above identifies a need for the formation of new clubs and such clubs will obviously require facilities to be provided to enable them to function. The locations where the formation of new clubs will be pursued is as follows:

Luton, Huntingdon, Bottisham, Braintree, Epping, Letchworth, Downham Market, Thetford, Diss, Sudbury

7.2.2 ACTION AREAS

- EACF will bring to the attention of relevant local agencies in the areas concerned, the facility requirements of the new clubs and will seek their assistance in identifying ways of providing such facilities. Local Authorities will be approached, along with local firms with sports facilities as well as other voluntary sports clubs who might be able to accommodate a croquet lawn in conjunction with their existing facilities. The assistance of local sports councils will be sought where appropriate.
TIMESCALE: May 1987 onwards

7.3 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE 11 — The Development of Indoor Croquet

7.3.1 The CA Equipment Committee is currently investigating the introduction of an indoor version of croquet, where the hoops would be mounted on flat plates to facilitate usage on hard floors. Indoor croquet would allow the game to be

played during the winter and with a relaxation of rules on the size of the court required, it could be played in comparatively limited spaces such as village halls and community centres.

7.3.2 ACTION AREAS

- EACF will continue to support the development of indoor croquet and once the game has been accepted by the CA, it will promote a series of demonstration events for Local Authorities, to encourage them to provide the game in their indoor centres. Particular attention will be paid to the possibilities of developing the game in rural areas. If necessary EACF will produce an amended set of simplified rules to enable the game to be accommodated in relatively confined spaces.
TIMESCALE: 1987 onwards

8 A GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Whilst it is intended that the implementation of the Regional Development Plan will be co-ordinated and undertaken in the main by the East Anglian Croquet Federation and its constituent clubs, the success of the development objectives will depend also on the support of other agencies. This section outlines the way in which specific agencies can assist with the implementation.

8.2 EAST ANGLIAN CROQUET FEDERATION

- To co-ordinate the implementation of the development objectives according to the timescale set out in this plan.
- To co-ordinate requests for financial assistance from other agencies.
- To liaise with statutory bodies such as the Sports Council and the local authorities to enlist their assistance in specific areas of development.

8.3 INDIVIDUAL CROQUET CLUBS

- To respond positively to the proposed developments and to assist in their implementation at local level.
- To organise local initiatives in line with the overall development objectives contained in this plan.

8.4 LOCAL AUTHORITY RECREATION DEPARTMENTS

- To seek to include croquet facilities in existing parks or sports fields when a demand can be identified and to improve existing facilities where necessary.
- To seek to include croquet in any multi sports promotions aimed at increasing participation.
- To assist in the establishment of indoor croquet facilities in the future.

8.5 LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

- To support the expansion of croquet in schools and at other local introductory events, by circulating fixture details and publicity materials to all schools and colleges.

- The EACF will liaise with Adult Education Departments regarding the inclusion of croquet coaching courses in their programme of activities.

8.6 THE SPORTS COUNCIL (EASTERN REGION)

- To assist the EACF in drawing to the attention of the relevant agencies those developments where the plan identifies they have a role to play.
- To consider financial assistance for initiatives of regional significance which have been identified as priorities by

the EACF.

8.7 THE EASTERN COUNCIL FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

- To note the requirements of croquet in the Eastern Region as set out in the development plan.
- To accept the plan as a memorandum
- To encourage member bodies to act upon those aspects of the plan where they have a role to play.

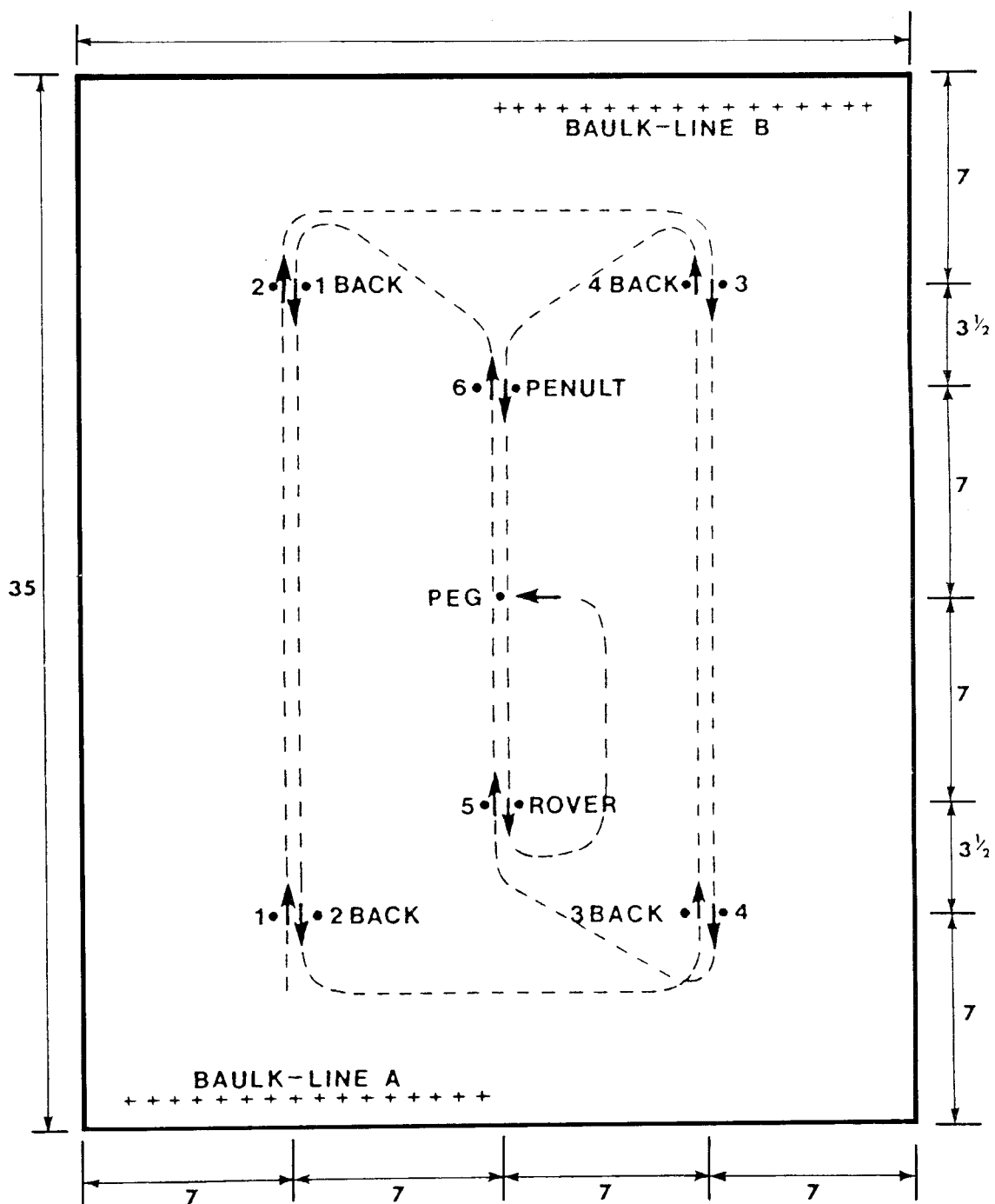
APPENDIX 1 CROQUET CLUBS IN THE EASTERN REGION

EACF Area	Club	No. of Lawns	No. of Members	Club Registered with the C.A.	Club Member of EACF	Open or Closed Club	Club has C.A. Coach	Club has C.A. Referee	Club runs C.A. Tournaments
EAST (Essex/ Suffolk)	Colchester	4	>100	/	/	O	/	/	/
	Harwich and Dovercourt	1	<20*	/		O			
	Frinton	1	<20*	/		O			
	Havering	2	20-40*	/	/	O			
	SE Essex	1½	20-40*	/	/	O			
	Newport	2	20-40*	/	/	O	/	/	
	Bentley	1	<20	/	/	O			
	Ingatestone	1	<20	/	/	O			
	Bancroft RFC	1	<20		/	C			
	Beechams	1 S	<20			C			
	Ipswich	2	20-40	/	/	O	/	/	/
	BT Research	1	<20*		/	C	/		
	Felixstowe	1	<20*			O	/		
	Bury St Edmunds	3 S	20-40*		/	O			
NORTH (Cambs/ Norfolk)	Cromer	1 S	<20*		/	O			
	Norwich	1½	20-40	/	/	O			
	MAFF Lowestoft	1	<20*		/	C			
	Thomas Cook (Peterborough)	1	<20*	/	/	C	/		
	Werrington	2	20-40	/	/	O	/		
	Hunstanton	5	<20	/	/	O	/	/	/
	Cambridge	2 S	<20*		/	O	/		
	Cambridge Univ.	?	>100		/	C			
WEST (Beds/ Herts)	Colworth	1½	<20	/	/	C	/	/	
	Wrest Park	6	20-40	/	/	O	/	/	/
	Stevenage	2 S	<20*			O	/	/	
	St Albans	2 S	<20*	/		O			
	Cassiobury (Watford)	2	20-40	/		O			

KEY S = Small Lawn
 * = New Club since 1983
 C = Closed Club (unable to admit outside members)
 O = Open Clubs (able to admit all comers)

Number of members
 (less than) <20
 20-40
 (greater than) >100

APPENDIX II LAYOUT OF A STANDARD CROQUET LAWN



All distances are in yards.
Only the outer continuous line (the Boundary line) is marked on the court.
The two starting, or Baulk, lines are shown.
The order of making the hoops is indicated by arrows starting from Hoop No. 1.
The starting hoop has a blue crown and the final, or Rover, hoop has a red crown.