**WASTING TIME IN ASSOCIATION GAMES**

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Every player has a duty to play at a reasonable speed. There will be times when a player has to think through a strategy, or take time lining up a difficult shot; but swinging the mallet to and fro for half a minute, or gazing around at length when the next shot is obvious should be avoided.

Allowances are made for new players who are still learning the basic tactics, but as players gain experience they should be able to speed up their game. Slow play is particularly unfair when a player has a lot of bisques against a better player, and uses up most of the game time with their bisques, so the opponent does not get a fair share of the time.

Law 49 says: *The striker must position the balls and play his strokes with reasonable despatch. The adversary should anticipate as far as possible with which ball he will play next so that he may waste no time in approaching it at the start of his turn. In handicap play, the striker must indicate promptly at the end of his turn whether or not he intends to play a half-bisque or bisque. In doubles play, time must not be wasted in prolonged discussion or instruction.*

The Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet (ORLC) says: *A nine-hoop break with a leave consists of 70 strokes and can generally be completed in 12 to 25 minutes, giving an average time per stroke of between 10 and 20 seconds. In practice, a referee is unlikely to take action until the average duration rises to 30 seconds per stroke (45 minutes for an all-round break) and should also be influenced by the tactical difficulties and lawn conditions that the striker faces. It may be argued that players differ greatly in their natural rhythms and that croquet is a game intended to be played with care. Nonetheless, if a time-limit is in operation, the adversary is entitled to consideration. It is also worthy of note that some extraordinary accelerations in the pace of play have been seen in apparently slow players when a slender lead has become a deficit.*

*Nonetheless, if the referee agrees that the striker is taking an unjustifiably long time, he is fully entitled to use Law*[*55*](http://www.croquet.org.uk/association/laws/6th/laws_6th.htm#Law55) *to end the turn at any time. Naturally, the striker should be warned first and have explained to him the basis on which the referee will act. A less radical solution may be found in summarily and publicly awarding extra time.*

If a player takes a long time over one shot, this is not a justification for accusing them of slow play, unless their previous play has also been slow. A player is entitled to take time when there are tactical problems to be sorted out.

If a player thinks that their opponent is playing too slowly, the first action is a friendly comment between turns, suggesting that they speed up. Except in extreme circumstances, it is impolite to interrupt a turn to comment on slow play. This would be justified if there was little time left, and the player is behind on hoops. If the friendly comment has no effect, the referee should be called to check the speed of play.

In social games slow play is usually tolerated, as these are often when players work out tactics for more serious games. However, frequent offenders should be warned that this is unacceptable in competitions.