

2026 MacRobertson Shield – Player Briefing

Version 1.3 by Michael D. Town 5/7/2026

Regulations

The Event is being played under the 2026 MacRobertson Shield Regulations V4.1., which take precedence over these briefing notes should there be any discrepancies.

The Event

The Event shall consist of three rounds of Test Matches in which each team plays each of the other three teams.

Schedules 1 (DDSDS) and 2 (DSDSD) will be used for each pair of Tests.

Play will normally start at 10.00 a.m., except that the start may be delayed by a ceremony on the first day of each Test Match.

The start time on days 2-5 at Surbiton will be 9.30 a.m.

Play will, if necessary, continue until impractical due to bad light as determined by the TM. Earlier finish times may be necessary on days where there is an evening event. In all cases, the in-player will be allowed to complete their turn if they so wish.

Court allocations will be announced by the TM before each day's play via a commentary item on CroquetScores, and will also be on the Order Of Play sheets on the noticeboard.

Some Test Matches will require late starts for some players. Courts will be pre-allocated, but if the specified court is still in use at 1.00 p.m., a different court may be allocated, or double-banking may be imposed.

Announcement of teams

The names of the players, the singles orders of merit based on current singles form, as defined in paragraph 8.3, and the doubles pairings of the competing teams, in a Test Match shall be submitted to the Tournament Manager not later than 4.30 p.m. on the day before the Test Match starts. Each team will submit in writing or electronically the names of the six singles players in order of merit (1-6) and the names of the players comprising the three doubles pairs, designated 1, 2 and 3 (which may be in any order).

For the purpose of agreeing the team orders submitted, a meeting will be arranged by the Manager on the day before the test match starts, at least one representative from each competing team appointed by the team captain with authority to challenge and respond to challenges to the team orders must attend. Challenges to team orders may be made only at this meeting and no team order shall be rejected in the absence of a challenge. If the team orders cannot be agreed by those present, the matter will be referred to the Appeals Panel.

A singles order of merit shall not be subject to challenge if no player (“the relevant player”) is placed higher than another player in the same team whose published current grade (DG) is more than 50 grade points higher than that of the relevant player. Additionally, the singles order of merit shall not be subject to challenge if the relevant player is placed higher than another player in the same team if they have a 12-month Performance Grade that is higher than that of the player being challenged below them.

Round 1 (24th - 28th July) at Hurlingham and Roehampton Clubs.

Test 1 (Seed 1 v Seed 4) is to be played at Roehampton on days 1, 3 and 5 and at Hurlingham on days 2 & 4 using Schedule 2.

Test 2 (Seed 2 v Seed 3) is to be played at Hurlingham on days 1, 3 and 5 and at Roehampton on days 2 & 4 using Schedule 1.

All the singles matches will be at Hurlingham, and Roehampton will only host doubles matches.

Late starts will be scheduled for singles players 5 and 6 for their first singles day and for singles players 3 and 4 for their second singles day.

On the final day, play will finish one hour before the start of the Centenary Dinner proceedings.

Round 2 (30th July - 3rd August) at Sussex County Croquet Club.

Round 2 will consist of Test Matches between the winner of a Round 1 Test Match and the loser of the other Round 1 Test Match.

Test 3 – Winner of Test Match 1 v Loser of Test Match 2

Test 4 – Winner of Test Match 2 v Loser of Test Match 1

The Team with the largest winning margin in Tests 1 and 2 will use Schedule 1 and the other Test Match will use Schedule 2.

It is expected that nine courts will be available for play at Sussex County Croquet Club, and so no late starts will be scheduled.

Round 3 (5th - 9th August) at Surbiton Croquet Club.

Round 3 will consist of the remaining Test Matches.

Test 5 – Seed 4 v whichever of Seeds 2 and 3 they have not yet played

Test 6 – Seed 1 v whichever of Seeds 2 and 3 they have not yet played

The Team with the best winning record so far will use Schedule 1 and the other Test Match will use Schedule 2.

Late starts will be scheduled for singles players 3 and 4 for their first singles day and for singles players 1 and 2 for their second singles day.

On the last two days, the late starts may be reallocated to doubles matches if the results of their Test Match has already been decided, so that the singles in the other Test Match can proceed without late starts.

On the final day, play will finish at 7.00 p.m. to allow players to attend the Closing Ceremony at Surbiton.

Club details

Detailed arrangements for each of the locations are linked from the event website.

Hurlingham - <https://croquetworldteamchampionships.co.uk/hurlingham-club/>

Roehampton - <https://croquetworldteamchampionships.co.uk/roehampton-club/>

Southwick - <https://croquetworldteamchampionships.co.uk/sussex-county-croquet-club/>

Surbiton - <https://croquetworldteamchampionships.co.uk/surbiton-croquet-club/>

Players' attention is particularly drawn to the local road restrictions around the Hurlingham Club. If approaching from Putney Bridge, traffic should avoid turning right under the railway arch on New Kings Road, but should turn right on Grimston Road or Foskett Road instead. When leaving the club, traffic should return the same way as used for entry.

Unfinished matches

Unfinished matches will be continued at any opportunity on subsequent days but will not take precedence over scheduled matches in that Test Match and will not start before any scheduled matches in that Test Match.

Players with an unfinished match must be prepared to resume play when directed by the Manager. This shall include (if necessary for determining the outcome of the Series) the day following the scheduled end of the final Test Match(es). Priority shall be given to matches in a Test Match the outcome of which could in turn influence the determination of the winner of the Series. Other unfinished matches need not be completed, since there is currently no requirement, for seeding or other purposes, to determine the finishing order of all four teams.

Matches may be resumed on different courts (even if pegged down) and at different venues. A warm-up period of 10 minutes shall be allowed prior to the match being resumed.

Double banking may be necessary.

All players must be available for a full day's play on the day following the final Test Match if required to continue unfinished matches.

Warm-up

A warm-up period will be allowed in the 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of each match. During this time, players may warm up on their court using the two balls they will use in their first game and any additional balls available. Hoop running may only be attempted using strokes no harder than would be required to send the ball seven yards if unimpeded by contact with the hoop in order not to disturb the setting of the hoops. Players may not shoot at the hoops or peg. A player may practice after they have finished for the day at the Manager's discretion.

Expedition in Play

Players' attention is drawn to Laws 56 (Expedition in Play) and 63.5 (Time Wasting).

The striker must position the balls and play the strokes of a turn with reasonable despatch. The opponent should anticipate as far as possible which ball will be the striker's ball for the next turn so that time is not wasted in approaching it at the start of the turn. A player who fails to play with reasonable despatch or deliberately plays more slowly in the latter stages of a time-limited game will be considered to be wasting time and action may be taken in accordance with Law 63.5.

Obstructions and Uneven Ground

Wooden stop boards may be moved if they interfere with a player's swing or stance: they are not regarded as fixed obstacles for which relief can be claimed. Relief may be claimed if a fixed obstacle or foliage interferes with a player's swing or if sloping ground outside the court interferes with a player's stance.

Reporting results

Players must report the result of each game as soon as they have finished. Order of Play sheets are provided on a noticeboard at each venue, indicating the court designated for each match. Scores should be entered in a +17tp format on the sheet in the column next to the winner's name.

Weather

The TM shall have discretion to halt play on any court at any time due to the court being, in his or her opinion, unfit for play; or lightning or other severe weather (including extreme heat) that may threaten the safety of players and/or spectators.

If play is halted, the players must remain on site and available to resume play immediately unless given permission to leave by the TM. All balls and clips will remain in place on the court unless the TM directs that the match(es) be pegged down or balls marked.

If play is significantly disrupted, the TM reserves the right to introduce double-banking in order to ensure that the tournament programme is completed on time.

Smoking

Each club will have its own rules about designated smoking areas, but in general, smoking near the croquet lawns is discouraged.

Meal Breaks

For each match, a one-hour lunch break may be taken at any time by mutual agreement subject to the following:

- The lunch break may not be taken earlier than noon.
- The lunch break may not be taken any later than immediately after the end of the turn in progress at 1.00 p.m.
- If a game finishes after 12.00 p.m., then either player (or pair) may specify that the lunch break be taken then.
- Before the start of a turn after 12.30 p.m., the player (or pair) about to play may specify that the lunch break be taken then.

For matches not commencing at 10.00 a.m. the Tournament Manager will modify the times above as appropriate and inform the players concerned before they commence play.

If the Test Match schedule is under pressure, the Tournament Manager shall have discretion to impose a shorter lunch break.

If the second or third game of a match is to start after 5.30p.m., then the players may take a break of up to 20 minutes prior to the start of this game.

Lateness

Players' attention is drawn to the WCF Regulations comments on lateness:

6.7.1 The standard penalties are as follows:

First offence in an Event:

Up to 1 hour late – no penalty

1 to 1½ hours late – first game of a match or the next scheduled game lost

Over 1½ hours late – Best of 3 or 5 game match lost

Second and subsequent offences in an Event:

Up to ½ hour late – first game of a match or the next scheduled game lost

Over ½ hour late – Best of 3 or 5 game match lost.

For the avoidance of doubt any offence in one stage of the tournament carries forward to all other stages of the tournament

Players should be ready to start play at 10.00 a.m. (09.30 a.m. for Tests 5 & 6 at Surbiton) each day once the 10 minute warm-up period has expired.

Appeals

Any player dissatisfied with a decision with regard to the running of the tournament is entitled to appeal. Should an appeal be lodged an Appeals Committee of three will be formed from the Appeals Panel.