

What's Gateball?

What kind of sport is it?



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1. Gateball Today

The growing popularity of gateball

Gateball is a sport that was developed by Eiji Suzuki in Japan in 1947, based on the sport “Croquet”, a game that has a long history in Europe.

The Japan Gateball Union was established in 1984. In the following year, in response to a call from Japan, 4 countries and 1 region — China, Korea, Brazil, the United States of America and Chinese Taipei — joined Japan to form the World Gateball Union. The founding chairman Ryouichi Sasagawa said: “Gateball is a sport that can be enjoyed by children through to the elderly, helps people to maintain health, contributes to a fulfilling lifestyle and at the same time, promotes communication amongst many people”, and this sport has been introduced to the world since then.

Today, 11 member nations and 3 member regions participate in the World Gateball Union, and many different international friendly championships, including the World Gateball Championship and the Asian Gateball Championship, held once every four years, as well as the the South American Gateball Championship, are held.

In recent years, gateball has begun spreading to Africa. If exchange with croquet organizations can be deepened and gateball spread to Europe, it could become a sport that anyone could enjoy that is loved around the world.

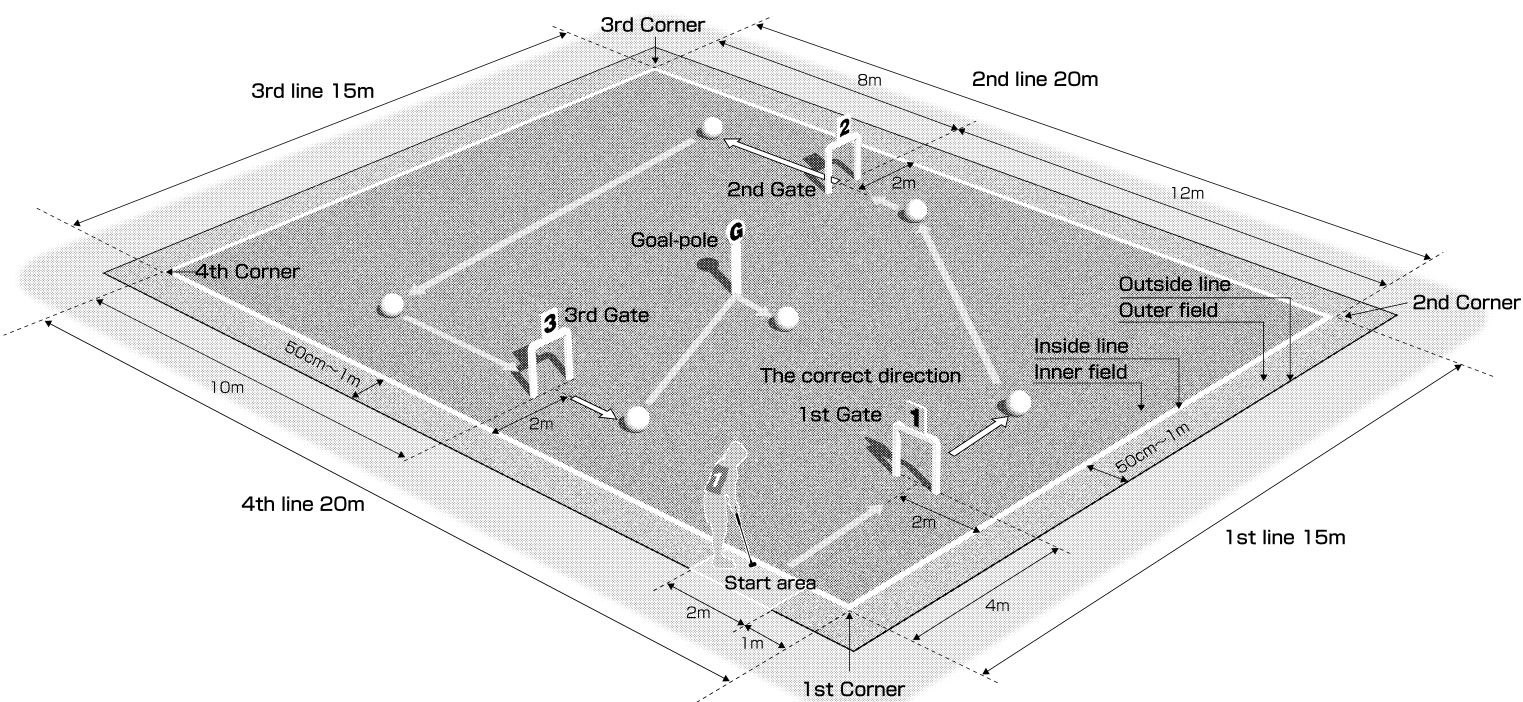


2. The Structure of the Game

[1] The Game and the Court

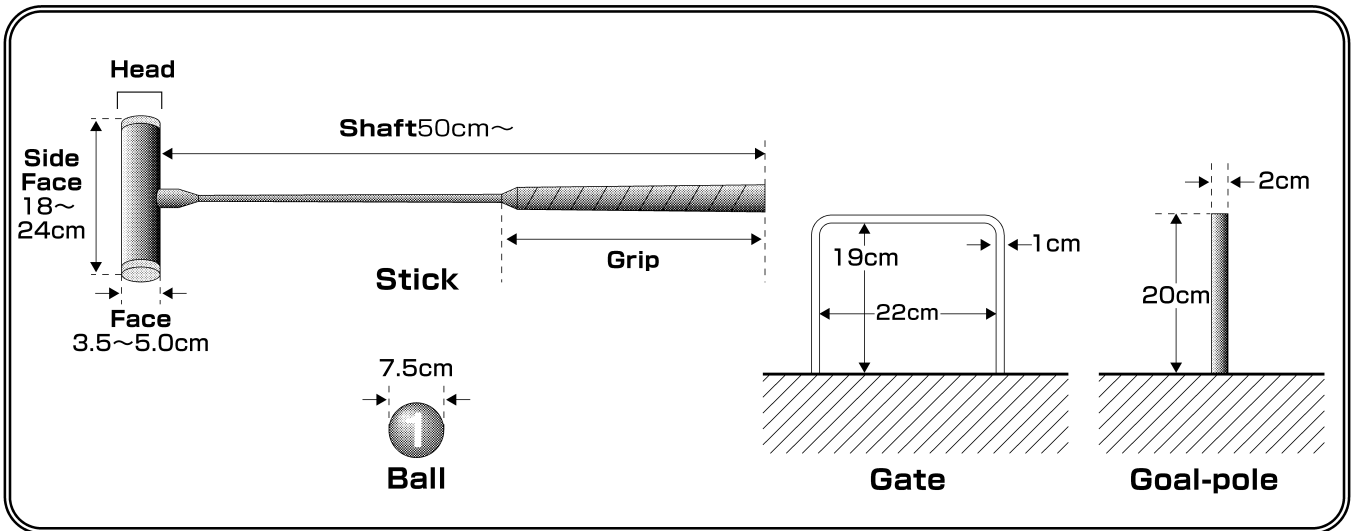
Although gateball is a game played between two teams, according to the rules, only one player ever plays at any time on the court during the game.

- It is a game played between two teams, each with 5 players.
- The winner is decided by the total number of points achieved during the 30-minute game.
- The leading team uses red balls (odd numbers) and the following team uses white balls (even numbers).
- The members of the leading team and the following team take turns to stroke the ball in the right order, passing the ball through the three gates (Gate 1 to Gate 3) on the court, with the game finishing, that is "Finish" or "Agari" when the ball strokes the goal-pole.



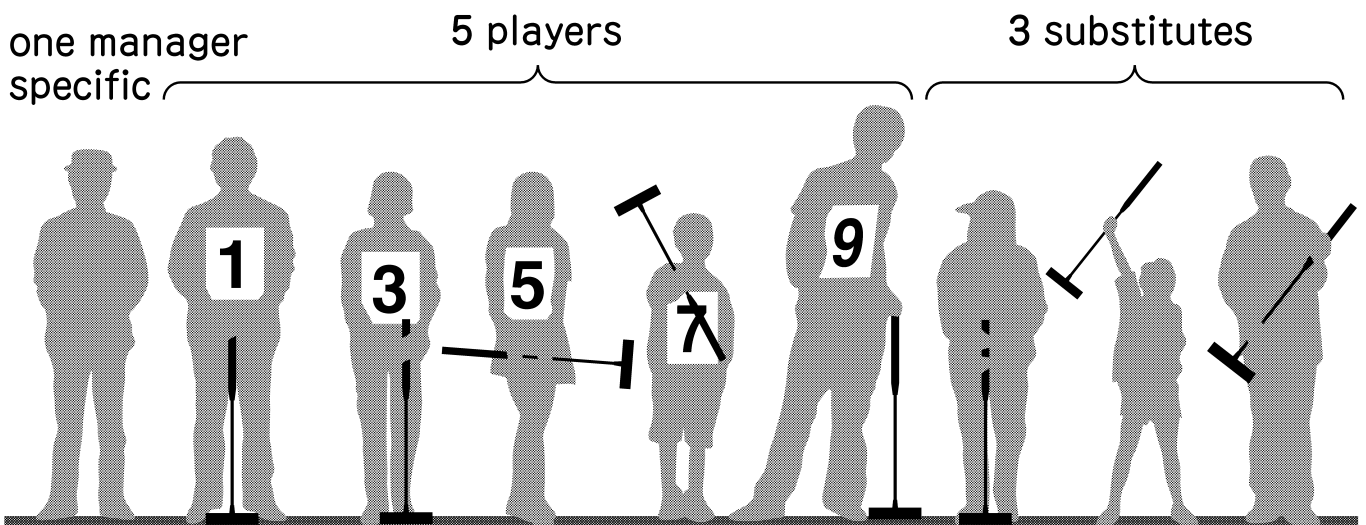
[2] The Necessary Equipment

- Sticks, balls, gates and the goal-pole are used in gateball.
- There are 10 balls - "Red ①③⑤⑦ and ⑨" and "White ②④⑥⑧ and ⑩".



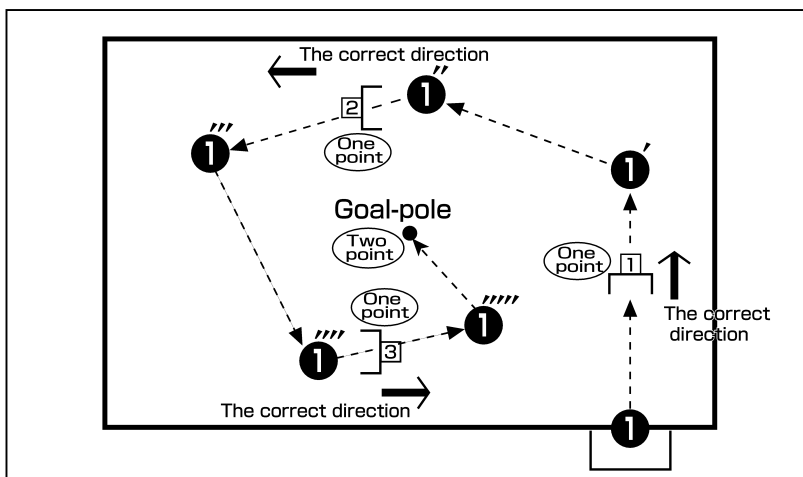
[3] Team Structure

- A team consists of 5 players and up to 3 substitutes, among whom one shall be designated the captain.
- Each team may have one manager specific to the team.

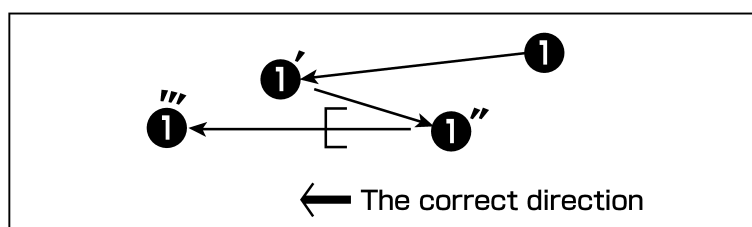


[4] How to Play the Game

- Before commencing a game, a toss is carried out to select the leading and following teams. The leading team becomes the Red team and the following team the White team.
- When the ball passes a gate, also known as "Gate Tsuka", one point is awarded for each time the ball passes through Gate 1 to Gate 3 (total of 3 points). In the case of a finish, or an "Agari", 2 points are awarded when a ball that has passed through Gate 3 hits the goal-pole, and therefore the stroker scores a total of 5 points.
- One stroke is allowed for the ball with the same number (stroker's ball), starting with Red 1 in the stroking order (**the stroker of Red 1 places his/her ball in the start area and strokes it to pass through Gate 1**).
- If the stroker successfully passes the ball through the gate, that is, succeeds in "Gate Tsuka", "continuous play" (the stroker hitting his/her ball once) is allowed. "Gate Tsuka" involves the ball passing through Gates 1 to 3, in that order, in the correct direction (**if Red 1 passes through Gate 1, the ball can be stroke to the area near Gate 2**).



- When the ball doesn't pass a gate, the ball is returned to front side once, then the ball passes through the gate in the correct direction

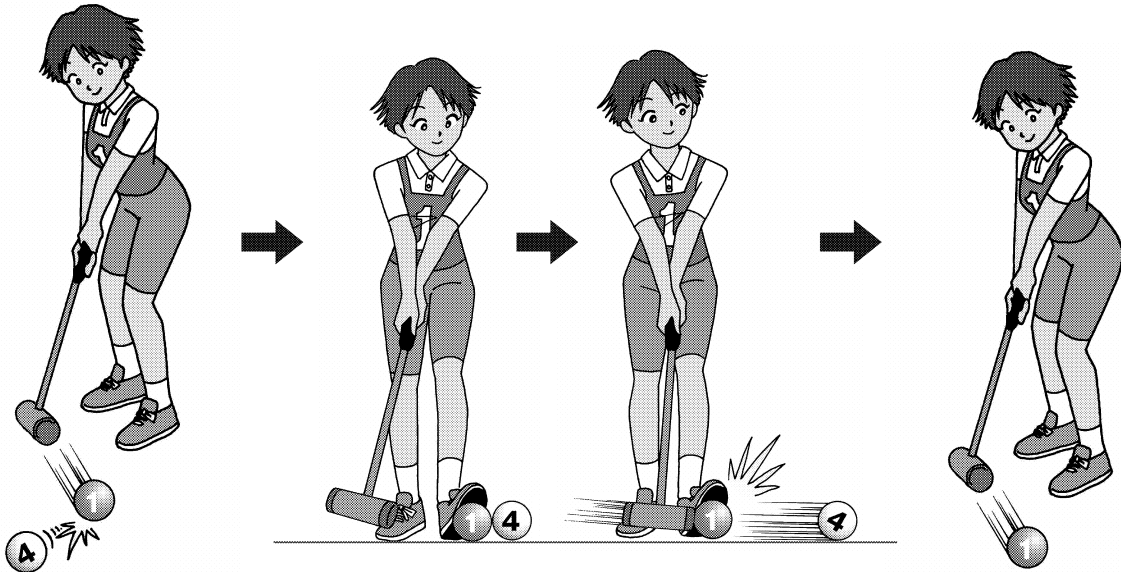


- When stroking, if the ball hits another ball, resulting in a "Touch", "Sparking" (the stroker steps on the stroker's ball and places it so that the other ball is touching the stroker's ball, and moves the other ball by stroking his/her ball) is permitted. After a successful "Spark", continuous play is allowed.

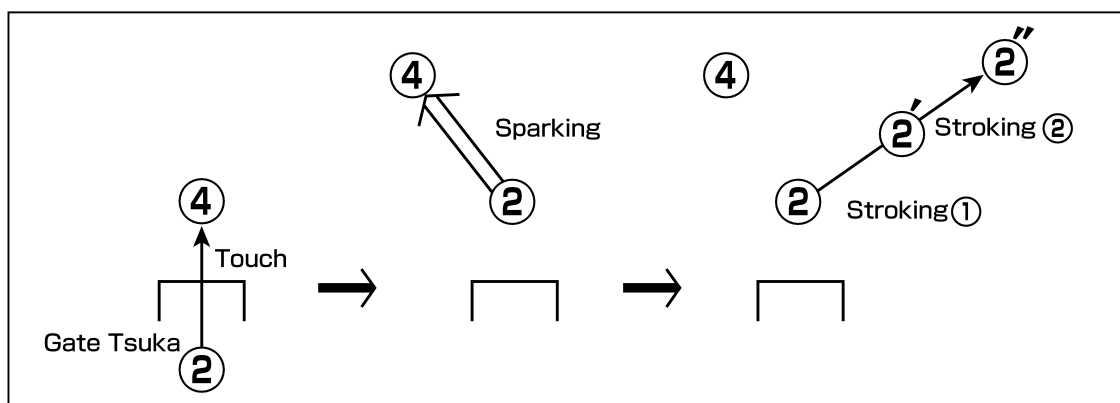
① Touch

② Sparking

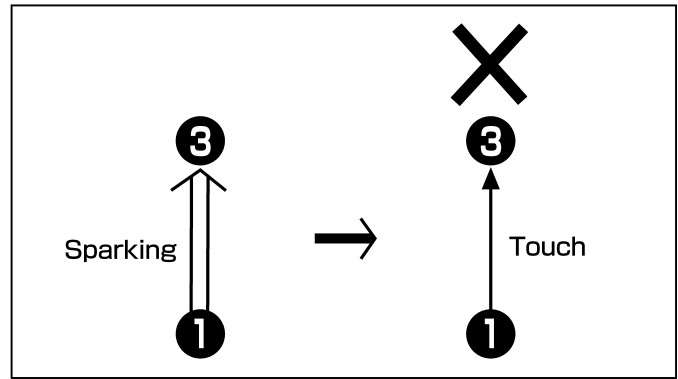
③ Continuous Play



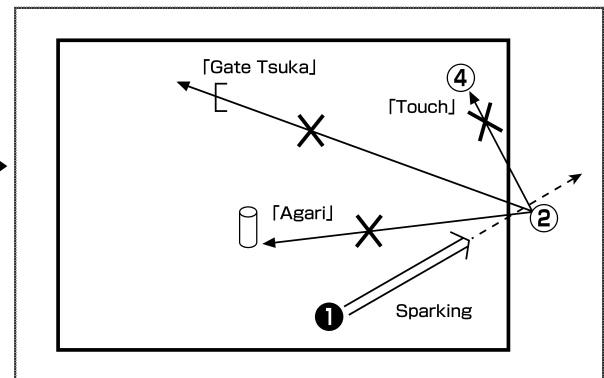
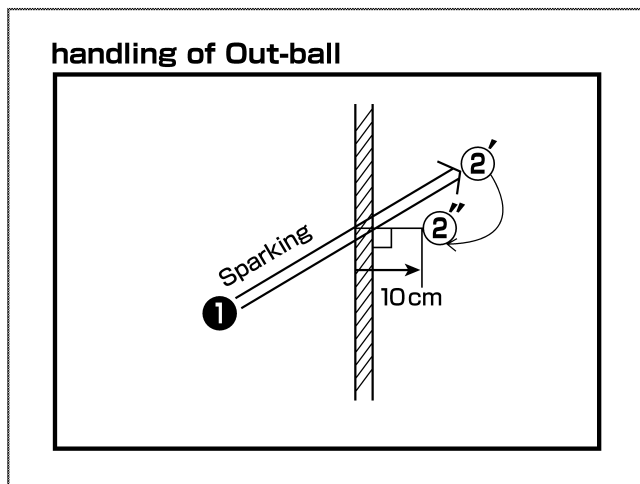
- In the event of a successful "Gate Tsuka" and "Touching the other ball/s" in succession, two continuous plays are allowed after a successful "Spark".



- If, during a continuous play, the ball "touches the other balls" as a result of a "Spark", this is deemed a "Touching the same ball twice" foul (a stroker cannot hit a ball in succession, in a single turn, that has already been touched with his/her own ball).



- If, as the result of a stroke and spark, the ball moves outside the inside line, that ball becomes an out-ball. If, in the next stroke, if an out-ball that is hit inside the court ends up touching another ball inside the court, this is regarded as a foul. Even if the out-ball passes through a gate, it will not be recognized as a "Gate Tsuka".



- After passing the ball through Gate 3, if the stroker's ball hits the goal-pole ending in a successful finish, that is, "Agari" takes place within the set time, then that stroker finishes, and that ball is excluded from the court.

- If all players in one team successfully finish, that is "Agari" takes place within the set time to result in a Perfect Game, the game ends and the winner is declared. (If a Perfect Game results with Red 1, then White 2 can be stroke, and the game ends once the ball is stroke).

- When time is up, and the stroker of the leading team is still playing, the game ends after the stroker in the following team plays. Alternatively, if the stroker of the following team is still playing, the game ends with that stroker's play.

3. Skills Structure

Individual skills and team skills (cooperative skills)

The structure of skills in gateball is similar to croquet. This is because the game is played with only one player ever stroking at one time and therefore requires a high level of individual skill. In addition, the game skill (team strategy) that develops with every turn not only adds a sense of thrill to the game, but can also be described as a "mind game" that can be enjoyed equally by the spectators as they try and predict the outcome of the game.

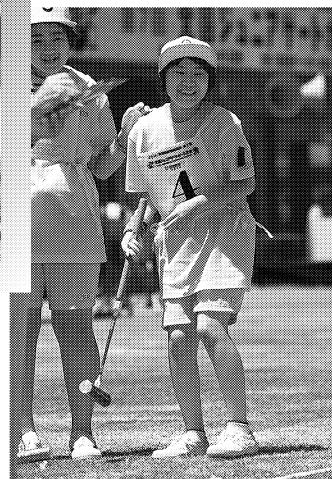
The structure of skills in gateball can be summarized as follows.

①The skill of being able to "control the ball" is everything when stroking the ball, and the team or the individual's mental control, such as being able to predict the development of the game and powers of concentration are also highly

relevant to the game.

②Because only one player is ever playing at one time during the game, "linked skills" that are relevant to the team's next stroker are an important aspect of "team skills". In many cases, therefore, the game requires not only individual skills but also the psychological element of "teamwork".

③"Game skills" (team strategy) can be divided into "a strategy that enables one's team to score" as a result of the formation of the balls and a Touch (an offensive play) and "a strategy to prevent the other team from scoring (a defensive play)". In addition, as the team's strategy can easily affect the outcome of the game, there is a strong relationship between strategy and individual and team skills.

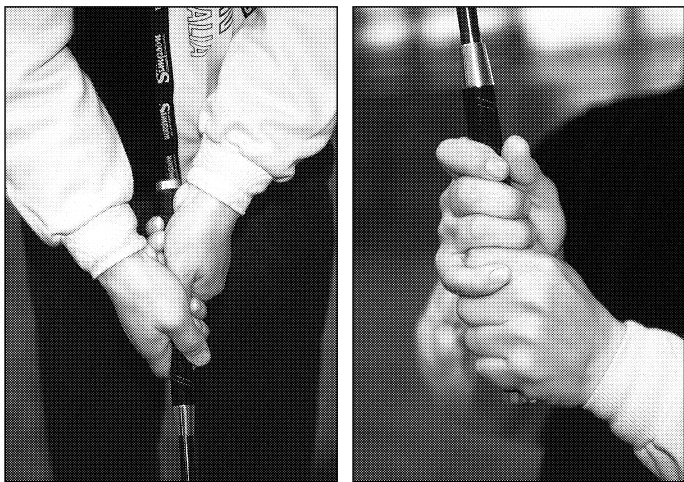


4. Individual Skills

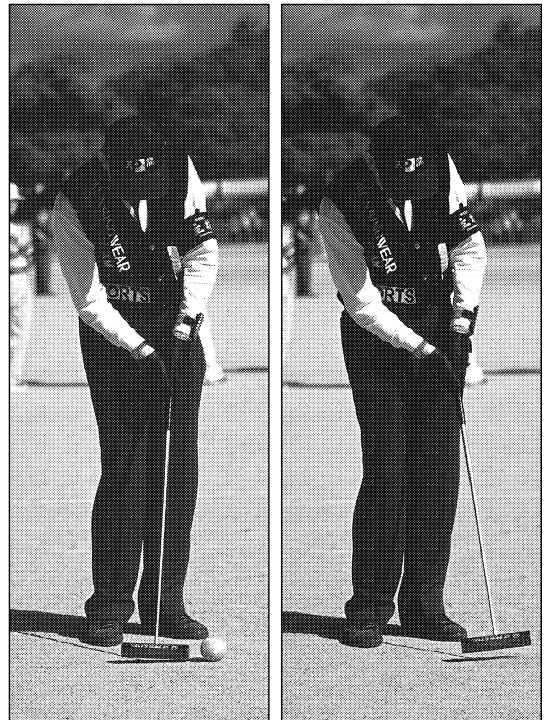
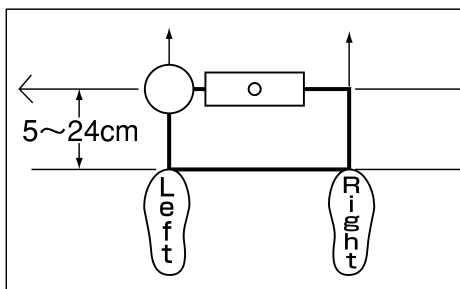
[1] Stroking

- There are three types of stroking - conventional stroking, start stroking and sparking. The technique of stroking the ball so that it rolls along the intended course and stops in the player's intended position is common to all three variations.
- The stroker must either stroke or spark the ball within 10 seconds (**if the stroker goes over time, he/she loses the right to strike**).

● Grasping the stick (Grip)



● Stroking pose (Stance)



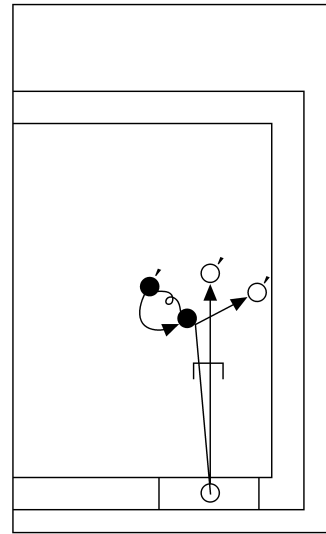
● Swing



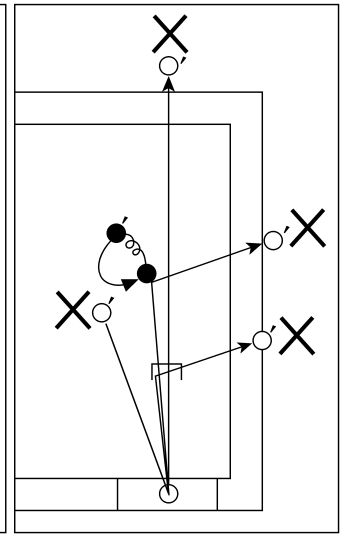
[2] Start Stroking

- The stroker places his/her ball, that is, the stroker's ball, in the start area and strokes the ball so it passes through Gate 1. If the ball doesn't pass through Gate 1, the stroker's ball is returned to the stroker, and once all other stokers have played once, the stroker once again strokes the ball so it passes through Gate 1. **(A ball that doesn't pass through Gate 1 is not permitted onto the court).**

The ball passes through Gate1



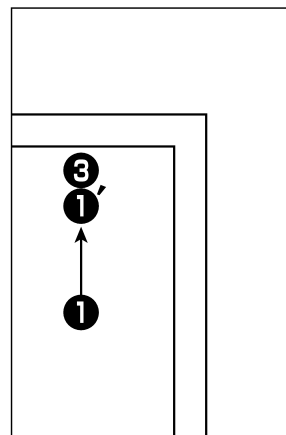
The ball doesn't pass through Gate1



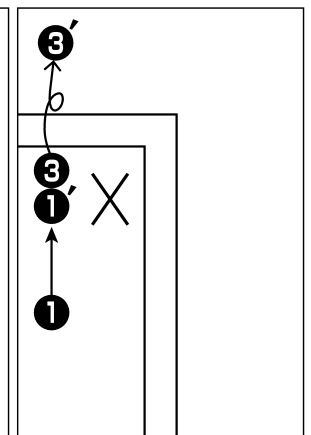
[3] Touch

- A Touch involves the stroker stroking his/her own ball which then hits another ball and both the stroker's ball and the other ball stop inside the inside line, after which the stroker gains the right to spark.
- In continuous play that follows sparking, team skills advantageous to the stroker's team (cooperative skills) becomes necessary.

Touch is achieved



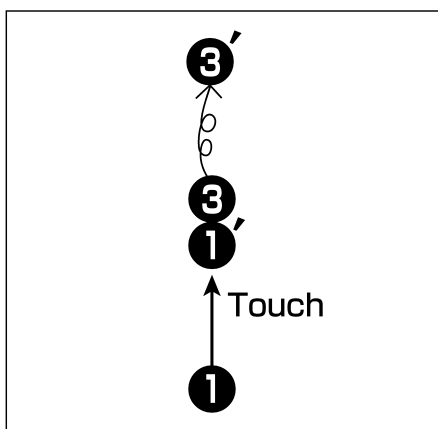
Touch isn't achieved



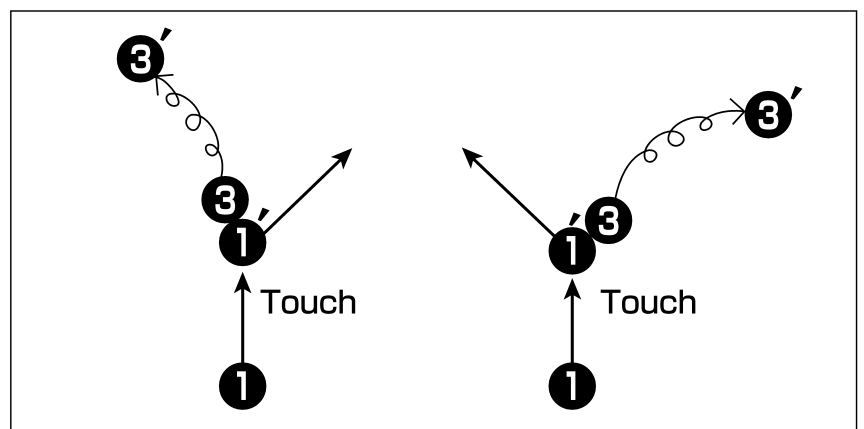
- "Tsuka Touch (Touch Tsuka)" also requires team skills (linked skills)

• Types of a Touch

Head-on Touch



Slide Touch



[4] Sparking

- A successful spark is when the sparked other ball moves more than 10 centimeters following the spark, and the stroker gains the right to extra stroke.
- If sparking fails, the stroker loses the right to play again.

● The Effectiveness of Sparking

- ① To move the ball so that it is advantageous to the stroker's team when sparking another ball **(to apply cooperative skills)**.
- ② To move the ball so it is disadvantageous to the other team when sparking another ball **(to make the ball an out-ball)**.

• Order of play when sparking

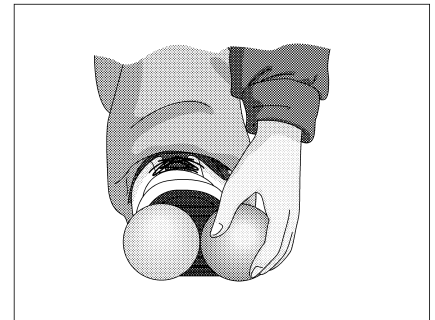
- ① Pick up the touched other ball.



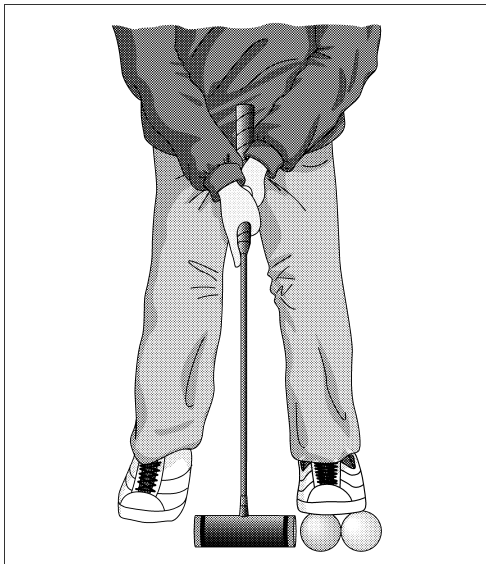
- ② Step on the stroker's ball so that it doesn't move.



- ③ Set (placing the other ball so it touches the stroker's ball)



- ④ Remove hand from the set other ball



- ⑤ Spark (hit the stroker's ball to move the other ball)



[5] Team skills (linked skills)

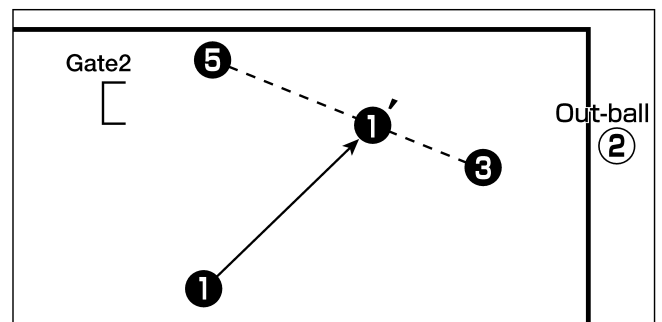
- The game that unfolds with each stroker's turn requires team skills (cooperative skills) on the part of the stroking team, so that the single stroke of the stroker's ball, or the last stroke in the case of a continuous play, ends up being advantageous to that stroker's team.
- The fundamentals of linked skills is that the stroker must always stroke his/her ball by first checking the formation of his/her team's balls with

the higher numbers in relation to the number of his/her ball. (For example, the balls with the higher numbers in relation to Red 1 will be Red 3 and Red 5).

- It is important to link the skills of each player (team strategies) to realize the ball formation for the "Tsuka Touch (Touch Tsuka)"

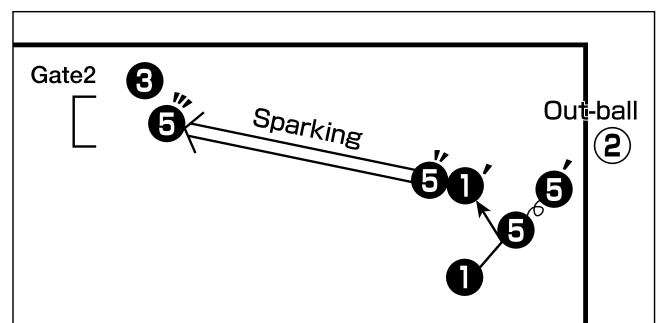
① Hitting the ball into a position that is relevant to his/her team's next stroker.

If the ball formation is as shown in Diagram , the stroker of Red 1 hits his/her ball so that it goes between Red 3 and Red 5. Then, the next stroker of Red 3, by touching Red 1, sparking and gaining the right for continuous play, can touch Red 5.



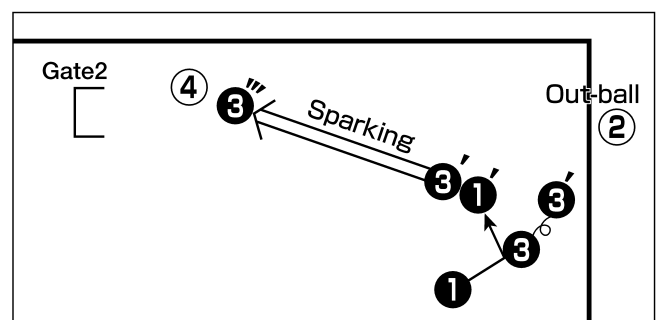
② Sparking to send the ball to the position of the stroker's team (the offense and defense positions)

If the balls are in a formation as shown in Diagram , Red 1 touches Red 5, and sparking then sends Red 5 near Red 3, and Red 1, as a result of continuous play, sends the stroker's ball near Red 3. However, the stroker should check that White 2's position isn't going to affect Red 3.



③ Sparking to send the ball to the other team's position (the offense and defense positions)

If the ball formation is as shown in Diagram , Red 1 touches Red 3, and Red 3 is sent near the other team's White 4 by sparking, and Red 1, as a result of continuous play, sends his/her ball near Red 3. However, the stroker should check that White 2's position isn't going to affect Red 3.

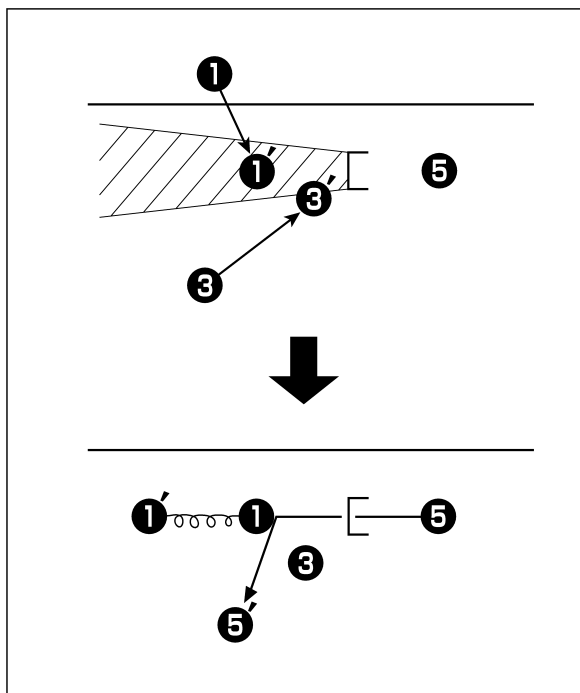


5. Game Skills (Team Strategy)

[1] Cooperative Playing

- Because the game is played with only one player ever playing at any one time, the stroker must hit the ball to a position that is advantageous to his/her team. This is when team skills (linked skills) become highly relevant.
- Cooperative playing refers to, for example, realizing a "ball formation" that enables the players Red 1, Red 3 and Red 5 in the same team to carry out a Tsuka Touch (Touch Tsuka).

The position of a ball in "Tsuka Touch (Touch Pass)"



If a successful "Tsuka Touch (Touch Pass)" takes place as a result of Red 5 being stroke, after sparking Red 1 and gaining the right for two more continuous plays, the team has a perfect opportunity to destroy the other team's "ball formation".

[2] Strategy

- The team's tactics (strategy) that are decided by the entire team as the game unfolds are based on the technique of "ball formation". These tactics (strategy) can largely be divided into "the first stage of the game" during the 1st and 2nd round, "the middle stage of the game", 10 minutes into the game and the "final stage of the game", 20 minutes into the game.
- The ball formation in the first round is extremely significant for both teams. This is because, the leading team must achieve the most advantageous

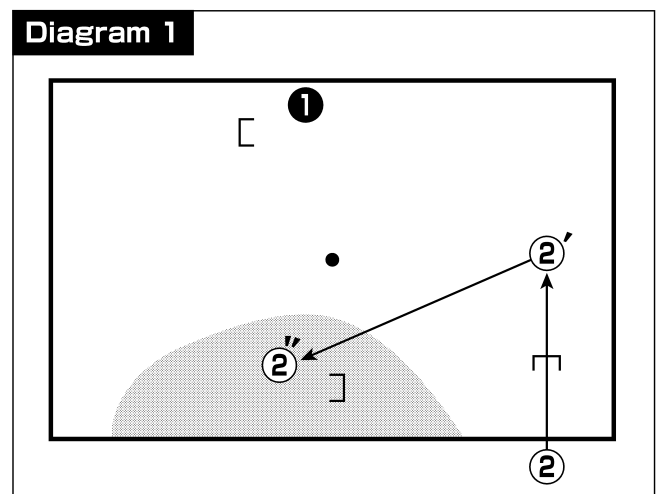
position in order to score (the offense and defense positions), and the following team must achieve an advantageous position in relation to the leading team's position.

In addition, in relation to game skills after the 2nd round, this ball formation becomes an important predictor for how the entire game will unfold.

- The strategy involves selecting either offensive play or defensive play depending on how the game is unfolding.

① Example of the first stage of the game (Rounds 1 to 2)

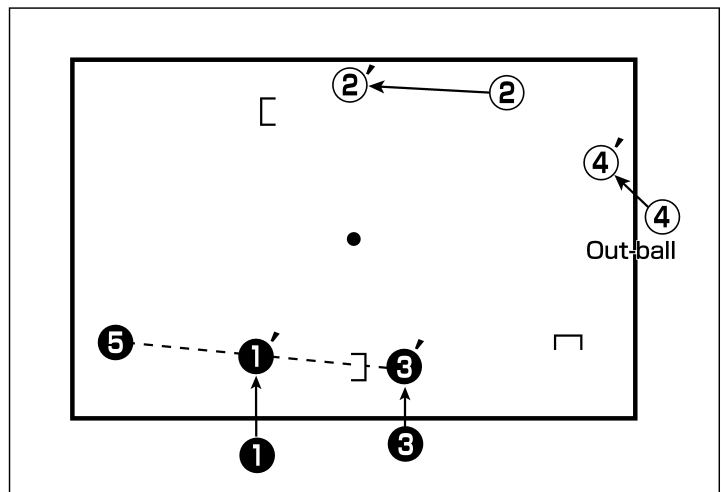
In Diagram 1, if Red 1 arrives at a position near Gate 2, White 2 arrives at a position near Gate 3 (the shadow area in the diagram is the White team's defense area). Red 3 is sent near Red 1, and White 4 is sent near White 2. However, caution is required here as the ball will become the target for a Touch by the other team if the ball moves too far.



② Example of the middle stage of the game (after 10 minutes into the game)

- In the middle stage of the game, it is important that both teams prevent the other team from passing a gate (Gate Tsuka). Therefore, the offense and defense to achieve a ball formation at Gate 2 and Gate 3 is played out.
- Touch Pass and a Tsuka Touch can introduce a disadvantageous situation to the other team by destroying their ball formation.

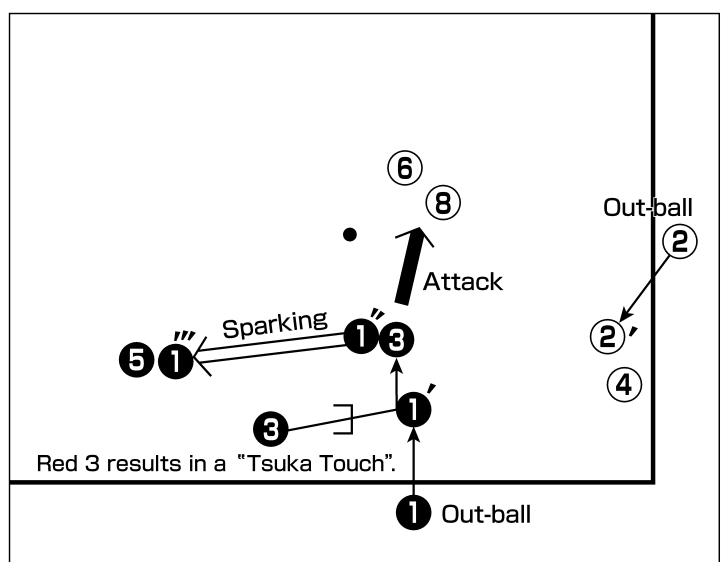
If the ball formation is as shown in the Diagram, Tsuka Touch can be applied so that the out-balls (Red 1 and Red 3) destroy the other team's ball formation. However, in order to achieve a Tsuka Touch with Red 5, the ball formation must not be destroyed by the moves involving White 2 and White 4.



③ An example of the final stage of the game (after 20 minutes)

- In the final stage of the game, it is important to prevent the other team from successfully finishing, that is, achieving an "Agari" (2 points).
- At this stage, the remaining time is calculated, and predictions are made such as how many points the team can score, and the team selects whether to play an offensive or defensive game.

In Diagram , with 5 minutes remaining, and White 6 and White 8 about to finish, that is, an "Agari" recognized, the Red team, by realizing a "Tsuka Touch" ball formation by stroking the Red 1 out-ball, White 2 can be moved near White 4. Red 3 results in a "Tsuka Touch", and sparking sends Red 1 near Red 5, and using the right for 2 continuous plays, it is possible to attack White 6 and White 8's positions.





Publisher

WORLD GATEBALL UNION

4-10 TORANOMON 3-CHOME MINATO-KU TOKYO

105-0001 JAPAN

TEL:+81- (0) 3-5401-2251

E-Mail:info@gateball.or.jp

<http://www.gateball.or.jp/>

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