

ISSUES IN BUYING A CROQUET MALLET

There are many potential criteria that CCC members could consider in buying a croquet mallet. I recommend trying out a range of mallets, but then buying a relatively inexpensive \$200-300 mallet that seems OK. Second hand or new. That will allow you to work on a straighter swing, how to hit various shots and most of all, what to do next – all of which are more important than the actual mallet. After a year or so, you may then decide to change and upgrade – and by then you will have ideas about:

Criteria for purchasing a mallet include (in no particular order/seriousness):

- price – the top end are now \$800 or more, but you can buy decent mallets for less than half that. Second hand is sensible for your first mallet, since you may want to change...
- material - wood, metal, carbon fibre or combinations. Few top players use wooden mallets, but it is not clear cut - try them all before you buy.
- length of handle – longer the better in terms of your back (but Kevin Brereton felt short was better for accuracy)
- whip vs stiffness in the handle – whip produces better stun shots/pass rolls, but can be “too responsive”
- shape of handle – cross section can be square, round, oval, octagonal. Some handles are rotated 5-15 degrees to “suit natural hand position”
- length of head – 10” is minimum, 11” now normal and 12” common (Ian Bassett has a 15”). Trend is to long & thin heads, [to get more power](#), but don’t change length too rapidly
- shape of head – round, square, rectangular (see Dawson’s Millennium). If you always hit in the middle, doesn’t really matter but thin mallets handle shots through hoops better
- weight of head – 3 lb. is standard. More weight gives more power to shots w/o accelerating during swing, but takes effort to swing back. Less weight helps pass rolls.
- “peripheral weighting” means weight is right out at the ends of the head, not in the middle, which is claimed to help hit balls straighter when a swing is slightly off
- “D ring” ends allow mallets to be stood upright when the head is a round barrel (but my mallet still falls over 50% of the time)
- the face on the head can be wood, brass, fibre or composite – many schools of thought on what works best
- a common issue is the screw(s) holding the head onto the shaft coming un-done & needing to be constantly tightened
- some manufacturers offer ways to disassemble the mallet/shaft for airline travel (or you use guitar cases, cricket bags or special croquet bags eg Fenwick-Elliott’s)
- some mallets offer aiming assistance (lines, screw patterns etc) but it is illegal to use actual aiming aids eg laser pointers, mirrors, etc
- a “flash” mallet can often intimidate your opponent – not guaranteed to work, but nice when it does

Related issues:

- mallets must be symmetrical to be legal – it is a risk to buy a mallet with a chipped face w/o being able to fix it
- tape – most players use tennis or golf grips. Heat-shrink cricket grips? I use squash gauze in wet weather (doesn’t last long but cheap & good grip)
- it is a good idea to use a mallet cover or at least a polyurethane beer holder for the mallet head – mallets can get knocked around, especially when packed in a car boot
- gloves can keep your hands warm in cold/wet weather. Golf, tennis or bicycling gloves – make sure they’re soft & flexible enough to feel your mallet
- putting your name & contact details on the mallet is sensible in case you mislay it somewhere

Worth checking out: <http://www.cammeray-croquet.org.au/General/mallets.php>

Cammeray also has an on-line second hand market in mallets, although not many at the moment (but you can express your interest in buying one....).

If you want to know who makes mallets, there is a wide selection of advertising on the glass door on the drinks fridge side as you enter the Club. Also just type "croquet mallets" in Google, and the makers pop up...

In the end **croquet is more about you, than a specific mallet. Jump in, and enjoy playing!**

Regards, peter
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