

Level 2 Gateball Coaching – Some Ideas for GB

Gateball Australia has been included in the development of new coaching programs by the Australian Croquet Association. The new framework is compliant with requirements of the Australian Sports Commission

In recent years a level 1 program has been rolled out. Coaches for all 4 codes of mallet sports complete a common core including an online course and a core Foundation Coach program. To become a gateball coach players then have to complete a gateball endorsement.

The level 1 gateball endorsement is built around a skill card listing 10 very basic stroking, sparking and sliding skills. This is targeted at a basic, beginner or foundation level of play. This coaching program was developed using the Australian Sports Commission's Foundation, Talent, Elite and Mastery model as a reference framework. <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/ais/fstem>

At Level 2 a coach knows how to extend players, can teach tactics and assist players to produce their own improvement programs. A level 2 coach could be working with players at "Talent" level in the ASC model. Arrangements for a level 2 coaching program are yet to be finalised by the ACA

This document outlines a suggested approach to a level 2 gateball endorsement program. It uses a **strategy and tactics** document developed by Keith McCleod a number of years ago. A draft **Level 2 skills card** identifies the skills that players need to enact these strategies and tactics.

To play well in an interclub competition a player may be called upon to carry out these series of skills. At the same time, the link to the strategy and tactics document provides the player with a rationale for the level 2 skills and, at the same time, should increase the players strategic understanding of the game.

Gateball

Strategies and Tactics

**A collection of suggested strategies and tactics
for Gateball games**

Openings Strategies

First Ball - Making Gate 1

The first ball through Gate 1 gives that team an advantage because Gate 2 can be loaded thus prevents the opponent team from setting up near Gate 2.

Tactic 1

Winning the toss and being the leading (Red) team can be an advantage. But remember that game statistics show that both the leading and following teams have an equal chance of winning.

Tactic 2

Players 1 and 3, and Players 2 and 4, being the Players most likely to be the first to make Gate 1, probably should be the team's best gate - makers. A strong player at 9 and 10 is worth considering.

First Ball - Continuation After Making Gate 1

After making Gate 1, the first ball should cover Gate 2.

Tactic 3

The first ball through Gate 1 should set up about 2 metre in front of Gate 2 and be positioned close to the second line boundary. This position should allow the ball to pass Gate 2 if directed by the captain.

Tactic 4

The first ball to make Gate 1 should be a strong shot that takes the ball near the second line boundary and thereby gives a good opportunity for a leave of less than 200mm from the second line boundary with minimal risk of becoming an out-ball.

First Ball Opponent Team - Making Gate 1

If the first ball through Gate 1 covers Gate 2, the first ball of the opponent team through Gate 1 can cover Gate 3.

Tactic 5

The first ball of the opponent team through Gate 1 can set up about 1 metre in front of Gate 3 and be positioned close to the fourth line boundary.

Tactic 6

The first ball of the opponent team to make Gate 1 should be a soft stroke that keeps the ball near Gate 1 and thereby gives a better opportunity for a leave within half metre of the fourth line boundary with minimal risk of becoming an out-ball.

Other Balls - After Making Gate 1

Team With Balls at Gate 2

If two balls are set up at Gate 2, the other balls of this team can be positioned to provide Touch opportunities when the balls pass Gate 2.

Tactic 7

If Gate 2 is covered with two balls, the other balls of this team after making Gate 1 can be positioned with the continuous stroke close to the middle of the third line boundary to provide for a Touch by balls passing Gate 2.

Team With Balls at Gate 3

If two or three balls are set up at Gate 3, the other balls of this team should be positioned elsewhere on the Court depending upon the state of play at the time. This is to defend against the possibility of the opponent team achieving an extra continuation stroke by a 'Gate and Touch' or a 'Touch and Gate'.

Tactic 8

If Gate 3 is covered with two or three balls, the other balls of this team after making Gate 1, should be positioned elsewhere on the Court and not clustered with the balls at Gate 3.

But always consider the numbers and position of the balls of the other team.

Gate 1 – First Attempt

Look for gaps in numbers and opportunities during the first attempt of players at Gate 1. For example, if balls passing Gate 1 are 1,5,7,9 and 2,4,6,8,10 this gives 2 an opportunity to spark 4 to opponent's balls!

Tactic 9

Look for gaps in numbers of balls attempting Gate 1.

Strategies When Gate 2 is Controlled

Fundamental to the game in the first 15 minutes is control of Gate 2.

When Team A has Gate 2 covered, a strategy for Team B to dislodge Team A's balls from in front of Gate 2 is essential in order for Team B to gain control of the game. While Gate 2 is covered by Team A's balls, Team A has the opportunity not only to make that Gate, but also to prevent access to the Gate by Team B. When Team A makes Gate 2 with 3 or 4 of its balls, it can move on to attack the balls of Team B at Gate 3 in the knowledge that it has a comfortable lead in the game.

The strategy of the captain of Team B should be focused on gaining control of Gate 2.

Tactic 10

The appropriate strategy for Team B when Gate 2 is covered by Team A's balls will depend upon the circumstances, but the captain of Team B should consider:

- > a strong stroke by a Team B player making Gate 1 that takes the ball near the second line boundary, followed by an aggressive continuation stroke to touch a Team A ball at Gate 2 or to pass Gate 2. But be aware that failure will expose the ball of Team B behind Gate 2
- > an aggressive stroke to touch a Team A ball at Gate 2
- > a slide touch from Gate 3 to achieve a position near Gate 2
- > a gap in Team A ball numbers at Gate 2
- > use the Shanghai hold back technique: for example, Team A Ball 1 makes Gate 1, Team B Ball 2 is not played (hold back), other balls are played, Ball 10 is played and passes Gate 1 and is then positioned to enable Ball 2 to pass Gate 1 and get a slide touch to Gate 2.

General Playing Strategies

Gate and Touch and Touch and Gate

The Gate and Touch and Touch and Gate stroke, by giving the player two continuous strokes, is a very powerful stroke that gives a team an opportunity to take command of the game.

Tactic 11

When two or more balls of the same team are at a gate, try to set up for a 'Gate and Touch' or a 'Touch and Gate' stroke.

Watch Opponents Tactics

Watch opponent's playing tactics and identify situations where a potential Gate and Touch or Touch and Gate may arise.

Tactic 12

All team players should assist the captain and check for danger situations.

If the opponent is set up for a assured gate and touch or touch and gate, separate the balls of your team to minimise damage. Also look for ways to force your opponent to make decisions by placing balls to give your team an advantage in subsequent play.

Setting Up Behind a Gate

Setting up behind a gate is dangerous unless the front of the gate is guarded. If an opponent team's ball makes the gate, the ball behind the gate is available for a continuation stroke Touch.

Tactic 13

Avoid setting up behind a gate unless the front of the gate is guarded by a ball of your team.

Keeping Close to the Boundaries

By keeping your team's balls close to the Court boundaries, the risk of a Touch by an opponent team's ball is reduced. Out-balls should be stroked onto the inside line or just a few millimetres from it

Tactic 14

Set up close to the boundary line and try to keep your team's balls about 1 metre apart.

Keeping Balls Together

If all the team's balls are clustered together, the risk that one of these ball will be Touched by an opponent team's ball is high. Also, the balls are exposed if the opponent team gains an extra continuous stroke.

Tactic 15

Don't cluster balls. If three balls are together, set up the other two balls at a distance.

However, if the team have absolute control of the game (all opponent balls are out-balls), then there is advantage in getting all balls together. This enables balls to be sparked to positions to ensure control is maintained.

Tactic 16

Don't cluster balls away from the boundary as this exposes them to a Touch by an aggressive stroke by the opponent team.

Look for Gaps in Numbers

Look for situations where an opponent's ball is an out-ball and your team's balls either side of the out-ball number are together. For example, if 4 is an out-ball, and 3 and 5 are together, then 3 can touch 5 and spark 5 to a position on the court without any danger from 4. This is a very powerful tactic to get control of a game.

Tactic 17

Keeping ball pairs together is a very powerful tactic. For example. Keep 2 and 4 together so that ball 2 can spark ball 4 to a favourable position. And don't forget that balls 1 and 9 and balls 2 and 10 are also pairs!

Constant Attack

Always attack the opponent even when your team has a clear lead and control of the game. Do not allow the opponent to

regroup for an attack on your team. However, during the last 5 minutes or so of the game, it may be better to concentrate on making gates and the goal-pole. But remember that the game is often won or lost in those last minutes!

Tactic 18

Spark balls to opponent balls to ensure opponent balls are not in a position to get back into the game.

Chains

Use chains to allow your team's balls to reach balls. Care required with the numbers however!

Tactic 19

Use both your team's balls and opponent balls if appropriate for chains.

Slide

Nearly every stroke to touch another ball can benefit from a slide. Slides can be used to place the stoker's ball in a position to: pass a gate, move closer to the next ball to touch, or on occasions, mount an attack from one side of the court to the opponent's balls on the another side.

Tactic 20

Always consider a slide when attempting a Touch. If the target ball is close, the prospect for an accurate slide will increase.

Out-balls

Playing In

For defence, an out-ball can be played in just a few millimetres inside the boundary.

Tactic 21

Consider playing in an out-ball just inside the boundary or on the court boundary in a defensive position but ready to attack if the opportunity arises.

Use Opponent Ball Rather than Spark It Out

Before sparking an opponents ball out of court to become an out-ball, check to see whether it can be used by your team before that number is required to play again. For example, if 6 touches 7, then 6 should spark 7 to become an out-ball because 7 is the next ball to play; however, if 6 touches 5, then there is potential to use 5 before sparking it to an out-ball because all other balls will play before 5 plays again.

Tactic 22

Before sparking an opponent ball to an out-ball, consider using it to assist your own team's play.

End of Game

Making the Goal-pole

If the time is close to the end, and your team has balls for the goal-pole, consider a tactic to peg these balls out to obtain the 2 points rather than a tactic to continue to try to make gates with the other balls.

Tactic 23

Near the end of the game, consider pegging balls on the goal-pole to obtain the extra points.

End Game – Goal-pole Opportunities

If two balls of your team with consecutive numbers have made Gate 3, try to keep these balls together when near the end of the game. On the final turn of these balls in the game, for example 2 and 4, the first ball to play, 2, touches 4 then sparks 4 to near the goal-pole then 2 is positioned near 4 in the continuation stroke. When 4 plays, it touches 2, sparks 2 onto the goal-pole and then touches the goal-pole itself thereby gaining an additional 4 point!

Tactic 24

With about 6 minutes to the end of the game, look for two balls with consecutive numbers which have passed Gate 3 and keep these balls together for the potential of 2 agaris in the final turn.

Playing Balls Out

If your team is in front on points and the game is close to the end, for lone balls, consider strokes that are aggressive and if not successful will place the ball outside the boundary. This can achieve two objectives: the first is to Touch a distant ball or to make a gate; if the aggressive move fails, then the second is that the ball will become an out-ball and will not be available for use by the opponent team in the final minutes of the game.

Tactic 25

Near the end of the game, consider aggressive strokes by lone balls.

Team Is Likely to Lose the Game

Near the end of the game, if your team is behind on points and likely to lose the game, consider using aggressive play to turn the game around. This usually involves attempts at touching distant opponent balls.

Tactic 26

Near the end of the game if your team is behind on points and likely to lose the game, consider using aggressive play to turn the game around.

Sparking your team's ball through a Gate

Earlier in the game this tactic should generally be avoided. Sparking balls through Gates forgoes the opportunity for the stroker to have a continuation stroke on passing the Gate and diminishes the number of occasions when a Gate/Touch can be set up. This Tactic should only be attempted when an expected opposition attack will thwart these Gate opportunities or at the end of the game, especially if the sparked ball is unlikely to get another turn.

Tactic 27

Sparking your team's ball through a Gate is a useful Tactic in certain circumstances. But always firstly consider other opportunities carefully.

GB Level 2 Skills Card Ver 8

These skills match some of the strategies found in the document *Gateball, Strategies and Tactics, A collection of suggested strategies and tactics for Gateball Games, Gateball Australia, Gateball Information Pamphlet, Version 3, 29 Aug 2016*. Available from www.gateball.com.au

For each of these skills aim to achieve them on three successive occasions. If you cannot do this, note where the series breaks down and work to improve the particular skill identified. Creative solutions with the same outcome are acceptable.

1 SKILLS FOR OPENING STRATEGIES

1(i) Passing gate 1 and setting up near gate 2, setting up near gate 3 or setting up near line 3.

Nominate the option you are attempting.

Stroke a ball through gate 1 and with the continuation stroke:

-EITHER position the ball 2m from gate 2 and up to 350mm from line 2

-OR 350 mm from the line, at gate 3

-OR within .5 metre from the middle of line 3.

Achieve 3 each of these positions as a continuation shot after passing gate 1.

Vary the length of your stroke through gate 1 to suit the selected following continuation stroke.



2 SKILLS FOR STRATEGIES WHEN GATE 2 IS CONTROLLED

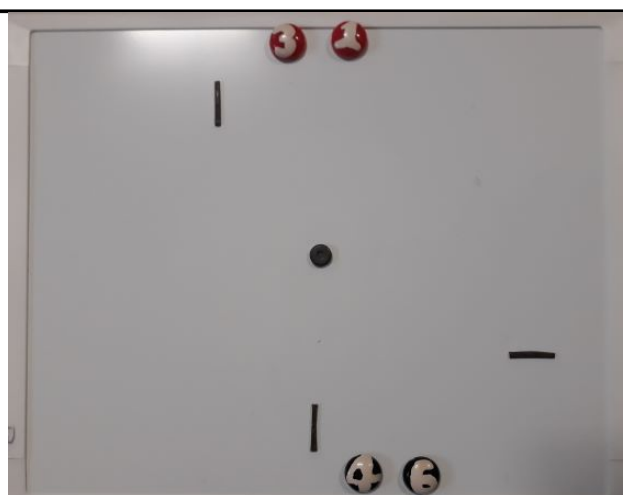
2 (i) Sparking across from gate 2/3 to an opposition ball on the other side of the court

Position two balls near line 2 about 800mm apart and parallel to line 4. Balls should be about 30cm from the line.

Place two opposition balls on the opposite side of the court. Again the balls should be parallel to the line, about 30cm from the line and 80cm apart.

Stroke your first ball to touch the other ball of the same colour

Spark this ball to a position where it can attack an opposition ball on the other side of the court. Leave your own ball tight to the line.



After removing the opposition balls leave your attacking ball tight to the line.

2 (ii) Executing the holdback strategy.

Place an opposition ball 2m in front of gate 2, about 500 mm from the line.

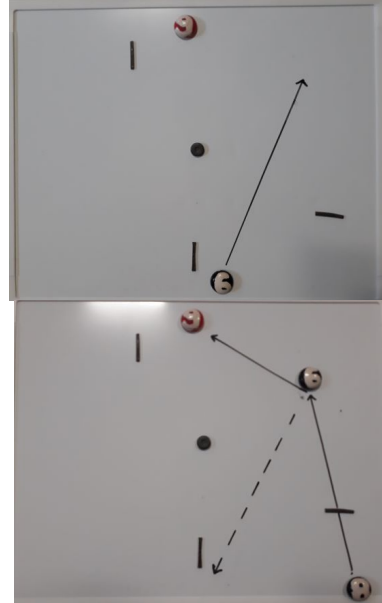
Place one of your own balls 500mm behind gate 3 and 500 mm from line 4.

Stroke this ball to a position behind gate 1 where one of your own team's following balls can use it to slide off and attack the opposition ball at gate 2.

With a third ball, stroke it through gate 1, slide off the pioneer or pivot ball to attack the ball at Gate 2

Touch the opposition ball and spark it out near corner 3.

Tap your ball to end up 2m in front of gate 2 and within 100mm of line 2.



2 (iii). Passing gate 2, connecting with a ball near line 3 and sparking it to the front of gate 2

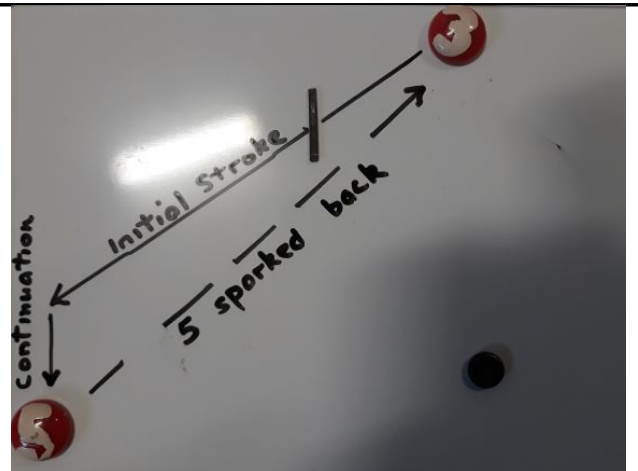
Place a ball about .5m from line 3 near the centre of the line.

Place a second ball in front of gate 2 and up to 350mm from line 2.

Stroke the second ball through gate 2, touch the first ball and spark it to a position in front of gate 2

Play the second ball tight to the line.

Stroke the second ball through the gate, place it close to the line 800 cm from the first ball.



3 SKILLS FOR GENERAL PLAYING STRATEGIES

3 (i) Building a ladder or chain from corner 4 to make gate 3.

Choose five red or white balls.

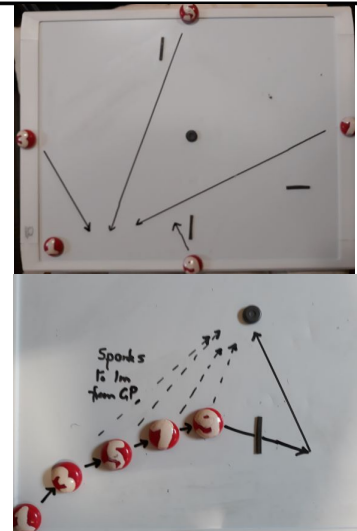
Position the first ball in play in corner 4.

The four other balls should be placed in the middle of each side of the court.

Play in the four balls from the middle of each side to build a ladder or chain for the first ball in the corner so it can make the gate.

Use the ladder for the first ball to pass gate 3 and then stroke it to the goal pole. Stroke the touched balls as close to the goal pole as you can.

Spark all remaining balls on the goal pole with the next ball's turn



3 (ii) Set up and possibly use a straightener for a gate touch/touch gate.

Set up three consecutive balls in an equilateral triangle with 800mm sides between gate 3 and line 4.

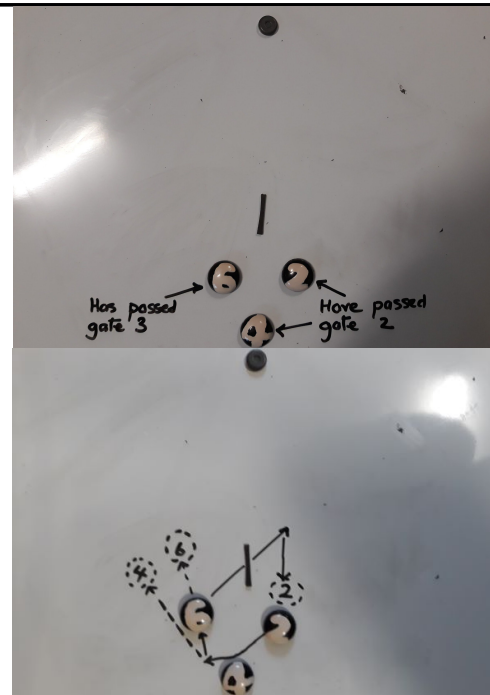
The first two balls are yet to pass gate 3 while the final ball has already passed that gate.

Use mini slides and short sparks to set up a gate touch for the second ball to play and to run the first or stokers ball through the gate

Execute the gate touch and send the touched balls to the goal pole.

Score the goal pole with the ball making the gate touch.

Assuming the last ball has already passed gate 3, put any remaining balls on the goal pole. Creative solutions with the same outcome are acceptable.

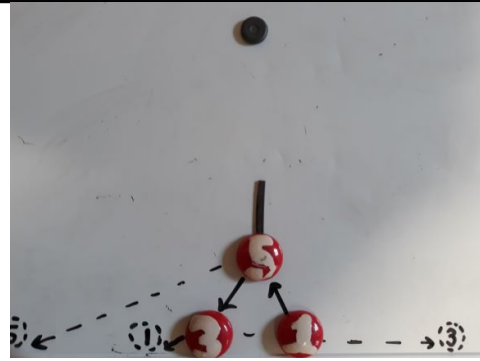


3 (iii) Scattering.

Set up three consecutive balls in an equilateral triangle with 800mm sides between gate 3 and line 4.

Your opposition is about to achieve a gate touch at the gate on the opposite side of the field.

Scatter your balls as a defensive play. Each ball should be no more than 10cm from the line and at least 2m apart



(iv) Identify the position of following balls. Before each play in a game a player should be able to identify where the following red and white balls are located.

(v) Identify alternative plays for a ball at 3 points in the beginning, middle and end stages of a game. Discuss advantages and disadvantages for each play

4, 5 SKILLS FOR OUTBALLS AND END OF GAME STRATEGIES

4,5. (i) Mini slide fest.

Toss three balls gently into the air directly above a gate.

Choose your stokers ball as the one furthest behind the gate.

Use slides and sparks to spark at least one touched ball through the gate and to run the stroker's ball through the gate

4,5 (ii) Getting onto the goal pole

Place an outball at the middle of line 1.

Place a second ball just to the right or left of the outball but in play.

Play in the outball so that that the inball can slide to the goal pole.

Slide the second ball to the goal pole

Spark the touched ball onto the goal pole and then your stokers ball.

