

World Croquet Championship 2009 Semi-Final Commentary

<p>Reg Bamford v Rob Fletcher</p> <p>Welcome all.</p> <p>Samir here to start off the commentary today. I'll probably hand over to others as the day goes on - you can't expect a chap to commentate all day!</p> <p>All players are practicing at the moment. We have Reg Bamford and Rob Fletcher on lawn 6, and Chris Farthing and Ben Rothman on lawn 7. Both are right in front of the club house. Based on some of Rob's practice shots, the lawns are playing at 12 seconds in both directions; but the wind hasn't really got up yet. Both lawns were cut last night and rolled this morning.</p> <p>The final will be on a new lawn, rotated through 90 degrees and covering both of these lawns, so no advantage to either semi-final there. The ball stop has created a green stripe which would run east-west on the final lawn, but I think this is just greener grass due to the shade, rather than longer grass.</p> <p>08:34 16/05/2009</p> <p>Reg and Rob have started. Reg is starting with blue, so I assume he won the toss. Reg supershot, quite long, perhaps 15 yards.</p> <p>Rob to middle of east boundary with yellow.</p> <p>Reg hits from corner III.</p> <p>Reg has rushed to 2 yards from hoop 1, and has made the hoop.</p> <p>Reg has stuck in 2 and wants a referee. I think he's claiming a wedge. Rejected by Chris Irwin who is refereeing this match.</p> <p>Rob has hit Reg's hoop 3 pioneer with Red (turn 4), he rushed the ball from 2 to hoop 1, little backward take off and he's away.</p> <p>08:54 16/05/2009</p> <p>Rob is at 1-back</p> <p>Patchy updates for a while, I've been given a plate game.</p> <p>08:58 16/05/2009</p> <p>Rob is making an NSL; Reg's hoop 1 ball at hoop 4. There's some of blue open from A baulk, and Rob has had to join almost level with hoop 4, certainly south of hoop 5.</p> <p>Reg is taking the short lift with his hoop 1 ball. Misses.</p> <p>Rob has another backward take off for hoop 1. 18 inches straight.</p> <p>Rob has sent his hoop 3 pioneer out very hard. Hits hoop 3, and that may be the only reason it stayed on.</p> <p>09:12 16/05/2009</p> <p>Rob has started his TP, but parked red on the wire of 4back</p> <p>09:18 16/05/2009</p> <p>Rob has not got the peel going to 6, having another go to 1-back</p> <p>Peel rejected. Might just be a ball to the peg now.</p> <p>No! He's setting up to be planning to peel 4-back before 3-back.</p> <p>Black has gone into position for peeling penult before 4-back.</p> <p>More importantly is rush to 4-back on peelee seems to have gone due south of blue, his escape ball. He may not be able to get a good rush down to 3-back. Jawses the peel, has a rush pointing at hoop 1. Cuts it to 3 yards N of 3-back. Slightly east which may save him... 1 yard straight position.</p>	<p>Chris Farthing v Ben Rothman</p> <p>08:37 16/05/2009</p> <p>I'll put the second semi here.</p> <p>Chris and Ben are still warming up, I think Ben may be preparing a thesis on the East boundary.</p> <p>Chris and Ben are off. A 13 yard supershot with blue from Chris, so I assume he also won the toss.</p> <p>Ben is shooting to corner II.</p> <p>Chris misses in corner II.</p> <p>Ben misses the double.</p> <p>Chris has a good rush to hoop 1, about 2 yards SW, his break looks under control.</p> <p>08:54 16/05/2009</p> <p>Chris is at hoop 5</p> <p>Patchy updates for a while, I've been given a plate game.</p> <p>09:01 16/05/2009</p> <p>Chris has made 1-back. His 2-back pioneer is south of the hoop 1, but it shouldn't be a problem.</p> <p>09:12 16/05/2009</p> <p>Chris has had an NSL</p> <p>Ben hits from corner III</p> <p>09:18 16/05/2009</p> <p>Ben has got going, now for hoop 5</p> <p>09:25 16/05/2009</p> <p>Ben is for 3-back, making a spread,.</p> <p>Ben has joined up just north of level with 5.</p> <p>09:30 16/05/2009</p> <p>Chris is taking the long lift from corner III. Nicks red, and has a TP on offer for game 1.</p> <p>Excuse me for a moment, I appear to have a lift to hit.</p> <p>09:52 16/05/2009</p> <p>Whilst I've been away...</p> <p>Chris broke down at hoop 5, giving gen an easy start. He now has a TP for the first game.</p> <p>Ben is now at hoop 2</p> <p>Ben is at hoop 5 with one peel complete.</p> <p>10:02:24 AM</p> <p>DBM taking over commentary of both games...</p> <p>Ben is at 6 with his standad TP but has rushed partner right in front, and has to back-peel it to get it into position</p> <p>Worker OK, but now has a longish peel ~4 ft</p> <p>Peel went through by 5 yards, the 2-b pioneer is ~3yds NE off the hoop</p> <p>Made 1-b, and whilst rushing partner down to rover, flicked off the peg to put it on the perfect line, but too long for an attempt.</p> <p>Apparently Duncan Dixon has failed a straight rover peel to win the draw half of the plate, and Grimsley is now in</p> <p>Ben has done the third peel, but has a short backward takeoff to 3-b</p>
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Sticks in 3-back hoop.	Made it easily, and is now approaching 4-b with K at rover and Y at penult
09:25 16/05/2009	
Rob now 3-back and 4-back. Reg has a 3 yarder with his hoop 1 ball, or a 5 yarder with his hoop 2 ball. Or a lift.	Ben just tickles his 3 yard return, rolls it to the middle getting a rush on partner to penult
Hits yellow, taking it out of 3-back; takes off to red in front of 4-back and is careful to get to the side to avoid peeling it. Seems to hit it quite hard, now has an awkward 7 yard take-off across the rush line to hoop 1.	About to make rover, with partner by the peg
Good shot, and good rush. Reg has a 6 inch hoop 1 from which he gets his rush to yellow, south of 3-back,	1-0 Rothman, +13tp
Reg has had a good long think, and then rushes black south of yellow.	Game 2 Rothman RY, going first
09:52 16/05/2009	Y supershot U joins up with it, no double
Whilst I've been away...	Ben trickles at U, missing
Reg has stopped at 1-back, cross wiring Rob at hoop 2, and joining in corner IV.	Chris has a double at Y & R from in front of 1
Rob has shot an missed.	Chris hits in
Reg has just played his rush.	He's put Y about 2yds WSW of 2, and rushed partner to 2ft straight in front of 1
As expected (because of the non-standard leave), Reg isn't showing any interest in the SXP. Looks like it may be a TPO though. Interesting choice with Rob on 3-back and 4-back.	Made 1, 4bb ahead of him
10:02:24 AM	Got a rush on Y to 2, K about 2-3 yards in front of 3
DBM taking over commentary of both games...	Y is about a yard in front of 4, rushed red to III
Reg has done one peel of the TPO, and is about to rush the peel ball to 6	Makes 3, and partner goes to 2ft in front of 5, getting a rush on the pivot
He's in a bit of a mess, having all the balls near 6, and will need to peel getting a rush to 1-b, the other ball isn't deep either	Made 4 with a rush back, Y goes to a couple of ft in front of 6
He's hit the peel ball in running the hoop., jawsed it, and is now rushing U away in order to put it to 2-b whilst getting a rush on Y to 1-b from near 6	Made 5, but R is east, so he's had to rush partner nearly to 3-b befoore putting it back to 2-b
Reg made 1-b OK, but has just put the 3-b ball about 3-4 yds too deep. A good rush on the peel ball though	It's about 18" NW of 2-b
The peelee is a couple of feet to the W of rover, and Reg is approaching 2-b from a yard straight in front	Made 6, and approaches 1-b with Y near the peg
Made it with a rush back, and is about to put partner to 4-b going to the peelee	Is putting R to 3-b
Reg has waltered off the final peel, choosing instead to rush it behind the deep 3-b pioneer. The 4-b pioneer is perfect	It's a bit long, so he's put Y down there too.
The peelee is ready to be rushed across after the hoop.	Made 2-b.
Reg is having a bit of trouble placing the balls for the croquet stroke approaching the hoop. Referee on to fill in a hole	Rushes both Y & R to 3-b
Reg made 3-b but didn't rush into peeling position, so he's put R a yard straight in fornt of rover aand rushed Y up the lawn	puts R to NSL position and rush Y back to partner near the peg
Reg has made 4-b, perfect ball at penult	Y to near 2, lays up on the maximum distance spot.
Rushes partner down to near rover, puts it back to the peg, and rushes the peelee to a foot from the hoop	Ben taking the short shot with Y. Hits the in-lawn ball. (crowd not paying any attention to the local boy? No applause)
Reg has found another hole, near penult	Rushes U to IV, gets it to 3 yds W of 6, gettin his rush.
Reg has made pen and is putting a ball down to behind rover going to the ball by the peg	Ben approaches 1 to a couple of feet at a slight angle, and squeezes through
Y is deep and E, U is shallow and W	Plays his sweep well, and hit the hampered shot
Irish peeled into the jaws, R is only a yard off the boundary	I guess Ben hit the peg with R since it is now in the middle of the lawn, and not at 3, he's made 2 with a rush back though
Rushed partner off level with 1	Tries to get a rush to the ball on the boundary, but R falls over a bit, and he will need to cut it.
Took off back and got his rush on the peelee back to the peg. pegging out from about 2 yards E of the peg	Gets to 4 yds behind it on the EB, takes off to get his rush.
	Plays a poor rush, but a good take-off, and runs the hoop from ~18"
	Knocks K up the lawn a bit, and rolls it to 5 going to the ball at 4 ignoring partner on the boundary
	Makes 4, with a rush back into the lawn. Now taking off to partner on the boundary, with K only a ft from 5
	R is 3 yards behind 6, and approaching 5 from a foot
	Got the games the wrong way round there for a bit, sorry, corrected now

Pegs out R and goes off in II	Going to K which is 3 yards in front of 1-b, r is 5 yards in front of 2-b
Rob wanders about looking at his options	Makes 1-b, U 3yds WNW of 3-b K 2 ft from the peg
Plays the thick take off from K, putting in nearly 6 yards past 4-b (about 2 yards N)	(you can see how this is confusing me...)
Rolls U across, but is short with Y, U goes peg high about 2 yards from the boundary	Makes 2-b and rushes back about 6 yards N
Has the squeeze, so Reg goes to II	Ben, just plays the take-off from the peg ball to the 3-b ball
Rob runs the hoop to the boundary, getting some lucky wire, to shorten his next shot by 3 yards	Makes 3-b, but puts U a bit diagonal for my liking
Crowd loving this	The crowd starts applauding despite the fact that neither player has finished their break...
Approaches from five 5ds and spans through. More applause. Gets a rush to penult	Chris has lifted U (the peg ball, for hoop 1) and shoots down the boundary. Misses.
Makes pen with forward rush	Both of them rush a bit short and have to play backward take-offs
Slightly angled rover, makes it no trouble	Makes 1 and rolls K to 3 going to Y at 2
1-0 Fletcher +8otp	Making 3 with K to the side of the hoop.
Fletcher UK, playing first	Hmm.. must have known he was only going to run the hoop by 2 inches...
U supershot R peg high on the EB K shoots down, missing to the SB left out of the corner	"Most difficult shots in croquet" result in an innings turnover.
Reg shoots a partner from a baulk. Can't believe he's missed...	(i.e. the take-off from 3 to the ball in IV, and hitting it...)
For some reason, it needs two referees to make sure that both Reg's balls are on the yard line.	Chris puts R to 2, and gets a rush on Y to 1, he will have a standard TP if he plays these first couple of big shots well.
Rob shoots back up the line with K, missing into the corner.	Rushes it to a yard or so behind, and takes off a little short.
Reg rushes to just out of III, and gets a rush on K back to U in the middle	Makes it though, and gets a rush up the lawn, takes off to get his rush to 2
Reg has got K about 3 yds in front of 2, and has made 1 with no forward rush	Apparently Duncan Dixon has won the final of the draw in the plate.
Puts U 2 yards past 3, and rushes to just beyond hoop 2, needs a ref again for the hole.	Makes 2, and rushes sideways to put a ball to 4 and get his rush to 3
Makes 2 and takes off to the ball near III	Approaches 3 badly off partner, not getting it into peeling position.
Makes 3 and ignores K which is hanging around about 3 yards W of 6	Leaves partner there after the hoop, getting a rush down the lawn on Y
Makes 4 and rushes back to past K, partner going to 6	Makes 4 and gets R up to just past level with 4-b
About to make 5 with a perfect 4bb	Makes 5 with a forward rush
Making 6 off partner, K a yd in front of 1-b, U peg high between 1 & 2	Peeling from about 18" straight, R a couple of yards to the side
Reg has made 1-b and has K a ft from the peg, put U to 3yds WNW of 3-b, and rushed to 2ft in front of 2-b	Got it in the jaws, and has approached 6
Reg rushes close to the peg, but doesn't like the 3-b ball, so rushes K away before stopping it back.	Underhit the shot from near III, and hasn't got much of a 3-b pioneer and needs a ref to watch him hit the ball in the jaws (it's not long, though)
Makes 3-b with K 4 ft from the peg, but gets a good rush on it	Hit it, and rolled it over to behind 1-b
Reg's U is also a bit diagonal, but deeper, K is about 18" from the peg.	Makes 1-b and has a rush on partner to peeling position. Y too short to peel to getting a rush though, and R not good enough to roll to
Rob also lifts U (the hoop 2 ball in this case), and takes the short shot. Also misses	He's going for it though. Doesn't get the peel (or even the jaws) and doesn't get a rush.
Reg hits partner, and takes off behind the ball on the boundary	Makes 2-b but with no backward rush
Both of them rush a bit short and have to play backward take-offs	Doesn't play a great croquet stroke. R is a good "box" ball, but K doesn't have a rush on Y to 3-b.
Hopefully they'll differentiate a bit now, since Reg has a standard TP	He's approaching the hoop from 3 yards to the side. Got a bit of an angled hoop.
He's made 1 and got both R & K at 3, approaching 2 from 4ft straight in front.	...and fails it. Bounces off 3 yards w
All looking very boring from Reg now.	The hoop 4 ball has a 2 yarder at the peeler, with both
He's made 3, and hit partner. Needs a hole filling again.	

<p>Reg has done the first peel</p> <p>About to make 4</p> <p>Made 4 with a rush back, R not peeled enough to rush back up the lawn, and in fact the rush across hits the hoop.</p> <p>Takes off and makes 5</p> <p>Approaching 6 from 6" partner 2ft behind the hoop</p> <p>Plays a straight peel from about a yard putting partner into the jaws</p> <p>Rushes K into the back of the hoop, but looks like he can place the strikers ball so that it can run the hoop.</p> <p>Sorry, no, he can't, he's got to play a backward take-off from WTD position</p> <p>This looks really ugly for Reg</p> <p>It's probably so close he could play a "bouncer", but i dunno how these hoops will react to one of those.</p> <p>He's played the take-off well, and only has a slightly angled hoop.</p> <p>Bullies it through, with hoop & roquet</p> <p>Has ignored R in the jaws, and gone to make 2-b directly</p> <p>Makes it with a rush back.</p> <p>Rush peels pen before 3-b, but can't get the rover peel. R is very close to rover, possibly touchng a wire</p> <p>He's left it alone after 3-b</p> <p>Rushes down after 4-b and is going to fiddle with the peelee.</p> <p>More hole filling.</p> <p>R is now 18" straight in fron of rover.</p> <p>Made pen, K on the line between 1 and 4, U level with the hoop. peeling from a foot straight</p> <p>Another very deep peel, but still managed to keep it on the lawn.</p> <p>Rushing back to the peg.</p> <p>2-2.5 yard pegout</p> <p>Deals with it - Reg +26tp</p> <p>Reg RY going first</p> <p>Y SS U just out of II R misses K misses the two balls in contact</p> <p>Reg puts K a ft W of 2, getting a slight cut rush to 1</p> <p>Makes 1, no forward rush.</p> <p>takes off to II, puts U 2ft behind 3, and makes 2 from 6"</p> <p>Rushes into the back of 3, takes off a bit long and runs it cleanly. hits a 4 yd return</p> <p>Rolls it down and hits the ball near 5</p> <p>Makes 4 and puts partner to 6</p> <p>Makes 5 looking at putting K to 2-b</p> <p>makes 6, not swapping partner with the ball at 3-b</p> <p>Makes 1-b puts U a bit deep at 3-b though</p> <p>Made 2-b without a controlled rush, K now 3 yards E of the peg.</p> <p>rushed Y to IV and putting it back to the peg getting a rush to 3-b</p> <p>Makes 4-b and overhits the croquet stroke , so no rush to</p>	<p>other balls in the vicinity of 4</p> <p>Got all the balls perfectly for his delayed TP</p> <p>Not much of a rush back, didn't get past the peg</p> <p>Rolled down, Y has gone past the hoop by a foot</p> <p>Has got a straigh backward take-off to 5</p> <p>Makes 5 no forward rush</p> <p>Short on his roll, can't rush to peeling position</p> <p>Hits Y and stops it W of 6!</p> <p>Actually, K is a rubbish 1-b pioneer, so I guess Y was supposed to be better (it is but not by much)</p> <p>U is a couple of yards NNE of 2-b, and making 1-b off Y</p> <p>Makes 1-b and McCulloughs Y to 3-b</p> <p>Makes 2-b and 3-b giving him a 3 yard return - centre ball, K 2 yards in front of 4-b</p> <p>Poor croquet stroke Y 4 yards past pen, no rush on U. Rolls it down OK though</p> <p>Makes 4-b and uses Y to get a rush on U to pen. K 3yds wsw of rover</p> <p>Gets his rush to rover, Y & U near the peg</p> <p>Makes it with some depth annd has a 4 yard return, tickles it</p> <p>Ben setting up his spread, needs to croquet U a yard or so, though (it's on the line of the peg though.)</p> <p>Decided it was too far, and is having an OSL instead.</p> <p>OSL, Y 2 yards out of IV, R 3 yds N of it</p> <p>Chris making a treble out of U with R & Y in the background</p> <p>Misses U, hits R</p> <p>Rushes Y back to U but doesn't get a good rush to penult</p> <p>Makes it though. Still needs to get a rush to rover off something</p> <p>Oops. He just rushed R into hoop 4. He now has a 7 yard approach, I'm surprised he didn't just punt R across the lawn there, but he played it as a roll. Has a 4-5 ft straight hoop.</p> <p>Stuck in it. R is the peg ball though.</p> <p>Rushed K back through rover and put it to 5 yards behind 4-b. Left U a couple of yards SE of 3-b and laying up about peg high on the WB</p> <p>There's a lot of space between R & Y. I guess to get one of them wired.</p> <p>Chris is shooting K at U.</p> <p>Centre ball</p> <p>Took off a little short and is going to rush R to Y</p> <p>Didn't rush very well, and has to take off behind Y from in the lawn. Fortunately (for him) Y is a yard off the yard line</p> <p>Gets a good rush to rover.</p> <p>Rushes to about 2 ft to the side and played a take off. It looked a lot like it hilled an extra foot or so away from the hoop.</p> <p>Made sure of this one though</p> <p>Rushes Y back to the vicinity of 6.</p> <p>Thickens it about 5 yards closer to the NB, getting a rush on R that he chops towards the middle</p> <p>He's got about a 4 yard peg out attempt</p> <p>Misses it, and goes back to partner.</p>
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the wired spot

He's got it a yard away from the peg, I guess wired, but I'm on the wrong line.

Reg has laid up with his rush, so he's happy with the leave.

Rob lifted the ball at the peg and shot at the outside ball. Missed though

12:39 16/05/2009

Samir back now, taking over this game.

From the missed lift, Reg has rushed to the ball by hoop 2, rushed back to corner IV and then to hoop 1. He has just approached hoop 2 well, but off partner.

After 2, Reg has rushed through hoop 5, came through by about 2 yards.

James is cheering on Pidcock to make the final.

Reg, playing yellow, has rolled red to hoop 4, hit and taken off from blue down to yellow at hoop 3.

Up to about 100 spectators for the final. Feels like about a third of those are (or at least were) players.

Reg has got a short, but slightly angled hoop 4.

No problem, firm shot through to the boundary.

Reg has got his escape ball for the 4-back peel too far south. Will probably try to peel straight from about 2 yards.

Great roll after hoop 5 to get blue to within a couple of feet of 1-back, and get a short straight rush on peelee.

Peelee in a hole, so more gardening. Good use of the hole to rush into, and then fill it before peeling. The peel is perhaps 18 inches, maybe 15 degrees. Jawses it, but has a 2 foot rush straight to hoop 6.

Didn't get a useful rush after hoop 6, cuts it to E boundary level with penult. Should have enough space to hold for the rush peel from here.

2-back pioneer is about 6 yards from 2-back, but fairly straight. Rolls peelee over to 1-back for a wylie peel, but clubs it. It's on the line from 1-back to corner I, about 3 yards from the hoop. Rolls peelee over to penult and heads for 2-back.

Runs 2-back hard to the boundary. Looks to have also jawsed 1-back on lawn 5!

Looks like he wants a death roll peel to 3-back. Has rushed peelee straight in front.

Peel catches no wire, and ends up about 2 yards from S boundary. Has 3 yarder at his 3-back pioneer.

Reg has misapproached 3-back, is stalking on a line which suggests 30degrees. Runs it, and gets some hill to have a clear shot at blue.

He's rushed to 4-back, and called out the gardener again. Take off was a bit long - might have stopped without the gardening - but runs it easy enough. Big cut-rush to S boundary, about 3 yards from red.

Spits black back into lawn to get a rush on red. Didn't get a good rush, but tries to rush it in front of rover.

Oops - red has hit and stuch to the back of rover. Thick take-off to penult, knocking red about a yard to the side. Could have found himself wired had yellow rolled another ball or two, but easy enough approach to penult.

Plays for and gets a rush out of penult to black. He's sent it a bit too far. Seemed to be worried about hoop 4, but has got away with it. Doesn't send blue deep, it's perhaps 2 yards SE of rover. Rushes black across to re

Looks to be trying to cannon red closer to peel position. Chris says "he must be completely nuts". Looks to be a simple position to play a small drive to put black W of

Ben limbers up for his 12 yarder with the 4-b ball

...and misses.

Chris has a 3 or so yarder which he doesn't want to hit to hard. R & Y are joined up a couple of yards out of III

Plays it well, has about a 1 yard straight approach to 3-b

Makes 3-b but no forward rush. Is rolling partner to penult going to the two balls behind 4-b

K goes about 4 yds in fron of penult, U has a 2 yarder at Y. Clips it.

Y goes out to about 2 yards in front of 2-b, and rushes R to a foot from it.

Makes 4-b with a rush E, stopping it to rover

Goes about 2 yards in front of the hoop, and rushes Y behind K

Rushes K to Penult. Should finish from here.

Makes it, K goes to the peg, but U goes a little far for a good rush on Y.

Cuts it down Ok though

Y goes behind rover, and U rushes R to a foot in front.

Makes it

Game over. Farthing +5

12:59:25 PM

Looks like lunch

01:31:22 PM

Back from lunch

Farthing RY going first.

R to IV

U duffer tive

Y gentle at the duffer misses, and pioneers 1 (about 4 ft behind)

K hits U

Takes off to the ball in IV

R is good at 2, K has a 4 yarder at Y pointing at I

Rushes it to about 3 yds directly W of the hoop

Takes off to position.

There's a bit more cloud now, and the sun is occasionally going in.

Ran the hoop by 5 yards, and hit U

Taking off to behind Y

Rushed Y to WB, put it to a couple of yards W of 3.

Made 2. Put R to 4 (about a foot past)

Rushed to 3. U is hovering about behind 5

Made 3 with a forward rush. Easy 4bb ahead.

Y is now the pivot, making 4 off R

Made it, R is now 5ft in front of 6.

Y 5ft to the W of 5, making 5 off partner

Hits U after making the hoop, putting it to 2-b

4ft NNE of 2-b, rushed Y to level with the peg

Y to 4ft ENE of 1-b, just made 6, rush pointng N

Rolled R to 3 yds WNW of the peg, going to Y

1-b made, chops Y up the lawn a couple of yards

rover and get a rush to rover.

Got a half-ball promotion, leaving a cut-rush on red, about 30 degrees, but perhaps 18 inches closer. Black looks to have stopped due South of the hoop and may well stop peelee.

Peel goes through, comes out at an angle and misses black. Yellow has bounced off the hoop and is 45 degrees.

Runs the hoop easily, must have been better than it looked. Easy finish for a 2-1 lead.

Bamford +26tp

13:15 16/05/2009

Lunch

In the draw, Dixon has won the plate draw. The process games are Huneycutt v Ritche and Osbourn v Prater.

In the Premiership, Manchester United have drawn with Arsenal to claim the title.

England v West Indies; England 569-6 dec, Indies 70-3

Finally, good news for everyone present at the NCC. You're missing the Eurovision Song Contest finals.

13:45 16/05/2009

Reg is back and has taken up station in the shelter between lawn 6 and 7.

13:54 16/05/2009

Oops soory, a round of applause has just greeted Rob hitting a shot from corner III.

Game 3; Rob RY, Reg UK

Rob supershot

Reg middle of E boundary

Rob hits from corner III

Approaches to 1 yard in front of hoop 1, runs and has a three ball break in front of him.

13:59 16/05/2009

Rob has rushed red into the back of hoop 4, can only take off to hoop 5 pioneer

Makes 5 with a rush back to red

Only gets blue about 4 yards NW of the peg, and can only rush to peg high. May even be partly stymied by red. Good roll, runs 6 off the lawn and now needs one good shot to recover the break.

Rob has got to 3-back with little further problems, and seems to be having a defensive spread.

Blue and Red are 4 feet apart, slightly off level with 5. Lags black to 3 yards from W boundary.

14:11 16/05/2009

Reg taking a long lift from corner III. Misses, but looked extremely close.

Rob has rushed to about a foot north of hoop 1. Takes off, hoop and roquet.

Just made 2, and is thinking about taking a rush to corner IV.

The manager has just realised he's missing Eurovision, and now wants to find a TV. James suggests the big screen in the bar.

Rob has decided against the rush to corner IV and will settle for a delayed TP. Rushes partner about 7 yards S of

Y goes to the peg, K rushes R near to U

Approaching 2-b from a yard straight.

Makes it without a rush back to Y

Rolling up, rushes Y quite hard (needed to move it a yard, moved it nearly 3), but U is out of the way of the take-off

Rushes R to 4 ft in front of 3-b

Only just squeezes through 3-b, needs a referee for the hampered shot

Looks pretty easy. And he hits it with no trouble

Puts R about 4 yds SW of 2 and rushes Y pretty close to the spot

Pretty good spread

Chris lifts Y and is shooting down the boundary

Looking at it, leaning a bit... missed

Ben rushes K to R pretty well, but gets a slightly longish rush, putting K to 18" to the E of 2

Rushes R 3 yds W of 1 and takes off well.

Runs it pretty cleanly and has about a 4-5 yarder back

Hits it but is now only a couple of yards from I

Rolling it to 3 going to the ball at 2

A pretty good shot. R 3 yds W of 3 and a 1 yd roquet on K in the right direction.

Makes 2, but has a rush pointing S

Hits it a couple of yards, and is putting it to 4 going to R

K goes 5 ft in front of 4, U with a rush

Approaches from a foot or so, makes the hoop, but no forward rush.

Lets see if he can play "the most difficult shots in the game" aa bit better this time

He's about 4 yards short on the take-off, but hits it this game...

Y goes about 2ft NW of 5, approaching 4 from a ft

Got his rush back, but not into peeling position

Rolls it over a couple of yards, doesn't get a rush S so tickles R and takes off

The take-off is good, and approaching 5 from 4 feet or so

Runs the hoop very cleanly and has a couple of yarder back at the pioneer.

Has the peg slightly in the way of puttin out his 1-b pioneer

Not a great roll - Y is about 5 yards in front of 1-b and U has a 3 yarder at K

Hits it too hard, so can't peel it now. I think he's trying to put it in the jaws though.

Didn't manage to jaws it, rushed a little behind 6

Has made the hoop, and rushed back a couple of yards. Now taking off to the peelee from the middle of the lawn

Rushed it to the NB behind 4-b, but has a difficult split to play now to get his rush to 1-b

K is OK at 2-b, but there's no rush to 1-b, he's now got to approach from the boundary in front

Does well, though. Almost George Collins's it into the jaws.

D'oh. Only runs it by 6" and has to try and hit the pivot

Yep got it

4-back after hoop 3 and takes off to corner IV.

He's put his hoop 5 pioneer on the wire of the hoop so will need a good take off back to it from 4-back. Has decided to rush peelee further from 4-back and send it back to make the approach to the hoop 5 pioneer earlier.

Deals with hoop 5. Has a hampered stroke after the hoop, but looks easy.

It was. Can't get the rush on peelee for the peel before 6, but is setting up for another go before 1-back.

Can't get his hoop 6 ball to 2-back, leaves it near the peg going to peelee. this looks to be putting the break at huge risk.

Abandons the peel, cut rushes peelee the middle of North boundary (round of applause from Chris Clarke) and sends peelee to 2-back.

Chris suggests leaving yellow (the 3-back pioneer in hoop 4) and red on the wire of 6. We'll see what Rob does. Reg is for 1+1.

Break still under control, now approaching penult. Still has all the balls in front of him.

Looks like we're getting a spread, or possible a cross-pegging. Parter is on the W side of the peg, so perhaps a reverse spread. Rob has just made rover.

Reverse spread it is. Red is a yard E of the line between 3 and 4, looks about peg high. Yellow is 6 inches from the peg and Rob is joining level with 6 on W boundary.

14:40 16/05/2009

Reg is taking the shot from A baulk at yellow by the peg. 17 yards, probably about the same length as the shot at Rob's balls from B baulk.

Hits.

Day 3 close, West Indies 94-3

Reg has a 1 foot rush to hoop 1.

Over rushes by 4 yards, but no problem.

Reg has run hoop 2, and has a 4bb. It's not very tight, but shouldn't cause a problem.

Reg seems to be thinking after running hoop 4. Perhaps he's thinking about an SXP.

No, just partner going to 2-back.

Reg has just made hoop 6, all under control.

Good time to thank UBS for more champagne.

15:03 16/05/2009

Reg has completed his break without any further fuss. Diagonal spread, blue quite tight to W boundary about level with 6; black (for 4-back) by the peg, about 18 inches away. Reg has joined near maximum length position.

Rob has lifted the 4-back ball from the peg without hesitation. He's 4-back and peg. This shot should win the game, or possibly lose the match.

He's missed; looked to be shooting at the in-lawn ball again.

So, Reg v the lawn for a 3-1 win.

He's got himself a 1 foot straight rush to hoop 1. Rushes into the back of hoop 1. Looks nasty. No, there's some of blue in the jaws. It's easy.

Approaches hoop 2 under tight control, with a good pioneer at hoop 3.

Rushes after 2 to a yard N of corner IV. Gets a rush while punting red in court a few yards.

Reg has run hoop 3 and has called a referee. Chris Irwin is shaking her head. Hits blue anyway (2 foot).

Clubs blue about 3 yards past hoop 5, but has got right up

Takes off and rushes to the boundary level with 2-b

Underhits (and over rolls) it, Y is 4 yds short of 3-b, but rushes back to 2-b OK

Makes it with a rush back. No McCulloughing this time, let's see if he's going to try any straight peels.

I think he's having a go at a peel now, from about 5 yards, he's certainly lining it up carefully

Missed the hoop completely

He's not rushed R past Y either. Just taking off to get the rush to his hoop

Approaching 3-b from a couple of feet

Makes it, rushes Y a yard or so E, then puts it to rover. No peels now, I suspect

R is a good penult ball, and Ben has made 4-b with no trouble

Puts K to the peg going to the penult ball.

Makes it and gets R & K near the peg for his spread

Makes rover with a rush back

Puts Y about 6 yds S of 2

Gets R on the wired spot about 3" from the peg, and rushes back to the EB.

Chris lifts R from by the peg to the end of b-baulk

Shooting at Y...

...only just misses (Ruter says it hilled off)

Ben rushes K to the boundary behind Y

Puts out a pretty good penult ball, and rushes to a couple of yards at a slight angle from 4-b

Approaches to about a yard straight

... and fails it.

Chris has an umpire on to watch his 4 yarder at the ball in the hoop

Hits it.

Puts K to 2, getting a rush on U to R which went off the WB level with 1.

Rushes to about 4 ft from it

Gets the rush and makes 1 from about a foot at a slight angle

Gets R into the lawn a bit and rushes U behind 2

U goes a yard W of 3, Y has an easy rush on K

Makes 2, but ignores R, just splitting K to 4 and going to 3 from where he is

K 2yds in front of 4, approaching 3 from a couple of feet

Hmm.. only just ran 3, maybe distracted by the applause for Reg hitting his lift

And misses the hampered shot. U is the peg ball.

U rushes Y to 3 yards out of I on the WB

Y goes to about 5 yds SSW of 2, U rushes R to the end of a-baulk

He stops R almost into III (probably only a yard or so out), and Christs off the black

Rolls K & U down towards IV, laying up with a rush pointing at 4-b. It looks like this must be a target for R

Actually, it's not even a bad target for Y, either.

And this is what Chris is taking.

to red near corner IV.

Reg decides blue is good enough for hoop 5, and sends partner up to 4-back. Provided he can deal with his hoop 5 pioneer, he's got a delayed TP waiting to be had.

Rushed poorly after 4, and had to roll across to 4-back. Positions black nicely, but needs to tickle red. Hits it centre ball and ideally needs a thick take off back to blue for hoop5.

Striker's ball is good, but peelee is 4 feet ESE of 4-back.

Rushes up to 4-back after hoop 5, but lands blue W of everything. Has to take off to partner, leaving blue in what might be a good position for peeling 4-back before 1-back, but he'll be expecting to do it before 6.

4-back jawed. 2 yard, but straight rush to hoop 6. Gasps from the gallery.

Rushes a foot NE of hoop 6. Backward take off without any gardening (!) and runs it, giving himself a rush pointing at corner IV.

Good croquet stroke from E boundary level with 5 to get black nicely in front of 2-back and a tight rush peel.

The rush to 1-back skates past 1-back, approaching from 2 yards NW.

Reg has peelee nicely in front of penult for a death roll attempt to 2-back. Blue is North of rover, and about 3 yards E. He won't be able to peel rover to it, but it's not too bad if he needs another go at a penult peel.

He doesn't, peel goes through nicely, perhaps too far. But under control at 2-back.

15:33 16/05/2009

30 minutes since Reg's leave.

Leaves red near rover, no attempt at a Wylie peel of rover. I assume he'll send his 3-back pioneer to penult, and position red with a take off to his 4-back pioneer.

Approaching 4-back from 5 feet.

Peelee is about 2 feet NE of rover.

Gone back to rover, and adjusts red straight in front of the hoop. Reg looks disgusted with his take off to blue, but we can't see anything wrong with it.

Peelee is now a foot straight in front of rover, black 2 yards NE of red, and Reg his taking croquet a yard SE of penult having already made that hoop.

No excuses from here.

Peel goes deep, but striker's ball clear of the hoop, and a simple rush and pegout to come.

3 yards and it's all over.

Reg +5tp

A great performance by Reg, tight break play, and triples looking under control. Not something you could say about the other semi, so that makes Reg a strong favourite for the final, even before accounting for experience and ranking.

Rob's shooting wasn't quite up to yesterday's standard, but it's still a great performance 3-1 in a World Championship Semi final in your first full season. I suspect he'll be a strong favourite to go one better at home in Australia next time around.

Reg Bamford beats Rob Fletcher -8otp +26tp +26tp +5tp

But he's missed it, actually probably not a target at all from the line he took.

Ben has roqueted Y

Stops it out a couple of yards past 4 and rushes into III

Stops t out a couple of yards and rushes R to 18" in front and slightly E of 4-b

approaching with a take-off

runs the hoop gently!

But still taking on his 6 yarder at U

Hits it in the middle

Stops U to a couple of yards in front of rover

Rushes R to 2 yds WNW of penult

Approaches to 2ft straight.

Runs it by 6 yards, and has a 2 yarder back at R

Taking off to Y

Doesn't get past it, so now playing a roll putting Y behind rover going to K

Y goes a couple of yards past the line, but U gets a good rush.

Approaches the hoop, but puts U on the opposite side to Y.

And it might punish him, he's now a little hampered by U from shooting at Y

No, needs a ref, but still hits Y in the middle

Takes off back, and rushes U to 2 yards from the peg

Rothman wins the 3rd +23

Rothman RY going in

R to middle of EB

U longish duffer

R shooting at Y from 4yds outside III

Hits it, cutting it straight off the boundary

Rolls Y into the lawn, and has a 2yd cut rush on U to 1

Rushes it off the boundary level with the hoop

Approaches with a roll and goes screaming past

R runs away to peg high on the EB

K takes on his double of U with Y in the background

Misses U but hits Y

Approaching 1 from 2-3 yards SE

Plays it well, and makes the hoop with a forward rush

U goes about 5 yards deep towards III, but K has a good rush on Y

Makes 2, but doesn't try to cut his eastward pointing rush to R, choosing to play a split instead

Plays it pretty well, and gets Y only a couple of feet from 4 and gets a rush to 3

Makes 3 with a rush, and gets partner near the peg, taking off to R

Puts R to 5, and makes an easy 4.

Y is a poor pioneer, and goes 3 yards past 6

Rushes U south, and stops it back, about 3 yards short of 6

Makes 5 with a sideways rush, then rolls R to 1ft in front of 1-b going behind Y

Rushes Y to U, and gets a rush to 6

Makes 6, and puts U to 2 ft E of 2-b. rushes Y to NB

Approaches 1-b from only a few inches away, makes it and rushes R back a couple of yards

R goes a yard or so past 3-b and K doesn't have a rush southwards on Y

Chooses to roll it to 3-b going to U (possibly having another NSL)

Rushes U past the back of the hoop to a foot to the side

Makes the hoop and rushes U to 6 yards behind 3-b

Takes off and is making 3-b with both oppo balls there

Makes it, rushes Y away, and puts it over to near 2 getting a rush on U to the EB. R is already in NSL position

Ben lifts Y from near 2 and marches down to a-baulk

Ben misses

Chris has chosen the crap option, of hitting partner first and then rushing Y down to IV, as if oppo had shot down the boundary

Doesn't look great.

Y is 2 yards behind the hoop, and R has a 4 ft cut rush to 1

Rushes well though, maybe too well - R only looks to be a foot from the hoop at most

Makes the hoop gently, and can probably cut R to IV

Gets it to the SB behind 4

Puts it a foot from 3 getting behind K, rushes K to 3 yards behind 3

Leaves it there and plays a thin take off to get a rush on Y behind 2

A little long but cuts it the right way

Makes 2 with a northward pointing rush

Moves it a couple of yards, and plays a split going to partner

Y goes about a foot past 4, but U is down the wrong line and doesn't get a rush on partner

He's rolling it to peeling position from 3-4 yards away

It looks pretty good, but my angle isn't ideal

I don't think he tried to fiddle peelee with R so I guess it's OK.

Ran the hoop and missed ball but kept it in peeling position after hitting it

Peeled it with a split and rushed R to the boundary level with Y

R goes about 4ft E of 5

Makes 4, and waits for the applause as Reg wins.

Rushes Y to near III

Stops Y to 5ft WSW of 6, rushes K to 4 yds E of 6 and takes off to R at 5

Rushes R to a foot in front of 5

Makes 5 with a forward rush, but rushes R to a bit of a bleh position between 6 & 1-b

He's swapping the balls over. Rolled R as an escape ball, and rushed Y S of K

Y goes to 1ft in front of 1-b

approaches the hoop from a foot

Peeling from about 2ft

Peels by about a foot getting a rush N on R
R about 3 yds N of 2-b, approaching 1-b from a foot
Makes it with an eastward pointing rush
Cuts it N a bit, cannoning into K - cunning
Y goes 4ft W of 3-b, U rushes K near R
Makes 2-b with a rush back.
Puts R about 4ft behind 4-b, getting close to the peelee
Peeling from about a foot
Done it. Rushing to 3-b now
Approaching from 18" or so from the SE
Makes it with a slight cut rush towards rover.
Rolls Y over to rover, but is slightly short getting his
rush back up the lawn on K
Rushed past the W of rover (don't know if that was
deliberate) and now taking off from between 1-b and penult
Makes 4-b with a rush back to K
R goes past the peg getting a rush on K to penult
Makes it but no forward rush
A little roll to put it by the peg getting a rush on R
Put R past the hoop, rushes Y a foot or so, approaches the
hoop
Runs it easily, hits Y, and takes off to K to level the match
Farthing RY going in
Y long SS
U joins up with it, maybe cross pegged
R shooting from I at something
It's a dribble at Y
K has a double at R & Y from b-baulk, I think
Hits Y
Y goes to 2, K rushes R behind U
Rushes to 4 yds in front of 1
Approaches pretty well, to about a foot. Makes sure of it,
running by 6 yards
U goes to 3, and Ben has his 4bb in front of him
Makes 2 and puts Y to a yard in front of 4
Makes 3 and puts U to 4ft in front of 5
Making 4 from a foot in front
Christ's off Y making the hoop, and rolls it at least 2 yards
past 6
Rushes R only just past U so it's not going to 6.
Leaves it there as a "pivot"
Makes 5 without a backwards rush, so has to put out his 2-b
pioneer from a couple of yards further away.
Rushes R to the NB
Puts it a couple of yards ENE of 1-b
Rushes Y to a yard in front of 6
Makes 6 and Christ's off Y again
Rolls it over behind 1-b, makes the hoop, then rushes Y to
near the peg and takes off back to R
Has to cut R to get it S
R goes a couple of yards W of 3-b

Makes 2-b with a cut rush back towards the peg

Moves Y a bit now its a yard S of the peg, doesn't get a good rush on R

Approaches 3-b from a couple of yards, and can rush R close to Y

Stops R to 4-5yds SW of 2, and rushes Y to the spot near the peg

A little take off and an easy rush to the EB.

A smattering of applause as Ben finishes his turn

Interestingly Chris is taking the short lift, despite the fact that Ben has not come near either of his two delayed Tp efforts

He lifted Y from near the peg, and missed.

To be fair, he didn't hit either of his long lifts either, so maybe that boundary isn't very flat

Y is a couple of yards in the lawn near 4, K is 2 ft in front of 2, and Ben has rushed R to 5 yds NNW of 1

The backward take-off is Ok though, and he runs the hoop by 8 yards

Hits his 4 yarder at R in the middle

Puts R about 2yds SW of 3 going to K

Approaches the hoop from a yard, but doesn't quite run it far enough

Cuts it a bit, and has to put into peeling posn from about 5 yards

Both balls are a bit long, but K is definitiely peelable

R is rushed to 18" in front of the hoop

Ben is attemptin the peel from about 2 yds SSE of 4-b

Looks like he's trying it with split too

A round of applause as he does the first peel

Hasn't managed to cut the escape ball to the side boundary, so is putting it behind 4 going to Y

Approaching 4 from the side putting Y to 5

Gets a straight hoop, but Y is 2-3 yds E of 5

Has a rush back on R and hits it to level with 4-b on the EB

R goes to 2yds E of 6, and U rushes K to 3yds W of 6. the peg is right in the way of the take-off

Leaves U a bit on the mat with the take-off, but cuts Y in front of 5 anyway

K is a yard from 6 WNW

Makes 5 with a forward rush, takes it to between 3 & 4

Puts it across the face of 6 to get it lft in front of 1-b

He's one of "those" players...

i.e. has his escape ball for the penult peel on the East side of the lawn...

It may be an American thing, as they don't learn to rush balls off the lawn in a 3bb playing US rules

Peels K by a foot and has a rush pointing at III

Rushes to 3 yds W of hoop 3

R is a good 2-b pioneer, approaching 1-b from 2 feet

Got a rush pointing ESE, took it to between 3 & 6, 2 yards off the boundary.

Christs off K putting Y to 3 yards WSW of 3-b

Rolls K to the 3 yards SE of the peg going to 2-b

	<p>Makes it with a rush back East</p> <p>Puts R to 4ft in front of 4b (I must say, his control has improved as this game has progressed)</p> <p>Rushes K well and gets it into longish angled peeling position.</p> <p>Peels it, but goes a little long with U, so no rush to 3-b.</p> <p>Approaching with a take-off from ~2yds WNW of the hoop</p> <p>Needs the referee to do a bit of hole repair</p> <p>Takes off to a foot in front</p> <p>Makes sure of it, and has a 6 yard return</p> <p>Centre ball.</p> <p>Looks like he's lining up to put Y to penult</p> <p>Yep, does it well too, 1 ft behind the hoop</p> <p>rushes K to near R and has poked this back into the middle</p> <p>Makes 4-b and tickles R in order to put it to rover</p> <p>About a yard from the hoop, should really be all over now.</p> <p>K goes to the peg, rather than leaving it behind penult.</p> <p>Makes the hoop, and hits Y</p> <p>Takes off to K</p> <p>Leaves it by the peg and takes off to R</p> <p>Approaching rover from 18" - expect rapturous applause when the local boy becomes the first American in the final</p> <p>Makes it, hits the red and takes off to K</p> <p>Goes way past and gave himself a good chance of getting a grievous.</p> <p>Missed it though, and is now pegging out from a yard</p> <p>Rothman +26tp</p> <p>To be honest Ben looked significantly more ragged than Chris, but did hit in a bit. I don't think he'll trouble Reg much tomorrow, especially with the hoops in virgin ground. Reg looked significantly more controlled today, and is clearly peaking at the right time.</p> <p>Ben Rothman beats Chris Farthing +13tp -5 +23 -26tp +26tp</p>
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