

Wickets

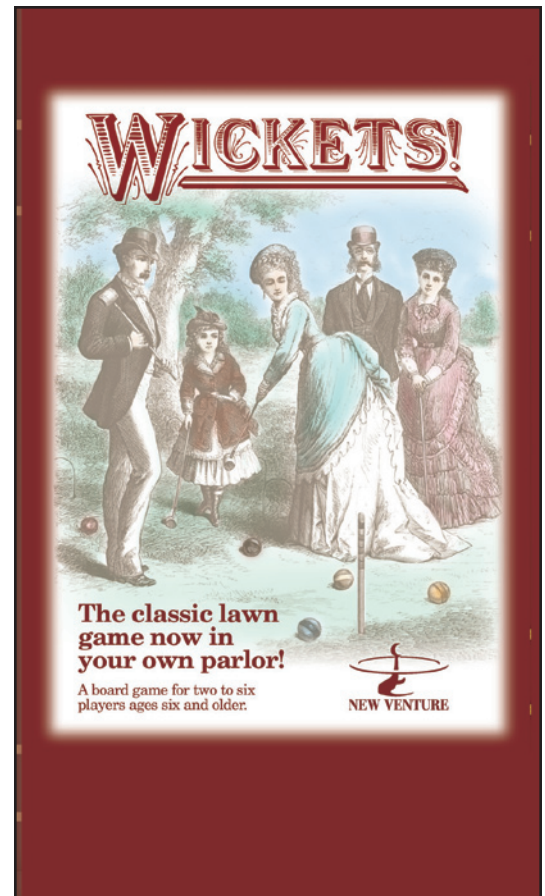
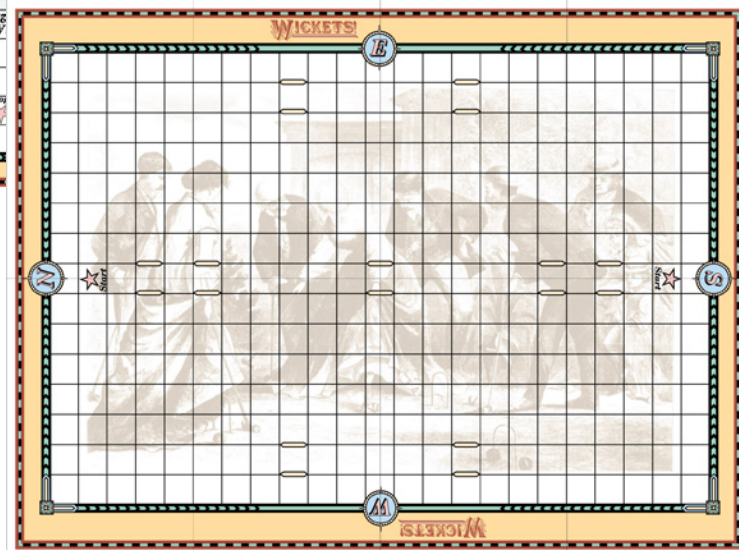
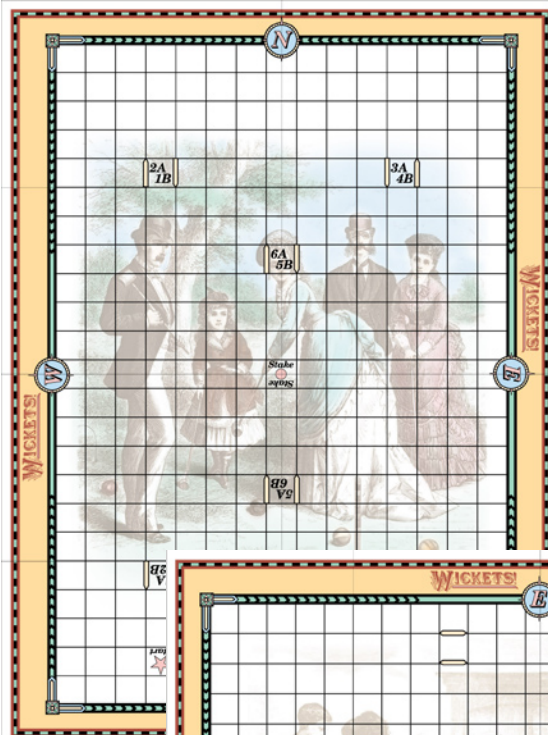
Croquet on the Dining Room Table!

Type: Simulation
Ages: 8+

Players: Two to eight
Duration: 15 - 30 minutes

Synopsis:

Wickets is a simulation of croquet on a game board, with a dice-and-pawn strategy that can have intricate variations. The game includes adaptations of both the International 6-Wicket rules as well as the more common 9-Wicket “backyard” rules. And, just like in real croquet, land next to an opponent and you can “send” him or her flying off in a disadvantageous direction.



Equipment & Features:

The board is two-sided, one showing a grid and markings of a “nine-wicket” croquet layout (the popular “backyard” version) and the other showing a six-wicket English version.

Each player has a pawn depicting their ball, and a pair of six-sided dice are used to determine the moves.

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The Rules:

Rules applicable to both variations:

The object of the game is to collect the maximum possible points to win, being one point for each wicket passed through and one point for each stake struck. Players begin at the star "start" space and proceed through a pattern of wickets around the board back to the start to win.

Each player choose a pawn to represent his/her ball color. (See version for playing order and team colors). The moving player is called the "striker" and his playing piece the "struck ball." Movement is determined by the roll of two 6-sided dice. Each number rolled is executed by moving the ball in a straight path rank or file (no diagonals) for each number rolled. A 90° turn may be made between the two numbers, or both can be used in one straight shot. As an example: if a player rolls a 3 and 5, he/she can move the ball 3 spaces to the left then 5 spaces forward.

Also included in the game is a wicket counter card for each player to help keep track of their sequence of play. Each player should fasten a paperclip to the edge of the wicket counter to indicate the wicket they have just scored.

If a roll of the die would send a ball beyond the border of the playing field, the player's turn ends at the boundary and play passes to the next player regardless of any continuation shots that may have been earned (continuation shots are explained below).

To score a wicket, the struck ball must pass completely through the wicket space to the space on the other side. If a player's ball comes to rest in the wicket space, that wicket is blocked. Players may pass a turn (thus staying in the wicket space for a round) but his/her ball might be "croqueted" by another player.

A ball may pass through a wicket in the wrong direction with no score and no penalty. However, if a ball strikes a stake out of turn, the player's ball is returned to the start position of that turn and his/her turn is ended.

If a striker's ball passes into a space occupied by another player's ball at any time during the movement, this is called a "roquet." The player's turn ends immediately and the striker's ball is called "in hand." The striker can then choose between two options: He/she can take a continuation shot (roll both dice again and continue his/her turn) or "croquet" the other player's ball by rolling a single die and then moving that other player's ball in a straight line in any direction (rank or file - no diagonals).

Croqueted balls must stop at the edge of the board regardless of count on the die roll. This ball is then considered "dead" to the striker until the striker scores again. That is, the striker cannot croquet the same ball again until he/she has passed through a wicket or struck a stake, at which time the croqueted ball becomes "alive" again to the striker. If a move would pass through a space occupied by a ball that is "dead" to the striker, that move is illegal and cannot be made.

If a ball passes through a wicket then strikes another ball (passes into an already occupied space), the continuation

shot for the wicket is not valid. Only one continuation shot (or croquet) is allowed for each "strike" (i.e. each roll of the dice).

Once a ball has passed through the last wicket on the course, it becomes a "rover." As such, it can be used to roquet (and subsequently croquet) any ball on the course - all balls are "alive" to a rover. This strategy is not very effective for individual play on the nine-wicket field, but is very useful in team play to help a teammate by croqueting other balls and blocking other players while one's teammate catches up. Rovers may be taken out of the game ("staked out") if they are driven into the stake by a croquet shot. In team play, the remaining teammate is on their own to complete the course. It may be possible to win, therefore, with fewer than the requisite number of points.

Rules unique to Six-Wicket Croquet:

Six-wicket is played by two teams of two players. The team colors are blue and black versus red and yellow. The playing order is blue, red, black then yellow. In tournament play, a coin toss determines which team goes first, and therefore the colors the team will play.

Beginning at "start," the players pass through the wickets in the order marked on the board: 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 6A, 1B, 2B, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6B and finally hitting the Stake for the final point. The wicket spaces are marked with yellow graphics that indicate the direction the ball must pass through the hoop. As an example, a ball must pass through 4A from North to South, but through 3B South to North.

The first team to reach 26 points (or the majority of points when all players have "staked out") wins (that is, 12 wickets and the stake for each player on the team). (Beware the rover!)

Rules unique to Nine-Wicket Croquet:

Nine-wicket croquet can be played by teams of two or three, or by individuals, in any number that divides accordingly. The order of play is always blue, red, black, yellow, green then orange, and teams should be set up to alternate evenly in these turns. In singles, it is recommended that each player up to three play two balls around the course, alternating as if the player were a team of two.