

The earliest of rules of jeu de mail

Jeu de mail originates in Italy under the name 'palliomaglio', but it is unknown when, where and how the game was played in Italy and why it ceased to exist. Jeu de mail was presumably introduced in France around 1550 by Princess Catherine de Medici from Italy, the wife of King Henry II.

One can distinguish four main variants of the game:

- **The town game**

The people played in the streets, on road tracks through the garden allotments, etc. intramural. The players plotted a course for themselves. The distance of these courses varied depending on the size of the towns, from less than 200 metres up to several hundred metres. The common town people probably played the game. It is unknown if the players divided a match into several parties, but considering the relatively limited space available, that was possibly not the case. Specific targets are not described; we assume that players used trees, walls, doors, etc., whatever suited them well.

Mail players initially played mail through existing streets, paths, and open spaces inside the town where they plotted their routings. In the 17th and 18th centuries in Avignon, people played the mail game along the inner side of the city walls. Only the street name plate reminds us of what happened here almost 400 years ago.





The 'open field game' was played outside the town on roads, in the fosses of the ramparts and on the sandy tracks through the agricultural fields in the open countryside. – Bibliothèque Méjanes, Aix-en-Provence, France

- **The country game**

The people played outside the town, in the dry fosses of the ramparts, on the sand tracks and the paths between the agricultural fields. The players set out a course and divided the game into several 'parties' because more playing space was available there. The targets consisted of trees, doors, walls or large stones. We wonder if the 'country game' was not an independent historical variant of the game as played in the town. Several documents show that when towns grew and became busier, the councils started to limit the playing grounds, and later on, the players were banned completely from the in-town streets. The intramural players had no alternatives other than to stop playing their beloved game or go extramural.

- **The bourgeois or noble game**

Straight and bordered alleys of considerable length were constructed just outside the town near one of the gates in the city walls for the middle-class people who called themselves 'nobles' (keeping up with the Jones). There was often a 'palemardier' (mail professional and club & ball maker), who was not only the club and ball maker but also the coach, the referee, the professional player and the wine house landlord. The targets varied from stakes to elevated or ground rings. Sometimes in between, rings were placed through which the ball had to pass before continuing to play to the end target.

- **The royal or aristocratic game**

The upper class played on long alleys like those of the bourgeois, which they constructed in the gardens of their private estates. The players had private palemardiers who took care of everything to make the game as attractive as possible.



Top: The mail alleys specially designed for the middle class were laid out because of their length just outside the town. Because of the developments and growth of the towns, these courts ended up almost in the centres, where they were converted into beautiful promenades or ugly parking lots or even disappeared completely. – Peyrou in Montpellier

Bottom: The royals and the aristocracy constructed their mail courts on private property. The length of the alleys depended on the space available in the gardens. – Adriaen van de Venne, 'A game of Pell-Mell' (c.1620-1626) from an album of 102 drawings – © Trustees of the British Museum



As far as we know, no Italian (or Latin) rules for palliomaglio have been found. We have not researched this subject because of the language problem. When Catherine de Medici brought the 'royal' game to Paris, there must have been a palliomaglio professional who knew the rules by heart and who was possibly responsible for the construction of the alley, for making clubs and balls and teaching players how to swing. We suppose that Italian professionals first found a job in the Languedoc region, teaching and making balls and clubs for the French bourgeois players.

History

It was Bartolomeo Ricci, who in his 'Lettera sulla Pallamaglio' published in 'Bascetta, Sport e Giochi', 1553-1554, referred to rules written around 1550 for the game of palliomaglio in the town of Ferrara. Alas, these rules are in Italian.

Around the same time, in 1555, Antonio Scaino wrote his 'Trattato del giuoco della palla' (Treatise on ball games), published in Venice. He dedicated his treatise to Prince Alfonse II d'Este, an enthusiastic ballplayer. Scaino described the rules along with a description of the necessary equipment and playgrounds for the games of 'calcio' (football), 'pallacorda' (indoor tennis), 'pallone' (handball) and 'palliomaglio' (jeu de mail). Unfortunately, we have not found a translation in one of the languages we master.

(Article from Wolfgang Behringer in the Oxford Journals, 2009: 'Arena and Pall Mall: Sport in the Early Modern Period')

In the German publication 'Das Golfspiel.' by Philipp Heineken in 1898, the author refers to the rules of 'Paille-Maille', written in the 17th century: "Von dem Paille-Maille besitzen wir aus dem 17. Jahrhundert genaue Regeln. Im Besitz des Verfassers befinden sich solche vom Jahre 1632." (We possess from paille-maille the exact rules from the 17th century. The author has such rules from the year 1632.) Unfortunately Heineken did not include these rules in his publication. These rules have not been recovered yet (Kuno Schuh, Deutsches Golf Archiv, December 2013).

The earliest known rules in the French language are an exclusive code of mail rules, 'Les loix dv Paillemail', which date from before 1642, explaining only the rules (and regulations) of the royal and bourgeois game.

The Dupuy Collection in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)

The oldest known printed rules of paillemail in the French language are part of the so-called 'Dupuy Collection'. The Dupuy brothers were collectors of old papers. They filed them in folders which they closed when they had a certain thickness. There were 800 of these folders, all well-dated. This collection was bequeathed to the 'Bibliothèque du Roi' (library of the King; today, we would say 'Bibliothèque nationale de France'). Two Dupuy brothers were custodians of the library. Folder 777, closed in 1655, contains the rules of several games, amongst them 'Les Loix dv Paillemail'. It is unclear if August Dupuy (1581-1641) wrote 'Les Loix' himself, but handwriting specialists identified the handwritten notes on the pamphlet as his. He is not known as a sporty person, but he was interested in the technical literature of games. It is clear that 'Les Loix' date back before 1642. (By courtesy of Thierry Depaulis)

For many years these rules have been used as the basis for new publications about the rules of paillemail and several other games. After painstaking research, Thierry Depaulis, independant game historian, chairman of the 'International Playing-Card Society', president of 'Le Vieux Papier' association and member of the board of directors of the 'Swiss Museum of Games' foundation, found the following editions of the main publications about the rules of card games, containing also the rules of paillemail and many other games:

- La maison academique 1659, 1666, 1674, 1697, 1702
- La maison des jeux academique 1665, 1668
- Academie universelle des jeux 1718, 1725, 1730, 1732, 1737, 1739, 1743, 1751, 1756, 1758 (two editions), 1760, 1763, 1765, 1766, 1770, 1773, 1777 (two editions), 1786, 1789 (two editions), 1802, 1805, 1806, 1810
- La plus nouvelle academie des jeux 1721, 1728, 1752
- Encyclopédie méthodique 1792
- Le nouveau joueur parfait 1797
- L'arbitre des jeux 1847

Source: 'Les loix du jeu', Thierry Depaulis, 1994



In 1717, Joseph Lauthier wrote his booklet 'Nouvelles règles pour le jeu de mail', entirely devoted to the alley or royal game. In addition to the rules, Lauthier explains how to swing the mail club for the best result with illustrations.

It is interesting to see that 30 years earlier, in 1687, the Scottish medical student Thomas Kincaid explained in his diary how to swing the golf club for the best result (Olive M. Geddes, 'A Swing Through Time – Golf in Scotland 1457–1743/1744', 1992/2007).

The first publication containing rules, regulations and instructions for the crosscountry 'chicane' or 'Languedoc' game as played mainly in the Languedoc region, was written in 1772 by J. Sudre.

Sudre partially copied Lauthier's instructions with minor changes needed for the cross-country game. The palemardiens of Montpellier approved the rules. So, the Sudre rules must have been generally accepted by the Languedoc mail players, as the royal alley players used the Lauthier rules.

The Sudre book has run several reprints, the last new edition from 2009 by Alain R. Bocquet.



Top: The rules in this booklet of Lauthier describe the long-alley game. The rules were copied from previous publications. – Bibliothèque Méjanès, Aix-en-Provence, France

Bottom: Frontispiece of 'Le Noble Jeu du Mail de la ville de Montpellier, Avec ses Règlements' about the rules of the chicane or Languedoc game, written by J. Sudre in 1772 and perhaps these rules were only in circulation in the Languedoc region (South of France).

'Les Loix dv Paillemail' (rules of jeu de mail)

'Les Loix dv Paillemail' (rules of jeu de mail) Over the years, several authors tried to translate, or at least transcribe, these rules of paillemail from the 17th-century French language into modern English. Authors have not been able to fulfil this difficult task. One or two others have persevered with the translation task and even published the results (the chapter 'The Rules for Playing Pall-Mall' by Michael Flannery, John McClelland & Brian Merrilees in 'Sport and Culture in Early Modern Europe', 2009). However, this translation is such that it does not explain the meaning of the rules.

We decided to include our transcription of the old rules of the game in this publication. Therefore we invited several colleagues, including ancient sports historians, golf referees, philologists and translators, to make a new attempt to make these almost 400 years old rules understandable for ourselves and our readers.

One has to understand more or less the main basics of the game and the courts at that time. As spoken and written in the 17th century, French differs from 'modern French'. Also, the meaning of certain words has changed over the centuries. Such words used centuries ago are not easy to translate or transcribe.

The order of the rules is not always explicit; therefore, it is unclear if there is a connection between the successive rules.

The rules refer to the 'long alley' game, divided into 'au rouet', 'en partie', and 'au grand coup' (see definitions below); the 'jeu de mail à la chicane game' is not included in these rules.

Some of the rules are not related to the game itself but much more to the 'regulations' around the game, like the bets, the cloakroom, the rent of the equipment, etc. In later publications, the authors split up the rules for the different variants of the game and separated rules and regulations.

By mutual agreement, we decided:

- To number the different rules to make cross-references easier.
- To stay in the transcription as close as possible to the original French text, even when this would mean that the English sounds somewhat inarticulate but represents the style of the period.
- To mention directly after an unclear rule that we cannot explain the meaning of a rule or have doubts about our transcription.

- To use, if necessary:
 - ◇ 'Dictionnaire universel contenant généralement tous les mots françois tant vieux que modernes et les termes toutes les sciences et des arts.' Antoine Furetière (1690)
 - ◇ and its edition from 1725, reviewed and extended by Henri Basnage de Beauval & Jean-Baptiste Brutel de La Rivière
 - ◇ and the 'Dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise' (1694).
- That in the English transcription we will use the French terms as given in the definitions below.
- To refer to the hand-written notes of Augustin Dupuy on the original manuscript as far as relevant for the transcription.
- To compare, for further clarification, the manuscript with the rules of jeu de mail in 'La maison academique', attributed to La Marinière or La Martinière (Pinson de La Martinière?) from 1659.
- To add, when necessary, the word as used in the golf vocabulary between brackets.

Definitions

Ais	Boards alongside the court.
Archet	Iron hoop or ring.
Au grand coup	Long-driving contest; two or more players try to hit the boulle farthest, and the weaker player claims a handicap, measured in distances between the trees alongside the court.
Au rouet	Match between individual players; players who try in conformity with the rules to play through the <i>archet</i> within the fewest number of strokes.
Boulle	Ball of boxwood.
Court	Long and narrow playing field with a flat, hard surface bordered by a low wooden fence.
Debut	Opening stroke.
Debuter	Making the opening stroke.



LES LOIX DV PAILLEMAIL:

A vant que de battre, il faut demeurer d'accord de la valeur de la partie. Il n'est permis de battre qu'à trois ou quatre pas de l'archet au plus loing. Le Roi est le plus communément, il fait à l'entree les battemens de la valeur de la partie.

Il ne faut rien mener (sans la bouille que va dedans seulement).

Toutte renuance au debar dans les six ou quinze pas, le rommeur donne que l'on ne parle.

Haut le debar, la défense n'est que de vingt-cinq pas, & ne fait parler.

Qui touche les six autres la chose défend, même au debar, ne doit recommencer.

L'on ne peut mener en batz pour le debar au six ou sept ou huit pas.

L'on ne peut défendre au debar sur les bouilles d'une même partie.

Toute bouille touchant au hazard, sans se pourvoir de défendre, s'en va au debar.

Toute bouille en effe, sans passer, se doit remener si on n'est parvenue de la partie.

Qui fait au debar, peut entrer pour deux, & non pour des autres.

La bouille qui tombe en l'eau, n'a plus lieu que la plus vers du Mail, perd la partie.

Toute bouille d'une même partie qui se perdent, demeureroit au debar.

Quand la bouille le fonde, c'est de plus loing qu'on en mennera, ou à son choix.

Quand la bouille se rompt, c'est à qui elle est, n'est de la partie.

Celui qui perd la bouille est tenu pour deux, ou instant deux de pas, au debar remener, ou à plus d'autres.

Qui rompt la bouille changée, peut aller celle qui l'a touché à la place.

En l'on luy permet de aller chercher, n'est de la partie & n'est rompé à remener.

Qui fait bouille d'un, ne peut y entrer pour deux.

Quand va de la partie ou le porte-levé, au debar la bouille, l'on peut recommencer.

Toute bouille arrêtée fortuitement, & repoullée, se doit remener à son choix arrêté.

Il faut laisser de la levée au rommeur, s'il s'accommoder.

L'on ne peut rompre de derrière si on ne l'a par la partie.

Toute bouille qui est de la partie, est en partie.

Qu'on ne peut aller au debar, & pour rompre pas d'autres rommeurs.

Il faut s'arrêter les pas de devant pour se voir passer.

Il faut passer, par hazard, la bouille remenee par delant, l'on ne laisse à aucun gage.

Les dix-sept seules demandes par le porte-levé, aux regards.

Qu'il n'est rommeur de quelque chose, c'est au debar de se pourvoir.

Les six ou sept autres haut sans demander, l'on n'est rommeur de s'en rompre.

Il faut passer de la levée au debar, & non en rommeur.

Et qui passe en crochissant perd le coup, sans pourvoir recommencer.

L'on ne peut s'accommoder pour passer, soit du Mail ou de la levée.

Pour passer, l'on ne peut appeler le debar ou de la bouille, n'y entrer et qui est de la partie.

Qui passe le premier au pas ou au plus loing, s'il n'est perdu.

L'on ne peut aller à trois de plus, quand qu'on n'est en partie.

L'on ne peut rompre à deux de plus, & l'on n'est le rommeur.

Si on parle l'on n'est rommeur, par quatre allures, l'on ne peut recommencer.

Toute bouille passant par quelque hazard que ce soit, se doit.

Qu'on ne peut aller à trois de plus, si on ne se voit, c'est rommeur qu'on ne peut que le plus ou de six de plus, le coup est en achèvement, ne peut rommeur, plus à perdre.

Qu'on ne peut aller au debar le premier coup si on a debar, plus à

beaucoup de mois & plus d'instants bouille de la partie.

Qu'on que est rommeur au debar, & de la bouille, venant de la bouille, le rommeur s'en va, & n'est pas de deux, le port-levé, si la compagnie le veut, rommeur la bouille entre la plus & rommeur est rommeur de la partie.

Il est permis de s'arrêter de la levée en quel que lieu qu'on soit.

Quand on est rommeur de derrière de rommeur rommeur, l'on peut rommeur le debar au debar de la partie.

Il n'est permis de plus, ne peut rommeur à rommeur, s'il n'est de la partie.

Il n'est permis de plus, ne peut rommeur à rommeur, s'il n'est de la partie.

Qui passe d'une rommeur, ne peut s'arrêter les pieds plus avant que la bouille.

Qui rommeur à rommeur pas de debar, n'est pas de rommeur, si on a debar au debar.

L'on ne peut s'arrêter qui que ce soit, de ce qu'un autre rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur.

Quand qu'on n'est pas de debar, s'il n'est rommeur, celui qui est de debar, n'est pas de debar.

Le debar se doit rommeur avant que le rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur.

Qui fait la bouille sans passer, & l'on ne peut rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur.

Celui qui demande, plus de la bouille, le rommeur rommeur, si quelque rommeur.

Qui fait la bouille de la levée rommeur pour la levée, se doit rommeur.

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Qui fait la bouille de la levée rommeur pour la levée, se doit rommeur.

L'on est obligé d'aller voir rommeur, si les bouilles sont de debar, ou pour rommeur.

Il n'est permis de s'arrêter si on ne fait qu'un instant de debar rommeur.

Qui passe d'un à l'autre, perd la partie.

C'est à celui qui est plus loing de l'archet, de rommeur la partie.

Il n'est permis de s'arrêter de debar, l'on ne s'en peut rommeur plus loing que l'on est, en de debar, & s'il n'est rommeur.

L'on ne peut passer du mail en quel que lieu que ce soit.

Qui a debar, ne peut aller que de debar rommeur de debar.

Qui rommeur au debar rommeur sans rommeur, quand elle est fait, le coup est au debar, si on ne peut rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur.

Tout rommeur ne peut rommeur qu'au debar, si les autres rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur.

Si plusieurs sont rommeur, c'est au debar de s'arrêter le premier.

Le premier qui rommeur, se doit rommeur de debar, au debar rommeur.

Le rapport est de debar au debar de la partie de la partie.

L'on ne peut rommeur pour de debar, si on ne peut rommeur.

Il n'est permis de s'arrêter, si on ne peut rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur, si on ne peut rommeur.

Il faut passer par la levée au debar, & non de debar.

L'on ne peut s'arrêter de debar, si on ne peut rommeur.

Il n'est permis de s'arrêter de debar, si on ne peut rommeur.

Il n'est permis de s'arrêter de debar, si on ne peut rommeur.

Le Mail du Mail est rommeur de mail & de debar rommeur, & non de debar, si on ne peut rommeur.

Chacun est obligé de payer quatre fois par rommeur, instant rommeur.

Qui rommeur au Mail sans s'arrêter les rommeur à garder au debar, plus à quatre fois avant que rommeur.

The oldest known written rules in the French language from before 1642 for the royal and bourgeois game on the long mail courts. We do not know who wrote these rules for whom. — Collection Dupuy, Ms. 777, folio 93, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

En partie	Match between two teams with the same number of players.
En partie liée	Series of two consecutive matches between two teams, both to be won by the same team.
En passe	A player is ' <i>en passe</i> ' when he is in the space between the <i>pierre</i> and the <i>archet</i> and where one takes the <i>lève</i> to play through the <i>archet</i> . (It is tempting to think of the green in golf: the place where new or additional rules come into play.)
Mail	Wooden club composed of a cylindrical head equipped with iron rings at both ends and a long pliant shaft used for striking at the <i>boulle</i> .
Lève	Spoon-like iron club (lofter) for playing through the <i>archet</i> .
Pair	Same number of strokes.
Passe	Action of playing the <i>boulle</i> through the iron <i>archet</i> .
Pierre	A stone placed upright at approximately 16-18 metres from the <i>archet</i> to mark the <i>passe</i> area.
Plus	One stroke more.
Porte-lève	The person who carries the <i>lève</i> (caddie).
Rapporter	Playing with a handicap.

A mail *court* has an *archet* at both ends. One starts at one end of the *court* to play towards the other end, where one has to play through the *archet*. Before each *debut*, the players bet on who will win the match. When all players have arrived at the far end of the *court* and have played through the *archet* or have

been excluded from doing so (see rules below), they reverse playing to the starting point.



The two faces of the hardwood cylinder of the mail were protected against damage from the impact of the boulle by iron rings. The iron rings improved the balance of the mail as well. – Musée du Vieux Montpellier, France

Les Loix dv Paillemail.

1 *Avant que debutter, il faut demeurer d'ccord de la valeur de la passe.*
Before *debutter* the players must agree on the bet of the *passe*.

2 *Il ne faut debutter qu'à trois ou quatre pas de l'archet au plus loing.*
One must *debutter* within three or four steps from the *archet*.

3 *Le Rouet estant commencé, il faut aduertir les survenans de la valeur de la passe.*

When the *rouet* has started, one must inform those joining unexpectedly about the bet on the *passe*.

4 *Il ne faut rien mettre souz la boulle qu'au debut seulement.*

Only at the *debut* is one allowed to place the *boulle* on an elevation.

5 *Toute rencontre au debut dans les cinquante pas, se remet encore que l'on ne parle.*

When a *boulle* touches another *boulle* within a distance of 50 steps from the *debut*, the player may replace it at its original lie unless it is discussed.

6 *Hors le debut, la defense n'est que des vingt-cinq pas, & s'il faut parler.*

After the *debut*, this distance for the following strokes is only 25 steps, and replacing the touched *boulle* at its original lie must be discussed.

7 *Qui touche les ais auant la chose defenduë, mesme au debut, ne doit recommencer.*

He whose *boulle* touches the *ais* before "touching a *boulle* which is declared before the *debut* as not to be touched", is not allowed to replay his stroke.

(We do not know if the translation between quotation marks covers the words 'la chose defenduë'. It could be that this rule protects the *boulle*.)

The ais alongside the court are clearly visible in this engraving 'Le Mail' by/after N. Guérard (1648?-1719). – From Henri Rene D'Allemagne's 'Sports et jeux d'adresse'



8 *L'on se peut mettre en beau pour iouër, mais vis à vis d'ù l'on estoit.*

A player may replace the ball to improve the lie but only in respect of where the ball lies.

Source: *'Sport and Culture in Early Modern Europe', John McClelland & Brian Merrilees, 2009*

(Dupuy added 'without moving forward', so not closer to the *archet*.)

9 *L'on ne peut defendre n y destourner les boules d'vne mesme partie.*

One is not allowed to protect or divert *boules* from his team.

(Team players cannot manipulate each other's *boulette*.)

10 *Toute boulle roullante court le hazard, sans se pouuoir defender, sinon au debut.*

Apart from the *debut*, any accidentally moving *boulette* cannot be protected by any rule.

(This rule is like the rule in golf where you have to play the ball where it lies, except at the tee because it is not yet in play.)

When several people played on the court, one could touch someone else's boulette regularly, and rules for such situations were necessary. – Mail court in the Enghien Park near Brussels from Romeyn de Hooghe, 1685 – Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag, The Netherlands



11 Toute bouble arestée, estant poussée, se doit remettre, si ce n'est par celles de la partie.

Any *boull*e on the court pushed by a *boull*e from the other team must be replaced at its original lie.

12 Qui sort au debut, peut r'entrer pour deux, & non pour dauantage.

When at the *debut*, the *boull*e is played off the *court* (out of bounds), the player has to replace it without improving the lie and at a penalty of two strokes.

(In golf, the penalty will be one stroke and playing again from the tee. See also rule 44.)

13 La bouble qui tombe en l'eau, ou plus bas que le plat terrain du Mail, perd la passe.

The player whose *boull*e ends up in a drainage slot alongside the *ais* or lower than the flat surface of the *court* loses the *passe*.

(In 1659, the rule changed into: Wherever a *boull*e has fallen when played off the *court* at the second stroke, it can be replaced by another if the players agree.)

14 Toute bouble d'une mesme partie qui se poussent, demeurent où elles vont.

All *boull*es hit by the same team must remain where they stopped.

15 Quand la bouble se fend, c'est à la plus loing qu'on en met vne autre, ou à son choix.

When a *boull*e cracks, another *boull*e may be placed where the farthest-away part of the cracked one stopped or at one's choice.

(In jeu de crosse/crossage, one continues to play with the biggest part of the cracked ball.

If a ball cracks due to a stroke in golf, the stroke is cancelled, and a new ball must be played as close as possible to the spot from which the cracked one was played.)

16 Quand la bouble se trouve desrobée, celui à qui elle est, n'est pas de la passe.

When a *boull*e disappears, its owner cannot play the *passe*.

(It could mean that the player is disqualified.)

17 Celui qui perd sa bouble estant r'entré pour deux, ou ioüant deux de plus, en doit remettre vne autre, où il plaira les autres.

He who loses his *boull*e may continue at a point agreed upon by the others at a penalty of two strokes or playing two strokes more.

18 Qui trouue la bouble changée, peut ioüer celle qu'il trouue à la place.

He who finds his *boull*e replaced by another can play the one he finds in its place.

(We suppose that this rule only applies in en partie with the *boull*e of your partner. See also rule 56.)

19 *Et s'il l'on luy permet de l'aller chercher, il n'est de la passe s'il tarde trop à reuenir.*

And when he is permitted to go and search his *boull*e, he cannot play the *passe* when he takes too much time.

20 *Qui sort hors le début, ne peut r'entrer pour deux.*

He who plays his *boull*e off the *court* other than at the *debut* can continue at a penalty of two strokes.

(In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

21 *Quand vn de la partie ou le porte-leve areste la boull*e, *l'on peut recommencer.*

When a *boull*e is stopped by a player or by the *porte-lève*, one is allowed to replay the stroke.

22 *Toute boull*e *arestee fortuitement, & repoussée, se doit remettre où elle & esté arestée.*

Every *boull*e stopped accidentally and moved backwards must be replaced where it originally stopped.

23 *Il faut ioüer de la leve au tournant, sans s'accommoder.*

When there is a bend in the *court*, players must use the *lève* to get around this bend without improving the lie of the *boull*e.

(There are several *courts* which are not straight but have a bend or are even U-shaped, for example, the one at the Palais-Royal in Paris.)

24 *L'on ne peut reuenir de derriere, si tous ne sont en passe.*

One can only start the return when everybody lies *en passe*.



Detail of a painting (1624) from the South Netherlandish painter Paul Bril with a caddy on the right, carrying a spare club and several balls in a sack over his shoulder. The long stick served to retrieve balls from unplayable lies. – Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund

25 *Toute boulle qui tient de la pierre, est en passe.*

Every *boulle* that comes to the stone is *en passe*.

(This rule looks like one of the basic rules in golf. A ball that touches a boundary is considered to be on the smallest surface. We suppose that in mail, the stone is a 'line' of the boundary of the *passe* area, and the *boulle* has to be handled as being *en passe*.)

26 *Qui tient du fer est derrière, & peut reuenir par dedans l'archet.*

He, whose *boulle* touches the *archet** and stops behind it, is allowed to play the *archet* from behind.

(* But did not go through the archet)

27 *Il faut affranchir le fer par dedans pour auoir passé.*

To score, one must play through the *archet* without touching it.

28 *Si ayant passé, par hazard la boulle retourne par dedans, l'on ne laisse d'auoir gaigné.*

When having played the *passe* and the *boulle* rolls back through the *archet* accidentally, the stroke still counts.

29 *Les differens se doiuent demander par le porte-leve, aux regardans.*

When there is a difference of opinion about rule interpretation, the *porte-lève* should ask advice from knowledgeable spectators.

30 *Quad l'on ne trouue rien de quelque chose, c'est au demandeur à prouuer.*

When the spectators do not come to a unanimous opinion the player concerned should prove his case.

31 *Lors qu'on iuge tout haut sans demander, l'on n'est contraint de subir ce jugement.*

When someone gives his opinion aloud without being asked, one is not obliged to agree with this opinion.

(In 1659 this rule was abandoned.)

32 *Il faut passer de la leue en droite ligne, & non en crochetant.*

The stroke with the *lève* must be made in a straight line and not under an angle.

33 *Et qui passe en crochetant perd le coup, sans pouuoir recommencer.*

And he, who plays the *passe* holding the *lève* under an angle, loses the stroke and may not replay it.

34 *L'on ne peut s'accommoder pour passer, soit du Mail ou de la leue.*

One is not allowed to improve the lie of the *boulle* when playing the *passe*, whether using the *mail* or the *lève*.

(This rule contradicts rule 23.)

35 *Pour passer, l'on ne peut applanir le lieu où est la boulle, n'y oster ce qui est deuant.*

To prepare the *passe*, one is not allowed to level the place where the *boulle* lies or to clean the surface in front of it.

36 *Qui passe le premier au pair ou au plus, a gagné.*

He who plays through the *archet* first, playing *pair* or *plus*, is the winner.

37 *Qui passe après vn qui a passé à deux de plus, gaigne, sinon il perd.*

He who plays through the *archet* after someone who played through the *archet* at two *plus*, wins; if he does not play through the *archet* he loses.

(In the game of mail, you apparantly cannot half a 'hole'.)

38 *L'on ne peut ioüier à trois de plus, quand quelqu'vn est en passe.*

Being at three *plus* one is not allowed to play the *passe* when someone else is already *en passe*.

39 *L'on ne peut reuenir à deux de plus, si l'on n'est le dernier.*

One cannot return at two *plus* if one is not the last in the match.

(We do not understand the meaning of this rule.

Dupuy replaced 'if one is not the last in the match' with 'if one is not the last who played the *passe*.')

40 *Si en passant l'on est empesché, par quelque estrangier, l'on ne peut recommencer.*



When one is *en passe* and is hindered by something strange (apart from agency), one is not allowed to replay.

(Dupuy did change 'something strange' into 'hindered by someone who does not belong to the team'.

In 1659, this rule was modified and read as follows: When one is *en passe* and hindered by an outsider, one is allowed to replay.)

41 *Toute boulle passant par quelque hazard que ce soit, gaigne.*

Every *boulle* going through the *archet* via any hazard counts.

In this picture from the booklet of Lauthier, 1717, illustrates how one should play the lève, a spoon-like club, when being en passe.

The archet is in front, and the player is behind the boulle, not sideways as in golf. In this example, the player makes the passe with one hand, and then the feet must remain behind the boulle (see rule 49).

42 *Quiconque laisse passer à trois de plus, estant en passe, croyant qu'on ne joïe que le plus ou deux de plus, le coup estant acheué, ne peut reuenir, ains a perdu.*

Anyone being *en passe* and thinking one is only playing for one *plus* or two *plus* and therefore does not play the *passe* at three *plus*, cannot replay his stroke, thus, has lost.

(Perhaps this means the same as in golf when you think you cannot win because the ball of your contestant is lying very close to the hole, and therefore you give the hole away [concede].)

43 *Quiconque entre au Rouet le premier coup estant debuté, placera sa boulle entre la moins & plus esloignée boulle de la partie.*

When the *debuts* have been made in a *rouet*, any late-comer must place his *boulle* between the nearest and the farthest *boullés* of his contestants.

(In golf, the late-comer can only join at the next tee.)

44 *Quiconque estant sorty au début, & ne le sçachant, veut mettre sa boulle avec les autres, r'entrant pour deux, le peut faire, si la compagnie le veut, mettant sa boulle entre la plus & moins esloignée boulle de la partie.*

Anyone playing off the *court* at the *debut*, without knowing, is allowed to place his *boulle* on the *court* between the nearest and the farthest *boullés* in agreement with his companions for two penalty strokes.

(See also rule 12.)

45 *Il est permis de s'ajuster de la leve en quelque lieu que ce soit.*

It is allowed to use the *lève* wherever on the court.

(We suppose that 'wherever on the court' means the *passe* area because where one changes from the large wooden *boulle* to a small iron ball.)

46 *Quand tous sont derrière & peuuent reuenir, l'on peut prendre le hazard au delà de la pierre.*

When everybody has played through the *archet* and starts to return, one must place the *boulle* behind the *pierre*.

47 *Ioüant deux de plus, ne peut preiudicier à aucun, estans tous deux en passe.*

If both players are two *plus* and *en passe*, there is no disadvantage to either of them.

(We do not understand the meaning of this rule.)

48 *Il est permis ne ioüant que le pair ou le plus, de faire ce que l'on voudra.*

When playing *pair* or *plus*, the player can continue to play as he wishes.

(The meaning of this rule is not clear.)

49 *Qui passe d'une main, ne peut auancer les pieds plus auant que la boulle.*

The feet must remain behind the *boulle* when making the *passe* with one hand.

50 *Qui oublie à compter les passes doubles, ne les gaigne que simple, s'il a debuté auant.*

When one forgets to count the double *passes*, only one counts if he has already made the return *debut*.

(When in golf in match play, the player leaves the green and tees off on the next tee, the result of the previous hole is final.)

51 *L'on ne peut aduertir qui que ce soit, de ce qu'vn autre ioüe, ne de ce qui doit ioüer.*

One is not allowed to inform whoever about what has been played nor what should be played.

(We suppose that this rule is meant towards the opponents when playing *en partie*. Otherwise one should not be allowed to discuss tactics with the own partner.)

52 *Quand quelqu'vn n'a passé, & nul ne peut reuenir, celuy que est le dernier gaigne.*

One is not allowed to inform anyone about what has been played or what should be played.

(We suppose this rule is meant towards the opponents when playing *en partie*. Otherwise, one should not be allowed to discuss tactics with the own partner.)

53 *Le dernier doit demander auant que leuer sa boulle, si aucun peut reuenir.*

Before the last one lifts his *boulle*, he must ask if no one can return.

(We do not understand the meaning of this rule.)

54 *Qui leue sa boulle sans passer, & sans demander, perd la passe, si aucun peut reuenir.*

He, who lifts his *boulle* without having played through the *archet* and without asking, loses the *passe* if nobody can return.

(The meaning of this rule is not clear.)

55 *Celuy qui a demandé, puis leue sa boulle, la peut remettre, si quelqu'vn peut reuenir.*

He, who has asked and then picks up his *boulle*, can replace it if somebody can return.

56 *Qui ioüe la boulle d'vne autre partie pour la sienne, doit recommencer.*

He, who plays the *boulle* from the other team, must replay the stroke.

57 *Qui ioüe la boulle de son compaignon pour la sienne, perd vn coup.*

He, who plays the *boulle* of his companion as his own, gets a penalty stroke.

58 *Qui passe la boulle de son compaignon pour la sienne, perd la passe.*

He, who plays the *boulle* of his companion through the *archet*, loses that *passe*.

59 L'on est obligé d'aller voir soy-mesme, si les boules sont derrière, ou peuuent passer.

One must see for oneself if the *boules* are behind the *archet* or *en passe*.

60 Et si l'on n'y va, si l'on fait quelque faute elle ne se peut reparer.

And if one does not go and see and makes an error, there is no redress.

61 Qui passe n'estant à luy à passer, perd la passe.

He, who plays the *passe* whilst not his turn, loses that *passe*.

62 C'est à celuy qui est plus esloigné du mylieu de l'archet, à reuenir le premier.

He, who is farthest away from the middle of the *archet*, must return first. (Contrary to golf, it is not the lowest score but the distance that decides who returns first.)

One of the very few presentations of women playing the game of mail together with men. We don't know if it was common practise that women took to the mail alley. It could be rather crowdy on the court, undoubtedly the reason to develop rules for touching each other's boules. – Adriaen van de Velde, 1625 – From Flannery & Leech's 'Golf Through the Ages'



63 *Estant proche de l'archet & deuant iceluy, l'on ne s'en peut esloigner plus loing que l'on est, en se dressant & s'ajustant.*

Being near and in front of the *archet*, it is not allowed to improve the lie of the *boullle* whilst addressing and aiming at the *archet*.

64 *L'on peut passer du mail en quelque lieu que l'on se trouue.*

One is allowed to use the mail to play the *passee* at any lie.

65 *Qui a débuté, ne s'en peut aller que du consentement des autres.*

He, who has *debutté*, is only allowed to leave (to leave the match) with the consent of the others.

(We suppose that this rule is related to the betting.)

66 *Qui iouë au grand coup sans rencontre, quand elle le fait, le coup est nul.*

In the *grand coup* where touching other *boullles* is not allowed, the stroke is invalid when nevertheless, another *boullle* is touched.

(We think the stroke must be made again without penalty.)

In 1659, this rule was extended with 'on the condition that one did not touch the wooden fence'. Probably one may not purposely touch another *boullle* other than via the wooden fence. Because *au grand coup* is about distance, nobody would purposely play via the fence.)

67 *Ioüant au grand coup, si le second est aresté par la premiere boullle, il ne laisse de gaigner.*

Whilst playing *au grand coup*, the second player whose *boullle* is stopped by the *boullle* of the first player can still win.

(This rule seems the same as rule 66.)

68 *Tout auantage ne se peut prendre qu'au début, si les autres veulent.*

The others must agree upon any advantage (handicap) at the debut.

(The advantage consisted of the distance between one or more trees.)

69 *Ioüant à rapporter, si l'on est poussé par vn de la partie, l'on n'est tenu de rapporter.*

If in *rapporter*, one's *boullle* is moved by another one, the player does not need to replace his *boullle* at its original lie.

70 *Si plusieurs sont à rapporter, c'est au plus auancé à ioüer le premier.*

When playing *rapporter*, the player with the most advanced lie must play first.

(Dupuy modified 'the most advanced' into 'the less advanced lie', so the *boullle* farthest away from the *archet* must be played first.)

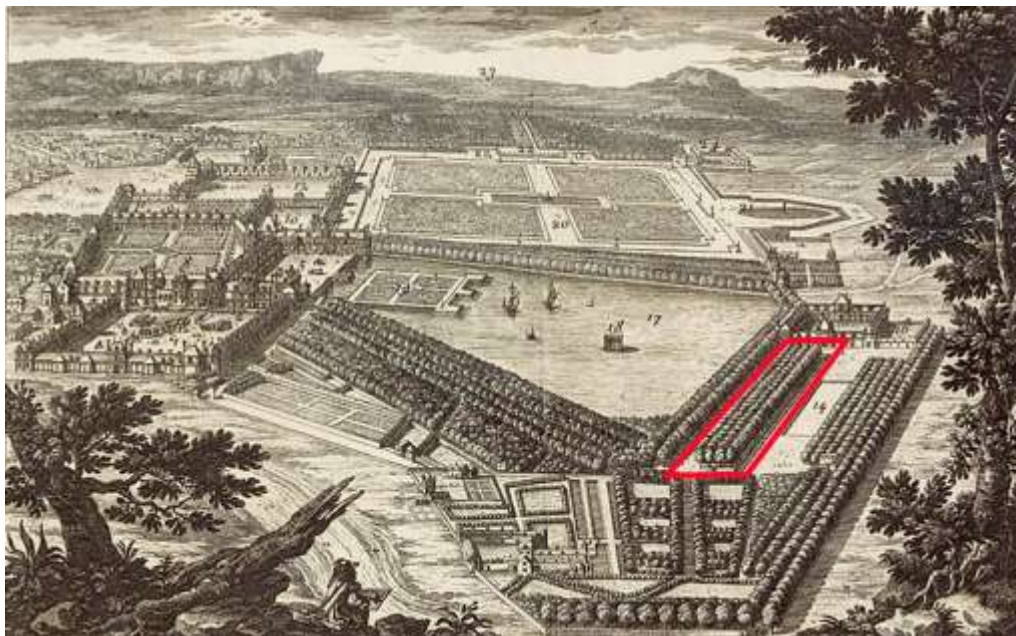
71 *Le premier qui rapporte, iouë le pair de tous les autres, en quelque lieu qu'ils soient.*

The first to *rapporter* plays the *pair* of all others, whatever their lie is.

(The meaning of this rule is not clear.)

Dupuy modified this rule into 'The first to *rapporter* plays the *plus* of all others'.

In 1659 this rule was abandoned.)



In this picture, the red form indicates where the court was laid out at the castle in Fontainebleau. The ais on the right and bottom side, where we also see the entrance to the court, are visible. The distance 'between two trees' will not always be the same on every court; assumably, the reason to change it into 50 steps (see the rule underneath). – 'Veüe generale de Fontainebleau', 17th-century engraving by Gabriel Péréelle – Médiathèque de Fontainebleau, France

72 La rapport est deux arbres au delà de la pierre de passe.

The rapport is the distance between two trees beyond the stone.

(In 1659, the distance between two trees is replaced by 50 paces [about 40 metres].)

73 L'on ne peut rentrer pour deux, ioüant en partie liée.

When playing *en partie liée*, one must play two matches.

74 Ioüant en partie, il faut ioüer tour à tour, & non deux fois de suite.

When playing *en partie*, one must play in turn and not two times in succession.

(We suppose that 'playing in turn' means between players in the same team and that the team farthest away from the *passé* area always plays first.

In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

75 Et qui le fait par malice ou autrement, perd le coup sans ressource.

And he who plays twice maliciously or accidentally loses the stroke without redress.

(In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

76 *Toute partie commence, ne se peut quitter que d'un commun consentement.*
When a match has started, it can only be abandoned on common consent.
(In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

77 *Il faut payer au bout de la passe ioüat aux testons, pour éviter le mécate.*
When playing for 'testons' (silver coins), the debt must be paid after the *pas*se to avoid calculation errors.
(Dupuy modified this rule into: 'Debts have to be paid after the *pas*se.'
In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

78 *Quand l'on iouë aux demy testons, il faut payer quad l'on en doit deux.*
When playing for 'half-testons', one must pay when one owes two.
(Dupuy crossed out this rule on the original pamphlet.
In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

79 *L'on ne peut estre forcé à prendre les passes les vns sur les autres.*
One cannot be forced to play the *passes* of another player.
(In 1659 this rule was abandoned.)

80 *Il n'est permis à qui que ce soit, de pousser plus d'une boulle, en se pourmenant: mesme y ayant des parties au ieu.*
No one is allowed to play with more than one *boull*e (to practice), even when matches are being played.
(Dupuy modified this rule into 'especially when matches are being played'.
In 1659, the original text remained.)

81 *Le Maistre du Mail doit fournir de mail & de lève aux ioüeurs, & non des boull*es, *s'ils ne les payent particulièrement.*
The master of the mail must provide the players with a mail and a *lève* and not with the *boull*es if they are not paid for.
(In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

82 *Chacun est obligé de payer quatre sols par teste, ioüant peu ou prou.*
Everybody must pay four 'sols' whether one is playing a little or a lot.
(In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

83 *Qui iouë au Mail sans laisser son manteaux à garder au Maistre, payera quatre sols auant que commencer.*
He who plays the mail *court* without leaving his coat to be attended by the mail master must pay four 'sols' before he starts.
(In 1659, this rule was abandoned.)

84 *Porte-lèves* and lackeys (caddies) following the *boull*e of their masters are not allowed on the *court* itself to prevent them from advancing or moving backwards the *boull*es.
(Added in 1659)

85 When a team plays behind another team, it is only allowed to *debut*ter when the other team is at a distance of at least 100 steps whilst shouting 'gare' (fore).
(Added in 1659)

