

# Conktober 2018

In aid of Chestnut Tree House children's hospice

## The Noble Game Rules of the Tournament and Official Duties

**Conkers is a traditional children's game in Britain and Ireland played using the seeds of horse chestnut trees – the name 'conker' is also applied to the seed and to the tree itself.**

### What You Need

- Horse chestnuts
- Drill or rotary tool
- Heavy duty string

### Preparing the Conker

A hole is drilled in a large, hard conker using a nail, gimlet, small screwdriver, or electric drill. A piece of string, about 20 cm (8 inches) long, is threaded through it. A large knot at one or both ends of the string secures the conker.

### How to Play Conkers

1. All Conkers and Laces for every game will be supplied by the organiser. Neither Conkers nor Laces must be knotted further or tampered with.
2. Organisers will need a person assigned as an Umpire and a person assigned to be Scorer.
3. The game starts with a toss of a coin. The winner of the toss can choose to strike or receive.
4. The player whose conker is to be hit first must let it hang down from the string which is wrapped around his/her hand. The nut must be held perfectly still and at the height the first striker chooses. There must be a distance of not less than 8" or 20cm of lace between knuckle and nut. The striker may hold his/her opponent's nut still to steady it before striking.
5. The first striker wraps the conker string round his hand and takes the conker in the other hand and draws it back for the strike and to release swings the conker down by the string held in the other hand.
6. Each player then has three consecutive attempts to strike the opponent's conker.
7. Each attempted strike must be clearly aimed at the nut, no deliberate miss hits.
8. The game will be decided once one of the conkers is smashed.

9. A small piece of nut or skin remaining shall be judged out. The remaining nut must be enough to mount an attack.
10. If both nuts smash at the same time then the match shall be replayed.
11. Any nut being knocked from the lace but not smashing may be re threaded and the game continued.
12. A player causing a knotting of the laces (a snag) will be noted. Three snags leads to disqualification.
13. If a game lasts for more than five minutes then play will halt and the "5 minute rule" will come into effect. Each player will be allowed up to nine further strikes at their opponent's nut, again alternating three strikes each. If neither conker has been smashed at the end of the nine strikes then the player who strikes the nut the most times during this period will be judged the winner.
14. There is one Umpire in charge of each game and their decision is final, except in the case of an unresolved query or dispute between Player and Umpire, in which case the Chief Umpire will be called and his/her decision shall be absolutely final.

### Safety and game etiquette

- Entrants participate at their own risk and have signed the disclaimer.
- Remember it is a game, a bit of fun and for charity.
- Players are likely to get bruised knuckles, so don't aim with too much force.
- Players and viewers, especially young children don't stand too close.
- "Strings" (when the strings get wrapped around each other), "stampsies" (if the conker falls to the floor and contestants destroy the conker by stamping on them) are NOT allowed.

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## Stewards

- To assist the Registration Secretary in his duties.
- To organise the registration area.
- To ensure that players are ready at the appropriate times.
- To try and locate any missing players!
- To keep the playing area clear of any 'knocked-out' players and spectators other than those authorised.

## Interesting facts about Conkers

- Britain is believed to be the only country in the world where the game of conkers is traditionally played with horse chestnuts in the autumn.
- Horse chestnut trees were first introduced to England in the late 16th century from Eastern Europe.
- The World Conker Championships are held every year on the second Sunday in October in Northamptonshire. Contestants are not allowed to use their own conkers.
- The first recorded game of conkers was on the Isle of Wight in 1848 and was modelled on a 15th century game played with hazelnuts, also known as cobnuts.
- The origin of the name 'conker' is unclear, but one popular explanation is that it stems from the French word cogner, meaning to "hit".
- Horse chestnut conkers, unlike many other kinds of chestnut seed, are unfit for human consumption.
- Extracts from horse chestnuts have been used to treat malaria, varicose veins, diarrhoea, frostbite and ringworm, as well as being a component of sunscreen products.
- Conkers are edible by deer, cattle, horses and not surprisingly squirrels.

## DUTIES OF OFFICIALS

### Chief Umpire

- To ensure that Umpires are familiar with the rules and order of play.
- To act as judge in any dispute and to make the final decision. (Small pieces of skin/shell left on the string should be judged 'out'. It must be large enough to hit).

### Umpire

- To register competitors as they arrive for each game.
- To be responsible for offering and collecting the safety equipment.
- To maintain the smooth running of each game.
- To ensure that the rules are followed.
- To record the result of each game.
- To judge at their discretion any 'snags'.
- To time each game (not to the second) and to bring in the 'five minute rule'.
- To examine any conker which slips over the knot, and to declare a replay if necessary.
- To refer any dispute over quality of conker, snags or rules to the Chief Umpire.
- To collect laces and conkers from competitors

### Registration Secretary

- To oversee the registration of players.
- To ensure registering players read the safety disclaimer
- To facilitate the movement of players to their playing area at the appropriate times.
- To liaise with stewards.
- To maintain the agreed order of play.
- To ensure that all players read the rules prior to commencement of play
- To assist with the order of events: finals, presentations, etc.

Sidney says...

Be safe when playing with conkers.

