

## **2011 BEACH CLUB INVITATIONAL**

**January 26-30, 2011**

It is always nice to start off a tournament with balloons. And noise makers. And it was fitting that the 33<sup>rd</sup> Beach Club Invitational began this way, Croquet Chairman Laura Warner's birthday party combined with the tournament's Opening Reception. Gathered at the "Old Guard" Club in West Palm Beach, hugs were exchanged, charts were scrutinized and announcements were delivered in style. The actual games would start the next morning, at either The Beach Club or at The National Croquet Center, but strategy was already being discussed.

Temperatures throughout the event were challenging, but for the 60 combatants in attendance, little could extinguish the competitive fires that ran within. Three flights were played in both Singles and in the Waterford Doubles, plus a small but equally matched Novice Doubles division. Six time slots and seven lawns were in use and matches were timed at one hour and fifteen minutes. Stewart Jackson, Tournament Manager, kept things moving at The Beach Club while Tournament Director, John Osborn, held hands at the NCC.

The Doubles competitions were of the Waterford style, each player receiving five matches with no Playoffs. And in the Championship Flight, things could not have been much closer; five players tied with four wins. Neil Houghton, tied in net points with Ron Huxtable, took top honors by two gross points! Guy Brown 'netted' a valiant Third. In the First Flight, three players stumbled into four victories with Joy Bradford claiming top honors with a comfortable five net-point margin - Hope Harmon and Betty Anne Brine following the leader. The undefeated Geraldine Lancto captured the Second Flight, Lee Little stood alone with four victories for Second and Warren Phillips edged out a pack with three wins for Third Place. Hildegard Jones went unblemished to prevail in the abbreviated Novice Flight.

As regard to Singles action...in the Second Flight Dolph Cramer (10) saved his energy by playing Singles only. And it paid off. Having snuck past (11-10) Doubles winner Geraldine Lancto (13), he then just squeezing by the great shooting of George Mathys (10) to claim the largest trophy. The First Flight found two big guys playing both tiny and few shots in the Finals. Guy Brown (5) was lucky to have even made Sunday play with a sixty-foot wicket shot in the last turn to knock off feisty Stuart Baker (5) in the Semis. Chuck Perry (5) was equally lucky by surviving Sandy Walsh's (4.5) sexy moves on Saturday. (She hit the ball pretty well too.) Both gentlemen played very conservatively, but when Chuck stuffed the sixth wicket, Guy (10-8) tip-toed away with top honors.

It was in the Championship Flight Singles, though, where weird things were happening. Let's be honest - when was the last time you even heard the name 'Chuck Loving' (1) in a recap article? And yet, long forgotten Chucky was the only player, of twenty-four, to find himself undefeated after block play! But wait...things get stranger! While it was obvious that Chuck's luck would eventually take a turn toward reality, it was who knocked him out of the event that is equally bizarre. Yes, they are now making Don Hereens (2) T-shirts, for not only had Don already knocked out David McCoy (-.5) in the previous round, and then Chuck, but he then defeated (18-16) Johnny Mitchell (-2) in the semis! On the other side of the draw, Tim Biting (-1) and defending champion Chris Patmore (-2) both fell (10-15 & 8-11) to Mike Gibbons (-1.5). No huge surprise there, for Mike is probably the most under-appreciated player in the country. And Derek Wassink (-2) defeating Mike 16-15 in the Semis was also a somewhat logical outcome. But Derek now against, well, Don Hereens in the Final? And Don did make a run for it, taking advantage of maximum opponent deadness. Still, Derek did pull it out in the end, the game much closer than the 21-11 score indicates.

Throughout the event, each night the click of a roquet was replaced with the clicks of glasses, social events filling up the already active week. Wednesday evening offered cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at Bill and Judith Cooley's 'The Palm Beach Steakhouse' while Thursday moved the party over to the home of Stewart and Josie Jackson. The Player's Dinner was held Friday at The Beach Club, and while the weather required a shift from poolside to the warmer climes inside, the conversations and cuisine were spectacular. Sunday's Awards Ceremony & Grand Buffet certainly lived up to the great reputation it has earned over the many years.

The Croquet Committee at The Beach Club wishes to thank all of their esteemed guests for joining its Members in this annual celebration of comradery and croquet. The Club hopes to see everyone again next year and wishes all of the participants the best of luck in their continuing endeavors.

### **CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT SINGLES**

1. Derek Wassink
2. Don Hereens
3. Johnny Mitchell
3. Mike Gibbons
5. Chris Patmore
5. Chuck Loving
5. Dick Brackett
5. Peter Just
9. David McCoy
9. Ron Huxtable
9. Ted Knopf
9. Tim Biting
13. Linda Huxtable
13. Rufus Bayard
13. Tom Hughes
16. Barry Gibson
16. Bob Chilton
16. David Ekstrom
16. John Hunter
20. Conrad Rugart
20. Neil Houghton
20. Ted Quimby
23. Bass Winmill
23. Steve Warner

### **FIRST FLIGHT SINGLES**

1. Guy Brown
2. Chuck Perry
3. Sandy Walsh
3. Stuart Baker
5. Betty Anne Brine
5. Charlotte Hapak
5. Geraldine McCauley
5. Joan Novell
9. Martie Ekstrom
10. Carl Myer
10. Donald Lancto
10. Doug McKeckneay
10. Hope Harmon
10. Joy Bradford
10. Kiehner Johnson
16. Kevin Moran
17. Carole Lembo
17. Lou Fusz

### **SECOND FLIGHT SINGLES**

1. Dolph Cramer

2. George Mathys
3. Geraldine Lancto
4. Carla Rueck
5. Penny Ferraro
5. Warren Phillips
7. Missy Diack

### **CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT DOUBLES**

1. Neil Houghton
2. Ron Huxtable
3. Guy Brown
4. Derek Wassink
5. Tim Bitting
6. Chris Patmore
7. John Hunter
8. Sandy Walsh
9. Dick Brackett
10. Bass Winmill
11. Rufus Bayard
12. Bob Chilton
13. Johnny Mitchell
14. David Ekstrom
15. Linda Huxtable
16. Chuck Loving
17. David McCoy
18. Barry Gibson
19. Ted Quimby
20. Conrad Rugart
21. Tom Hughes
22. Ted Knopf
23. Don Hereens
24. Peter Just

### **FIRST FLIGHT DOUBLES**

1. Joy Bradford
2. Hope Harmon
3. Betty Anne Brine
4. Stuart Baker
5. Eileen Holberg
6. Charlotte Hapak
7. Geraldine McCauley
8. Beatty Cramer
9. Lou Fusz
10. Chuck Perry
11. Doug McKechney
12. Donald Lancto
13. Kiehner Johnson
14. Carl Myer
15. Martie Ekstrom
16. Joan Novell

### **SECOND FLIGHT DOUBLES**

1. Geraldine Lancto
2. Lee Little
3. Warren Phillips
4. Mary Anne Mathys
5. Jo Stetson
6. Kevin Moran
7. George Mathys
8. Carla Rueck
9. Sally Winmill
10. Penny Ferraro
11. Missy Diack
12. Julia Wallace

#### NOVICE DOUBLES

1. Hildegard Jones
2. Thomas Tribby
2. Jeanette Bair-Tribby
2. Wayne Dimm