



2011 Big Lobster Invitational

The 2011 edition of the Big Lobster Invitational wrapped up play on Sunday afternoon, September 11, 2011 under brilliant sunny skies much like that day ten years ago when we suffered the worst terrorist attack on American soil. Under the auspices of the Woodlawn Croquet Program, this tournament welcomed guests from New York, Florida, California, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Colorado, Georgia, and Canada. Our out of town visitors and our local contenders were treated to amazing views of the Maine Coast, delicious Maine lobsters, and a unique blend of six and nine wicket croquet. As we say here in Maine, croquet in September on the Maine Coast is the “way life should be.”

The tournament commenced Tuesday evening at the courtside home of Eileen Holberg in Southwest Harbor with a reception and BBQ. Ben Rothman who assisted us with the tournament conducted a clinic on the cut throat nine wicket doubles game using the modified Claremont Rules. The historic Claremont Hotel, overlooking Somes Sound, has been the home of the Claremont Classic nine wicket tournament since 1976. Prior to dinner, eight live lobsters were set up in lanes on the croquet lawn and bets were taken to see which lobster would win the race. Lobster antennas were tweaked and they were coaxed along until lobster #6 made it across the finish line first. Fred Beck from Brooksville decided to give the winning lobster a full pardon so he removed the bands on his claws and took him to the shore and released him to the waters of Somes Sound. All players enjoyed a lobster bake at the Bar Harbor Lobster Bake Co. in Hulls Cove on Friday evening and wrapped up the tournament Sunday noon with delicious lobster rolls provided by Sue Bennoch at Ben`s Store in Ellsworth.



Tournament play began on Wednesday morning under dark skies with rain showers on occasions at Eileen Holberg`s Court, Larry Stettner`s Court, and the two courts at the Claremont Hotel. The nine wicket doubles had 32 players in two flights and each team had six games in two days with awards given to the first, second, and third place in each flight. Players enjoyed sipping coffee from the lawns overlooking Somes Sound and the wonderful lunches provided by the hotel at the Boathouse on the pier. In the first flight, the father/son team of Roy Morgan and Stephen Morgan from the West River Wickets group in the Annapolis, Maryland area mastered the transition from 6 wicket to this very unique nine wicket game to take first place. Linda Huxtable and her dad Don Lancto, who was named the senior croquet player of the year by the USCA at their annual meeting in March, and who is recovering from some serious health issues came in second place. Third place was won by Woodlawn Croquet members Randall McAndrews and Barbara Entzminger. In the Championship Flight, the local duo of Alan Madeira and Dave Nelson went undefeated to take first place. Alan and Dave have been the top contenders at the annual Claremont classic in both singles and doubles for years and are masters of this 9 wicket game. In second place was Neil Houghton and Eileen Holberg, both members of Woodlawn Croquet. Ben Rothman and his friend Cody Aichele came in third place. Ben put on a show for the spectators in one game by peeling his partner ball through 8 wickets on one turn.

On Thursday morning, tournament play shifted to six wicket singles in four flights with 27 players competing on the croquet lawns of Larry Stetter, Eileen Holberg, the two courts at Woodlawn, and the Tapley Cove court on the shores of the Bagaduce River in Brooksville at the home of Mary Gould and Marcia Chapman. Absolutely perfect, sunny weather was the order for the next three days. In the second flight, 7 players had 6 block games and Janet Pearson of Woodlawn and Cody Aichele from the New York Croquet Club played for the championship on Sunday morning on Woodlawn's full court with Janet prevailing by a score of 14 to 11. Barbara Entzminger of Woodlawn took third place honors. In first flight, up and coming 6 wicket player, Stephen Morgan went undefeated in block play and played John Richardson from Toronto, Canada in the championship game. Stephen won by a very close score of 16 to 15 in the championship game Sunday morning. Stephen also earned 28 tracking points for his play and will be dropped to a 6 handicap after this tournament. Lloyd Hadden from New Hampshire took third place in the first flight. Art Parsells from Tulsa, Oklahoma was the top seed in the championship B flight coming out of block play. Paula Phaneuf won the flight by beating Art in a very close score of 16 to 15 in the championship game which did not get decided until the final turn. Betty Whitlow from Kentucky came in third place. All six players in the Championship A flight had handicaps from 0.5 to -0.5. John Phaneuf, the top seed with a handicap of -0.5 had to withdraw from the singles play due to a very bad ankle problem. Tournament Manager, Perry Mattson of Woodlawn Croquet filled in for him. Neil Houghton of Northeast Harbor and a member of Woodlawn Croquet got the best of Ron Hendry from Rancho Mirage, California in the championship game Sunday afternoon by a score of 16 to 14. Ron Huxtable won the third place award.

The awards were handed out Sunday afternoon and everyone left to head back to their homes full of lobster, good camaraderie, lots of croquet, and promised to be back for the next Big Lobster Invitational.

Final results for the 2011 Big Lobster Invitational:

Nine Wicket Doubles

Championship Flight

1. Alan Madeira and David Nelson
2. Neil Houghton and Eileen Holberg

3. Ben Rothman and Cody Aichele
4. Larry Stettner and Janet Pearson
5. John Phaneuf and Paula Phaneuf
6. Don Bridges and Pat Bridges
7. Art Parsells and Delores Gallagher
8. Ron Huxtable and Barry Williams

First Flight

1. Roy Morgan and Stephen Morgan
2. Linda Huxtable and Don Lancto
3. Randall McAndrews and Barbara Entzminger
4. Lloyd Hadden and Thomas Van Gorder
5. Robert Yount and Gerry Lancto
6. Fay Lawson and Frannie Martin
7. John Richardson and Diane Richardson
8. Fred Beck and Linda Beck

Six Wicket Singles

Championship A Flight

1. Neil Houghton
2. Ron Hendry
3. Ron Huxtable
4. Perry Mattson
5. Linda Huxtable
6. Chuck Whitlow

Championship B Flight

1. Paula Phaneuf
2. Art Parsells
3. Betty Whitlow
4. Robert Yount
5. Delores Gallagher
6. Don Bridges

First Flight

1. Stephen Morgan
2. John Richardson
3. Lloyd Hadden
4. Charles Alexander

5. Calvert Chaney
6. Fred Beck
7. Roy Morgan
8. Pat Bridges

Second Flight

1. Janet Pearson
2. Cody Aichele
3. Barbara Entzminger
4. Tom Stoner
5. Gerry Lancto
6. William Brewer
7. Tim McCormick

Perry Mattson
Tournament Manager