

NCC Championship Singles Tournament
December 2nd, 3rd and 4th 2011

Just as the awards were about to be given out at the end of the 2011 Championship Singles tournament, a huge roar went up, engines were revved, horns honked and the crowd cheered. Unfortunately all this acclamation was caused by several thousand bikers roaring past the National Croquet Center on their way to a rally, not by the players and spectators that had gathered to watch the new, four-part trophy be awarded to the winners of this hard-fought contest.

In three days of play club members competed in four flights for the bragging rights to the title "Club Champion". This year the trophy was not a plate, silver cup or glass bowl, it was a composite arrangement of four croquet balls arranged in stepped order on a presentation stand. In each flight there were two days of block play to determine the rankings then one day of single elimination playoffs to determine who would be the first to get their names in front of the appropriate ball.

Along with the usual suspects from the NCC, there were several visiting members including Ed O'Laughlin, Michael Todorovich, Lynda Sudderberg and Steve Grassbough who added glamour and interest to Championship and Second Flights.

There was agony and ecstasy during the three days. Among the lessons learned; never go six-ball dead before making the third wicket, never mess up your leave after playing a perfect 10-wicket break to rover - you will lose! And avoid the death roll-off when attacking balls on court #5's north boundary where many a hope of victory slowly trickled over the string and into oblivion.

There were some excellent, hard fought games in all the flights and even the ultimate Champion could be seen chewing the grass after a stuffed wicket or two. In First Flight Cinne Cagney proved once and for all that it is the person who wins the last game who wins the trophy. During the Sunday playoffs she grasped the mallet firmly in both hands and just as firmly crushed the hopes of both Jodie Rugart and John Blamire to take home the prize after suffering lopsided losses to both those players during previous block play. Well done Cinne!

In Third Flight the upcoming David Spivey proved that he can not only make his own mallets, he can use them too - to great effect. David will one day be doing the same in all the other flights (and he is a great chef too!).

But it was in Second Flight that Anthea Blamire proved the rule mentioned above. She played magnificently, but nervously, in her block, winning every game and came roaring into the finals with a squeaker in the semis. Then, she met visitor Steve. With strong winning chances going into last turn, she lined up a three-foot roquet, took a deep breath, pictured the trophy with her name on it, heard the applause, swung her confident mallet - and missed the ball! Steve became our first Second Flight Champion.

The overall results are:

Championship Flight	
1st	Peter Just Club Champion
2nd	David McCoy
3rd	John Warlick

First Flight

- 1st Cinnie Cagney
- 2nd John Blamire
- 3rd Jodie Rugart

Second Flight

- 1st Steve Grassbaugh
- 2nd Anthea Blamire
- 3rd Lynda Sudderberg

Third Flight

- 1st David Spivey
- 2nd Brian Cooke
- 3rd Gail Rubin

The Club would like to thank Sandy James for all their excellent food and service, Shelly Meyers for registering players and collecting the money, Archie Peck for supervising the courts and equipment, and Anthea Blamire for keeping the scores and game tallies. Anthea scores with me every time.

