

2011 PIPING ROCK INVITATIONAL

May 19-22, 2011

In general, croquet is a mathematical game. Choices are made throughout, the odds of success balanced upon that fickle scale of risk and reward. Percentages fluctuate constantly, aspects of time, score, opponent ability and court conditions mutating the numbers, often leaving a player questioning even their best educated guess.

While it is perhaps this challenge that keeps the croquet tournament schedule hectic from month to month, there are so many more reasons as to why the Piping Rock Invitational continues to bring out croquet addicts from both near and far. Yes, the weather remains an inconstant from year to year, but while the temperatures may change, the hospitality of the Club remains both legendary and unprecedented. The beautiful panorama speaks for itself. The relaxed, unobtrusive and professional way in which the Croquet Committee and the staff supports and attends to the player's every wish speaks volumes.

While rain was a threat throughout the four day event, aside from the brief shower here and there, and one serious but quick downpour late Saturday, conditions were more than reasonable. Sweaters and nearby rain-gear were the norm, but the temperatures never proved to be uncomfortable. The courts, though a little slow to mature this year, played fair throughout.

In a change from previous events, the play schedule was revamped to allow for more civilized transitions, less double-banking and a smoother flow of play. Seven lawns were in use and matches were timed at one hour and fifteen minutes. Four blocks were employed for the Singles competition and Waterford Doubles (no Playoffs) allowed everyone a match per day throughout three divisions. A Singles Plate event was also available for the thirty-three percent of players who failed to make the single elimination Playoffs.

In the Championship Flight Singles, Stuart Lawrence (-1) looked much the best throughout, completing five of the only six games that actually reached the magic twenty-six number. He defeated Tim Bitting (-1) 26-13 to capture the Title and end a wonderful weekend. Despite a spirited last turn charge by Bill Whitman (4.5), Francis Palasieski (7) took Championship 'B' honors with a 15-13 score. It should be noted that "The Player Known Simply as Francis" was not only the last seed and seven-handicapper in the Flight, but just the start of a strong finish by the 'under-thirty' or New Paltz members. Templeton Peck (7) went undefeated within the First Flight, showed much improvement throughout and defeated New Paltzer David Cohen (7) in the 13-9 Final. Perhaps those occasional trips to Florida during the Winter paid off! Randi Cudlitz (12 and again from New Paltz) was nothing but smiles by overcoming (16-9) the previously undefeated and determined Carla Rueck (11) in the Second Flight. Plate winners by Division were: Micah Beck (2.5), Jim Wyer (6), Jake Johnson (7) and Jane Mango (13).

If you are tired of hearing about the 'under-thirty' group, the Doubles results will certainly not ease the pain. In the Championship Flight, St. John's alumni, Micah Beck, took top honors over Stuart Lawrence and Tim Bitting. David Cohen (New Paltz) captured the First Flight ahead of Piping Rock's Stephen Ely and John Postley. Randi Cudlitz (New Paltz) doubled her trophy intake with a Second Flight victory over Ralph Charles and Rocco Mango. It should probably be noted that while Piping Rock's Lucie Bard has now placed a David Cohen photo upon her dart board, having lost to him twice, David should receive the 'Good Spirit Award': instead of attending his own college graduation, he chose to play croquet at Piping Rock. Wow.

Before, during and after the competitive play upon the lawns, weight was to be gained throughout the Invitational, the Club holding nothing back in pleasing the forty-seven participants at hand. Courtside breakfasts were served each morning, daily lunches offered a wide variety of options and a snack was always within reach. Highlights also included the Opening Reception, the Player's Dinner and the famous Lobster/Steak gala Saturday night. Mother nature cooperated by offering a great courtside BBQ Luncheon during the Finals. Both the service and the fare was phenomenal throughout.

If you like to be pampered at a stunning facility, to spend time with some special people and the chance for some great competition upon the lawns, please ask and hope that there is room at Piping Rock next year! Special thanks go out to the entire Croquet Committee (Chairperson, Elaine Postley), Tournament Manager - Jane Simonds, Piping Rock's five-star staff, Andy, Kim and Bernadette in particular, and to a grounds crew that never shied away from that extra effort. Piping Rock offers a tournament that many only dream of. Till next year....

FINAL RESULTS

CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT SINGLES

1. Stuart Lawrence
2. Tim Bitting
3. Bob Bake
3. Bill Martin
5. Jane Simonds
5. Ceci Shiftan
5. Norris Settlemyre
5. John Hunter
9. Micah Beck
10. Ben Morehead
11. Bass Winmill
11. Ron Shiftan

CHAMPIONSHIP 'B' SINGLES

1. Francis Palasieski
2. Bill Whitman
3. Justin Berbig
3. Reine Bitting
5. Jack Montgomery
5. Elaine Postley
5. John Postley
5. Stephen Ely
9. Jim Wyer
10. Elaine Fong
11. Jim McLaughlin
11. Ann Nolte

FIRST FLIGHT SINGLES

1. Templeton Peck
2. David Cohen
3. Ralph Charles
3. Jennifer Ely
5. Lucie Bard
5. Peter Timmins
5. Beatty Cramer
5. Eleanor Perkins
9. Jake Johnson
10. Michael Seele
11. Victoria Tutino
11. Dolph Cramer

SECOND FLIGHT SINGLES

1. Randi Cudlitz
2. Carla Rueck
3. Helga Seele
3. Kelso Sutton
5. Jane Mango
6. Franklin Perrell

CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT DOUBLES

1. Micah Beck
2. Stuart Lawrence
3. Tim Bitting
4. Bob Bake
5. Jack Montgomery

6. Reine Bitting
7. Bill Whitman
8. Norris Settlemyre
9. Justin Berbig
10. Ron Shiftan
11. Jane Simonds
12. Bass Winmill
13. John Hunter
14. Bill Martin
15. Ceci Shiftan
16. Ben Morehead

FIRST FLIGHT DOUBLES

1. David Cohen
2. Stephen Ely
3. John Postley
4. Templeton Peck
5. Peter Timmins
6. Francis Palasieski
7. Lucie Bard
8. Elaine Postley
9. Jake Johnson
10. Jim Wyr
11. Jim McLaughlin
12. Jennifer Ely
13. Elaine Fong
14. Beatty Cramer
15. Ann Nolte
16. Michael Seele

SECOND FLIGHT DOUBLES

1. Randi Cudlitz
2. Ralph Charles
3. Rocco Mango
4. Helga Seele
5. Dolph Cramer
6. Carla Rueck
7. Jane Mango
8. Kelso Sutton
9. Julia Wallace
10. Mary Louise Whitmarsh
11. Sally Winmill
12. Franklin Perrell
13. Hank Bard

13. Eleanor Perkins
15. Victoria Tutino

-John C. Osborn (TD)