

WINTER INVITATIONAL Feb 3-6, 2011 SARASOTA COUNTY CROQUET CLUB

The Sarasota County Croquet Club held its winter invitational on February 3-6, 2011 using three full size courts in Venice, Florida and one additional court, Saturday, at The Oaks in nearby Osprey, FL. Rain, rain, and rain was the weather forecast for the four days. And what did we get, cloudy, cloudy, and cloudy with occasional sun, and mild Florida temperatures.

The opening party was again held at the Manasota Beach Club, as guests of the owner, Sydney and Bob Buffum. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were the order of the day, as we watched the sun go down over the Gulf of Mexico. No green flash noted. More than thirty players stayed on for no-host superb five course evening meal, which was in keeping with the ambiance of the Beach Club. Schedules handed out, friends reunited, and attitudes adjusted, the players looked forward to the following days.

This year a comfortable 24 players participated. Thursday and Friday consisted of Block play in three flights. Due to handicaps twelve players ended up in 1st flight, divided into two blocks of 6. At the end of block play they were to be seeded into two ladders, with a final play-off between the two ladder winners

In Championship, with six players, Russ Cuccia finished the block undefeated, handing Jackie Jones losing her only loss. The ladder saw Russ lose to Jackie in the quarterfinals, lose to Blaine Davis in the semi-final, with Blaine losing to Jackie in the final game Sunday

First flight, as mentioned above consisted of twelve players, in two blocks of six, seeded in a serpentine sequence. At the end of the five games, courts were available and a sixth cross-block game was scheduled, with each player competing against an opponent with a like handicap. Glenn Bennett, having lost one game, became the top seed in one ladder. Again the serpentine seeding was used, and uniquely every player in block #1 ended up in ladder #1, and the block #2 participants in ladder #2. With one ladder playing at The Oaks on Saturday, it was not until the end of the day before notes could be exchanged.

In ladder one Glenn Bennett went undefeated until the final game. Having sent Dolores Gallagher to the loser ladder in the quarterfinals, Dolores then beat Bill Cole to face Glenn a second time, and was successful in beating him

Second flight, with six players saw four of the six with three or more wins. Rich Zeck was the top seed in the ladder. (All ladders were double elimination) It was determined that Rich had one problem in his run for the gold. He lost to Kay Schneider in the block (His only block loss), then he lost to Kay in the quarterfinals, and after defeating Norm Mulrone, he came back in the final game to lose again to Kay Schneider, who was pleased to win her flight

Socially, in addition to the opening party, continental breakfasts and lunches prepared by Sue Doherty and her "kitchen cuties" were served courtside each day, "Attitude adjustment" followed play each day, and an "Italian Night" dinner was held Friday evening.

Fred Jones, Tournament Director