

29th Annual Texas Croquet Classic **11/27/2011**

Classic Battles and An Unexpected Champion: The 29th Annual Texas Croquet Classic

This year's tournament was blessed with fabulous weather, beautiful courts, tremendous play and classic Texas hospitality. Fourteen players from around the country gathered in North Texas to do battle in the fall classic sponsored by the Dallas Croquet Association and the Hubbard Mallet Club.

The first day was mixed hi-low Waterford Doubles. The tournament includes hi-low doubles as a teaching opportunity for new players. Harold Menzel, tournament manager, did a marvelous job of balancing the teams and this made for very tight matches with most victories determined by a single wicket. After it was finished, Joe Yoder and Bob Chilton were tied with 4 and 0 records in the Championship Flight. Yoder was awarded first place on points. In First Flight, Suzan Copeland and Harold Menzel won 1st and 2nd place trophies respectively.

Singles play was equally exciting. This year's tournament featured a new event—Croquet Under The Lights. Bob Chilton's beautiful court has great lights and we took advantage of this to hold two matches in the evening. The two lowest-handicap players from each flight squared off, and these provided some of the tournament's most entertaining croquet.

In the First Flight match, Suzan Copeland managed a narrow victory over the always surprising Frank Vuitch. Frank always plays well even though this is the only time of the year when he plays; he doesn't even practice. Year after year, he shows up, dusts off his mallet, and gives everybody a tough time.

While the First Flight match was entertaining, the real fireworks came between Britt Ruby and Johnny Mitchell in Championship. Mitchell stumbled early and Ruby jumped out to a big lead. Ruby was rolling to an easy victory when he missed a 6' shot and gave Mitchell the opening he desperately needed. With time expiring, Mitchell calmly ran eleven hoops with his first ball, pegged out Ruby's rover ball, and then ran another five wickets with his second ball to win by one. The spectators erupted with applause and hearty congratulations to both players for such a great match.

Even though this was one of the toughest tournaments in history, Bob Chilton did something that has rarely been accomplished; he swept block play, handily beating even Ruby and Mitchell. Suzan Copeland matched Chilton's grand accomplishment and emerged from First Flight undefeated.

The competition was even tougher in the playoffs and upsets were the rule. In First Flight, Suzan Copeland fell in the semi-finals and Vuitch beat Sandra Walsh for his first championship.

The Championship flight leader, Bob Chilton, also suffered the same disappointing fate as Suzan, losing in the semi-finals to Johnny Mitchell. Britt Ruby beat Joe Yoder in the other semi-

final to set up another classic rematch. This time the tables would be turned as Ruby claimed another Texas Classic Championship.



A special thanks goes to everybody who made this another great tournament. Bob Chilton and Bill Copeland worked incredibly hard to get their courts through the hottest, driest summer in Texas history. Suzan Copeland not only played well, she expertly handled all the food arrangements. George Blackburn made sure everybody had plenty to drink. And, yet again,

Harold Menzel deftly handled the toughest task of all, the scheduling. Menzel gave us great, competitive doubles matches and got everybody through block play with nary a hitch.

The final standings were as follows:

Championship Singles:

Britt Ruby	1 st
Johnny Mitchell	2 nd
Bob Chilton	3 rd
Joe Yoder	3 rd
Bill Hixon	5 th
Bill Copeland	5 th
Donna Dixon	7 th
Bob Knowlton	8 th

Championship Doubles:

Joe Yoder	1 st
Bob Chilton	2 nd
Donna Dixon	3 rd
Bill Copeland	4 th
Johnny Mitchell	5 th
Britt Ruby	6 th
Bill Hixon	7 th

First Flight Singles:

Frank Vuitch	1 st
Sandra Walsh	2 nd
Harold Menzel	3 rd
Suzan Copeland	4 th
Pat Garner	5 th
George Blackburn	6 th

First Flight Doubles:

Suzan Copeland	1 st
Harold Menzel	2 nd
George Blackburn	3 rd
Sandra Walsh	4 th
Pat Garner	5 th
Frank Vuitch	6 th