

**THE 2012 USCA CLUB TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**The National Croquet Center**  
**West Palm Beach, FL 33401**  
**March 14-18, 2012**

It is hard to describe the Club Team Championships. Ask a few of those players relaxing upon the NCC veranda between matches as to why they enjoy the competition so much and odds are you will never hear the same answer twice. Call it the Mardi Gras of Croquet. Call it whatever you wish, but one thing is for certain - the growing number of participants each year means that there is something special about this event.

While the size of the field last year was impressive, this year attendance grew by sixteen, creating a total of sixty doubles teams representing seventeen Clubs. Of course, with those numbers comes both good and bad news. More may be merrier, but even with twelve courts to frolic upon, time and space does offer limits. It's like trying to see how many people can fit into a stretch limousine...those already inside get less comfortable with each addition. Surprisingly though, rare was it to find a player who really felt the squeeze. Everyone played at least a game less than they would have last year, and for the twenty players who failed to make the Playoffs, their tournament ended after only two and a half days. Still, even those who failed to make it onto the lawns by the weekend seemed more than content to simply be a part of the festival. No, there is little or no down-time at the Club Teams, no matter what color of clothing you might be wearing.

The general format was simple in nature. Five Flights were played, matches were timed at one hour and twenty minutes, qualification rounds gave everyone six games and 85% of the entrants then moved into a modified double-elimination ladder. Six rounds of action were played the first three days and there was no double banking, the later something which might change should the attendance increase again next year. The Clubs themselves were divided and allocated into one of three Divisions determined upon how many doubles teams were sent. Points were awarded to the top six finishing couples in each Flight, those numbers were added together and the Club with the largest total claimed the esteemed Lyon's Trophy for the year. Simple, right?

While some scattered showers were in attendance the first two days, the general weather was more than cooperative throughout the event. The wickets were generous in width and while the courts had seen plenty of action throughout the Florida season, they played well considering the traffic they had experienced. Game delays were rare and even with a couple marathon overtime matches, the schedule ran smoothly. Only two players were late for their first round matches -on the same day, partners, coming from different directions and late for completely different reasons. Who doesn't believe in croquet karma?

If there was a dominant team that was in tune with whatever karma was available, it came in the form of Ben Rothman & Jim Butts. They went undefeated throughout the event and captured the Championship Flight title with a 26-11 victory over Stewart Jackson & Ted Quimby. Harvey Geiger & Al Sutton stunned the powerhouse team of Peter Oleson & Stephen Morgan by taking the First Flight honors with an overwhelming 16-5 score. John & Cathleen Dainton were nothing but smiles after defeating (13-10) Joy Bradford & (the injured) Victoria Albrecht in the Second Flight while Charles Alexander

& Tim McCormick slipped past (13-12) Harry Lloyd & Monica Uhlhorn in the Third Flight. Denys & Bobbie 'Toes' Shorthouse fought past two strong NCC teams to wiggle out a 13-11 Fourth Flight Finals win over Gail Rubin & Patricia Muir.

In the Lyon's Trophy Club competition, The Croquet Club at the NCC took home the big prize for the second year in a row. Yes, home court advantage does have advantages, not just knowing about whatever little imperfections the courts might have, but by being able to send thirteen teams to the event, almost double that of their opponents. Woodlawn (four teams) had another strong showing by capturing Division Two while Wexford (one team) and Lenox (two teams) dueled into a tie for Division Three honors.

Not to be forgotten, earlier in the week, amongst a gaggle of (three) USCA Schools and the Planning Committee Seminar, the Golf Croquet Championships were also held. Following a cross-block (19-point games) seeding stage, the entrants were broken down into two Flights, the favorites all living up to expectations.

In the Championship Division, Sherif Abdelwahab defeated David McCoy in one well-fought best-of-three (7-point games) semi-final (7-6, 6-7, 7-5) while Ahab Dincer had a slightly easier time in overcoming Cheryl Bromley (7-5, 7-4) in the other. The two brothers were now forced to face off against each other once again. In block play, both exhibited stellar play with Sherif coming out ahead in a 10-9 match. Now playing in the Finals, Sherif again took control in the first game with a 7-5 win. For what it is worth, in that all of the games that day had been strong in ability and long in length, by the time the second game began Ahab was in danger of missing his evening flight. No matter...Sherif prevailed 7-4 to be named Champion.

In the First Flight, Sandy Walsh and Bill Bromley had a wonderful semi-final battle, Sandy eventually sneaking by with 7-6, 7-6 victory. Peder Theiste and Zoe de Ropp were also well matched, Peder winning (7-6, 7-4) in, obviously, two games. This set up a Final with no clear favorite. While Peder took the first game 7-3, Sandy fought back in the second, coming up just short and allowing Peder the title with that 7-6 win.

Whether you participated in one or within a multitude of events during the eleven days the USCA likes to refer to as "Croquet Week", you are probably tired now. Obviously the strategies of croquet are taxing to one's mental health, but it was really the social activities offered beyond the boundary lines that could have actually killed you. Yes, the bar was always open...and busy. Yes, there was an affair every night, and whether it was included within the entry fee or not, almost everyone was there. There was the Opening Reception, the Player's Dinner, the Annual Meeting, raffles, auctions, entertainment, Bombay members slipping you (not me) little bottles of rum, lunches to die for and a fantastic Final's Brunch. Did I mention the fact that St. Patrick's Day fell right in the middle of...you get the idea.

Croquet Week is a long and amazing experience. It is even longer for the incredible USCA and NCC staffs, the ground's crew and everyone at Sandy James, those who make certain that the plates are warm and the drinks cold and flowing. And it really is like Mardi Gras! I know the players thank all of those who work so diligently to make everything just right. Mark your calendars...they will all be ready for you again next year!

-John C. Osborn (TD)

## **CLUB TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS**

### **CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT**

1. Ben Rothman – Jim Butts	Mission Hills
2. Stewart Jackson – Ted Quimby	Beach Club
3. Dick Brackett – John Warlick	NCC
4. Derek Wassink – Peter Just	NCC
5. John Young III – Doug Moore	Bermuda
5. Johnny Mitchell – Steve Mossbrook	NCC
7. David McCoy – Robert Van Tassell	NCC
7. Bill Mead – John Ryan III	NCC
9. John Phaneuf – Paula Phaneuf	PGA
9. David Theiste – Peder Theiste	Heatherwood
9. Sherif Abdelwahab – Sandy Walsh	International Tennis
9. Ed O’Laughlin – Laura O’Laughlin	Baltimore
13. Mike Orgill – Mary Rodeberg	Mission Hills
14. Jerry Waechter – Jerry Luecke	NCC

### **FIRST FLIGHT**

1. Harvey Geiger – Al Sutton	Wexford
2. Peter Oleson – Stephen Morgan	West River
3. John Blamire – Larry McDermott	NCC
4. Guy Brown – Betty Whitlow	PGA
5. Judy Just – Joe Pierotti	NCC
5. Perry Mattson – Fred Beck	Woodlawn
7. Justin Berbig – Cheryl Harders	Bermuda
7. Lucille Maresca – Margo Stinson	PGA
9. Les Kelley – Bernard Pattie	Bombay
9. Bob Yount – Richard Dolan	PGA
11. Barbara Leeming – Zoe de Ropp	NCC
12. William Rouady – Howard Zipper	Boca Raton

### **SECOND FLIGHT**

1. John Dainton – Kathleen Dainton	Woodlawn
2. Victoria Albrecht – Joy Bradford	PGA
3. Calvert Chaney – Roy Morgan	West River
4. Judy Dahlstrom – Toni Kemp	Mission Hills
5. Sara Low – Karen Kaplan	NYCC
5. Lee Hanna – Dan Lawrence	Bombay
7. George Fulmer – Ted Cooley	Bombay
7. Beth Ann Theiste – Robin Sweet	Heatherwood
9. John Woodside – Ron Atkins	Lenox
10. Spencer Hood – Randi Cudlitz	SUNY

### **THIRD FLIGHT**

1. Charles Alexander – Tim McCormick	Woodlawn
2. Harry Lloyd – Monica Uhlhorn	PGA
3. Rodney Calver – Tom Stoner	West River
4. Patrick O’Laughlin – Flavia Logie	Bombay
5. Anders Theiste – Mell Malski	Heatherwood
5. Kelso Sutton – Cody Aichele	NYCC

7. Susan Savage – Peter Stevens	West River
7. Ann Licursi – Rosemary Faulconer	PGA
9. Anthia Blamire – Julia Wallace	NCC
9. Brian Davidson – Tim Mullen	SUNY
9. Carla Rueck – John Seidler	NYCC
9. Brian Cooke – Erinn Cooke	Baltimore
13. Linda Guthrie – Karen Cooley	Bombay
14. Karen Heckman – Mary Robb	Bombay

#### **FOURTH FLIGHT**

1. Bobbi Shorthouse – Denys Shorthouse	Lenox
2. Gail Rubin – Patricia Muir	NCC
3. Lisa Brown – Jeanne Branthover	NCC
4. Sheila McCauley – Sally McGrath	Westhampton
5. Bill Krause – Nancy Morgan	West River
5. Don Whalen – Elaine Dow	Woodlawn
7. Eugenia Wilkie – Liddy Chaney	West River
7. Lin Irej – Harold Denton	West River
9. Melissa Hernan – Jack Hottum	SUNY
10. William Duryea – Lovejoy Duryea	Westhampton

#### **LYON'S TROPHY RESULTS**

	<u>Teams</u>	<u>Points</u>
<u>Division One</u>		
1. National Croquet Center	13	17
2. West River	7	11
3. Croquet Club at PGA National	6	10
4. Bombay	6	3
<u>Division Two</u>		
1. Woodlawn	4	12
2. Mission Hills Country Club	3	7
4. Heatherwood	3	1
3. New York Croquet Club	3	2
5. SUNY	3	0
<u>Division Three</u>		
1. Wexford	1	5
1. Lenox	2	5
3. The Beach Club	1	4
4. Westhampton Mallet Club	2	2
5. Bermuda	2	1
6. International Tennis HOF	1	0
6. Boca Resort	1	0
6. Baltimore	2	0

#### **GOLF CROQUET CHAMPIONSHIPS**

##### **Championship Flight:**

1. Sherif Abdelwahab
2. Ahab Dincer
3. Cheryl Bromley
3. David McCoy

**First Flight:**

1. Peder Theiste
2. Sandy Walsh
3. Bill Bromley
3. Zoe de Ropp

Also played:

Anders Theiste  
Barbara Leeming  
John Walsh  
John Kartawich