

## **2012 Mtn. Laurel Invitational** **June 6<sup>th</sup> – June 10<sup>th</sup>**

The Twentieth Annual Mountain Laurel Invitational Tournament was held between June 6<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup> at the picturesque setting in the mountains of Southwest North Carolina. Hosted by the Chattooga Club in Cashiers, NC, the setting was everything anyone could want. The two full size courts set just below the open pavilion and lodge with a backdrop of two mountains, made for spectacular sunrises.

Speaking of the courts, they are probably one of the finest playing surfaces in Eastern United States. The grass is without a blemish, the speed is ideal, and the near perfect level is a pleasure to play on.

Open practice on Tuesday afternoon preceded the opening party on the Pavilion, set just off the courts. The format this year would be block play singles leading to modified double elimination in Championship flight, and single elimination in First flight, Participants were divided into two flights, Championship with nine players at -1.5 to plus 5.0 handicaps, average 2.2; First flight, eight players from eight to twelve handicaps, average 10.4;

We had discussions with the Croquet Gods and were promised warm, sunny days throughout the tournament, but it was not to happen. The days were comfortable in the low seventies, with mornings at 55 degrees and partly cloudy. Sunday brought the rain, not too hard, but enough for rain gear. Overall, no complaints.

Breakfast each morning, with an omelet, cooked to order, delicious fresh fruit plates, cereal and fresh baked pastries, preceded morning croquet, lunch ordered off the menu as a guest of the club was followed by afternoon croquet, which lead to cocktails with heavy hors d'oeuvres. Wednesday evening was dinner off the extensive club menu. Thursday evening was the only open evening for the week. Friday evening Kathleen Rivers hosted cocktails and a buffet dinner party at her spectacular home, high on the mountainside. Saturday's sit down dinner, after cocktails on a private patio overlooking the courts, consisted of a salad of mixed greens, followed by Filet Mignon & Lobster tails with roasted new potatoes, with a dessert of fallen chocolate cake with whipped cream.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were devoted to block play in all flights. Saturday saw the beginning of the elimination ladders, with the quarterfinal; semi final, and final rounds on Sunday.

Following the finals in all flights on Sunday morning and the awards presentations in front of the fireplace on the Pavilion, participants and their guests were treated to a wonderful Sunday brunch.

Championship flight singles, with nine players, had Jim Hall and Jackie Jones leading with Dick Sullivan close behind at the end of block play. Both with six wins net points

were the deciding factor. Seeded into a modified Double elimination ladder (Four had double life, four had single, one was out). Jim Hall defeated Bill Hartmann, while Jackie defeated Dick Sullivan. Jackie then defeated Jim Hall, where he again lost to Dick in the loser's ladder. Dick Sullivan then returned to face Jackie Jones in the final game. Jackie held the lead most of the game, and then Dick ran a three-ball break to go ahead. As the time ran out, Dick pegged out red to go ahead by one (Yellow three ball dead). Jackie rushed black to one-back, clearing yellow, but tying the game. Dick missed two or three long roquets, while Jackie lined up and made two back to win the match 15-14 (Yellow did not make #2).

In First Flight singles, consisting of eight players, Betty Crisler was first out of the block, with Dawn Jupin, the club's croquet pro and rookie of the year, a close second. The top two seeds got a double bye, while the next two got a single bye in the ladder. The ladder participation followed closely along the handicap levels, with Betty Crisler and Antonia Marmo, both 8's, leading the pack to the finals. Betty Crisler took a lead, and never relinquished it. It was here first peg-out in competition, winning 26-20.

Waterford doubles consisted of four games for Championship, and five games for First flight. Basically the first two games each morning. Not double banked. Serving as a morning warm-up, and a social mixer, it never the less became quite competitive. In Championship the top three had three wins apiece out of four games. Deciding by net points the winner was Jackie Jones, with Geoffrey Mattison second, and Bill Hartmann third. First flight saw Dawn Jupin a clear winner with four wins, while the next three contestants had three wins each, the second place going to Linda Guthrie, and third to Peter Stirrup.

Hats off to Dawn Jupin who has done a exceptional job of revitalizing croquet at the Chattooga Club.

With another successful tournament completed, the plans for the fall Autumn Leaves Double Invitational October 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> at the Chattooga Club are well underway. It will again be a five-day event with singles and doubles play. Hope to see you there.

Fred Jones  
Tournament Director

Championship Flight Singles

1. Jackie Jones
2. Dick Sullivan
3. Jim Hall
4. Bill Hartmann
5. Geoffrey Mattison
5. Rich Watson
7. Mike McRee
7. Vincent Marmo
9. Tom Moss

First Flight Singles

1. Betty Crisler
2. Antonia Marmo
3. Dawn Jupin
3. Linda Guthrie
5. Peter Stirrup
5. Judy Freeman
7. Hal Cottingham
7. John West