

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships

May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity

The USCA Southeast Regional returned to the South Carolina “Lowcountry” for the first time since 2008. Forty-two players entered for three flights of singles and doubles. The field included defending champion Danny Huneycutt, who also happens to be the USCA’s top-ranked player and current national champion.

Play was at three clubs in the Bluffton area: Palmetto Bluff, Spring Island, and Sun City, moving to Dataw Island near Beaufort for the finals. The event was hosted by the Coastal Carolina Croquet Clubs, a confederation of the aforementioned clubs plus Port Royal and Wexford. In the past, the widely-spaced clubs were considered a drawback by some visiting players, but the new lawn at Spring Island and the second lawn at Sun City allowed for a relatively compact venue, with intra-day transfers kept to a minimum.

Second flight featured a strong group of mainly local players at handicap 10, plus an intrepid group of higher-handicap players from the Middle Peninsula Croquet Club in Virginia. The newcomers held their own, particularly in doubles, where Carl Johnson and Dennis Koziol earned the #2 playoff spot.

But once the playoffs began the more experienced players came to the fore, with Joe Ryan leading the charge to win both singles and doubles. In the singles final he beat Art Thomasson, while in the doubles he partnered with Don Smith to beat Marilyn Long and Jo Abrahamson -- all players in both finals from the Sun City club.

First Flight singles started with two blocks of seven, and with only three advancing from each block there were no unimportant games. Block A was especially tight, with six of the seven players finishing on three or four wins. The outcome remained in doubt until the last round, where Elaine Moody, John Donahue, and Simon Jenkins each won to reach four wins and the playoffs. Block B played closer to form, with top seed Conrad Haas winning five games to secure a playoff bye. Conrad won this year's iteration of the husband-wife match against Marie Haas, but Marie also qualified on four wins. Ralph Moore won his last three games to edge Ken James on net points for the final playoff spot. Marie Haas had beaten Moore in the block, and each player advanced to the final where Moore had the edge to win the singles title.

In First Flight doubles, Conrad Haas and Alan Langley showed how to use a rain delay to advantage. Trailing in the game and hampered by deadness when play was stopped due to approaching thunderstorms, when play resumed Haas and Langley each cleared and went on to win handily and secure the top playoff seed. Their opponents in the semi-finals were Marie Haas and Art Thomasson, who had never met before the tournament and who struggled to develop into an effective doubles team in the block. But once the playoffs began they found the formula, winning the final against Stan Abrahamson and Ron Pollard by taking advantage of opponent deadness.

Championship doubles had two blocks, but as in the other flights all pairs advanced to the playoffs. That Block A #3 seeds Robert Hurst and Tom Yates won their block was not really an upset, given each player's laughable handicap of 3.5 at the start of the tournament. In Block B top seeds John Curington and Horace Hayworth won 3/3. Each pair advanced to the semi-finals, but neither pair made it to the final. The top-ranked team of Danny Huneycutt and Steve Summer beat Curington and Hayworth in a dramatic finish with Huneycutt scoring the go-ahead hoop with last ball in last turns. Hurst and Yates played the pick-up team of Tournament Director Jeff Soo, filling in to get an even number of doubles players, and first-time Championship player Marc “Soup”

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships

May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity

Campbell, Soo and Campbell parlayed a protracted two-in, two-out opening into a lead, then used opponent deadness to close out the game.

In Championship singles top block seeds Huneycutt and local favorite Ken Scoggins each went undefeated in the eight-player blocks. Yates and Hurst, again no surprise, each won 6/7 to round out the top four. Bald Head Island player Bill Daigle showed that his 4 handicap was off base, winning 5/7, while Sun City players Bill Escher and Stan Abrahamson battled for the final spot from Block A, Abrahamson winning the match between them but Escher winning out on net points. In Block B it was Hayworth and Summer earning the final spots, with honorable mention to Sun City player Jim Saunders, playing offhandicap 4.5 and winning 3/7 games.

In the quarterfinals, top seeds Huneycutt, Scoggins, and Hurst advanced with comfortable wins. In the battle of the mis-handicapped, Daigle upset Yates 15-13. Daigle made a good start in his semi-final against Huneycutt, but Huneycutt eventually took control to win 26-12. Most eyes were on the other semi-final, featuring local favorites Scoggins and Hurst. Both players play a very aggressive game and this captivated the Sun City crowd as Hurst won 23-14.

The Championship doubles final featured an entertaining mix of errors, good shots, and unusual situations. Campbell and Soo prevailed 17-12.

In the Championship singles final, Hurst had the first error, under-cutting a scatter shot and leaving the spent ball at 2. But he immediately re-took the initiative with a long hit-in. A missed roquet after 2-back turned it into anyone's game again, and after some back and forth Huneycutt played two clean breaks to win 26-10 and to retain the regional championship singles title.

Avril Nicholson, Regional Vice President, was Tournament Manager. The tournament was directed by Jeff Soo with assistance from Eileen Soo. Too many volunteers to list helped by setting courts, transporting lunches to the different venues, and organizing the social events.

-- Jeff Soo jeff@ipsedixit.net

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships

May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity

Championship Flight Singles

1. Danny Huneycutt
2. Robert Hurst
3. Ken Scoggins
4. Bill Daigle
5. Tom Yates
6. Horace Hayworth
7. Steve Summer
8. Bill Escher
9. Stan Abrahamson
10. Jim Saunders
11. Marc Campbell
12. Henry Vaughan
13. Bill Hartmann
14. John Curington
15. Russ Hanson
16. Marge Cramer

First Flight Singles

1. Ralph Moore
2. Marie Haas
3. Conrad Haas
4. Simon Jenkins
5. Elaine Moody
6. John Donohue
7. Ken James
8. Harvey Geiger
9. Kenny Lovett
10. Alan Langlely
1. 11.Lloyd Hadden
11. Dean Hewitt
12. Don Smith
13. Roger Halweg

Second Flight Singles

1. Joe Ryan
2. Art Thomasson
3. Iris Shadrick
4. Marilyn Long

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships

May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity

5. Tony Young
6. Carter Richardson
7. Jo Abrahamson
8. Dennis Koziol
9. Carl Johnson
10. Bob McCreary

Championship Flight Doubles

1. Jeff Soo & Marc Campbell
2. Danny Huneycutt & Steve Summer
3. Horace Hayworth & John Curington
4. Robert Hurst & Tom Yates
5. Bill Escher & Simon Jenkins
6. Jim Saunders & Marge Cramer
7. Bill Daigle & Henry Vaughan
8. Bill Hartmann & Russ Hanson

First Flight Doubles

1. Marie Haas & Art Thomasson
2. Stan Abrahamson & Ron Pollard
3. Conrad Haas & Alan Langley
4. Elaine Moody & Ken James

Second Flight Doubles

1. Joe Ryan & Don Smith
2. Jo Abrahamson & Marilyn Long
3. Carl Johnson & Dennis Koziol
4. Carter Richardson & Bob McCreary

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Danny Huneycutt, Singles Champion in Action

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Jeff Soo, Doubles CChampion in Action

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Marilyn Long and Jo Abrahamson, Doubles Runnerup, 2nd Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Joe Ryan & Don Smith, Doubles Winner, 2nd Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Art Thomasson, Singles Runnerup, 2nd Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Joe Ryan, Singles Winner, 2nd Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Stan Abrahamson & Ron Pollard (Not Shown) Doubles Runnerup, 1st Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Art Thomasson & Marie Hass, Double Winner, 1st Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Marie Hass, SingleRunnerup, 1st Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Ralph Moore, Singles Winner, 1st Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Danny Hunneycutt & Steve Summer, Doubles Runner Up, Championship Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Marc Cambell & Jeff Soo, Doubles Winner, Championship Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Robert Hurst, Singles Runner up, Championship Flight

2012 USCA Southeast Regional Championships May 16-20, Bluffton, SC & vicinity



Danny Hunneycutt, Singles Winner, Championship Flight