

## 2013 Desert Classic Purse Tournament

After a largely successful U.S. Open in December and the recent California Cup, the Mission Hills Croquet Club finished the Association Laws portion of the winter season with a \$3,700 purse tournament. Twenty-four players threw their hats in the ring for a shot at the big money singles title including national champion Doug Grimsley, and one of Canada's best Chris Percival-Smith. Local players Leo Nikora, Jim Butts and four-time Desert Classic champion Ben Rothman were determined to keep the money in the desert. Returning to the fray from some absence was Rhys Thomas, best known for his on-screen cameo in the award-winning film *Boogie Nights*. Brian Cumming was preparing for a leisurely trip to the Coachella Valley but was instead forced to stay in Ontario to work-through the painful passing of his close friend, Ben the kidney stone.



In first flight, Jean Engebretson shocked the field with her undefeated block play. Jean controlled each game ruthlessly while making just enough hoops to win. Northern California representatives Jim Hanks and his son Tim stayed after losing some pride in the California Cup hoping to bring back some cash. Tim represented a more aggressive approach to the first flight, attempting to pegout in every game (and nearly succeeding). Tim earned the second seed with only one loss to Jean. Jim Hanks claimed the third seed and local terror of the first flight, Nick Gray, took the fourth bye in the twelve player ladder. Jean suffered her first loss in the semi-finals to Nick Gray after an 8-0 run including a 12-0 playoff victory over her frequent frenemy Marvin Salles. In the other semi-final Tim Hanks eschewed the fourth commandment and beat his father 26-21 with his fifth pegout of the tournament. The best-of-three final was fairly one sided with Tim adding two more notches to his belt 26-3 and 26-8 to take home the \$400 prize and improve his record to ten wins and only one loss. Jim Hanks added to the family funds with

his \$150 third place victory 11-10 over Jean Engebretson. Nick received \$300 for his second place finish.

In the main event Rothman set the bar pretty high. Ben went 8-1 in the block with seven triples and one quadruple peel. Doug Grimsley claimed the lone block victory over Rothman, but slipped up against the next few top players. Chris P-S, Ron Hendry and Leo Nikora all beat the big bully. Leo claimed the second seed in the best-of-three playoff ladder with a 7-2 record while Chris and Doug fell to the third and fourth spots despite scoring two triples each in block play. After playing last year's World Championship in Australia, Peter Bach decided to make his mark in the Championship flight. Peter tied for the fourth seed with five wins in the block including his playoff opponent, Chris Percival-Smith. In the first round Peter beat Chris for the second time 26-3, but the format got the best of him as Chris went on to win 26-1 and 26-0. Peter would not be deterred and went on to complete his first triple peel in a tournament against Steve Mossbrook in the plate event. Peter became the 86<sup>th</sup> American to complete the elusive triple and he managed to get paid \$100 for his efforts by winning the plate final 26-19 against Jim Butts.

The top seeds continued their dominance in the first round setting up the anticipated semi-finals matchups of Ben versus Chris and Doug versus Leo. Chris started strong with a 26 point shutout, but Ben bounced back with two triples and a spot in the finals. Leo Nikora has had battles with Doug before and even used unusual tactics like running the first ball to the peg to best Virginia's best Tuna fisherman, but Leo played it by the book to win 26-9 and 26-3. Doug decided to change his flight claiming he needed to get back to his boat and his family, but a well-informed source claims that Doug didn't want to miss the next episode of Downton Abbey. Chris was happy to enjoy the cocktails during the final and his \$450 prize for third place without a fight.



*Doug Grimsley and Rhys Thomas*

The final left the crowd wondering if anyone could miss as Rothman and Nikora traded hit-ins on every opportunity. The breaks went as expected and most ended in standard leave positions with Rothman popping Nikora in the second game. Leo missed one hit-in in the second game and that was the only opportunity squandered as Rothman tripled both times he had the chance. Ben won his fifth-consecutive Desert Classic 26-9 tp, 26-10 tp and finished 14-2 with an astounding 13 triples and a quad meaning he peeled to finish all 14 of his victories on his way to the well-earned \$1,600 prize. Leo earned \$700 and much respect with his great shooting and impressive 11-4 record.



*Ben Rothman (Championship Flight winner), Tim Hanks (First Flight winner), and Marty Foroughi Trophy*

More pictures can be found at the [Mission Hills Croquet Club Photo Gallery](#).

### Championship Flight Singles

NAME	PLACE
<b>Ben Rothman</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Leo Nikora</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Chris Percival-Smith</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>
<b>Doug Grimsley</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Peter Bach</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> (Plate Winner)</b>
<b>Jim Butts</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Rhys Thomas</b>	<b>T-7<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Eric Sawyer</b>	<b>T-7<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Ron Hendry</b>	<b>T-9<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Steve Mossbrook</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>

### First Flight Singles

NAME	PLACE
<b>Tim Hanks</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Nick Gray</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Jim Hanks</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>
<b>Jean Engebretson</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Leigh Selk</b>	<b>T-5<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Cameron Evans</b>	<b>T-5<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Russell Uhler</b>	<b>T-5<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Marvin Salles</b>	<b>T-5<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Richard Wright</b>	<b>T-9<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Jerry Selk</b>	<b>T-9<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Bob Morford</b>	<b>T-9<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Mary Rodeberg</b>	<b>T-9<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Toni Kemp</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Pat Dugan</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup></b>