

Green Gables Invitational

July 11-14, 2013

Sea Girt, NJ

The 2013 Green Gables Croquet Club (GGCC) Invitational (the 28th one held) took place July 11 - 14 under some sunny skies and a fair bit of rain. The players were wonderful in still playing through this challenging weather and the courts drainage was excellent. GGCC's home is at the New Jersey National Guard and State Police Barracks in Sea Girt, NJ. It is undoubtedly the best guarded croquet facility in the world! Like the 2012 tournament, three full sized lawns were used. There were four flights of singles and two flights of Waterford doubles.

Third flight singles featured a block of six players. There were two standout players, GGCC's Don McLaughlin (9) and Julie Whitacre (9), daughter of GGCC member Jodie Rugart. Julie plays most of her croquet in St Louis, MO with her Grandfather Lou Fusz and her Aunt Missy Ramey. In the block play phase Julie had beaten Don 10 to 8 and the two ended up playing one another in the final. This time Don won in a hard fought match decided by one point. Both players will most certainly continue to improve. Second flight singles also had a block of six. Competition was tough in this flight and GGCC President Clair Flinn (7) was pitted against Rumson Croquet Club's Ham Shippee (7) in the final. The wickets were set very tightly and the players in the tournament who had the best stroke technique usually scored their wickets uneventfully. Clair was one of these players and it made the difference in his one point win over Ham.

Both Championship and First Flight singles had blocks of seven with the #2 and #3 finishers in the block playing in a semi final to meet the #1 finisher in the block. The first flight semi featured Carl Kruse (4.5) and Thelma Lyle (6) with Carl coming out on top. Carl then met fellow Rossmoor Croquet Club member Bill Cole (4) in the final and Bill dominated to take top honors. Bill has distinguished himself before in the GGCC Invitational winning other flights he's played in. He is a very strong first flight player.

Championship flight singles had an extremely competitive semi between GGCC's Conrad Rugart (3) and the Beach Club's Steve Warner (2.5). Steve prevailed to play veteran and undefeated Lenox Croquet Club's David Ekstrom (-0.5) in the final. It was a nail biting end game and one point difference with David winning.

In both the championship and first flight Waterford doubles, it's fun to see who wins because it isn't always the low handicappers who place. In first flight GGCC's Brenda Pollock (8) won and Merion Croquet Club's Ed Wilford (6) came in second. Championship had GGCC's Jack Montgomery winning going undefeated and GGCC's Ellen Hall coming in second.

As mentioned above, the wickets were very challenging which required many shots to be watched by a referee. Tournament Director Bob Kroeger used his slow motion video camera to make certain the correct call was made. The players appreciated this knowing how difficult it is for even the most experienced referee to make the correct call because things happen so quickly and not being able to rely on sound in every instance.

Social events included an opening party in Spring Lake at the Essex and Sussex (a magnificent condominium complex), cocktails and dinner at the Bath and Tennis Club in Spring Lake, and a dinner and cocktails at the beautiful home of Art and Kit Crowley in Spring Lake. As always, GGCC assigns a person to recruit deadness board keepers and Maureen Hauck handled this beautifully. Special thanks to all the GGCC members who contributed to the success of this event.

The tournament was expertly managed by Jodie Rugart, tournament scheduler was Ted Prentis, and tournament director Bob Kroeger.

~Bob Kroeger

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Championship Singles

1. David Ekstrom



Jodie Rugart, David Ekstrom, Clair Flinn

2. Steve Warner
3. Conrad Rugart
4. Jodie Rugart
5. Ken Northrop
6. Jack Montgomery
7. Murray Pollock

First Flight Singles

1. Bill Cole



Jodie Rugart, Bill Cole, Clair Flinn

2. Carl Kruse
3. Thelma Lyle
4. Symon Cowles
5. Bruce Huber
6. Stuart Baker
7. Marti Ekstrom

Second Flight Singles

1. Clair Flinn



Jodie Rugart, Clair Flinn, Bob Kroeger

2. Ham Shippee
3. Brenda Pollock
4. Ann Ix
5. Carole Lembo
6. Barbara Nelson

Third Flight Singles

1. Don McLaughlin



Jodie Rugart, Don McLaughlin, Clair Flinn

2. Julie Whitacre
3. Jeanne Spiotta
4. Joy Bradford
5. Millie Brogan

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Championship Flight Doubles

1. Jack Montgomery



Jodie Rugart, Jack Montgomery, Clair Flinn

2. Ellen Hall
3. David Ekstrom
4. Carl Kruse
5. Herb Roemmele
6. Ken Northrop
7. Stuart Baker
8. Steve Warner
9. Murray Pollock
10. Marti Ekstrom
11. Bill Cole
12. Bob Spiotta

First Flight Doubles

1. Brenda Pollock



Brenda Flinn

2. Ed Wilford
3. Bruce Huber
4. Julie Whitacre
5. Ham Shippee
6. Don McLaughlin
7. Thelma Lyle
8. Joy Guernsey-Diesel