

2013 PGA PEYTON BALLENGER INVITATIONAL
PGA National, Palm Beach Gardens, FL
February 5-9, 2013

Celebrating the 25th year of great comradely and exciting play, this year the Peyton Ballenger Invitational, hosted by The Croquet Club at PGA National, somehow seemed to be both bigger and better than ever. With 51 participants competing atop the five PGA lawns, as well as upon the nearby Devonshire court, the tournament certainly filled to capacity, with many left lurking upon the waiting list. But while the limitations of space is beyond the control of the Club, the hospitality of its Members seems to have found no boundary lines. Each year the event is highlighted by not only the spirit of the players, but by the incredible efforts made by those who would rather volunteer than play. This is hospitality at its best, and it is appreciated. It is the proof that the best can be made better.

For those of you who have not had the true pleasure of playing within this event, well, you have saved the gain of a few extra pounds and lost a lot of smiles not soon to be forgotten. Aside from the Opening Reception/Dinner and the Final's Luncheon, both held at the eloquent PGA Player's Club, evening activities were all held courtside. The bar opened in or about five in the evening and the banquets that followed included Italian Night, a Members Buffet and an Aloha Party. The planning takes months, Club volunteers do most or all of the work and, for the players, a more relaxing way to spend the hours after a hard day of concentration upon the lawns is hard to be found. And this overall effort is not sequestered to evening activities, but flows from breakfast and continues throughout the day. And yes, this tournament does get better every year.

Between the wining and dining, croquet actually did complete the perfect days. Five Flights of Singles were offered, thus making all of the play competitive in regard to handicap ranges. Three Flights of Waterford Doubles kept the social attitude of the tournament on course. Matches were timed at one hour and fifteen minutes and double-banking was played throughout almost all of the Singles play. Single elimination Playoffs were on the menu for the solo Flights while the Waterford Doubles was all-inclusive. The schedule went on time throughout, despite some ornery weather forecasts, all of which proved to be more bark than bite.

In the Championship Flight Singles, John Hunter clawed his way through the event but waltzed to a 20-7 victory over deadness-ridden Johnny Mitchell. Bob Yount found his way back into the PGA winner's circle with his First Flight 23-6 landslide over Patrick Colt. Sheila Davis overtook (19-17) Martie Ekstrom in the Second Flight, Antonia Marmo just snuck by (16-15) long shot of the week, Anne Licursi, in the Third and Carla Rueck regained her form by taking the Fourth Flight Title (14-5) away from Dianne Sadowski. Barry Gibson (local favorite), Martie Ekstrom and Sheila McCauley took top honors in the three Flights Doubles competitions.

Overall, there are few if any croquet tournaments within which one can feel so relaxed and pampered, at least not in the way one feels at PGA National. It is one of the most active Clubs in the Country, yet one within which its Members have the grace to share the joy and turn it over to its honored guests. And while there are way too many people to thank to even create a list, that really is the point...sometimes spirit outweighs the intent, effort has more value than outcome and a game played honorably always finds everyone ahead. We remember the journey, and at the Peyton Ballenger Invitational, everyone is victorious throughout, the process and the product equally perfect.

FINAL ORDER

CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT SINGLES

1. John Hunter
2. Johnny Mitchell

3. Barry Gibson
3. Mike Gibbons
5. Tim Bitting
6. Bob Chilton
6. David McCoy
8. David Ekstrom

FIRST FLIGHT SINGLES

1. Bob Yount
2. Patrick Colt
3. Michael Todorovich
3. Geoffrey Mattison
5. Al Dilley
5. Blaine Davis
5. Jack Montgomery
8. Vincent Marmo

SECOND FLIGHT SINGLES

1. Sheila Davis
2. Martie Ekstrom
3. Sandy Walsh
3. Jerry Luecke
5. Betty Crisler
5. Carol Mayo
7. Patricia Duncan
8. Tony Mayo

THIRD FLIGHT SINGLES

1. Antonia Marmo
2. Anne Licursi
3. Richard Scherf
3. Robert Chelberg
5. Penny Ferraro
6. Robert Lankford
7. Robin Sweet
7. Roxanne Rosetto

FOURTH FLIGHT SINGLES

1. Carla Rueck
2. Diane Sadowski
3. Franklin Perrell
3. Missy Chilton
5. Andrew Parsons
5. Bobby Duryea
5. Meg Macy
5. Sheila McCauley
9. Lovejoy Duryea

9. Pat Muir

CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT DOUBLES

1. Barry Gibson
2. Michael Todorovich
3. Sheila Davis
4. Al Dilley
5. Bob Chilton
6. Geoffrey Mattison
7. Vincent Marmo
8. Johnny Mitchell
9. Jack Montgomery
10. Bob Yount
11. Tim Bitting
12. Blaine Davis
13. Jerry Luecke
14. John Hunter
15. David Ekstrom
16. Patrick Colt

FIRST FLIGHT Waterford DOUBLES

1. Martie Ekstrom
 2. Betty Whitlow
 3. Robert Chelberg
 4. Antonia Marmo
 5. Sandy Walsh
 6. Anne Licursi
 7. Shanda Stephenson
 8. Patricia Duncan
 9. Penny Ferraro
 10. Richard Scherf
 11. Robin Sweet
 12. Ted Cooley
 13. Roxanne Rosetto
 14. Carole Mayo
 15. Betty Crisler
- Dnf: Robert Lankford

SECOND FLIGHT Waterford DOUBLES

1. Sheila McCauley
2. Carla Rueck
3. Diane Sadowski
4. Bobby Duryea
5. Rosemary Falconer
6. Pat Muir
7. Andrew Parsons
8. Mary Robb
9. Barbara Missett

10. Missy Chilton
11. Sharyl Forster
12. Lovejoy Duryea
13. Eugenia Wilkie
14. Franklin Perrell
15. Julia Wallace
16. Meg Macy

-John C. Osborn (TD)