

WINTER INVITATIONAL
January 31-February 3, 2013
SARASOTA COUNTY CROQUET CLUB

The Sarasota County Croquet Club held its winter invitational on January 31 through February 3rd using two full size and two half-size courts in Venice, Florida. Thursday saw the opening of the tournament, and the beginning of winter in Florida. During the night a cold front had passed through with heavy rain (which luckily ended before play started) and we were greeted with 41-degree temperatures. Hats, earmuffs, and heavy sweaters and jackets were the dress of the day, and during the remainder of the weekend.

The opening party was combined with the monthly club potluck dinner and was held at the Bay Indies Club House, hosted by the members residing at that community. The food, wine, and other spirits flowed freely and were enjoyed by close to 90 in attendance. Schedules handed out, friends reunited, and attitudes adjusted, the players looked forward to the following days.

Participation this year consisted of thirty-one players, divided into four flights, with better than one third playing in first flight.

Thursday and Friday consisted of Block play in four flights. Due to handicaps, twelve players ended up in 1st flight, divided into two blocks of six. At the end of block play they were seeded in an eleven player modified double elimination ladder with everyone guaranteed two games. The other flights all played a double elimination ladder

In Championship, with seven players, handicaps from -0.5 to 4.5, Alan Cottle and Colin Irwin who are both from Great Britain, members of the club and wintering in Venice dominated both in block and ladder play. Playing six block games Alan was undefeated, and Colin lost only to Alan. Due to seeding, they were not to meet in the ladder until the quarterfinals. They arrived there both having pegged out against opponents 26-3 and

26-4. Alan took the game 18-17 to go to the finals, while Colin took on Henry Vaughan in the loser ladder, defeating him 26-12. The final game, which admittedly could have gone either way, as a few wickets were stuffed, ended up with Alan Cottle the winner 26-12.

First flight, as mentioned above consisted of twelve players, (Handicaps 5 to 8) in two blocks of six, seeded in a serpentine sequence. The results of block play saw Don Smith and Richard Palmer leaders in Block One and Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli and Charlotte Neagle leaders in Block Two. All but Avril were eliminated by the quarterfinals, Sue Lawrence, seeded sixth, worked her way up the ladder to challenge Avril in the finals. In a very close match, which could have gone either way, up to the last ball, ended with Avril taking the win 16-15.

Second flight, with seven players, (Handicaps 8-10) saw Ward Lefler and Doug Johnson the top block finishers. In a see-saw battle through the ladder saw Doug best Ward in the semi final, only to have Ward come back from the loser side to take the final 17-12

Third flight, six players with handicaps 10-17, was a proving ground for some seasoned players, and more beginning players. The mix worked well, and everyone felt that the play went well. Lee Anderson seeded #4 after block play, upset #1 Webster Bull, but lost to Carolyn Meyer on the winning side of the ladder. Then to the loser side of the double elimination where Lee took out Michael Kline 16-15, and on a comeback edged by Carolyn 13-12 to win the flight.

Socially, in addition to the opening party, continental breakfasts and lunches prepared by Bev McLaughlin and Lulu Rodick and their "kitchen cuties" were served courtside each day, "Attitude Adjustment" followed play daily.

Saturday evening everyone gathered for dinner at the Manasota Beach Club, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres were the order of the day, as we watched the sun go down over the Gulf of Mexico. No green flash noted. Included after cocktails was a superb four course evening meal, which was in keeping with the ambiance of the Beach Club.

Submitted by,
Fred Jones, Tournament Director

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CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT

1. Alan Cottle
2. Colin Irwin
3. Henry Vaughan
4. Art Parsells
5. Jack Montgomery
5. Bill Cole
7. Ted Kemp

SECOND FLIGHT

1. Ward Lefler
2. Doug Johnson
3. Bob Lentz
4. Elsie Maxam
4. Gary Anderson
6. Norman Mulroney
6. Hedy Stoy

FIRST FLIGHT

1. Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli
2. Sue Lawrence
3. Jim McLaughlin
3. Sis Courtsal
5. Dolores Gallagher
5. Richard Palmer
5. Charlotte Neagle
5. Don Smith
9. Mike Conry
9. Christine Irwin
9. Ron Truman

THIRD FLIGHT

1. Lee Anderson
2. Carolyn Meyer
3. Michael Kline
4. Webster Bull
5. Pat Cunnington
5. John McDermott



From left to right: Carolyn Meyer, Ward Lefler, Lee Anderson, Doug Johnson, Colin Irwin, Avril Rangoni-Machiavelli, Sue Lawrence, Alan Cottle

Picture by Fred Jones