

# **CroqCan AC 2014**

## **August 2-4, 2014**

### **Ottawa, Ontario, Canada**

This event was held in excellent weather, 2-4 August 2014, on two courts of the Elmdale and one court of the nearby Highland Park Lawn Bowling clubs.

Its story has two lead characters, both named David. Top ranked David Wise, a visitor from Australia, quickly distinguished himself by being the only triple peeler, winning the top block and comfortably winning the subsequent semi-final against Patrick Little. Fifth ranked David Druiett distinguished himself by quietly beating the four players ranked above him one after the other during block play. He then qualified for the final by beating Louis Nel in a scrappy Semi-final. Thus, as they stepped on the green for the final, the odds seemed firmly in favor of the Australian David. However, he stuffed two hoops. The Canadian David made him pay -- he found his form, avoided errors and pegged out.

David Druiett has been playing for more than 25 years without winning a top flight tournament. However, his game has come together nicely in the last few months and so his efforts over many years paid off at last. We heartily congratulate him on becoming the 2014 Canadian Champion!

David Wise, in one of his three triple peels, played a memorable stroke. His peelee went through rover with so little clearance that he could not avoid a roquet when the jawsed striker ball scored. So the rover hoop was directly blocking the peg-out stroke. By imparting just the right amount of spin on the forward ball in the croquet stroke, that ball curved around the hoop on its way to the peg. Canadians are used to seeing deliberate nonlinear motion on a curling rink, but not on a croquet court.

The field of 14 players were divided for the first stage into an upper and lower block of 7 players each. The results of block play produced an Open flight, Red flight and Black flight of four players each. A sorting Knock-Out followed in each flight. Thus all players had meaningful games right up to the end. The finishing positions were as follows.

#### Open Flight

- 1 David Druiett
- 2 David Wise
- 3 Louis Nel
- 4 Patrick Little

#### Red Flight

- 1 Paul Emmett
- 2 Jane Beharriell
- 3 Daniel Pailas
- 4 Bill Rowatt

#### Black Flight

- 1 Jim Collins
- 2 Chris Loat
- 3= Toni Kemp and Ken Shipley

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The play-off game between the latter two was interrupted by a brief period of lightning and had to be abandoned. Alison Streight beat Gayle Waters in a consolation game between the remaining two players; these two set a wonderful example of cheerfulness in the face of many losses.

Game by game results appear on the Croquet Records website and also (with scores) on [croquetscores.com](http://croquetscores.com) (except for the three consolation games, which have no place in the format used there).

The participants in this event included three relative newcomers who had played less than 25 world ranking games prior to the tournament: namely Jim Collins, Daniel Pailas and Bill Rowatt. As the above finishing positions show, all three of them have made splendid progress. Jim and Bill have already established good styles of play in keeping with the customs of our sport. Daniel, on the other hand, has fallen into a habit of preceding even routine decisions by periods of contemplation of extraordinary lengths. In time-limited games, a disproportionate consumption of the available time by one player can lead to unfairness and is detrimental to the enjoyment of the game by opponents and spectators. For this reason, USCA rules prescribes a time limit of 45 seconds for a stroke. It is a cumbersome rule to enforce. Association Croquet relies instead on the judgment of players: the law that demands expedition in play is not quantified, thus virtually un-enforceable.

As a result it is up to us players to keep AC a pleasant sport. I've made no visible progress towards persuading Daniel to play with reasonable despatch. I hope others will join in the effort to persuade him. It will also be in his own long term interest, if he wants to fully realize his promising potential as a player.

Louis Nel