

2014 Lake Toxaway Mallet Club Golf Croquet Tournament September 18-20, 2014 Lake Toxaway, NC



The Lake Toxaway Mallet Club's Golf Croquet Invitational, now in its third year, continues to emphasize balanced competition in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. This makes for an ideal introduction to tournament play for newer players, while providing challenging competition for the more experienced.

This year the entry limit was lowered to 34 players, to allow more play and shorter wait times between games. The field included a healthy mix of newcomers with veterans, and locals with regional players. Within 20 miles of Toxaway there are now 10 USCA-affiliated clubs, with over 1500 active croquet players, and 9 of these clubs were represented in the tournament. The weather was just about perfect and the courts were in superb condition, smooth and fast. Players enjoyed daily lunches and evening social events at the Lake Toxaway Country Club.

As in previous years the qualifying format was a flexible Swiss, all 34 players in a single flight. The top eight then advanced to the "Mallet Flight" knockout, while the second eight played the "Wicket Flight" knockout. Games were 13-point (score 7 points to win) without time limits.

The level of play has risen from year to year, as shown when twice-defending champion George Bagwell lost his first game to a well-prepared Peter Carlin, last year's Wicket Flight winner. A tough start to the tournament, but first-round pairings were by random draw. Bagwell showed his usual focus in winning his next three games by good margins, securing a spot in the Mallet Flight playoff.

Day 1 ended with four players undefeated at 3-0: Cheryl Bromley, Michael Albert, Cathy Baillis, and Jeff Baillis. On Friday morning Albert and Bromley won their final qualifying games to earn top seeding in the Mallet Flight.

Anne Frost Robinson, playing in her first-ever Golf Croquet tournament, got taken to school in her first game, losing 1-7 to Mike Kline. But Frost Robinson got up to speed quickly, winning her next three games by good margins. Not quite enough to make the Mallet Flight—she was edged out on gross points, the secondary tie-breaker—but enough for top seeding in the Wicket Flight playoff. She was undoubtedly the only player to warm up with a stretch of kayaking on Lake Toxaway.

Carlin and Frost Robinson were joined by Gil Flowers and Jack Talley in the Wicket Flight semi-finals. The two matches played to a remarkably similar finish: 6-all, ball in the jaws, other player set for a jump

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shot, but the first player having a chance to clear that ball out of jump shot range. Talley missed the clearing shot and Frost Robinson played a perfect jump to advance to the final. Flowers made his clearing shot, denying Carlin the jump attempt, then tapped through for the win. The final was a largely defensive battle, Frost Robinson winning 7-3.

The top four seeds in the Mallet Flight—Bromley, Albert, Bagwell and Jeff Baillis—all advanced strongly through the quarterfinals. And for the third straight year, Albert and Bagwell met in the final. Albert got off to a strong start by scoring #1 from the line, then scoring #2 on the next shot with that ball. The players traded the next two points, then Bagwell made it 3-all by scoring both #5 and #6. Albert scored #7, leading to a lengthy tactical battle at #8. This proved to be the crucial point, Albert scoring for a 5-3 lead. The players traded the remaining four points, Albert winning the match 7-5.

The tournament was managed by George Enochs, ably assisted by many volunteers from the Lake Toxaway Mallet Club and staff from the Lake Toxaway Country Club. Jeff Soo was the Tournament Director.

~Jeff Soo

Mallet Flight Singles

1. Michael Albert
2. George Bagwell
3. Cheryl Bromley
4. Jeff Baillis
5. Gary Harden
6. Dick Boger
7. Dean Hewitt
8. Don Molitor

Wicket Flight Singles

1. Anne Frost Robinson
2. Gil Flowers
3. Jack Talley
4. Peter Carlin
5. Cathy Baillis
6. Kenny Lovett
7. Mike Kline
8. Carol Harden

Overall

17. Dana Quanstrom
18. Joel Nutt
19. Fred Jones
20. Jochen Lucke
21. John West
22. Henner Lenhardt
23. John Walker
24. Diane Walker
25. Tom Ford
26. George Olson
27. Karen Connery
28. Judy Freeman
29. Louis Freeman
30. Judy Carlin
31. Armand DeLaPerriere
32. Nancy Buebendorf
33. Judy Talley
34. Lee Frost Little



Jeff Baillis

Photo by Don Buebendorf