

Texas Classic October 16-19, 2014 Rockwell & Quinlan, TX

The 2014 Texas Classic: Fun and Good Croquet



Drone shot of Hi-Lo Doubles at Bob Chilton's Lake Ray Hubbard Mallet Club court

The 32nd annual version of the Texas Croquet Classic tournament was four days of nothing but good croquet and fun. The weather was perfect. The courts were fast and true, the wickets tight, and the competition even tighter.

There were only four players in Championship Singles, but it was a tough bunch. Britt Ruby was the prohibitive favorite, but, as stated, it was a tough field--so challenging that nobody escaped block play without taking at least one loss. Ruby was the #1 seed and was on a serious roll, winning several games 26-5 and 26-4. But nobody was conceding anything, particularly Bob Chilton. Bob beat Joe Yoder in the first playoff game to earn a shot at Britt who beat Donna Dixon in their play-off game. Britt jumped out to an early lead in the championship game but left one ball on the court that Bob reached by two-balling through a couple of hoops. Once Bob had his three-ball game going, to quote Britt, "He turned into a human buzz saw". Bob picked up the fourth ball, ran to Rover, left a great leave, and, when Britt missed the hit-in, Bob finished him off 26-5 for his first Texas Classic Championship.

First-Flight Singles was the battle of the Copelands, and this year it was Bill claiming the championship. Suzan was the defending champion, but Bill was really on his game. He was playing so well, he went undefeated and beat Suzan in the finals. The other First Flight players included Frank Vuitch (3rd) and Harold Menzel.

Second-Flight Singles was a battle of the out-of-towners. Dean Sanders from Austin quickly demonstrated why he won't be playing Second Flight much longer. He went undefeated and won singles with a win over Penny Ferraro

of Long Island, NY. The other Second Flight players finished as follows: Gary Neal, Huston Huffman, Missy Chilton, and Roger Osterhout.

Before Singles began, the tournament started with a day of Hi-Lo Doubles. The perennial Championship winner, Joe Yoder, proved once again why he loves working with high-handicap players and showing them how to get the most out of their game. He was rewarded with an unblemished record and the Championship. Donna Dixon also proved to be a tough competitor and finished second, losing only to Yoder. The rest of the field finished as follows: Frank Vuitch, Bob Chilton, Bill Copeland, Harold Menzel, and Suzan Copeland.

In the First Flight Hi-Lo Doubles, Roger Osterhout proved that his skills and dedication to learning the game earned him a Championship trophy. Missy Chilton also proved that she knows how to get the most from her partners and finished second. The rest of the field finished as follows: Gary Neal, Huston Huffman, Frank Spitzig, Penny Ferraro, Dean Sanders, and Mike Harris.

One award that nobody wanted went to Joe Yoder—The Rock for Brains trophy. This traveling trophy goes to the player who makes the most rock-headed play. Yoder earned it in his semi-final match against Bob Chilton when he lost his bearings and ran the Rover hoop after making Two Back which ended a potentially game-winning break. Yoder accepted the hand-crafted, baroque table clock made of river rocks embedded in a clear resin graciously and was overheard saying, “Well, it does go well with my mallet”.

The addition of Missy Chilton greatly enhanced the entertainment and fun. At the lavish Saturday night banquet, Missy handed out humorous awards ranging from Mr. Congeniality (Gary Neal) to Mr. Laid Back (Harold Menzel). It provoked some serious laughs and reminded us why we love croquet so much—the people and camaraderie.

In the end, everybody agreed that the Dallas Croquet Association and its leadership (Suzan and Bill Copeland, Harold Menzel, and Missy Chilton) know how to run a good tournament, and that the combination of old and new players makes for some wonderful competition and fun.

Britt Ruby, Bob Chilton, Joe Yoder

Official Standings

Championship Singles

Bob Chilton
Britt Ruby
Joe Yoder
Donna Dixon

First Flight Singles

Bill Copeland
Suzan Copeland
Frank Vuitch
Harold Menzel

Second Flight Singles

Dean Sanders
Penny Ferraro
Gary Neal
Houston Huffman
Missy Chilton
Roger Osterhout

Championship Doubles

Joe Yoder
Donna Dixon
Frank Vuitch
Bob Chilton
Bill Copeland
Harold Menzel
Suzan Copeland



First Flight Doubles

Roger Osterhout
Missy Chilton
Gary Neal
Houston Huffman
Frank Spitzig
Penny Ferraro
Dean Sanders
Mike Harris