

Audubon Invitational February 26-March 1, 2015 Naples, FL

Well, they did it once again. For the 21st year the Audubon Country Club held their annual croquet tournament on February 25th through March 1st. in sunny Naples, Florida.

Starting with a group of dedicated players divided into two flights of eight and one of seven, they were off and running on Thursday morning. The weather was typical sunny and warm Florida weather—but something went wrong. Saturday afternoon, the croquet gods were not tuned into the weather. The heavens opened, and in preparation for the evening's festivities, everyone managed to take a shower on the courts. And rain it did, heavy at times, then lighter, and then heavy again. No lightning, and the courts did not flood, however it was tough to get off the courts as all the walkways were under water. Tom Shelko, one of the stalwarts, who endured 45 minutes of heavy rain, was awarded a bottle of wine, having won the wet Tee Shirt contest. Of course, his one statement was "This is the first time that I have left my rain gear behind. I will not do it again".

The social side was well covered; as usual with an opening poolside get together, a wonderful house party at the Rupprecht's, and the usual dinner-dance evening at the club on Saturday evening.

But enough of that. We did play croquet during the day, and play we did. With a basic guarantee of six games in the block, and at least two more in the ladder, the schedule kept everyone busy.



L to R: Phil Parsons Winner 1st Flight, Brenda Quanstrom Runner-up 1st Flight, Dick Johnston Winner Championship Flight, Bob Worrell Runner-up Championship Flight, Hal Denton Runner-up 2nd Flight, Diane Walker Winner 2nd Flight

Championship Flight was an interesting group, with handicaps from 4 to 6, they all played well, with Joe Zilligen leading the block play and Dick Johnston and Eph Shulman close behind. As everyone was seeded into the double elimination ladder, the pressure was not at the highest level until Saturday morning, when the countdown began. Zilligen dropped down to losers bracket, and relatively soon he was out of contention. Dick Johnston lost his first game, but then decided it would be better to win the tournament, than to be eliminated. So he did just that. Five games in the loser's ladder brought him the trophy for the flight. Runner-up was Bob Worrell, who played well enough to come in second, and lower his handicap to a 5. Skip Babcock took third.

First Flight, with handicaps from 6 to 8, was a little wilder. Terry Moor, coming from Vermont, as an 8, needed to have his handicap adjusted. He went undefeated in the block, as was about to do the same in the ladder, until Brenda Quanstrom tripped him up, and eventually Tom Shelko finished him in the bottom bracket. Brenda then went on to meet undefeated Phil Parsons from Toronto in the finals. There was some excellent strategy at the final minutes of the game, but some fast thinking on the part of Phil allowed him to take the "gold" in the flight. Tom Shelko was third.

Second Flight, was second flight. Everyone worried about everything. However, there were moments of brilliance, and they should not be counted out. Diane Walker, with a golf croquet background, but with an interest in six-wicket croquet, entered her first tournament. Coming in as a 20, we adjusted her handicap to a 14, so as not to embarrass anyone. After doing well in the block, we adjusted her handicap to a 12. At tournament end as a 12 she racked up 55 tracking points. And ---won the flight. Much to the chagrin of Hal Denton and Steve Howell who had planned on winning.

As a result of four days, many handicaps were adjusted, the play was spirited, sometimes a little damp, but the Sunday brunch, with Bloody Mary's seemed to wrap up a great time, and we look forward to another year

Submitted,
Fred Jones, Tournament Director

CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT

1. Dick Johnston
2. Robert Worrell
3. Skip Babcock
4. John Richardson
5. Joseph Zilligen
5. Thelma Lyle
7. Ephraim Shulman
7. Charles Perry

FIRST FLIGHT

1. Phil Parsons
2. Brenda Quanstrom
3. Thomas Shelko
4. Terry Moor
5. Dana Quanstrom
5. Don Rupprecht
7. James McLaughlin
7. Clair Flinn

SECOND FLIGHT

1. Diane Walker
2. Harold Denton
3. Stephen Howell
4. Larry Lammert
5. Barbara French
5. Suzanne Parsons
- DNF-Dennis Lynch