

Green Boundary Club Invitational

(Bisque Tournament)

October 23 – 25, 2015

Aiken, SC

The lawns were freshly mowed, the wickets were repainted, the chairs and the tables were cleaned. Everything was in place for the 3rd annual 6-wicket invitational. Players started arriving at Noon on Friday, and all the players were on the courts for practice by 2 o'clock. Four of the players arrived from Cashiers, North Carolina: Jeff & Cathy Baillis, and Chris & Karen Weihs. Byron Hicks returned for a second time with Sharon Blackington, from Celebration Florida, and Donald Broderick and Sheryl Phillips were the local Club members who entered. Players remarked about how nice the courts were; indeed, our local Cold Creek Nursery had put extra effort into the lawns the past few months to prepare for the event. The players had a chance to try out the lawns, and were able to size up the competition via a few games. The handicaps of the players ranged from 9 to 14, so bisques were employed to help even the playing field. At 4 o'clock, the combination TD/referee (Rich Watson) gave a presentation about board-keeping, bisque strategy, and a rules refresher, and answered questions about blocking and wiring. Afterwards, players were having so much fun, they decided to have a game of golf croquet before the cocktail & hors d'oeuvre party hosted by Sheryl and Donald at the Clubhouse.

The wickets and strings were checked Saturday morning and players came out to warm up on the dewy lawns before the starting time of 8:30. The Club supplied fresh coffee each morning, and fresh fruit was available as well. Players staying at the historic Green Boundary Club enjoyed a full breakfast each day, and just walked out the back door to get to the court.

The scheduling of 7 players on one court for 2 days meant that the block games had to be limited to 65 minutes. On Saturday, 2 of the players had to play 4 games, but just 1 player was required to play 4 games on Sunday. The rest of the players had 3 games on each day. One spectacular 60-foot wicket shot was made by Phillips while playing Hicks: She was 10 feet directly behind wicket #2, and shot diagonally across the court to set up at #4. She hit the ball a little too hard, and her ball went through the wicket! That shot helped her beat Hicks 8 to 7, who by the way was the player with the lowest handicap.

The day's activities were halted for a great lunch together at the Club. At the end of Saturday, four players had won 2 games each, but Broderick had the most net points, so he was in first place followed by Hicks. In one of Broderick's games, he pegged out. But of the 11 games played that day, 5 had just a one-point spread! Several players dined that night at a fine local Aiken restaurant – Malia's.

As everyone had won at least one game, Sunday morning brought renewed hope for a trip to the trophy presentation. Three of the 10 block games played that day

were just one point apart. Sharon Blackington (guest of Hicks) won the door prize drawing at the Sunday brunch---an NCC coffee mug. By Noon, both Jeff and Cathy Baillis were in good shape. Jeff was undefeated with 5 wins, and would be in the final. Cathy won 4 of her 6 games. After Hicks defeated Broderick 12 to 11, he was tied with Cathy at 4 games each. The tiebreaker was the net points --- Byron had 20, vs. 7 for Cathy. So Byron headed to the final game against Jeff. The final game was scheduled to be 70 minutes in length.

As Jeff's handicap was 14 and Hicks's was 9, Jeff was entitled to 5 bisques. Byron jokingly told Jeff he should "man up" and not use any bisques. Jeff did indeed use the bisques---all of them were employed cleverly I might add, although all 5 were depleted by the 25 minute mark. It was a close game after that, but Jeff pulled ahead at the end to win it 12 to 9.

The tournament concluded at 5:45. Cody Anderson, on the Board of the Green Boundary Club, presented the 3 trophies to the winners.

RESULTS

- 1 Jeff Baillis
- 2 Byron Hicks
- 3 Cathy Baillis
- 4 Sheryl Phillips
- 5 Donald Broderick
- 6 Chris Weihs
- 7 Karen Weihs

Many thanks to Bob Newburn for bringing fruit and pastries out to the court in the mornings, and to both Bob and Diane Watson for helping get the chairs and tables ready at the start of each day.

Submitted by Rich Watson
Aiken, South Carolina

PS Come visit us! We play croquet all year in Aiken.