



2015 Lake Toxaway Golf Croquet Tournament

Lake Toxaway Country Club

September 17-19

The fourth annual Lake Toxaway Golf Croquet Tournament, hosted by the Lake Toxaway Mallet Club, was a sell out again this year and featured an international field, perfect mountain weather, meticulously prepared lawns, and the gracious hospitality and relaxed camaraderie this event emphasizes.

The venue at Lake Toxaway is one of the most spectacular croquet vistas in the country, as spectators watch the competition with beautiful Lake Toxaway in the background, and. In a continuing effort to help the players and spectators enjoy this Tournament, Toxaway introduced a new and unique innovation featuring a sideline scoreboard with player ID cards and current score. The device was fabricated by a Lake Toxaway Mallet Club member, Bob Conningsby, who is known for his creative inventions, and was well received by players and spectators, with the goal of making Toxaway a "FUN" place to play croquet.



Lake Toxaway Mallet Club member George Bagwell made his fourth consecutive appearance in the main-event final, but first-timer Matt Griffith swooped in from Kansas City to take the title.

Thirty-three players started the qualifying phase, as usual run as a flexible Swiss. 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 field ranged from players in their first-ever tournament to players with world championship experience.

On Day 1, 49 games were played in the Swiss format, double-banked on four three-quarter-size lawns. That was enough for three games for every player save one, who chose to sit out the last round. Ending the day at 3-0 were the top-ranked trio of Bagwell, defending champion Michael Albert, and Griffith, joined by Grady Price. Jack Talley was also undefeated at 2-0.

In a tournament tradition, after lunch on Day 2 the players in contention for a playoff spot were shown the leaderboard and asked to declare whether or not they wished to play a final qualifying game for a chance to gain a higher seeding. All the players with winning records opted out, leaving just one unsecured spot in the Wicket Flight. In a game lasting an hour and a half, Talley overcame Diane Walker 7-6 to secure that spot, leaving Bill Hartmann the one unlucky player not to advance despite a winning (4-3) record. The Mallet Flight quarterfinals featured comfortable 7-3 wins by Bagwell and Griffith, a 7-0 shock-and-awe performance by Albert, and a grueling 7-6 win by Peter Carlin. In the Wicket Flight, perennial contenders Jeff Baillis and Cheryl Bromley advanced with steady 7-5 wins, while Karen Connery-Albert deployed some shock-and-awe of her own, winning 7-1. Andrea Widdison, visiting from England with her husband Dave, had the easiest quarterfinal win of all, a walk-over when her opponent failed to appear after mis-reading the schedule.

With an enthusiastic audience of players and avid spectators, the semifinals for both flights started on Saturday morning. Bromley steadily built a lead against Baillis, getting to 6-3 en route to winning 7-4. All the other semifinals went to the thirteenth wicket. Bagwell and Carlin traded points throughout a game featuring many long clearances, Bagwell advancing to the final. Griffith got to 3-0 and then 4-1 against

Albert, who fought back to 4-all. Neither player was on best form for this game and Griffith survived. Widdison came back from 2-5 down to a 6-5 lead and 7-6 win.



Dave Widdison
(visiting from UK)

Jump shots played a big role in both finals. Bromley scored #2 with a long jump shot for a 2-0 lead, which became 3-0 after a long shot through #3. Her jump shot got out of sync after this, though, as Widdison worked her way back into the match, getting to 4-5 and then 5-6. Bromley closed out the match at #12, claiming a winner's trophy for the first time after coming close in each of the three previous years.

The Mallet Flight final contrasted Griffith's aggressive and hard-hitting style with Bagwell's patient defensive play. A pivotal shot came at #6, where Griffith scored with a long jump shot for a 4-2 lead. Bagwell scored #7, and had a good chance to tie after an excellent promotion to #8, but Griffith won this point and then closed out 7-4.

The tournament was managed jointly by George Enochs and Kenny Lovett, 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.

MALLET FLIGHT SINGLES



- 01 Matt Griffith
- 02 George Bagwell
- 03 Michael Albert
- 04 Peter Carlin
- 05 Grady Price
- 06 Dave Widdison
- 07 Byron Hicks
- 08 Stephen Jackson

WICKET FLIGHT SINGLES

- 01 Cheryl Bromley
- 02 Andrea Widdison
- 03 Jeff Baillis
- 04 Karen Connery-Albert
- 05 Jack Talley
- 06 Cheryl Melton
- 07 Nancy Buebendorf
- 08 Henner Lenhardt (DNF)



OVERALL

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 17 Bill Hartmann | 23 Chris Weihs | 29 Judith Carlin |
| 18 Gil Flowers | 24 Cathy Baillis | 30 Sharon Blackington |
| 19 Kevin Galton | 25 Pat Cunningham | 31 Gene Melton |
| 20 Kenny Lovett | 26 Karen Weihs | 32 Judy Talley |
| 21 Diane Walker | 27 Susan Cunningham | 33 Gail Barnett |
| 22 John Walker | 28 Roy Messer | |

Photos by: Don Buebendorf

TD: Jeff Soo