

The 2015 9 Wicket Nationals, or was it?

By Joaquin Morgan

As hurricane Joaquin descended on Washington D.C., Tournament Director Roy Morgan and a crew of die-hard croquet enthusiasts came together for the USCA 9 Wicket National Championship. The tournament was intended to span Friday, October 2 - Sunday, October 4, normally a beautiful fall weekend in the Nation's Capital. With phones ringing and emails firing off, those who arrived safely in D.C. prayed to the croquet deities for good weather. Unfazed by the forecast, John Warlick immediately and tirelessly searched for "good pieces of grass", Gail Rubin looked upwards to enjoy the wonderful monuments and riverside views, and Arthur Metrailler bought a guitar. The rest of the crew began setting up on the National Mall, only to be told that the park would be *closed*. Luckily, Capital Croquet Club member Billy Beam has a "Fantastic Farm"! The Beams were kind enough to invite the crew over for some croquet and the 9 Wicket Nationals was back in business. Now all that had to be done was re-sanction the tournament, re-order food, re-set up a couple of croquet courts, and get everyone to play croquet in the rain!

On Saturday morning, everyone bravely geared up and headed out onto the courts for the doubles tournament. The volunteers had set up four courts: Court 1, Court 2, "the tree court", and "The Swamp". As the rain held off, First Flight and Championship players took their turns battling it out. In First Flight, local boys Billy Beam and Tim Hasty went undefeated in block play securing themselves a place in the finals. Nipping at their heels were clubmates Mark Miler and Bryan Christiansen. Meanwhile, Championship Flight team Jasmine Morgan and Scott Gosnell were relegated to The Swamp where they faced off against Roy and Stephen Morgan. Up in The Swamp, golf swing reigned supreme and it was anyone's game. Ultimately, after slugging it out for a grueling 60 minutes, The Swamp won. Elsewhere, George Cochran and John Warlick secured their spot in the finals after an impressive day. Roy and Stephen Morgan would advance to the finals, even after suffering a brutal loss to Dave Nelson and Don Parker, who thrived in the cold drizzle of the afternoon.

Sunday funday as the morning began with the doubles finals! First flight's Mark Miler and Bryan Christiansen took the lead and never looked back against second-place finishers Billy Beam and Tim Hasty. Championship flight's Roy Morgan tried to carry teammate Stephen to victory, but George Cochran and John Warlick didn't fly to D.C. for nothing and ultimately took home the prize. More was yet to come as singles blocks battled it out. Croquet newcomer Scott Gosnell showed no mercy as he advanced to the semi-finals, only to be beaten by Tim Hasty and his impressive roll shots. After Tim beat Mike Kearns in block play, Mike got his revenge and happily took home the first place trophy. In Championship Flight, things heated up as Arthur Metrailler defeated George Cochran in an attempt to advance to the semi-finals. Ultimately, it came down to net points and George Cochran would play Gil Rocha while Don Parker played Stephen Morgan. Taking no chances, George swiftly secured his shot at a fourth national title while everyone watched Don Parker attempt to peel his partner through the final hoops and opponent Stephen Morgan lull around hoop two and three. Unfortunately for Don, Stephen capitalized on an opportunity and made a miracle comeback to face George in the finals. George and Stephen battled down to the wire with long hits and missed roquets until Stephen emerged victorious with his second 9 wicket national title. Now, quick! Give out the trophies!

A big thank you to all who were able to attend rain or shine and make this tournament one to remember! Additionally, a special thank you to TD Roy Morgan, Bob Kroger, the USCA 9 Wicket Committee, our hosts Mary and Billy Beam, and to everyone who helped with the court set up, take down, and then set up and take down again! Only a 9 wicket tournament could have such a cast of characters, entertaining play, and camaraderie brought about by hurricane Joaquin.



First Flight Doubles:

1. Bryan Christiansen/Mark Miler
2. Billy Beam/Tim Hasty
3. Lee Jorde/Cole Jorde
4. Michael Kearns/Gail Rubin
5. Arthur Metrailer/Lee Reed

First Flight Singles:

1. Michael Kearns
2. Tim Hasty
3. Billy Beam
4. Scott Gosnell
5. Lee Reed
6. Gail Rubin
7. Bryan Christiansen
8. Cindy Shephard



Stephen Morgan, Roy Morgan, George Cochran, John Warlick



Championship Flight Doubles:

1. George Cochran/John Warlick
2. Roy Morgan/Stephen Morgan
3. Dave Nelson/Don Parker
4. Anne Rocha/Gil Rocha
5. Scott Gosnell/Jasmine Morgan

Championship Flight Singles:

1. Stephen Morgan
2. George Cochran
3. Don Parker
4. Gil Rocha
5. Arthur Metrailer
6. Dave Nelson
7. John Warlick
8. Roy Morgan

