



# USCA National Association Laws Championship

## April 27-May 2, 2015

### West Palm Beach, FL



### **David Maloof Wins Singles**

### **Jeff Soo & Brian Cumming Win Doubles**

It was the weather, always a consideration when playing upon fast lawns, that proved to be the main challenge. Rain and intense wind on Tuesday allowed us all the chance to have a little polo half time divot stomp.....and to go fetch the chairs, clocks, tables, water coolers and whatever else went flying across the lawns. And thus, with weather always a consideration, we conducted the National Association Laws Championship. Thankfully the rest of the week gave us great weather with sun, a few clouds and great temperatures encouraging the wonderful play. It even got a wee bit chilly for us South Floridians!

This year 29 contestants came to the National Croquet Center to battle it out for the title. With four holders of the title in the line-up, all expected an exciting event...and we were not disappointed. The four blocks were seeded with the top four finishers advancing to the knockout round. Each of the blocks played according to seed except for block 3, where Matthew Essick, 16 years old from North Carolina, upset Danny Huneycutt to take the block and the fourth seed. David Druiett, Simon Jenkins and Peter Just also upset the rankings by entering into the knockout.

Ben Rothman, Jeff Soo, Matthew Essick and David Maloof ran through their first round opponents tallying six triple peels in their eight games. Robert Hurst, the fifth seed from block play, had an epic match 26-11, 16-22 and 24-22 against Stuart Lawrence, finally winning 2-1 as the sun set. At the bottom of the ladder, while Stephan Morgan surprised Chris Patmore in the first-of-three match (26-7), Patmore then rebounded by winning the next two games 26-9 and 26-7.

In the second round we had Rothman playing Huneycutt once again, winning in two straight. Jeff Soo played against Robert Hurst, where Soo won out 2-0. Essick dispatched Jenkins 26tp-0, 26tp-0. Maloof took a surprise first game loss to Patmore 16-

26 but then rallied, as he would the rest of the tournament, with two triples, thus earning the final spot in the semi-finals.

The semis proved to be great croquet with Rothman and Soo on one side and Essick playing Maloof at the bottom of the ladder. Rothman and Soo came out cautiously with Rothman getting the first break which he took to 4 back, setting a diagonal. Soo hit in and ran his ball around to set his triple but his leave wasn't perfect. Rothman missed the lift and Soo ran his break to one back where he broke down. Rothman, out of character, missed a five yarder and Soo ran to rover while peeling partner ball through four back. Again Rothman missed and Soo finished the game 26-9. The second game proved to be even more uneven as each player struggled with windy conditions with Rothman holding out for a 26-3 victory. After a bit of back and forth in the third game Rothman got the first break going and popped Soo through one and later failed to pop him through two making his leave difficult. Soo hit in and ran to four back leaving an opening for Rothman. Rothman hit in but failed to sustain the break after which Soo finished to advance to the finals.

On the other court Maloof and Essick went after each other immediately. Maloof got the first hit and ran his first break. Essick hit in (and he hit in a lot) ran his break, set the diagonal leave giving Maloof the lift. After missing the lift Essick started his second break but broke down after getting the first peel setting his leave up 24-9. He later finished. In the second game Essick hit in on fourth turn taking his first break to four back. With a bit of back and forth Maloof ran his first break to four leaving Matthew a choice of lift or shot, he chose the lift but missed. Maloof ran the triple setting up the final game which Maloof also tripled out. In the finals we had Jeff Soo, a former champion, challenged by David Maloof. The first game showed that each contestant was cautious and nervous with much positioning and little offense. With both players unwilling to risk it all, eventually, running three hours and with Soo winning 26-21. In the next two games Maloof went back to the form with two consecutive tps to take the title. To note: Mr. Maloof triple peeled in 7 of his 11 games in the singles knockout.

The doubles portion of the event had 13 teams competing in a single elimination knockout giving the top three teams byes. The first round saw one upset with Stephen Morgan and Ian Harshman, defeating Johnny Osborn and Simon Jenkins 2-0. The two youngsters then took on Jeff Soo/Brian Cumming, taking it to the wire losing the third game 24-26. The rest of the field saw the teams settling in with four triples in the six games. In the semi-finals Soo/Cumming suffered a loss when Rothman tripled but then battled back to tie the match. They were victorious winning the rubber game succeeding 9-26tpR, 26-13, 26tpS-1. On the other card David Maloof and Jim Bast outlasted the charging team of Danny Huneycutt and young Master Essick 26tpM, 13-26 and 26tpM-21. Huneycutt and Essick had trouble with their triples and ultimately bowed to the winners in an exciting match.

The doubles finals pitted the team of Jeff Soo and Brian Cumming against David Maloof and Jim Bast. Both teams attacked the weaker players forcing them to come up with the first breaks. Each broke down but Soo and Cumming proved too much winning two straight 26-10, 26-7. The plate tournament saw Stuart Lawrence beat Danny Huneycutt 26-10. The last time these two faced off at the NCC Lawrence beat Danny in the finals of the 2013 Steuber finals.

The USCA thanks all of the participants and looks forward the next adventure!  
~Bill Mead, Tournament Director

Singles

1. David Maloof
2. Jeff Soo
3. Ben Rothman
4. Matthew Essick
5. Danny Huneycutt
5. Robert Hurst
5. Simon Jenkins
5. Chris Patmore
9. Martyn Selman
9. Brian Cumming
9. David Druiett
9. Peter Just
9. Doug Grimsley
9. Jim Bast
9. Stephen Morgan
9. Stuart Lawrence
17. Sherif Abdelwahab
18. Andrew Wise
19. Daniel Pailas
20. Charles Gillmarten
21. Johnny Osborn
22. Christophe Bergen
23. Johnny Mitchell
24. Ian Harshman
25. Tim Bitting
26. Mike Todorovich
27. Bill Hartmann
28. Matthew Harders
29. Russell Dilley

**David Maloof**



Singles Plate



**Stuart Lawrence**

1. Stuart Lawrence
2. Danny Huneycutt
3. Ian Harshman
3. Simon Jenkins
5. Charles Gillmarten
5. Stephen Morgan
5. Mike Todorovich
5. Sherif Abdelwahab
9. Daniel Pailas
9. Christophe Bergen
9. Matthew Harders
9. David Druiett
9. Russell Dilley
9. Martyn Selman
9. Johnny Mitchell
9. Jim Bast
9. Brian Cumming
9. Tim Bitting

Doubles

1. Jeff Soo/Brian Cumming
2. David Maloof/Jim Bast
3. Ben Rothman/Robert Hurst
3. Danny Huneycutt/Matthew Essick
5. Stephen Morgan/Ian Harshman
5. Chris Patmore/Michael Todorovich
5. Doug Grimsley/Charles Gillmarten
5. Sherif Abdelwahab/Tim Bitting
9. Simon Jenkins/John Osborn
9. David Druiett/Bill Hartmann
9. Peter Just/Matthew Harders
9. Daniel Pailas/Russell Dilley
9. Martyn Selman/Johnny Mitchell

Brian Cumming & Jeff Soo



Doug Grimsley



Chris Patmore



Matthew Essick



Ben Rothman



Simon Jenkins

