

**THE BUFFALO CROQUET CLUB INAUGURAL 6-WICKET INVITATIONAL**  
**Buffalo Croquet Club**  
**Buffalo, New York**  
**July 29-31, 2016**



Only a couple months ago, if you would have told me that I would soon be playing croquet in Buffalo, New York, I would have shrugged off the thought the way one brushes off the possibility of winning Power Ball. Buffalo, in my mind, was simply a city you might uncover after test driving a new snow plow. I certainly had no idea that grass would even grow there, let alone that croquet wickets might take root upon land I envisioned being, at best, a natural habitat for, well, penguins. In retrospect, what I thought and what I now know could not have been farther apart.

The weather in Buffalo was absolutely fantastic, and wearing the shorts I had found buried under layers of sweaters and earmuffs, the Delaware Park courts, upon my arrival, were even more impressive. Everything one might need could be found at the facility, including four well-kept lawns and a smiling group of enthusiastic Buffalo Croquet Club members, most of whom were about to embark upon their first tournament.

Banners and flags adorned the surrounding gates, and as the tournament guests began to filter in, a festive feeling radiated throughout.

There were 29 players in all, and they spanned the whole gambit of experience. Naturally, there were some Canadians, including Hall of Famer Anne Frost Robinson. John Young III made the trip from Bermuda. A few from Florida, many from the New York Croquet Club – no matter where the participants hailed from, the genuine joy of being there for this inaugural event filled the air. The tournament would barely last three days, but there would be plenty of play and the contagious sound of laughter.

In regards to the facts, there were three well defined Flights of Singles and another three of Waterford Doubles. Players were guaranteed a minimum of eight matches throughout, all timed at one hour and fifteen minutes. Most of the Singles was double-banked and six rounds of play were completed on each of the first two days. The Singles Playoffs consisted of the top four finishers after block play and everything ran on schedule. What was truly impressive was how well the newer Buffalo Croquet Club members handled the pressure of tournament play. There were no conflicts, no confusion, and all of the matches ended with smiles and an offer of thanks for the opportunity to compete. Certainly a great deal of appreciation and credit go out to Russel Brown and Ryan Thompson, whose coaching within the Club helped to produce not only some impressive players, but an admirable spirit throughout.

The thing that probably surprised me the most, aside from how easy it was to find sun tan lotion in Buffalo, was that, in a close match over the always determined John Young III (-1.5), I (-2.5) was lucky enough to win the Championship Flight Singles. Temp Peck (4.5), on the adjacent court and in what I hear was an equally close game, took First Flight honors over Anne Frost-Robinson (4). In the Second Flight, a very impressive June Schneiweiss (11) battled past Bob Gannon (11), also impressive throughout the weekend. The Doubles competition, in somewhat of a rarity, found an entirely new list of participants propelled into the winner's circle. David Isaacs-Russel Brown captured the Championship Flight, Judy Dahlstrom-Kelso Sutton the First and Paul Neubecker-Bob Gannon the Second Flight. And isn't it always a happy day when the wealth is spread so wide?

Just under the improbable chance that someone did not have a great day upon the croquet lawns, social activities were abundant throughout. While the Opening Cocktail Reception took place courtside on Thursday, Friday night's Dinner Reception was held at the home of Club President, Bill Rupp. One cannot thank Bill enough for all of his hard work both before and during the event! On Saturday, a Dinner Party was held at the Hotel Lafayette, and while I was either too busy or fatigued to attend most of these events, I hear that an awesome time was had by all. Stories told during Sunday's courtside Awards Ceremony certainly offered the already heard reviews confirmation.

For those of you who have had any experience in promoting or running even an established croquet tournament, you certainly understand how much time and hard work is needed to create and make everything just right. In this respect, the efforts made by everyone within the Buffalo Croquet Club were nothing short of inspiring. From the concept, through the promotion and until the last trophy was awarded, every aspect of the event was done with style and unheralded enthusiasm. Enough thanks cannot be expressed to Bill Rupp, Russ Brown and Tournament Manager, Ryan Thompson, who dealt with every detail with professionalism. Thanks also go out to the Buffalo Croquet Club members for making the guests feel so at home and to the guests for participating in what will certainly be a 'can't miss it' event for decades to come.

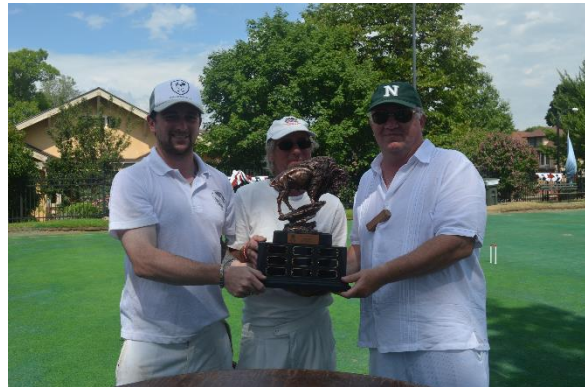
For a few hours I just caulked it up to global warming, but I have since been assured that yes, Buffalo does have beautiful summers. I am also now certain that the Buffalo Croquet Club does host a fantastic tournament. (I've even been reminded that people actually do win Power Ball.) Given all of that, I strongly suggest that next year, from August 4-6, you think about visiting Buffalo for a little croquet. Pack your sun tan lotion and get ready for a truly enjoyable weekend!

**CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT SINGLES**

- 1. John C. Osborn
- 2. John Young III
- 3. Russell Brown
- 3. James Erwin
- 5. Patrick Little
- 6. Douglas Moore
- 6. David Isaacs
- 6. Peter Timmins

**FIRST FLIGHT SINGLES**

- 1. Templeton Peck
- 2. Anne Frost-Robinson
- 3. Lawrence Cranfield
- 3. Cheryl Harders
- 5. Ryan Thompson
- 6. Jeanne Branthover
- 6. Kelso Sutton
- 6. Judy Dahlstrom



(L-R) Ryan Thompson, John Osborn and Bill Rupp



Anne Frost-Robinson

**SECOND FLIGHT SINGLES**

- 1. June Schneiweiss
- 2. Non-member
- 3. Karen Heckman
- 3. Sue Sherer
- 5. Paul Neubecker
- 6. Non-member
- 6. Bill Rupp
- 8. Sunghee Ahn
- 8. Non-member
- 8. William Vrooman
- 8. Ty Mortman
- 12. Non-member

**CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT DOUBLES**

1. David Isaacs-Russel Brown
2. Douglas Moore-James Erwin
3. John Osborn-John Young III
4. Patrick Little-Peter Timmins

**FIRST FLIGHT DOUBLES**

1. Judy Dahlstrom-Kelso Sutton
2. Cheryl Harders-Anne Frost-Robinson
3. Ryan Thompson-Templeton Peck
4. Karen Heckman-Jeanne Branthover

**SECOND FLIGHT DOUBLES**

1. Paul Neubecker-Non-member
2. Bill Vrooman-Bill Rupp
3. Nancy Elia-Sunghee Ahn
4. Non-members
5. Lee Little-Ty Mortman



Douglas Moore, drives to his first game across Delaware Park

**-John C. Osborn (TD)**