

# **Kamal Cup**

## **June 11-12, 2016**

### **Pasadena Croquet club**

The sixth annual Kamal Cup of GC singles was played the weekend of June 11-12. This event is named in honor of our club colleague Dr. Mohammad Kamal, one of the club's original founding members and our most decorated GC player.

Every year, something bizarre happens during the event. One year, a city truck ran over a homeless person in the park; in two successive years, very large tree branches snapped and almost injured park denizens. Last year, a large cycling event (Cyclavia) dominated Raymond Avenue and the First Flight Championship game was played to the rhythmic beat of a Zumba class taught on the grass just feet outside of the north court ring. This year, it was drizzly rain on a Saturday in June that was a bit bizarre. The tradition continues.

#### **First Flight**

The FF is always the most attended and competitive flight in this tournament. This year was no different.

The 8 players were reseeded for knock-out play-offs on Sunday based on their performances in their two blocks on Saturday, with top seeds in block A matched against lower seeds in the other and vice versa.

The play-offs were single elimination and they went to seed, with Judy Warren and Caren Sawyer, the top seeds, winning easily. However, Steve Miller had a dog-fight against Eric Harris in the quarter-finals. In fact, Eric was up 6-4, but Steve was able to charge back to tie it 6-6 and then take the tie-breaker point in dramatic fashion. In the other quarter-final, rookie Sean Chasworth used sound strategy and steady shot-making to upset the better seeded, veteran Carson Bond (who was a pre-event favorite to win the FF).

In the semi's, Caren and Judy got early match scares by falling behind or being tied with their opponents early. But both top seeds kept up their steady play and eventually outclassed their opponents. Caren beat Sean 7-4 and Judy beat Steve 7-3.

Caren played Judy in the finals. It was a close, exciting match, with both players matching each other clear for clear, hoop for hoop, shot for shot. In the end, Caren made a mini-run to score three hoops in a row, including a clutch jump at hoop 9, to win the FF with the score of 7-4.

In the consolation game, Steve outplayed Sean to win third place 7-4. Steve won third place last year; he was runner-up the year before.

This year, we had two other rookies in the FF, local comedian Brian Vermeire and local debutante Katie Anawalt. Both played extremely well for their first tournaments, especially considering the tougher Townsend hoops on the south court, which replaced the easy Foxy hoops used in past years. All in all, Sean Chasworth wins the Rookie of the Year award (or Fighting Spirit award if this were a sumo match) for his huge upset over Carson.

#### **Championship Flight**

After a five-game round robin on Saturday, the players were reseeded for a single elimination knock out. Ahmed Elhadary and Eric Sawyer got byes for being the top two seeds.

In the first round, old Beverly Hills Croquet Club members Mohammed was pitted against Croquet Hall of Famer Rhys Thomas. Mohammad was on form and he made quick work of Rhys, who was able to return home to continue working on his show scripts. In the other first round, Mohammad's polished and pleasant sons, Adel (the defending champion) and Ali faced each other for a brotherly beat-down. Ali (the younger by three years) beat Adel for the second time to earn a place in the semis.

In the semis, Mohammad outclassed Eric on the north court by hard, long clears, sending Eric's balls flying in all directions and far away from his hoops, winning 7-5. Meanwhile, on the south court, Ali was beating Ahmed (the inaugural event winner in 2011) 7-3 to advance into the finals. Ali and Adel played remarkably well, given that they did not have their mallets with them in Pasadena and haven't played much croquet in months, if at all. In addition to being gracious young gentlemen, they are excellent players.

In the consolation match, Ahmed and Eric relived old times, since they played each other in the finals in 2011. Ahmed beat Eric then, Eric beat Ahmed this time to take third.

In the finals, Mohammad was still on form and dominated his youngest son Ali 7-1, 7-2. Never fun to lose to your dad when you're young. But it's worse to lose to your son when you're a dad. One day ...

This was Mohammad's first club championship, meaning his name will be permanently placed on the Kamal Cup for the second time. Last year, his oldest son Adel won. So now it's up to Ali to win it and get a third Kamal on the cup. In six years of this event, we have had six different winners of the Championship flight. We've been lucky to have great players in this flight.

## Final Results

### Championship Flight-

1. Non-member
2. Non-member
3. Eric Sawyer
4. Non-member
5. Non-member
5. Rhys Thomas



left to right) Ali Kamal (runner-up),  
Mohammad Kamal (champion) and Eric Sawyer (third place).

### First Flight-

1. Caren Sawyer
2. Judith Warren
3. Steve Miller
4. Non-member
5. Non-member
5. Non-member
5. Non-member
5. Non-member



Left to right, Mohammad Kamal, Steve Miller  
(third Place) Caren Sawyer (champion) & Judith Warren (runner-up)