

2016 Lake Toxaway Golf Croquet Tournament

September 22-24, Lake Toxaway Country Club

The fifth annual Lake Toxaway Golf Croquet Tournament was hosted by the Lake Toxaway Mallet Club and was played over three beautiful days in the Carolina mountains. Area players were joined by visitors from up and down the east coast, from the midwest, and from as far afield as the UK. This pioneering invitational continues to be one of the most highly-anticipated Golf Croquet tournaments on the USCA calendar.

Cheryl Bromley built on her 2015 win in the Wicket Flight, taking the tournament's top prize by winning the Mallet Flight. One of four players to have played this tournament every year since 2012, Bromley has shown improvement every year. Despite a slow start, once she got into gear she was clearly the most consistent player in the field.

Twenty-seven players contested the qualifying phase, 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 tournament remains friendly to new tournament players, but the level of experience and the standard of play have risen from year to year.

Day 1 ended, as usual, with George Bagwell undefeated. Playing on his home lawns, the four-time finalist and two-time champion looked as consistent and focused as ever. He was joined at 3-0 by Don Molitor, also a Lake Toxaway member, and David Widdison. Widdison, the highest-ranked player in the field, traveled from England once again with his wife Andrea. Defending champion Matt Griffith finished the day 3-1, and seven players stood at 2-1.

The slightly smaller field meant more games per player and also more opportunities to reach the playoffs. In prior years, one loss was all players could afford and still make the Mallet Flight playoffs. Bromley started with two losses, then won four straight to claim the #6 seed. John Warlick managed to squeeze in eight games in the Swiss, taking the #7 seed with a 5-3 record. Stephen Jackson and Dick Boger tied at 3-2 +6, and Jackson won the seven-point play-in game to take the #8 spot.

The toughest quarterfinal was Griffith vs. Bromley. Both players will play in the World GC Championship in February, and both showed impressive form, especially jump shots. Bromley took control early and never relented, winning 7-3. In the same half of the draw, Bagwell and Warlick played the most entertaining match of the quarterfinals. Warlick took a 6-3 lead, but no one was counting out the wily Bagwell yet. He won the next hoop for 4-6, scored a long in-off for 5-6, then won a protracted battle at 12 to make it 6-all. Hoop 13 was an even longer battle, Warlick working hard to engineer safe hoop shots and Bagwell clearing balls from most anywhere. Warlick finally prevailed 7-6.

In the semi-finals the entertainment came in the other half of the draw, David Widdison and Jochen Lucke both in fine form, and perhaps the two hardest-hitting players in the field. Their game stayed close all the way to hoop 13, Widdison winning.

Widdison didn't play badly in the final; Bromley was simply on fire. She was flawless on jump shots up to two yards out, and this proved the decisive factor as she romped to a 7-2 win.

The tournament was managed LTCC tennis and croquet pro 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

- 1 Cheryl Bromley
- 2 Dave Widdison
- 3 Jochen Lucke
- 4 John Warlick
- 5 George Bagwell
- 6 Matt Griffith
- 7 Don Molitor
- 8 Steve Jackson

Wicket Flight Singles

- 1 Henner Lenhardt
- 2 Hal Denton
- 3 Gil Flowers
- 4 Gail Rubin
- 5 Dick Boger
- 6 Peter Carlin
- 7 Diane Walker
- 8 Roy Messer

Overall

- 17 Kevin Moir (DNF)
- 18 Judy Carlin
- 19 Adrienne Lucke
- 20 Armand DeLaPerriere
- 21 Michael Kline
- 22 Andrea Widdison
- 23 George Enochs
- 24 Chris Weihs
- 25 Kenny Lovett
- 26 John Walker
- 27 Karen Weihs

Don Buebendorf posted many photos here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/f73n4cxkmazdx8g/AACXwiZY1UXbrMAA_7DQIHQRa?dl=0