

2016 USCA SENIORS MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS

November 8-12, 2016

West Palm Beach, FL



You probably won't see it for a while, but in the span of about a month, the National Croquet Center found itself the host facility of four of the larger and most important tournaments on the calendar year. There was the National Golf Croquet Championships, the USCA 6-Wicket Nationals, the always popular Selection Eights and then, as though saving the most relaxed for the last, the USCA Seniors/Masters Championships. Bottom line, there was something for everyone, and while the weather was spectacular throughout them all, the final week was the proof of a perfect postcard.

Despite the uninvited yearly time change, forcing matches to begin a bit earlier than some would prefer, everything ran smoothly throughout. The Opening Reception found a total of 60 players (down from 63 but a few hours earlier) in attendance. Three Flights were in play, the Championship and First Flight Singles split into Seniors (60-69 in age) and Masters (70 and above) divisions. While there was one unnamed player (Michael Todorovich) who snuck down into the Seniors bracket, the USCA has promised more stringent security screenings in the future. Games were timed at one hour and fifteen minutes, eight courts were used and the format was the standard block-to-single elimination Playoffs. Most of the Singles play was double banked and the courts were in wonderful condition.

As is always the case, one of the nice things about the Seniors/Masters is that a large majority of the players have a solid history of experience. Referee calls are rare, respect is of the utmost and almost everyone remembers to write down their scores. Such experience also leads to some very strategic matches, a pleasure for the large number of spectators present. Of the eight Finals played Saturday, only one game saw a winning margin larger than four.

Amidst the Doubles action, Bobby Duryea & Jeff Morrison took top honors within the Second Flight in a 13-11 rumble over Hal Denton & Tom Stoner. No worries for Hal and Tom though, for immediately afterwards they faced each other in the Second Flight Singles Final. In fact, each would be one of the four players to complete in four matches in what, for them, was a very long Saturday. While it did appear as though they were playing for a tie, Hal somehow stumbled into the lead as the buzzer sounded, taking the Title with a 10-9 victory. Jeff Morrison and Robert Le Vine tied for Third Place.

In the First Flight Doubles, David Spivey & Ray Liberti continued to control the action with a 12-9 Finals victory over the newly formed team of Richard Alderson & Ted Thelin. Ray, another four-gamer on Saturday, would then defeat (14-11) the stubborn Bill Trower in the First Flight Masters Singles. Paul Phoenix and Vincent Marmo would settle for Third. Over in the First Flight Seniors Finals, Dick Scherf pushed back the surging Lynda Sudderberg with a 15-12 win and thus took hold of the larger trophy. David Spivey and Richard Alderson shared Third Place there.

While Doubles within the Championship Flight proved to be well balanced throughout, the surprising team of Leo McBride & Linda Huxtable, somehow, surpassed the competition. Despite fears amongst the players that Leo would either kill or devour his partner before the tournament was completed, the hyper and hyper-sensitive duo (they know who they are) defeated Tim Bitting & Peter Just (19-15) to claim the 2016 Title. Matt Griffith & Paul Phoenix, as well as Carl Mabee & Bert Myer, meandered in with Third Place.

In the Championship Singles Divisions, the Finals of the Masters portion offered a treat when the Finals pitted the legendary and 2014 Champion Jackie Jones against past National Champion, Carl Mabee. In a see-saw battle, Carl showed his trade mark killer instinct to survive with a 17-14 victory. Defending Masters Champion, John Blamire, and the defending Seniors Champion, Peter Just, tied for Third Place. And, for something completely different...Leo McBride, the last of those finding four games on Saturday, looked youthful and in control while defeating his fellow Senior (cough), Michael Todorovich, with a decisive 17-2 score. Matt Griffith and Bob Van Tassell settled for Third Place honors.

Overall, with beautiful weather serving as the perfect background, it seems as though everyone, win-or-lose, enjoyed this year's celebration. The lawns played very well, Sandy James provided wonderful lunches, the Player's Dinner received wonderful reviews and both the USCA and NCC staffs were more than happy to fulfill any desire or request. The Hall of Fame Dinner was also on hand, this year honoring Bert Myer and Damon Bidencope. Whether you competed in any of the other events in this crazy month of croquet, I have no doubt that this year's Seniors/Masters left everyone with good memories and a great time.

CHAMPIONSHIP SENIORS SINGLES

1. Leo McBride
2. Michael Todorovich
3. Bob Van Tassell
3. Matt Griffith
5. Tim Bitting
5. John Curington
7. Linda Huxtable



CHAMPIONSHIP MASTERS SINGLES

1. Carl Mabee
2. Jackie Jones
3. Peter Just
3. John Blamire
5. Bert Myer
5. Bob Chilton
5. David Ekstrom
5. Mary Rodeberg
9. Mike Gibbons
9. David McCoy
11. Steve Warner
11. Dick Sullivan
13. Jim Spoonhour
13. Donna Dixon





FIRST SENIORS SINGLES

1. Dick Scherf
2. Lynda Sudderberg
3. Richard Alderson
3. David Spivey
5. Steve Grassbaugh
5. Ron Millican
7. Pat Spratt
8. Deborah Millican

FIRST MASTERS SINGLES

1. Ray Liberti
2. Bill Trower
3. Paul Phoenix
3. Vincent Marmo
5. Ann Myer
5. Howard Holdsclaw
5. Martie Ekstrom
5. Ted Thelin
9. Michael Kline
9. Antonia Marmo
11. Larry McDermott
11. Wendell Thompson
13. Arthur Olsen
13. Harold Menzel



SECOND FLIGHT SINGLES



1. Harold Denton
2. Tom Stoner
3. Jeff Morrison
3. Robert Le Vine
5. Ann Licursi
5. Carla Rueck
5. Hildegard Jones

5. Clint Fowlkes
9. Yen Sullivan
9. Bob Duryea
11. Freear Pollard
11. Cecily Greenaway
13. Sheila McCauley

CHAMPIONSHIP DOUBLES

1. Leo McBride-Linda Huxtable
2. Tim Bitting-Peter Just
3. Carl Mabee-Bert Myer
3. Matt Griffith-Paul Phoenix
5. Bob Van Tassell-Dick Sullivan
5. Bob Chilton-Michael Todorovich
5. Fred Jones-Jackie Jones
5. Mike Gibbons-David McCoy
9. John Curington-Jim Spoonhour
9. John Blamire-Larry McDermott
11. Donna Dixon-John Warlick
11. David Ekstrom-Martie Ekstrom

FIRST FLIGHT DOUBLES

1. David Spivey-Ray Liberti
2. Richard Alderson-Ted Thelin
3. Lynda Sudderberg-Bill Trower
3. Wendell Thompson-Howard Holdsclaw
5. Michael Kline-Arthur Olsen
5. Mary Rodeberg-Patricia Duncan
7. Steve Grassbaugh-Pat Spratt
7. Vincent Marmo-Antonia Marmo
9. Harold Menzel-Ron Millican
9. Ann Myer-Deborah Millican

-John C. Osborn (TD)

SECOND FLIGHT DOUBLES

1. Bob Duryea-Jeff Morrison
2. Hal Denton-Tom Stoner
3. Freear Pollard-Sheila McCauley
3. Yen Sullivan-Rosemarie Maccario
5. Cecily Greenaway-Lois Holdsclaw