



The 2017 New Jersey State Croquet Championship

September 30 - October 1, 2017

Hosted by the Green Gables Croquet Club, Sea Girt NJ



Tom Cooper, Tom Hughes & Timothy Rapuano

At 5 years the state tournament has found its groove at the end of September. It's a great time to reunite with friends at the end of the season and have that one last chance for a competitive weekend of games while the weather's still nice. With all the crazy hurricanes and unseasonably warm weather this year, the players didn't really know what to expect for weather and court conditions. As it turned out, it was mostly sunny and a delightful weekend to play croquet.

This year, the field of players was expanded by an announcement from the United States Croquet Association to help promote the event. Priced at \$100, and \$50 for college students, the event quickly filled up. While the majority of the players were from NJ, players came from all over including New York, Delaware, and North Carolina. The fee paid for Saturday and Sunday lunches, Saturday evening supper hosted by the Coopers, trophies and a limited edition NJ State Championship pin.



Karen Leoncavallo takes aim

The field was divided into 2 flights. 11 players with handicaps from -1.5 to 5 were assembled into a big ugly 11 person occluded block for championship flight, while 6 first flight players ranging from handicaps 10 to 12 were entered into cross blocks. Championship flight players played 4 singles block matches on Saturday while first Flight players completed 3. For Sunday playoffs the bottom four championship players vied for the plate trophy while the top 7 enjoyed a three round playoff with the best seeded player receiving a bye. First flight also competed in a three round playoff with the top two players receiving a bye.

The championship flight saw many surprises on Saturday. While Adam Lassiter (3) went undefeated to secure the top seed, 2016 State Champion and highest ranked player, Tim Rapuano (-1.5), nosedived to the bottom after two losses, barely making it into the playoffs. On a high note, first time championship flight player, Peter Woolley (5), nabbed three victories to land himself in the 4th place slot.



Jonathan Parisi takes a shot while Ralph Charles watches for contact

Sunday saw the Championship take shape as seeded players started quarterfinals off at 8:30am in both the championship flight playoff and first flight. The plate semifinals started at 10am. In first flight, up and coming SUNY New Paltz phenom Jonathan Parisi (12) made quick work in the quarterfinals and semifinals to earn a rematch against top seed Karen Leoncavallo (10). Undefeated in the block, the Green Gables local resumed her dominance defeating Jonathan, 15-9.



Rodney and Adam Lassiter from North Carolina

The Championship plate saw twists that nobody could predict. Ralph Charles (2.5) seemingly gave the game away to Tim Mullen (4.5), while Loretta Cooper (3.5) handily defeated Greg Shaffer (1) by a 15 wicket margin. In the plate final, Tim Mullen clinched victory over Loretta, 15-13.



Tom Cooper with Tim Mullen (Plate Winner) and Timothy Rapuano

In the Championship playoff, Tim Rapuano made a nice comeback, defeating Rodney Lassiter (0.5), Tom Cooper (-0.5) and Tom Hughes (0) to grab first place. This is Tim's second trophy win.

This year's trophies were full color embroidered hats with artwork by Chris Kaas. Trophies were given to first, second and third places (as determined by block score) in both Championship and First Flight. The Championship Plate trophy is a wooden box containing two decks of playing cards designed by Chris Kaas.

Last but not least, a Big Thanks are needed to the Coopers for hosting everyone in their lovely home for Saturday night festivities, to Loretta Cooper and Pat Richmond for coordinating daily lunches, and to all of the members of the Green Gables Croquet Club who came out to keep boards and timers for the participants. Thank you!

FINAL RESULTS

Championship Flight Winner, Timothy Rapuano

Championship Flight Singles

1. Timothy Rapuano
2. Thomas Hughes
3. Adam Lassiter
4. Thomas Cooper
5. Rodney Lassiter
6. Peter Woolley
7. Justin Berbig
8. Tim Mullen (Plate Winner)
9. Loretta Cooper
10. Gregory Shaffer
11. Ralph Charles

First Flight Singles

1. Karen Leoncavallo
2. Jonathan Parisi
3. Scott Kennedy
4. Kevin Radcliffe
5. Brendan Tanner
6. Meg Niles

All photos courtesy of
Tina Tian,
Scott Kennedy,
& Timothy Rapuano

Tournament Director:
Tom Cooper

Tournament Manager:
Timothy Rapuano

