

2017 Croquet Network States Shield Championship:



From Left to Right: Wisconsin's Mary, Hennelly, Cheryl Bromley, Nel's Bjorkquist followed by Missouri's Matt Smith, Stephen Jackson and Billy Bob Breeden

Missouri Repeats with 7-3 Win

PARKVILLE, MO -- The mighty Missouri squad of Billy Bob Breeden, Steve Jackson and Matt Smith defended their 2017 Croquet Network Golf Croquet States Shield title on Saturday at the Kactus Creek Croquet Club with a 7-3 win over the visiting Wisconsin team.

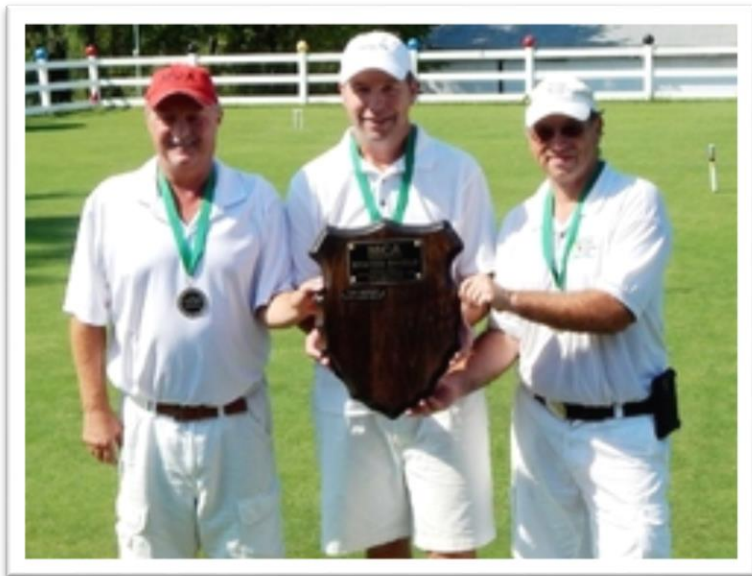
The day started with a good omen as Smith pulled off an impressive angled jump shot at hoop one to get Missouri out to a 1-0 lead in the opening doubles game against Nels Bjorkquist and Cheryl Bromley. As the game moved past hoop four, Missouri led 3-1 when Smith's partner Jackson drained hoop five from the south boundary for a 4-1 lead.

As it often does, the momentum carried through the middle section and Missouri extended to 6-1 and eventually took game one 7-2.

The three versus three matchup was played early to shorten the day. In that one, Billy Bob Breeden for Missouri controlled the full distance against Mary Hennelly and took a 7-1 win to get a 2-0 test lead.

The next round featured the one versus three matchups. Starting off, Smith took on Wisconsin's Hennelly and saw the game get to 2-2 before Smith settled in to claim a 7-2 victory to get the test to 3-0.

Starting shortly after, Bromley as Wisconsin's #1 took on Missouri's #3 Breeden. Bromley with the start got hoop 1 (H1) and good distance to H2, but Breeden evened as he jawed red then pushed it through with a shot from yellow at about 45



Breeden, Smith and Jackson with the Shield

degrees from the west boundary to erase Bromley's jump attempt opportunity and tie at 1-1. Bromley got a long, angled hoop at H3, then after a battle at H4 Breeden made an angled hoop to get to 2-2.

Another big battle took place at H5 as Breeden jawed via an in-off, but Bromley cleared him to the south boundary. After a bit of positioning, Breeden slid red through from 2.5 yards for a 3-2 advantage, but Bromley answered after another battle at H6 with a jump shot.

It stayed tight as Breeden made a 4 yarder at H8 to even at 4-4, which was followed

by Bromley getting a jump at H9. She then pushed out to 6-4, but Breeden

answered at H11. At H12, Breeden put red deep in the jaws from near the peg. Bromley had a jump attempt that missed, while Breeden positioned for the H13 battle. Bromley had a jump attempt that rolled into the C1 sector, so the score moved to 6-6.

The ending proved to be anti-climactic as Bromley got into the jaws with blue after a bit of a position battle. Breeden's best option was a hamper attempt that failed and Bromley tapped through to put Wisconsin on the board with a 7-6 victory.

So at 3-1 for Missouri, the Smith and Bjorkquist 1 versus 2 game had already started. Smith had the start but Bjorkquist got out to 2-1, before Smith evened at 2-2 as it shaped up to be a close one. Bromley jumped quickly into her 1 v 2 matchup against Missouri's Jackson and she pushed out to a 6-3 lead. With Bjorkquist challenging Smith the test seemed ready to tighten up, but Smith did find a way claiming a 7-5 win for a 4-1 advantage.

Then "Mr. Shield" Steve Jackson started clawing his way back on Bromley and got it to out the the 13th hoop. Bromley recovered in time though for a 7-6 win and kept Wisconsin hopes alive down 4-2.

The afternoon started with Jackson against Hennelly and increasing temperatures. Jackson wore Hennelly down as he got out to a 6-0 lead. Hennelly avoided the shutout, but Jackson took the win for a 5-2 overall lead that meant Breeden could get the test-clinching win as he took on Bjorkquist.

[RESULTS](#)
[COMMENTARY](#)
[PHOTOS](#) |
[VIDEO 1](#) (H1 JUMP)



Missouri's Matt Smith

It was tight most of the way, but Bjorkquist did work out to a 4-2 advantage. And with Smith and Bromley starting early it wasn't hard to envision a couple of Wisconsin wins to bring the score to 5-4. Breeden kept fighting though and was eventually able to get a 7-6 test and States Shield Championship win as the score moved to 6-2 overall.

The Smith/Bromley 1 versus 1 game proved to be entertaining as Smith ended up rushing Bromley through H11 to watch his 6-4 advantage drop to 6-5, in addition to allowing her first shot at H12. As the action there progressed, Bromley missed a key clear and Smith did finish it at 7-5 for a 7-2 lead in the test.

Bjorkquist took a 7-4 win in the last game of the day against Jackson for a 7-3 final.

APPRECIATION

Thank you to Matt and Ellie Griffith for holding the championship test and Missouri/Kansas test at the Kactus Creek Croquet Club and for hosting two of the Wisconsin players on Friday and Saturday. And thank you to Billy Bob and Debbie Breeden as well for hosting and for bringing food items and other essentials for the player lunch.

2018: THE ROAD TO MILWAUKEE

On Friday, there was a planning session for 2018 that included Cheryl Bromley, Matt Griffith and myself as the States Shield event is poised to expand from four to eight states. Out of that meeting, it was established that the Milwaukee Croquet Club will host the Championship final on two to four lawns in August of 2018. Additionally, it was agreed that August would be the annual month for the championship with discussion that future southern regions could play "Quad" qualifiers in April and May. A specific date for the 2018 States Shield Championship will be announced once the Milwaukee Croquet Club can confirm available court times.

AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION PLANS

The planning discussion also covered states that have expressed interest and there was high

confidence that the event can have two "Quad" qualifiers for 2018. In addition, a third quad could also figure into the mix. In such case, the August 2018 championship would include four teams.

NOTES

- Although the event is just two-years-old, Missouri's Steve Jackson is the official Iron Man of the event with nine singles games played now and a record of 7-2. Several players have notched six games -- Matt Smith, Billy Bob Breeden, Cheryl Bromley, Nels Bjorkquist, Dylan Goodwin and Darin Watson.
- Golf croquet newcomer Matt Smith kept his record perfect at 6-0 for 2018.
- Jackson's seven wins are tops for Shield play. Smith is next at six, while Bromley, Bjorkquist and Breeden have four each.
- For team game wins all-time, Missouri has 23, Wisconsin 10, Kansas 4 and Illinois 3.
- Organizers plan to expand to at least eight state teams for the 2018 Shield and that progress seems to be on track as three states have now expressed interest in participation next year. Representatives from interested states should contact Dylan Goodwin at croquetnetwork@gmail.com

RESULTS

Game	Winner			Loser		Score	
21	S. JACKSON / M. SMITH		beat	N. BJORKQUIST/C. BROMLEY		7	2
22	BOB BREEDEN	Billy	beat	HENNELLY	Mary	7	1
23	SMITH	Matt	beat	HENNELLY	Mary	7	2
24	BROMLEY	Cheryl	beat	BOB BREEDEN	Billy	7	6
25	SMITH	Matt	beat	BJORKQUIST	Nels	7	5
26	BROMLEY	Cheryl	beat	JACKSON	Stephen	7	6
27	JACKSON	Stephen	beat	HENNELLY	Mary	7	1
28	BOB BREEDEN	Billy	beat	BJORKQUIST	Nels	7	6
29	SMITH	Matt	beat	BROMLEY	Cheryl	7	5
30	BJORKQUIST	Nels	beat	JACKSON	Stephen	7	4