



**USCA**  
**Collegiate National Championship**  
*Merion Cricket Club – Haverford, PA*  
**April 21-22, 2018**



The USCA Collegiate National Tournament in 2018 was again graciously hosted by the Merion Cricket Club in Haverford, PA. Each year, there is both a Golf Croquet and an American Rules Six-wicket Croquet tournament. There were twenty four teams from five different colleges in the two tournaments this year, and some good competition in each.

In the Golf Croquet tournament nineteen games were won by only one or two points, and it featured the return of the defending champions from last year's Golf Croquet tournament, Peter Pendergrass and Zachary Adams, from Oklahoma Wesleyan University. There were enough courts and time for a sixteen-team playoff on Sunday, and every school had at least one team in the bracket, so everyone had a chance. It was the United States Naval Academy, however, whose teams had both swept block play and who sat atop the standings, taking on the challengers. Both of those teams remained in the semi-finals and one (Chase Stewart and Nathan Arellano) moved on to the final match to face the third-place seed from the day before: Mack McGowen from St. John's College. McGowen put up a good fight, but ultimately fell 7-4, giving the 1<sup>st</sup> place trophies to Stewart/Arellano and to the USNA. In the third place match, Oklahoma Wesleyan team Nathaniel Sanborn and Thomas Logan won a nailbiter 7-6 against the other Navy team of Gabriel Weigelt and Stephen Roberts.

**Collegiate Golf Croquet (Individual Teams):**

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Chase Stewart/Nathan Arellano (United States Naval Academy)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Mack McGowen (St. John's College)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Nathaniel Sanborn/Thomas Logan (Oklahoma Wesleyan University)
- 4<sup>th</sup>: Gabriel Weigelt/Stephen Roberts (USNA)
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Jake Shenot/Ryan Kirkoff (Penn State University)
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Jacob Green/Kylie Green (OWU)
- 5<sup>th</sup>: John Jane III/Alex Muradian (SJC)
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Brendan Tanner/Jacob Poulin (SUNY New Paltz)

**Collegiate Golf Croquet (College):**

- 1<sup>st</sup>: United States Naval Academy
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: St. John's College
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Oklahoma Wesleyan University
- 4<sup>th</sup>: Penn State University
- 4<sup>th</sup>: State University of New York at New Paltz

The American Rules Six-wicket tournament was contested by two schools, who had just played each other the prior weekend in the 36<sup>th</sup> Annapolis Cup, which is a best of five Nine-wicket matches. St. John's College won Game 5 in the waning light against their old rivals: the United States Naval Academy. So, the Navy was keen on revenge and played well, taking two of the top five spots in the playoffs, but they ran into a buzz saw named Tom Balding, a St. John's sophomore out of New York. Balding and his partner, Sean Miller, were 3-0 +48 after block play on Saturday, having won 26-5, 26-5, 22-16. They continued their streak in the playoffs winning the Elite Eight round 24-5 and the Final Four round 26-6 to face the Imperial Wicket of St. John's, Shane Hettler, and his partner Robin Lancaster. In an early attempt at a two-ball run, Balding clanked off of 2 and gave up the run to the patiently waiting predator Hettler, who picked up the break and ran eleven hoops to the peg. However, that may have been the fatal play as Balding, after some positioning and small gains for both sides, fearlessly attacked on the line to pick up a four-ball break, run it to peg, peg out Hettler, and set up the 2-on-1 match which Miller adeptly took home for a 26-17 win (and a stellar weekend line of 6-0 +96).

**Collegiate American Rules Six-wicket (Individual Teams):**

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Tom Balding/Sean Miller (SJC)
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Shane Hettler/Robin Lancaster (SJC)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Jacob Priester (USNA)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Jared Bassman/Charlie Carpenter (SJC)
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Anderson Camp/Kahse Mandarino (USNA)
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Joel Austin/Jacob Baldus (USNA)
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Val Pehrson/Alex Kwilinski (SJC)
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Tyler Snyder (SJC)

**Collegiate American Rules Six-wicket (College):**

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Saint John's College
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: United States Naval Academy

The tournament directors, Justin Berbig and Micah Beck (graduates of SUNY New Paltz and St. John's College, respectively, and both former players in this great tournament), would like to thank Lee Hanna for the work she has done over the past ... no-one-knows-quite-how-many-years, to support, encourage and teach croquet played in colleges around the country. Without you, this tournament would not have survived to reach this point and many of us would not have gone on to keep playing croquet after graduation. We were very sorry to miss you this year. We hope that we will see you again next year!

And, as always, we would like to extend a great big "Thank you!" to Whitney Thain and the Merion Cricket Club for hosting us again this year. It is a great privilege to be allowed to use your beautiful space.