

## 2018 Croquet Network States Shield:



From Left to Right: Oklahoma's Dale Jordan, Scott Spradling, Conner Helms followed by Wisconsin's Cheryl Bromley, Keith Anderson and Drew Kennedy

## Wisconsin Strikes Back

MILWAUKEE, WI -- After holding off a late morning Oklahoma rally, Wisconsin defended their home courts on August 18, 2018, to take a 6-4 win at Lake Park in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to claim the 2018 Croquet Network States Shield. The win seemed to be a fitting reward for the first Shield "expansion" team considering they came up short in last year's title bid against Missouri in Kansas City.

The day started with both teams fielding their top duos in the doubles opener with #1 Cheryl Bromley and #2 Keith Anderson for Wisconsin going up against #1 Conner Helms and #2 Scott Spradling for Oklahoma on the east lawn. It was a close game, but Wisconsin closed it out for a 7-5 win and a 1-0 lead. On the west lawn, the critical 3v3 matchup between Oklahoma's Dale Jordan and Wisconsin's Drew Kennedy was also under way. Jordan jumped out to a 3-1 lead when he scored H3 and H4 in one stroke for a 3-1 lead. Kennedy hung tough though and battled to get back in it and eventually extended the game to the 13th hoop. There he snagged a 7-6 win and pushed the Wisconsin advantage to 2-0.



Wisconsin captain Cheryl Bromley

The next round saw the #1s up against the #3s. Wisconsin's Bromley took a 7-4 win over Jordan and that pushed the overall advantage to 3-0. It was looking dire for Oklahoma as they potentially faced a 4-0 deficit with Helms locked in a 4-4 battle with Kennedy. But Helms dialed in and found his rhythm to take the final three hoops and put Oklahoma on the board, but still trailing 3-1.

That momentum extended as Oklahoma's Spradling got a 7-4 win against Anderson in the #2 versus #2 match, which closed out the morning action with Wisconsin up 3-2.

The afternoon opened with the 1v2 matchups and Oklahoma's Helms and Wisconsin's Anderson delivered an epic battle on the east lawn that went to the 13th hoop. Anderson took the decider and the Wisconsin advantage extended to two games. On the west lawn though, #2 Spradling countered for Oklahoma with a solid 7-3 win over Bromley.

So the final three games shaped up with Wisconsin leading 4-3. The 2v3 matchups were on deck and Oklahoma needed at least two of the three remaining games to stay alive. Both Anderson for Wisconsin and Spradling held the line as #2s and the test moved to a 5-4 advantage for Wisconsin.

The marquee 1v1 matchup shaped up as a must win for Oklahoma's Helms and a solid gallery with supporters from both squads settled in for top level GC action.

With Bromley having fallen to Spradling 7-3 in her previous game, it looked like the door was open. But Bromley reclaimed her form and came out on fire to work out to a commanding 5-0 lead. Helms fought back to 5-2 and the last two hoops were hotly contested, but Bromley wrapped it up with a clinic on long clears and claimed a 7-2 win to end the test with a 6-4 victory for Wisconsin.

## **THE ROAD TO MILWAUKEE**

To set up the championship showdown, eight teams battled in two different Quad Qualifiers on June 16-17, 2018. In the Midwest Quad Qualifier held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Wisconsin started



with a 9-1 victory over Indiana on day one. That put the team in the championship test on Sunday, June 17, 2018, against Minnesota, which had advanced with a 6-4 win over Illinois on day one.

Wisconsin got off to a fast start in the final and clinched early to secure the Midwest Quad title, but Minnesota won the last two games to produce a close 6-4 final score. Illinois and Indiana had a nice battle for third place with Illinois coming out on top 6-4.

The Central Quad was held in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, at the Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club on the same weekend and featured a Missouri team looking to defend its title as two-time



Oklahoma's Scott Spradling went 9-0 in singles Shield play

Shield champions. The team got off to a good start with a 7-3 victory over Colorado on day one, but the host Oklahoma team also advanced easily over Kansas 7-3. So, Missouri and Oklahoma met on Sunday for a chance to go to the championship in Milwaukee, and they delivered a championship thriller that saw the test stay within one or two games all day long. With Oklahoma leading 5-4, it came down to a battle between #1 Matt Smith for Missouri and #1 Scott Spradling for Oklahoma. The sharpshooters took it to the 13<sup>th</sup> hoop where Spradling delivered a 7-6 win for the home squad. In the third-place matchup, Colorado made the long trip to Oklahoma City pay off as it knocked off Kansas 7-3.

[CHAMPIONSHIP PHOTO GALLERY](#) | [CENTRAL QUAD](#) | [MIDWEST QUAD](#)

## CHAMPIONSHIP NOTES

- The host Milwaukee Croquet Club put on a heck of a spread for the two teams -- plenty of food and drink and a great overall atmosphere.
- No Shield games were double banked, which enhanced the spectator appeal of each game and kept games moving along.
- If the 6-4 score wasn't close enough for you, consider that the hoop count was even closer. Wisconsin had 56, while Oklahoma had 55.

- Scott Spradling went 3-0 in singles and to stay undefeated with a 9-0 record for the year in Shield singles play.
- Cheryl Bromley has now matched Missouri's Steve Jackson for number of Shield games played at 15.
- Wisconsin has now caught up with Missouri for all time test wins as the both now have 4-1 records in Shield play.
- Due to an agreement with the lawn bowling club at the public Milwaukee Croquet Club facility, Foxy hoops were used for the event. They were relatively sturdy but in some cases a bit wide.
- Organizers plan to expand to at least twelve state teams for the 2019 Shield and have now had discussions with eight other teams. It is quite possible that the event will have 16 state teams for 2019. Representatives from interested states should contact Dylan Goodwin at [croquetnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:croquetnetwork@gmail.com)

## CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS

| GAME | WINNER                          |        |      | LOSER                          |        | SCORE |   |
|------|---------------------------------|--------|------|--------------------------------|--------|-------|---|
| 81   | Cheryl BROMLEY / Keith ANDERSON |        | beat | Conner HELMS / Scott SPRADLING |        | 7     | 5 |
| 82   | KENNEDY                         | Drew   | beat | JORDAN                         | Dale   | 7     | 6 |
| 83   | BROMLEY                         | Cheryl | beat | JORDAN                         | Dale   | 7     | 4 |
| 84   | HELMS                           | Conner | beat | KENNEDY                        | Drew   | 7     | 4 |
| 85   | SPRADLING                       | Scott  | beat | ANDERSON                       | Keith  | 7     | 4 |
| 86   | ANDERSON                        | Keith  | beat | HELMS                          | Conner | 7     | 6 |
| 87   | SPRADLING                       | Scott  | beat | BROMLEY                        | Cheryl | 7     | 3 |
| 88   | ANDERSON                        | Keith  | beat | JORDAN                         | Dale   | 7     | 4 |
| 89   | SPRADLING                       | Scott  | beat | KENNEDY                        | Drew   | 7     | 3 |
| 90   | BROMLEY                         | Cheryl | beat | HELMS                          | Conner | 7     | 2 |

## TEAM ORDER

| TEAM      | PLACE |
|-----------|-------|
| WISCONSIN | 1     |
| OKLAHOMA  | 2     |
| MINNESOTA | 3     |
| MISSOURI  | 3     |
| COLORADO  | 5     |
| ILLINOIS  | 5     |
| INDIANA   | 7     |
| KANSAS    | 7     |