



# Cammeray Croquet Club



**May 2024**

<http://www.cammeray-croquet.org.au>

## Tournaments

### CNSW Silver Singles

Ron Humpherson, at the age of 92, won every game in this tournament held at Strathfield.

### Australian GC Open Doubles

Peter Landrebe and Robert Fletcher were partners in this, and reached the semi-finals. The Americans Tom Balding and Steve Morgan won the event.

### Australian GC Open Singles

Peter Landrebe reached the last sixteen in a very competitive field. Three Fletcher brothers reached the semi-finals, and Robert Fletcher won the final against Tom Balding 7-3, 7-4, 7-5. Robert Fletcher is now ranked first in the world in both AC and GC.

### CNSW Gold Singles

Peter and Joanne Brown entered this, and proceeded to demolish the field. Peter pegged out in every game, and Joanne lost only to Peter, pegging out three of her games.

### CNSW Men's Singles

Rob Elliott reached the semi-finals, losing there to Trevor Basset who won the tournament. Mike Hughes had the misfortune to meet Dwyne McCormick (one of Australia's top players, from South Australia) in the quarter-finals, but went on to win the Z event with a fine win against Ken Boal.

### CNSW Women's Singles

Alison Sharpe and Rosie Landrebe dominated this event, winning all their block games. Rosie's only losses were to Alison in the final, but she took a game off Alison in the best-of-three match.

Joanne Brown played well, beating Tricia Devlin in the block – but losing to the bottom-ranked player when a win would have taken her into the semi-finals.

## Upcoming Tournaments

The NSW Pennants begins at the end of May; Cammeray has two bronze teams and an open handicap team in this.

Red Bronze Team: Malcolm Sheldon (Captain) Rob Barrie Marg Barrie Gail Parrott

Blue Bronze Team: Warren Yates (Captain) Mary Goldsack Bronwyn McGrane Sue Nicholas

Reserves: Michelle Nixon Kristin Kool-Clarke Heather Sherlock

Open Handicap Team: Neil Hardie Michael Strickland Joanne Brown Graham Maynard

Reserves: Marg O'Brien Peter Brown Chris Brown

CNSW Platinum Singles is at EDSACC 4th to 6th June.

CNSW Bronze Brooch will be at Cammeray 22nd to 24th July.

## The Out Player

The only two popular games where one player has to sit out while the opponent scores lots of points are snooker and croquet. The following is an article from The Guardian of 27 April about the problems of being an out-player in snooker. It also applies to croquet! Most of us have experienced sitting out watching our opponent making a good break, knowing that it was our poor shot that led to this.

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As the World Snooker Championship heats up, there is nothing that quite mirrors the torture and solitude of The Chair.

Ding Junhui throws back his head and allows his eyes to droop closed for a few seconds. Opens them. Closes them. Finally, with a kind of resignation, opens them again. Ruffles the hair at his temples with both hands, as if trying to shake himself awake. Meanwhile, oblivious to any of this, his opponent Jack Lisowski continues to pot balls and rack up points: just a few feet away and yet in an entirely different world.

Welcome to the loneliest seat in sport. For the next minutes, perhaps even hours, this is your whole world and its horizons are extremely limited. You get a couple of bottles of water and a small table. You can't leave. You can't make a sound. No teammates or coach for solace. No way of knowing when you can get up again. Your opponent is busily clearing the table, playing you out of the frame. And – the worst part – it's usually your own fault that you're sitting there.

Almost all sports incorporate moments of quiet time: breaks, lulls, pauses in the action. But there is nothing that quite mirrors the elaborate torture, the solitude and powerlessness, of The Chair. It is, according to seven-time world champion Stephen Hendry, "what sets snooker apart from any other sport. You're absolutely trapped. It's a horrible feeling."

The average snooker player will spend, give or take, half their career sitting in The Chair. How do they cope? What does it do to their focus, their patience, their sanity? And – perhaps most mundanely of all – what on earth are they thinking about?

"It can be the most random things," says Mark Allen, the world No 3. "What I'm having for dinner. What I have left on the shopping list. Random, random things. Really, you should be concentrating on the task at hand. But sometimes matches and sessions can be so long, you need to let your mind wander a little."

The six-time world champion Steve Davis says: "You're aware of crisp packets. The granny in the front row with a bag of boiled sweets who decides to open one carefully because she thinks it's going to make less noise. But it makes more." .....

Of all snooker's greats, it is O'Sullivan who has perhaps the most polarised relationship with The Chair. "The first time I have ever felt absolutely helpless at a snooker table," was how Ricky Walden described their encounter at the 2014 Masters, in which O'Sullivan dispatched a world record 556 points without reply. But O'Sullivan has often struggled when marooned in The Chair himself. Earlier in his career he tried putting a towel on his head to block out external thoughts. When referees banned him from doing that, he began taking a spoon into the arena and counting the dots in the pattern on the handle.

For players already predisposed that way, the void of the chair can unleash a torrent of negative thoughts. In recent years Selby, the four-time world champion, has begun to speak more candidly about the mental health struggles that have afflicted him throughout his career. "It wasn't so much the actual playing that was difficult, more the sitting in your seat," he said in 2022. "When I was at the table I had things to keep the mind active. But sitting in my chair, you're in your own headspace, thinking about all the rest."

So what, at a psychological level, is going on here? "Our brain craves certainty and control," says Jeremy Snape, a former England cricketer and now a sports psychologist who hosts the Inside the Mind of Champions podcast. "In their absence, we try to fill the gaps. As for the self-talk, our brain wants us to keep safe. So we often hear the inner

critic, preparing us to lose. The champions are able to reframe the pressure and negativity to the things in their control.”

The problem is that The Chair can easily become a self-propheying spiral. “When you’re always sitting back in your chair as a result of a mistake, you have to process that mistake,” says the veteran Dominic Dale, who lost his first-round match 10-1 to Kyren Wilson. “It shatters your concentration. It takes you out of the zone.”

Davis learned his game in an earlier era when big breaks were rarer, mistakes not so brutally punished, plentiful booze and cigarettes to balm the tedium. Even so, he still had to learn techniques to maintain his focus. “The longer you sit on your chair stewing, the more you can go off the boil,” he says. “So over the years I used to write myself a note with a swing thought. A coaching aid. ‘Keep your head still’; ‘Finish the shot off’; ‘Get your bridge closer’. Sometimes it worked. Other times I got beat, went back and tore the note into a million shreds.” .....

For Wilson, who takes on Joe O’Connor in the second round on Saturday evening, body language is key. Herein lies the strange duality of The Chair: you’re being seen without being watched. Both part of the action and utterly extrinsic to it. “You need to be in the present,” he says. “You know people are watching, so you always need to send positive messages. If you’re sat there sulking, you’re only going to inspire your future opponents.” .....

So yes, this is a kind of loneliness. But a gilded and privileged kind of loneliness, the sort of loneliness that feels like a reward as well as a curse. Dale is 52 and fought through two rounds of qualifying to reach the world championship for the first time in a decade. “When I last played the Crucible, I was much more competitive,” he says. “I still had ambition and desire. When you get to your 40s and 50s, you understand that you’re doing your best. If it isn’t good enough, don’t worry about it.”

And so as he sat in his chair, watching Wilson clear up the last few balls to win the match, Dale smiled, thinking how far he had come. “Some great players had to qualify,” he says. “Stephen Maguire, Stuart Bingham. Even Neil Robertson didn’t make it. So I’m proud of myself. I understand that I might not ever get the chance to play here again.

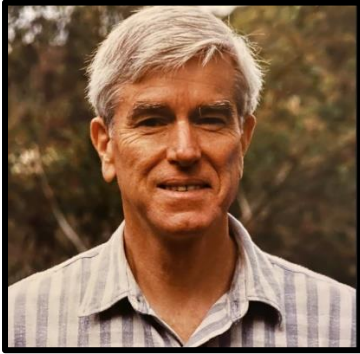
“Never,” he says by way of conclusion, “forget the beauty of the game of snooker.”

(My thanks to David Stanton for sending me this article).

## The Beauty of Croquet

When we were watching a game of croquet, Charles Britton of Marrickville commented that a well-played game of Association croquet had an elegance and a logic to it that reminded him of the music of Johan Sebastian Bach.

## Vale Ray Kidd



**Ray Kidd**



**Ray as a member of our bronze pennants team**

Ray died peacefully at Northern Beaches Hospital on May 6 following a fall then contracting Covid and pneumonia. He lived independently in a Belrose retirement village and celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with family and friends last February. Ray spent his childhood in regional NSW where his father was a bank manager with the National Bank. The family settled in Sydney in 1946 and Ray finished his schooling at North Sydney Boys High School. He went on to complete a Pharmacy degree at The University of Sydney, then following a year of National Service travelled to the UK where he worked as a pharmacist between many trips to continental Europe. On returning to Australia in the early sixties he established his own pharmacy business in Hornsby. He and his wife Joan built their dream home in Killarney Heights and Ray relocated his business to Killarney Heights shopping centre. He was well known and well-loved as the local Chemist, operating the business until he retired in 2010. Ray loved the outdoors. He was one of the founders of Turnak Ski Lodge in Guthega and was still skiing at age 85. In addition to skiing Ray was a regular in a couple of kayaking groups that made weekly explorations of Sydney's waterways. When lifting his kayak off his car got beyond him, he joined the group for their end of trip coffee. From an early age Ray liked to paint and he has passed on to his family an impressive collection of paintings inspired by his time in the 'bush'. Ray took up Croquet in 2014 and played in several of Cammeray's Bronze Pennants teams. He was also a regular Tuesday afternoon player.