



Cammeray Croquet Club



September 2024

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

Club News

Annual Maintenance: The lawns will be out of action for annual maintenance for three weeks from 8th December.

Alan Walsh intends to move Lawn 1 northwards to provide a bigger gap between lawns.

New Shed: The concrete slab is in place. The shed will be erected at the end of September.

Sunshades: We have received the Stronger Communities grant. Malcolm Sheldon will project manage installation of sunshades in mid-October after consulting Alan Walsh and the Club gardening team about the location.

SuperSopper: The absorbent roll has been replaced.

Christmas Party: The club Christmas party will be on December 8th

New Members: We welcome the following new members to the club:

Yvonne Brennan, Alan Jackman, Kathryn Fitzhenry, Suzy Flowers and Torben Albaek. Torben is a member of Chatswood, and a regular player in tournaments.

Atlassian Visit:



The well-known software company Atlassian arranged a visit to the club to play croquet, and were delighted with their experience. John Potter did a fine job in guiding them. Their comments were: *“Thank you so much for helping me organise a great afternoon out for our team, everyone really loved it, and John was an awesome host. It was such a fun experience, and I think there were quite a few people who liked it a lot more than they were expecting, “*

Beginner Lessons by Michael Strickland



Some of our latest Wednesday beginners – look out for them, and look after them!

Many club members may be unfamiliar with the course of Beginner Lessons which we offer to anyone interested in playing our game. (And, of course, some may be quite happy to remain unfamiliar!)

But your Newsletter editor, who was in fact a co-author (along with the late Stephen Howes) of the six-lesson beginner program which we have now followed for more than ten years, and who himself conducted that course for many of those years, decided that I should attempt this explanation of what the program involves, and what is happening.

A little history

It has long been recognised that Association Croquet is not a simple game for the uninitiated, and certainly not as straightforward as Golf Croquet. (Some have been heard to liken the difference to that between chess and draughts.) So, it would be quite inappropriate to push new members (even those with experience of GC) straight into playing AC with established players. It would be unfair to both. It was therefore decided many years ago, that new members who had not already acquired an AC handicap at another club should be required to complete a beginner course, before joining any regular club sessions.

Over the past couple of years, we have had no shortage of interest from people wanting to have a go at the game, and we have consistently had classes of six or eight, on a Wednesday afternoon, and Ian Lucas has had much the same on a Saturday morning. But even those encouraging numbers have sadly not yielded the boost in membership that might be expected. *Why?*

One reason given by even quite promising beginners is that they simply don't have the time to devote to it. And we can sympathise. It *is* very time-consuming while one is learning. One lesson each week is not nearly enough. And a couple more sessions of practice are barely sufficient to cement the foundation skills, let alone develop a worthwhile addiction to the game.

So, what are we doing?

We are now placing much more emphasis on the commitment required, and offering all beginners a membership which will enable them to come and practise whenever a court is free.

We also suggest some very simple exercises which they can use when practising on their own. (And we stress that work or any other distractions do need to be kept in proportion!)

And what does the course involve?

When I first had any instruction in the game (not at Cammeray!) I found myself being asked to try various two-ball (*ie* croquet) shots. But I was left wondering why anyone would want to play a 'roll' of any description! I can recall spending many hours just hitting on my own, or in designated 'Bronze' sessions, but it was not until much later that someone was kind enough to show me the 'four ball break' – and the proverbial 'light bulb' was switched on.

So, even at the conclusion of the very first lesson in the Cammeray course, after explaining how the lawn is laid out, and how the game compares with billiards or snooker (in that just one player at a time is attempting to make a break), I always offer a demonstration of just how it is possible to run all twelve hoops in a single turn. I usually find that running three or four is sufficient to get the idea across (and avoid too much embarrassment!). But I see it as important to be able to envision the bigger picture, before getting to grips with the constituent brushstrokes.

The course itself relies on the basic ingredients of (1) explanation, (2) demonstration, and (3) 'learning by doing', with a very strong emphasis on the latter. And it is carefully staged. A copy of all six lessons can be found on the Club website.

What else can we say?

Cammeray is one of the strongest Association Croquet playing clubs in NSW, but no club can remain strong for any length of time without knowledge and experience being passed down by senior players, not just to beginners, but to anyone looking to improve. We are blessed with a number of State players who continue to offer time and effort in this direction. And even on an informal basis, during our regular 'friendly' games, I can attest to receiving plenty of help (solicited and unsolicited!) from senior players.

I would also urge anyone who has some understanding of the game, to get involved in coaching or mentoring. Teaching anything requires one to make a close examination of the subject matter, and to think about what is important. There is no doubt in my mind that thinking about the lessons we run, and analysing the skills involved, has enabled me to recognise some of the mistakes I make – even if it doesn't stop my making them!

And with the imminent return of 'daylight saving', I am hopeful that we shall be able to revive the very successful Hi-Lo, Alternate Stroke, doubles games on Tuesday evenings. These are very social occasions, involving the pairing of an experienced player with one less experienced, in a game of doubles, with the latter being guided round the lawn by the former – usually concluding with a little refreshment.

A final plea ...

It has been very pleasing to see that, in recent times, not only has the Club purchased some new mallets for occasional use, but that our stock has been augmented by donations from members who have realised that they don't really need all the mallets they have acquired along the way. So, I conclude with a 'thank you' to those who have done so, and a request for others to consider making a similar offering of their old wares.

Tournaments

Golf croquet:

The Australian Men's Singles final was between Robert and Malcolm Fletcher, with Robert winning. In the Women's Singles our member Alison Sharpe won.

In the Golf Croquet Interstate Shield, Cammeray had two members of the NSW team – Rosie Landrebe and Alison Sharpe. In a nail-biting finish, NSW won the shield in the last game against Western Australia, where the two teams finished equal on matches, equal on games, and NSW had 224 hoops to WA's 216. Congratulations to our NSW team!

CNSW Open Doubles

Rob Elliott, partnered by Mike Gidding of Ballina, won this, winning every game.

Third place was between Jim Nicholls and Joanne Brown, Peter Landrebe and Rob Barrie, and Paul Skvorc and Wafik Nassif, who all won three games out of six. Joanne and Jim had the best net hoops.

Manly Seabreeze

This is always a popular event for Cammeray members, and this year thirteen of us were competing. One of our members (also a member of Manly) is David Gibson, who does a superb job of organizing the tournament, and does much of the refereeing.



David Gibson



Bronwyn McGrane



Sandra Colquhoun (L)

The top block was won by Chris Brown, who won all his games; the runner-up was Paul Skvorc. In the 3rd Block Sandra Colquhoun was runner-up on hoops to Blake Edwards. In the 4th Block Bronwyn McGrane was runner-up on a hoop count-back.



In the Doubles, Doubles A was won by Chris and Joanne Brown; in Doubles B Bronwyn and David McGrane were runners-up.

The trophies were presented by the CEO of Belle properties who sponsored the tournament.

Silver brooch

This was played at Cammeray in good weather. David McGrane won the tournament.



David McGrane

NSW Open Singles AC

Stephen Pearce of Canberra won the final against the colourful Callum Hyland. Cammeray had three players in this, but none reached the knockout. Rob Elliott won the plate.

Upcoming Tournaments

NSW Selectors Invitation 28-29 September – Paul Skvorc , Mike Hughes

Australian Presidents AC Eights 4-10 October – Jo Brown

NSW ACA Bronze Medal 26-27 October – Peter and Rosemary Landrebe, Rob Elliott

Kiwi Social Croquet Tour

Attached is information on a croquet tour of New Zealand. We think it is golf croquet, but are happy to spread the word about croquet.