



Cammeray Croquet Club



October 2024

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

Christmas Party

The club Christmas Party will be on Sunday 8th December from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The cost is \$25, payment by direct deposit by 1st December. Partners welcome.

Lawn Closure

Our lawns will be closed for annual maintenance from Monday 9 December onwards, extending at least until Christmas. The booking sheet will continue to display the usual sessions, but the maximum attendance will be set to zero. Non-zero limits will be restored once the lawns re-open. We have an informal arrangement with Manly that Cammeray members are welcome to play there when our lawns are closed.

Umpiring Course

Neil Hardie will be running an umpiring course at Cammeray – two 2-hour sessions 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday 3rd December, and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday 6th December. Anyone interested should contact Neil at nhardie@ozemail.com.au.

At present it is not possible to become accredited as an umpire as the NSW accreditation system is non-operational – we have no State Director of Refereeing, and no examining referees in Sydney. However, participants will become 'suitable persons' who are capable of umpiring in tournaments.

Tournaments

NSW Selectors Invitation 28-29 September – Paul Skvorc came third

Australian Presidents AC Eights 4-10 October – Jo Brown came third in the 3rd Eight

NSW ACA Bronze Medal 26-27 October – Rob Elliott came third in a tough field; Paul Skvorc also competed

Cammeray Bronze Championship – the final match was finally played, which Bronwyn McGrane won – so she is the Cammeray Bronze Champion, with Rob Barrie the runner-up

Cammeray Club Championship – a hotly contested tournament this year. In Block A Chris Brown won, with Alan Walsh runner-up; in Block B Steve Miles won, with Mike Hughes runner-up. In the semi-finals, Chris beat Mike, and Alan beat Steve, so the final is between Chris Brown and Alan Walsh

Cammeray Silver Championship and **Cammeray Platinum Championship** have both started, with five players in each

GC World Championships Chesapeake Bay Croquet Club, Virginia, USA – Rob Fletcher was the outstanding player, winning every match easily, but lost form dramatically in the final and lost to American Blake Fields

Building our Membership by Warren Yates

Every year we get lots of website requests from people who would like to take up Croquet. Sadly, only a small fraction of those enquiring stick with the process right through to becoming members and playing at our regular social game sessions.

This is perhaps understandable. Many enquiries come from people whose friends play 'Croquet' but chances are it is GC. When they discover our focus is on AC with its much greater required investment in lessons and practice, they drift away.

We can't be complacent about this. We need to keep our membership at a healthy level. With two lawns our club could easily support a membership of 100. In the last few years, it has hovered between 60 and 70, with the annual influx just matching the non-renewals.

At present we are fortunate to have both Ian Lucas and Michael Strickland running six lesson AC courses almost back-to-back on Saturday mornings and Wednesday afternoons throughout the year.

Here are some suggestions for increasing the return on investment of Ian and Michael's volunteer time.

All of us could encourage AC players from other clubs to join Cammeray as a second Club. This will give us new active members without the need for lessons.

All of us could introduce our own friends to AC. Taking them on the lawns for a few sessions, but only suggesting that they sign up to lessons if they show enthusiasm for AC, and at least some aptitude.

Respond immediately to website enquiries with an invitation to a small group try-out session. Only then asking them whether they want to commit further, by undertaking the lessons.

Offer membership to people doing the lessons so they can come and practice at any time.

Provide individualised support for new members through the transition from completion of the lessons to playing at regular social sessions. Mentored games (especially for groups of friends who have done the lessons together) and Hi-Lo alternate stroke doubles games are useful mechanisms.

Something for us all to think about – how best to fill a one-hour try-out session whose aim was to allow web-enquirers to decide whether AC really was for them.

Here is one suggestion

How to hold mallet and strike ball

Some practice at ball placement and hoop running

The objective of AC and GC: putting balls through hoops in a certain order

The break – key difference between AC and GC

The croquet stroke and how it makes a break possible

The roquet, croquet, continuation sequence

Demonstration of how this sequence can maintain a 4 ball break.

The challenge of the croquet shot – deciding where you want two balls to end up and getting them there accurately (why lessons are needed!)

The rush as a way of optimally locating the croquet shot

Finish with a game of GC

The Pirie Poke

The Pirie Poke is an innovative way of getting a ball through a hoop without making a double-tap. It is used when the ball is close to the hoop leg and at an acute angle. It was invented by Vern Potter (John Potter's father and Warren Yates' father-in-law) and John Riches (a well-known coach) when they were playing at Port Pirie thirty years ago.

It is difficult to play the shot without committing a fault; you can watch the video at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTXZeQgmz68 to see how it is played, and the problems attached.

Warren has sent me an intriguing video for a theatre act in Finland based on the Pirie Poke:

You can watch the act here <https://vimeo.com/647290642>

It comes with this description

Two old rivals meet again to test their skills against each other in a game of croquet. In the heat of the battle, the rules and the etiquette are forgotten, and the mallets and the players end up flying across the lawn

Pirie Poke in croquet: A shot invented by John Riches and Dr. Vern Potter while playing at Port Pirie in South Australia. It involves hitting the striker's ball forward by swinging the mallet backward (yes, it is indeed possible!), and is used when running a hoop with a ball that is in contact with a hoop-leg and at a very acute angle. -The Croquet Association, UK



