



Cammeray Croquet Club



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

Victory at the Eire Cup – the Debutante’s Perspective

By Joanne Brown

Friday the 10th of March, my first visit to the lawns of Cairnlea, Croquet Victoria’s headquarters ... what a vista! Twelve lawns full of AC players, some players competing in the final stages of the Gold Medal eventually won by Greg Hill of Victoria, others starting their first games in the Australian Men’s and Women’s singles which were scheduled to commence the next day, but with so many entries some games were brought forward, and the rest of us were just trying to get a feel for the lawns and tight, firm hoops before our first games the next day. It turns out, it takes more than a couple of hours on the lawns to get used to their distinctive characteristics!



Cairnlea, with its twelve lawns

Cammeray was well-represented at the Men’s and Women’s singles – Alison Sharpe, Rosie Landrebe, Barbara McDonald and myself in the women’s, and Mike Hughes, Peter Landrebe, Chris Lavina and Alan Walsh in the Men’s. Alison won the Z in the Women’s, Peter won the Y in the Men’s, and Rosie made it through to the final of the Women’s. Those of us that didn’t make it into any of the finals on the Tuesday, had the privilege of watching some excellent croquet. The highlight for me was having front row seats for the Women’s and Men’s finals being fought out by our very own Rosie and Queensland’s Yuni Rowell in the Women’s, and Robert and Malcolm Fletcher in the Men’s. Both finals went to three games with Robert getting up in the Men’s and Yuni in the Women’s. Congratulations to all our members for their efforts in the Men’s and Women’s Singles, especially Rosie who fought hard only to be pipped at the post in the Women’s final.



Rosie in the final of the women’s singles



Peter and Joanne – partners in the Eire Cup doubles

For me, those first few days were a chance to get some practice on the lawns before the main event, the Eire Cup, to be contested by all six States, unlike last year when Tasmania and Western Australia were prevented from coming to Sydney because of COVID restrictions.

There were five days of interstate competition, with a test against another state being played each day. Each test consisted of 4 mixed doubles games and 16 singles games.

NSW was represented by Peter Landrebe, Trevor Bassett, Tim Murphy, Stephen Pearce, Alison Sharpe, Rosie Landrebe, Kerri-Ann Organ and the debutante, me. Our reserves and team manager, Diane Scott, Sue Eldridge-Smith and Stephen Richards provided essential support during the whole campaign, from training sessions starting in December 2022 to the final day of play.

The camaraderie in Team NSW was strong throughout.

And so, the games began on Wednesday 15 March.

Day 1 - NSW v Western Australia – NSW 16, WA 4

Day 2 – NSW v South Australia – NSW 16, SA 4

Day 3 – NSW v Tasmania – NSW 16, Tas 4

Day 4 – NSW v Queensland – NSW 16, Qld 4

The first four days were outstanding for NSW, but they were pretty good for Victoria too. We had four out of four wins and so did the Victorians. We needed to win our last test to take the Trophy.

So, I guess you know the final outcome, the title of this article kind of gives it away, but what some of you don't know is how we got there in the end.

Day 5, NSW v Victoria, two games all after the mixed doubles, six games all after the first round of singles. My last singles match was the third last to finish. I went down to Victoria's Mignon Johnston. I ran to the first NSW player I could find and asked the state of play. After 18 games – NSW 9, Victoria 9 – but it looked like Stephen Pearce was ahead against Chris Grant, and Pete Landrebe was still in play against Greg Hill.

And then Chris Grant, Victoria's Captain made an unbelievable two-ball break to steal victory from the jaws of defeat – NSW 9, Victoria 10.

The only path left to victory was to win that last game and be ahead of Victoria on net hoops. Our net hoops for the last test were looking good – 307 to 232 after 19 games – so a win in the last game would get us there.

And so, it came down to the final stages of the last game of the tournament. We all gathered around lawn 6 where Greg was making a break to the peg with green, time had gone, Pete had one more turn. Greg was ahead and trying to get as many points on the board as possible to give himself a good lead. He took green to the peg and pegged it out. State of the game? Victoria had brown on 4-back and green in the box, NSW had white on 4-back, pink on hoop 6 and a lift, with the white ball sitting around peg-high towards the west boundary and brown north-west of 1-back.

I can't tell you exactly how Pete was feeling in that moment as he considered his options, but I am sure he was planning the shots he would take to set up a 3-ball break to the peg, and I am certain he was focused on the task at hand. However, I can tell you that the rest of the NSW team was feeling anxious, hopeful, nervous, glad it was Pete out there, and did I say anxious ... the tension was unbearable!

Pete picks up pink and heads to A-baulk, carefully lines up a double with white and brown ... sharp intake of breath by the entire NSW team as they watch Pete strike, the pink ball travels past white, no roquet, but then the beautiful sound of pink roqueting brown and cutting it to the north-east of 1-back. Team NSW erupts in cheers. Pete takes-off to white, cut-rushes it towards 6, long approach and longish hoop, runs 6 to the north boundary – more cheers from NSW, more nervous tension, more hope.

Pete roquets white and cuts it over towards 1-back. He considers his options with both brown and white at 1-back and no pioneer at 2-back, and then he does "The Thing". Some of you know what "The Thing" is, but I'll take you

through it for the uninitiated. Pete gently and accurately cut-rushes brown into the jaws of 1-back, he places pink so that the croquet shot will put both balls through the hoop, he plays a beautiful stop-shot sending brown south as a 2-back pioneer and stopping pink near white (more cheering from team NSW), he roquets white and the 3-ball break continues. I won't take you through the whole break, but needless to say, there were some difficult hoops (aren't they all at Cairnlea), and some difficult roquets, there was loud cheering from NSW with each hoop that was run, and we were all whispering "come on Pete" "you can do it Pete" as he lined up every shot.

Eventually, Pete approaches rover using brown, having left white not far from 4-back. He roquets brown and considers where he should leave it so as not to wire it from white, but making it difficult for brown to roquet white, because once he pegs out pink, it's golden hoop time, with both brown and white for 4-back.

Thick take-off back to white, putting brown in a perfect spot, gentle roquet and perfect take-off to the peg, leaving white in a runnable position in front of 4-back. Pink is pegged out – Victoria box and 4-back, NSW box and 4-back, and we wait for Greg to take his shot at white from up near A-baulk. Silence falls over Cairnlea, Greg shoots, brown just misses white and bounces off the hoop towards the east boundary. Pete walks on, carefully and slowly lines up the hoop, strikes and white runs 4-back. NSW wins! Team NSW goes crazy! Lots of cheering, some tears flowing, we are all hugging each other and rushing to congratulate Pete. What a moment, one I will never forget. An incredible Captain's knock to seal the Trophy for NSW.



Congratulations for Peter Landrebe after his amazing break to win the Eire Cup

I can honestly say that being part of the NSW Eire Cup team was an incredible experience. The strong bond within the team, the support given and received by every team member, the fight to win, the laughter and fun, the pride in each other, the opportunity to meet and play so many different players from around Australia, it was an experience like no other, topped off with the final victory to take home the Trophy.

Congratulations NSW, winners of the Eire Cup 2023!



The NSW Eire Cup team: Trevor Bassett, Rosie Landrebe, Di Scott, Kerry-Ann Organ, Stephen Richards, Peter Landrebe, Stephen Pearce, Joanne Brown, Alison Sharpe, Tim Murphy

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Footnote:

Performance of the Cammeray Members in the 2023 Eire Cup:

	Doubles (out of 5)	Singles (out of 10)
Peter Landrebe	4	10
Alison Sharpe	5	10
Rosie Landrebe	2	9
Joanne Brown	4	4

The Australian Men’s and Women’s Singles

The lawns at Cairnlea were very difficult, with tight hoops, fast lawns, severe roll-offs and various bumps; so the scores were very low – except for the Fletchers, where Robert and Malcolm pegged-out every time and did several triple peels. In the final, Robert prevailed 3-26TP, 26-9, 26TP-7. Chris Lavina reached the plate finals, and Peter Landrebe won the Y event.

In the women’s singles final, Rosie Landrebe won the first game against Yuni Rowell of Queensland, lost the second by a single hoop – 13-14 – and then lost the third game. Alison Sharpe won the Z-event; and Barbara McDonald reached the plate finals.

The Mosman Bash

Many Cammeray players entered the Mosman Bash, and our results were good. Chris Brown won the top block, winning four of his five games; David SurrIDGE narrowly lost the second block on a hoop count-back to Paul Skvorc of Cooks River; and Margaret O’Brien came second to Ron Humpherson in the third block.



Chris Brown and Michael Strickland



Margaret O'Brien



Graham Maynard

Cammeray Players in the Mosman Bash

The Cammeray Beginners' Tournament

We have been running a very interesting Beginner Tournament this year. Each game is allotted a mentor, who advises the current player on what shot to play, tactics, and, if necessary, how to play the shot. Several beginners have commented how useful they find this format, and how much they have learned. There were seven entries in the tournament, which is excellent.



Malcolm Sheldon helping Margaret Barrie



Sue Nicholas mentoring Liz Urwin



Graham Maynard advising Heather Sherlock

There are still a few games to finish, but the main contenders for the title are Robert Barrie, Margaret Barrie and Heather Sherlock.

Our thanks to the following members who have helped with mentoring and refereeing:

Mike Hughes, Michael Strickland, David Stanton, Neil Hardie, Malcolm Sheldon, Sue Nicholas, Steve Miles, Warren Yates, Graham Maynard.

We also thank Joanne Brown for organising this event, and Sue Nicholas for taking over the organisation when Joanne headed off to the Australian Singles and the Eire Cup. It has taken a great deal of effort!

Upcoming Tournaments

Enter one of the exciting tournaments which are being run in the next few weeks; these include:

CNSW Bronze Singles – Killara 11-14 April

CNSW Silver Singles – Strathfield 2-5 May

CNSW Gold Singles – Cammeray 9-12 May

CNSW Men's Open Singles – Tempe 28-30 April