



Cammeray Croquet Club



NEWSLETTER September 2015

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

Results

NSW Pennant Competitions

Last month we reported on the Bronze and Silver Pennant teams' efforts (mixed success, in case you can't recall) and we noted that the final of the Gold competition was still unresolved.

The Cammeray team of **David Stanton**, **Annette du Preez**, **Barbara McDonald**, and **Steve Miles** had lost 0-3 when they played in Maitland, but had then turned the tables completely by winning 3-0 at Cammeray – leading to a final on the 'neutral' ground of Tempe. Sadly, things did not go according to plan.

The final games had to be pegged down after the loss of too much time due to foul weather on 16th July. The rescheduled date of 11th August also had to be abandoned owing to the indisposition of one of the Maitland players. At the time of writing, the matter is still unresolved, and may well remain so ... but watch this space!

NSW Champion of Champions

In the meantime, it is our pleasure to report that the annual NSW "Champion of Champions" trophy has been won by Cammeray's **Alan Walsh** – unbeaten in the nine games he had to play against other Club Champions. Another great effort, Alan!



NSW Bronze Brooch

Each of the State "Brooch" competitions is aimed at an overlapping range of handicaps – in this case from 11 up to 16. **Marg O'Brien** succeeded in winning her Block, and upholding the honour of the Club, but sadly progressed no further. [Well done, but no picture this time, Marg!]

NSW Selectors' 6



Mike Hughes, finished top of the six, with four wins out of five, aided by an unfortunate occurrence in one game, when his opponent attempted to peg his ball out without having run Rover. And in the final, Mike managed to prevail against the one player who had beaten him in the block games. So well done, thou good and faithful servant of the Club!

Those who take an interest in these things (!) may like to know that for all his efforts, Mike increased his Handicap Index by one measly point. This was of course 'level play', and playing off 0 (or scratch) Mike found himself the lowest handicap player in the field.

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Editorial

If anyone were mildly perturbed by the suggestion last month that croquet (in the UK) would not survive to 2037 unless young people took the game up – relax!

The silliness of that argument has been equally roundly condemned by far more astute writers in the old country, where croquet is in fact pretty healthy. We can safely look forward to the game being played, over there at least, for many years to come. [Phew!]

On the local front, August was shaping up to be what we in the trade describe as a 'slow news month' – code for 'things may have been happening; we just haven't made much effort to find out what'.

But in fact we have garnered several scraps with which to keep you informed, along with some meatier stuff which may enlighten you, and possibly even entertain you. So all is not lost. Read on ...

... comment on this issue, and/or contribution to the next, can be sent to ...
Michael Strickland
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NSW Selectors' 4

No success to report for Cammeray players, but it is of interest to note that two players were tied for the top spot in the Block after a double round-robin. Each had three wins, each had the same net hoop score, and when it came to 'head to head' or 'who beat whom?' they could both claim a win against the other. The tournament regulations had no answer. So ... honours really even.

And forthcoming events ...

Oktoberfest Alternate Shot Doubles

(Sounds like an indoor event for the Concordia Club!) But this is in fact a new croquet competition, for which we have to thank our President in his role as Chair of the CNSW Tournament Committee, and it will be held at Tempe on dates to be advised.

NSW Open Singles

I am asked to mention that the NSW Open Singles competition will be held over the weekend of Friday 30th October to Monday 2nd November. Depending on the number of entries, the format is likely to be a round-robin, followed by knock-out rounds to a final, with a plate competition to boot. Aspiring players are encouraged to enter. Even being beaten by better players is a good learning experience.

The Australian Open

And the Australian Open championships will be played at Cairnlea in Victoria, from Saturday 14th to Sunday 22nd November, with the Doubles competition on the weekend of 14th and 15th, followed by the Singles, from Monday 16th to Sunday 22nd.

The format is blocks of around 8 over the first 2 days, followed by knockout or (for those who don't qualify) plate play. It is very likely all play will be at Cairnlea, so you can watch the best play when you are not playing. Plate standard is likely to be handicaps about zero up. And if there is interest, share accommodation can probably be arranged. Contact Mike Hughes: mike.hughes2@bigpond.com

Serious Stuff

1 Who or what was the original Peel?

As one who has yet to be inducted into the mysteries of the art, your correspondent was fascinated to discover that the term 'peel' was coined as far back as the mid-19th Century. It seems to have been named after one of the game's first recorded British Open champions – Walter Hayward Peel, who won the title in 1868, at Moreton-in-the-Marsh, in Gloucestershire.

The game was of course very different then, but Peel's proficiency at steering another ball through its hoop set him far above his contemporaries. It is said that in one game he completed a straight run of five consecutive 'peels' (as they soon became known).

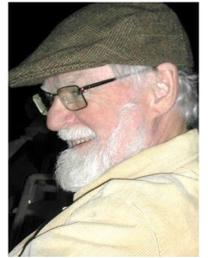
In later life, Peel was a driving force in the establishment of the original Croquet Association (the United All England CA).

How do we know all this? From recent reading of a very fine book – *Complete Croquet (A Guide to Skills, Tactics, and Strategy)* written by James Hawkins, and published by The Crowood Press of Wiltshire, UK. Highly recommended. Go to www.crowood.com

Croquet Etiquette

[The third in a series of articles by **Neil Hardie**, with due acknowledgment of the Oxford website.]

And congratulations are due on Neil's appointment by CNSW as Director of Refereeing for AC!



Time-wasting

Every player has a duty to play at a reasonable speed. There will be times when a player has to think through a strategy, or take time lining up a difficult shot; but swinging the mallet to and fro for half a minute, or gazing around at length when the next shot is obvious, must be avoided.

Allowances are made for new players who are still learning the basic tactics, but as players gain experience they should be able to speed up their game. Slow play is particularly unfair when a player has a lot of bisques against a better player, and uses up most of the game-time with their bisques, so the opponent does not get a fair share of the time.

Law 49 says: *The striker must position the balls and play his strokes with reasonable despatch. The adversary should anticipate as far as possible with which ball he will play next, so that he may waste no time in approaching it at the start of his turn. In handicap play, the striker must indicate promptly at the end of his turn whether or not he intends to play a half-bisque or bisque. In doubles play, time must not be wasted in prolonged discussion or instruction.*

The Official Rulings on the Laws of Croquet (ORLC) tell us: *A nine-hoop break with a leave consists of 70 strokes and can generally be completed in 12 to 25 minutes, giving an average time per stroke of between 10 and 20 seconds. In practice, a referee is unlikely to take action until the average duration rises to 30 seconds per stroke (45 minutes for an all-round break) and should also be influenced by the tactical difficulties and lawn conditions that the striker faces. It may be argued that players differ greatly in their natural rhythms and that croquet is a game intended to be played with care. Nonetheless, if a time-limit is in operation, the adversary is entitled to consideration. It is also worthy of note that some extraordinary accelerations in the pace of play have been seen in apparently slow players when a slender lead has become a deficit.*



It seems to be very important to take a little time lining up the peel ...



... but sometimes things just don't go to plan.

2 Why play Croquet?

Readers of these pages would doubtless be surprised that anyone would need to ask such a question. But it seems to be one that has exercised the mind of an aspiring academic at Edinburgh University by the name of Fergus McInnes – no doubt influenced by Socrates' assertion that 'the unexamined life is not worth living'. In a fascinating website (google *Fergus's Brain Online!*) he offers:

- A The combination of intellectual puzzle-solving ... with an element of physical activity in which skills such as precision and delicacy of touch come into play;
- B The company – croquet players tend to be intelligent positive thinkers, and possessed of a good sense of humour; and
- C Croquet clubs and lawns are usually pleasant places to be.

All well and good, I hear you say, if fairly trite. But Fergus then ventures a 'moral' viewpoint:

"How can I justify spending hours, or indeed whole days, playing a game while the world has such great and pressing needs, such suffering to be relieved or prevented, and when even from a selfish perspective I need to earn a living and should arguably therefore be doing something more useful with my time?" [Wow!]

And, in response, he comments on the benefits of croquet:

"I find that playing croquet encourages a positive attitude to life, which helps me in almost everything; more specifically it encourages a "can-do", "have-a-go" response to problems, and an attitude of not giving up. Even when the opponent has got both balls to the peg, and I haven't started scoring yet, I can still win: all it takes is two good breaks."

So there you have it ... sorry Douglas Adams, the meaning of life is not 42, after all ... it's Croquet!

Nonetheless, if the referee agrees that the striker is taking an unjustifiably long time, he is fully entitled to use Law 55 to end the turn at any time. Naturally, the striker should be warned first, and have explained to him the basis on which the referee will act. A less radical solution may be found in summarily and publicly awarding extra time.

If a player takes a long time over one shot, this is not a justification for accusing them of slow play, unless their previous play has also been slow. A player is entitled to take time when there are tactical problems to be sorted out.

If a player thinks that their opponent is playing too slowly, the first action is a friendly comment between turns, suggesting that they speed up. Except in extreme circumstances, it is impolite to interrupt a turn to comment on slow play. This would be justified if there was little time left, and the player is behind on hoops. If the friendly comment has no effect, the referee should be called to check the speed of play.

In social games slow play is usually tolerated, as these are often when players work out tactics for more serious games. However, frequent offenders should be warned that this is unacceptable in competitions.

Club Notices

If we haven't already mentioned it (and even if we have) the **Club Christmas Party has been set down for Sunday 29th November.**

The Club Silver Championship is underway, and the Gold Championship will also get going this month.

And still to come is a Club Handicap Championship, a Hi-Lo Day, and a Golf Croquet Day. (Brace yourself!)

Monday night croquet resumes on 5th October with the advent of Daylight Saving (although warmer weather might be of greater concern!)

Tee-shirt wisdom

It's not whether you win or lose that counts.

It's whether *I* win or lose.