

David Maloof won the 5th annual Rocky Mountain International (association rules) tournament in Denver, Colorado with a 26-16 win over 2008 RMI champion Rich Lamm.

Running at 15 plummers through most of the event, the beautifully manicured Washington Park lawn made play interesting for the twelve participants.

The twelve player field was divided into two blocks.

ROCKY BLOCK:

1. Danny Huneycutt 5/5 (4 TPs)
2. Paul Billings 4/5
3. Mike Taylor 2/5
4. Jim Butts 2/5
5. George Cochran 2/5
6. Tony Reaves 0/6

MOUNTAIN BLOCK:

1. Rich Lamm 5/5 (1 TP)
2. David Maloof 4/5 (1 TP)
3. Tom Yates 3/5
4. Ron Hendry 2/5
5. Jon Essick 1/5
6. Steve Summer 0/5

Round 1 of the knockout paired Ron Hendry against George Cochran with Ron Hendry winning 24-23; Mike Taylor defeating Steve Summer, Tom Yates besting Tony the plumber and Jon Essick upsetting Jim Butts.

In the quarter finals, Danny Huneycutt sent Ron Hendry packing, David Maloof and Mike Taylor had a barn burner in which both players had the game on their mallets and David surviving, Tom Yates beat Paul Billings 13-12 (remember the 15 plummers) and Rich Lamm edged out Jon Essick.

Perhaps the most interesting game of the tournament came in the semi-finals between Danny Huneycutt and David Maloof. A tactical game filled with strategy beyond measure lasting for hours, the two men played well through the day matching blow for blow before Maloof emerged victorious 26-12.

The other semi-final match pitted Tom Yates against Rich Lamm. Luck was on Rich's side as mid-game he took off from center A baulk into the jaws of hoop 5 (striker's hoop and purely by accident). Intending to attack Tom's balls in corner 2, he was now conveniently positioned to score 5, attack Tom in corner 2 and build a break. Luck ran out briefly as his hoop running stroke bounced off hoop 2. A fortunate 7 yard roquet that followed allowed him to carry on.

The 8 turn finals game between Maloof and Lamm was well played with only two errors (one each - a low number considering the 15 plummets they faced). Rich opened with the super shot. David took position max distance on the East boundary. Rich hit from B baulk and ran to 4-back. David lifted to B baulk and hit the 25 yarder, running to 4-back. Rich missed the lift and David commenced his peeling run. Faced with a straight double peel and peeler in the jaws of penultimate, David's croquet shot sent peeler beyond rover. Unable to return peeler to position for the rover peel, he ran rover and retired to the East boundary. Rich hit the lift and commenced his peeling run. With 4-back peeled and peeler in position to peel penultimate following hoop 6, Rich ran 6 deep and failed the comeback roquet. David finished from there to become the winner of the 5th annual Rocky Mountain International, following in the footsteps of previous winners Danny Huneycutt, Ben Rothman & Rich Lamm.

In the Plate semi-finals, George Cochran defeated Steve Summer and Jim Butts beat Tony Reaves. The Plate finals was very entertaining, as the sun was setting and most of the players were retiring to the Chop House while the two players duked it out with long roquets at every turn. In the end, with the game on Jim's mallet, a split shot gone bad out of 2-back gave George the innings. He ran to the peg, pegged out and left Jim with the task of hitting in, running four hoops while doing two peels to tie. It was not to be this day as George walked away with the Plate, a beautiful fused glass croquet-themed plate from the kiln of Tim Charney.

FINAL RESULTS:

1. David Maloof (\$1,000)
2. Rich Lamm (\$450)
3. Danny Huneycutt (\$300)
4. Tom Yates (\$200)
5. Ron Hendry
5. Mike Taylor
5. Paul Billings
5. Jon Essick
9. George Cochran (Plate winner)
9. Jim Butts (Plate runner-up)
9. Steve Summer
9. Tony Reaves

It is worth noting that Mr. Manners had his coming out to croquet society here at the Rocky Mountain International. A distant cousin of Tom Yates, he was enlisted to keep Tony the plumber in line during the RMI. It soon became very clear that Mr. Manners will be the next croquet rock star and heir apparent to Ask Abby. At various times he was seen with his back to the court, discussing his virginity with Phyllis Butts, or on finals day perched atop the peg. Management thanks

him for ensuring crowd control and the orderly progression of play.

The temporary absence of Jeff Soo ended the string of armadillo jumps seen annually at the RMI. In lieu of the Soorian maneuver we've grown accustomed to over the years, management presented Mr. Ron Hendry with an armadillo g-string, which minutes later had something to do with the closing party's summary removal from the Chop House. Last seen running down Wazee Street in downtown Denver, Mr. Hendry remains at large.....