

2013 Mtn. Laurel Invitational June 12-16, 2013 Cashiers, NC

The Twenty First Annual Mountain Laurel Invitational Tournament was held between June 12th and June 16th at the picturesque setting in the mountains of Southwest North Carolina. Hosted by the Chattooga Club in Cashiers, NC, the setting was everything anyone could want. Utilizing three courts set just below the open pavilion and lodge with a backdrop of two mountains, made for spectacular sunrises.

Open practice on Tuesday afternoon preceded the opening party on the Pavilion, set just off the courts. The format this year would be block play singles leading to modified double elimination in Championship flight, and single elimination in First and Second flight, following block play. Participants were divided into three flights, Championship with twelve players at minus one point five to plus three point five handicaps, average 2.2; First flight and Second flight with ten players each, with handicaps from 4.5 to 9, and 10 to 14 in each of the two flights.

The weather was generally ideal for croquet. The days were comfortable in the seventies, with mornings at 55 degrees and partly cloudy. Late Thursday afternoon brought rain, hard enough to flood the courts. The front passed through fairly quickly, and the courts were clear within thirty minutes, however due to the time of the day it was necessary to peg down six games. By mutual consent play started at 8 AM Friday, and we were able to pick up the lost time.

Breakfast each morning, with an omelet, cooked to order, delicious fresh fruit plates, cereal and fresh baked pastries, preceded morning croquet, lunch ordered off the menu as a guest of the club was followed by afternoon croquet, which lead to cocktails with heavy hors d'oeuvres. Wednesday evening was dinner off the extensive club menu. Thursday evening was the only open evening for the week. Friday evening Judy and Louis Freeman hosted cocktails and a buffet dinner party at their spectacular home, high on top of the mountain. The centerpiece of the buffet was a large tray centered by shrimp, ringed with stone crab claws, and an outer ring of lobster claws. Also passed were fresh fried oysters that melted in one's mouth.

Saturday's sit down dinner, after cocktails in the library, consisted of a salad of mixed greens with walnuts, followed by Beef Tenderloin & Lump Crab Cakes with herbed potatoes, with a dessert of fallen chocolate cake with port wine reduction.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were devoted to block play in all flights. Saturday saw the beginning of the elimination ladders, with the quarterfinal; semi-final, and final rounds on Sunday.

Championship flight singles, with twelve players divided into two blocks of six, had David Ekstrom and Bill Hartmann leading at the end of block play, however

Jackie Jones and John Phaneuf were third and fourth with the same number of wins (4 of 5 games) but with less net points. Seeded into a modified Double elimination ladder (Six had double life, six had single life.). After the first round, John Phaneuf who defeated David Ekstrom, and Jackie Jones who beat Bill Hartmann dominated the play. Jackie then defeated John Phaneuf, where he lost to David Ekstrom in the loser's ladder. David Ekstrom then returned to face Jackie Jones in the final game. During the ladder Jackie had been winning by margins of 10 to 18 points, while David had been winning by margins of 1 to 5 points. The final was more evenly matched, with Jackie, the Championship flight winner, 15 to 14.

First Flight singles, consisting of ten players, was a cross block arrangement. Although serpentine seeded by handicaps, it again showed an inherent problem of cross block. The first five each had four wins, while the second five combined totaled five wins. Players were seeded into the ladder in a predetermined manner to equalize this problem. The leader of each block, each with a bye, ended up playing in the final. Jake Johnson topped Calvert Chaney 10 to 8 to take the title.

At the awards ceremony Jake mentioned that he had had two goals to reach in croquet. One was to get a 5 handicap, which he did in March of this year, and the second was to win his flight in the Chattooga tournament, which he admitted was his top ranked tournament.

Second flight also saw ten players in a cross block arrangement. This flight played out in a much more even manner. Harold Denton and Michael Kline were the top out of the block, but both were not destined for the finals. In a single elimination Harold was a victim of Linda Guthrie, who went on to take the final by a score of 10 to 8 over Michael Kline. Michael had played very well up to this point, but was not able to overcome Linda in the final.

Waterford doubles consisted of four games for each of four flights. Championship "A" and "B" were blocks of eight, while First and Second flights were blocks of 9. Serving as a morning warm-up, and a social mixer, it never the less became quite competitive. In Championship "A" the top three had three wins apiece out of four games. Deciding by net points the winner was Paula Phaneuf, with Jackie Jones second, and David Ekstrom third. Championship "B" saw Dan Hise take the winning trophy, while the next two contestants also had three wins, the second place going to Geoffrey Mattison, and third to Martie Ekstrom. First flight awarded the winning trophy to Calvert Chaney, with Louis Freeman taking second, and Kathleen Dainton taking third. Second flight saw Harold Denton take the trophy, while Marilyn Perry took second and Rodney Calver ended up third.

Following the finals in all flights on Sunday morning and the awards presentations in front of the fireplace on the Pavilion, participants and their guests were treated to a wonderful Father's Day Sunday brunch.

Hats off to Dawn Jupin, the Tennis and Croquet Professional, who has done an exceptional job of revitalizing croquet at the Chattooga Club.

With another successful tournament completed, the plans for the fall Autumn Leaves Invitational October 2nd to 6th at the Chattooga Club are well underway. It will again be a five-day event with singles and doubles play. Hope to see you there.

Fred Jones
Tournament Director

Singles

Championship Flight

1. Jackie Jones
2. David Ekstrom
3. John Phaneuf
4. Paula Phaneuf
5. Donna Dixon.
5. Bill Hartmann
7. Mike McRee
7. Bob Yount
9. Mark Enderle.
9. Dan Hise
11. Geoffrey Mattison
11. Mal Wall

First Flight

1. Jake Johnson
2. Calvert Chaney
3. John Dainton.
3. Roxanne Rosetto
5. Mark Fields
5. David Trigiani
7. Chuck Perry
7. Martie Ekstrom
7. Betty Crisler
7. Kathleen Dainton

Second Flight

1. Linda Guthrie
2. Michael Kline.
3. Harold Denton
3. Tom Stoner
5. Ed Guillot
5. Rodney Calver
7. Judy Freeman
7. Louis Freeman
7. Gary Neal
7. Patricia Cunnington

Waterford Doubles

Championship "A" Flight

1. Paula Phaneuf
2. Jackie Jones
3. David Ekstrom
4. Donna Dixon
5. Bob Yount
6. Mike McRee
7. Bill Hartmann
8. John Phaneuf

Championship "B" Flight

1. Dan Hise
2. Geoffrey Mattison
3. Martie Ekstrom
4. Mark Fields
5. Mal Wall
6. Betty Crisler
7. Jake Johnson
8. Mark Enderle

First Flight

1. Calvert Chaney
2. Louis Freeman
3. Kathleen Dainton
4. David Trigiani
5. Judy Freeman
6. John Dainton
7. Ed Guillot
8. Roxanne Rosetto
9. Michael Kline

Second Flight

1. Harold Denton
2. Marilyn Perry
3. Rodney Calver
4. Cris Glick
5. Liddy Chaney
6. Tom Stoner
7. Gary Neal
8. Linda Guthrie
9. Patricia Cunnington