



# RUNNING HOOPS

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet Club

July 2014

## COMPETITIONS

Kenilworth teams have been out and about to a number of clubs playing with varying degrees of success: the reports and results are below:

### WML AC v EDGBASTON (a) Tuesday 24 June 2014

Sadly the first match of 2014 season resulted in a very narrow defeat 3-4.

In the morning doubles match Pauline & Cliff were holding a 4 hoop lead when Paul Trafford made a timely long break of 7 hoops and with time called soon afterwards this proved decisive.

In one singles match Peter Moody made good use of his bisques to secure a sizeable lead but his opponent, Ian Slater, then made some good breaks to win +7. In the other singles match Philip cannily held on to 2 of his 6 bisques and these enabled him to force an impressive victory over Henry Fellowes.

So Kenilworth needed to win 3 of the 4 afternoon matches and they came very close indeed.

Cliff withstood a whirlwind start by his opponent, Henry, and then playing some of his very best croquet secured a win +12 with 50 minutes of playing time left.

Peter, by his own analysis, made poor use of his bisques and lost by 12 hoops.

Pauline, playing her first AC match in the league, held her nerve and frustrating her opponent by keeping him out of the game so cleverly that he was not able to score a hoop for about 3 hours (!) scoring a pleasing win +13.

Philip put up a valiant effort, leading for much of his game, but once his bisques had all been used he faced an uphill task and finally lost by 1 hoop, making Edgbaston winners 4-3



### Did you Know.....

Croquet was the first outdoor sport to embrace equality, allowing both sexes to play the game on an equal footing.

## WML AC v SHREWSBURY (h) 28 June 2014

Kenilworth have recorded their first victory this season in the league against Shrewsbury, who have won the league several times in recent years.

Cliff was pleased to be playing his morning match v Peter Dorke, a friend (?) from the 1980's who ran the croquet at Ludlow College, who annoyingly had beaten the croquet team from Warwick School in successive years at the semi-final stage of the National Competition.

Revenge was duly served as Cliff made excellent use of his 2 bisques to set up 2 decisive breaks resulting in victory by +18 inside 2 hours.

In the other singles match Peter Dennis was in the lead for much of his game but narrowly lost -5 when Shrewsbury's captain Graham Colcough put together a long break just minutes before time was called.

In the doubles match Philip and Alan had 6 bisques which they used to good effect to set up a commanding lead. Finally winning +9 on time despite a fine break by Robbie Dodds that took his ball to peg leaving the 2 Kenilworth balls wired on hoop 5, the next hoop for his partner's ball. Fortunately Philip restored the advantage to the home side by making a long roquet with the next shot.

In the afternoon Peter beat Peter Dorke +14 making excellent use of his 3 bisques. Soon afterwards Cliff completed victory over Robbie despite squandering the 5.5 bisques he was entitled to. (this victory incidentally triggered a handicap change for Cliff to 4.5, uncharted territory!)

Next Philip 'what shall I do now!?' Wood played in a style that belied the 'middle name' affectionately conferred upon him by the captain! He played very decisively indeed, with great confidence, securing a win +15. (perhaps wearing his infamous lab coat had helped!)



Alan battled on in the rain in his low scoring game against Barbara Edwards. The two players were evenly matched and eventually Alan won +6 on time .... making only a little use of his only bisque.....which Cliff had mistakenly returned to the clubhouse 30 minutes earlier!

So Kenilworth finished up winners by the convincing margin 6-1.



Over tea, which included some freshly baked 'welsh cakes', kindly provided by our opponents the home team reflected how the match had been played in a truly wonderful spirit.

### Murphy Shield

In the Murphy Shield we won in the first round (played at Nottingham C.C.) on the last hoop of the last game against Belsay Hall.

In the 2nd round we play Durham, and again play at a neutral venue since we are so far apart - this time at Sheffield U3A on July 11th.

## Himley

In the WMF GC League we won on Sunday 29th June at Himley, gaining full League points.

The team comprised Philip Wood, Nigel Haslam, John Leader and Peter Kristunas. After several days of rainy weather the lawns were slow. The first round of singles we lost 3-1 as we became used to the conditions. In the next round Nigel regained his devastating form and we won it 3-1 to level the match.

After lunch we again won 3 games to take the score to 7-5 overall. We then won all of the last round of singles to take an unassailable lead of 11-5 into the doubles. By winning both doubles as well, we ensured maximum bonus points for a large winning margin (and for an away win). John and Nigel had 3 wins in the singles and Philip 4.

The weather was good as was the company and teatime cake and there were actually 2 or 3 spectators. An Armed Services Show was going on in the large area of parkland next to the lawns with a brass band etc. and a fly - past by a WW2 Spitfire. Himley have had a lot of badger damage on their lawns and we appreciate their efforts to deal with this and to make us very welcome.



The picture left was taken by Alan Richardson on the 27th June, after a heavy rain shower, the day before the Shrewsbury match!!

Are wellies allowed on the lawns?

## Offchurch

A fine June afternoon saw our old friends from Offchurch arrive to play our annual pairs match. Obviously keen and eager to tackle us they wasted no time in starting to practise on our lawns. Promptly play began and despite the visitors practise, the home side with green advantage took all three of the first round games with a comfortable 18 hoops to 7 victory.

The second round saw the visitors seriously digging in and taking their time. Not one match reached a seven hoop finish in the 40 minutes per round allowed. This round saw the visitors with their first win thanks to the friendly Captain of the day. Ha! Ha! The result being a 2 to 1 win for us with an 11 hoop to 8 victory.

The third round continued to favour the home side with one game being drawn at 3.3 resulting in 17 hoops against 8. Play ended as it began with a 3.0 victory giving us 17 hoops against 8.

It should be noted that the two wile veterans who played in alternate games with different partners never lost a game.

The very friendly and sporting afternoon finished with an excellent tea enjoyed by all. Our special thanks go to Diane not only for her efforts in the field of play where she was always on the winning side, but also for her splendid efforts in the kitchen. Can we do as well away at Offchurch?

## SECRETARY'S SHIELD 2014

Having won the West Midland League in 2013, Kenilworth qualified to take part in the National AC Competition, the Secretary's Shield.

Sadly we fell at the first hurdle, losing to a team from St Albans; 0-7!

However we did have to face a particularly 'rapid improver' in the form of Thomas Cullis who will surely soon have his handicap reduced dramatically. In his first match v Cliff he used his last bisque to peel his front ball through rover leaving both balls on 'peg' with two long breaks and his opponent yet to take croquet! In fact Cliff did have some chances and managed to prolong the game by a further hour before Thomas eventually won. In Thomas' second game v Peter he embarrassingly, for him, completed the game with 3 of his 6 bisques still standing!

In the doubles Adrian and Alan were using the red & yellow balls, traditionally Adrian's first choice in view of his Welsh Connections, but Alan committed the grave crime of putting the red ball into play in his first turn whilst Adrian's back was turned! Obviously this was a major setback to the home pair and, although they did have some chances, the opponents always had the upper hand and won the game +14.

In the other games both Peter & Cliff had good starts v Chris Frost but once Chris found himself with a good opportunity he doggedly converted his chances into victory. Alan was always struggling against Heather but Adrian recovered well against Terry and threatened to win, until he faltered with his back ball at 3 back.



### The Two-Day Tournament

The annual Kenilworth two-day tournament took place on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June. This year the players were also competing to be the first name on the silver Fellows Salver, a leaving gift from Henry Fellows, the long-time top-rated member.

The players were Peter Dennis, Pauline Dennis, Philip Wood, Peter Moody, Ray Clipson and Frank Hibberd. Peter M could not attend on the first morning, so John Leader substituted. John reappeared in the following afternoon to act as referee, and was also very generous with his comments and advice.

Pauline demolished Frank, but could not muster any more wins. Peter M was handicapped by his comparatively little practice this season, and his substitute losing. Ray admonished himself severely after making some simple errors. Peter D came closest to halting Philip's progress, but failed at the last. Frank bored Peter D into submission, by relentless Aunt Emma (i.e. negative) play. Philip was unbeatable over the two days; his home-made mallet appeared to add a touch of magic to his long shots.

Results: Philip                      Won 4  
Peter D                      Won 2, Lost 2  
Ray                              Won 2, Lost 2  
Frank                          Won 2, Lost 2  
Pauline                      Won 1, Lost 3  
Peter M/John L              Won 1, Lost 3



Philip then accepted the salver from organiser Peter D, to generous applause from the other players; who, win or lose, rated the two days as thoroughly worthwhile.

## **Marj –gives simple answers to GC questions**

Dear Marj

I was playing my regular doubles “friendly” session with Gillian against Phyllis and William (we call ourselves “the Sickies”, as we all sound “ill”). Anyway, I’ll pick up the game with Phyll’s White about 2 feet in front of the hoop and Gill and Will a long way away. It was my turn to play with Brown. I couldn’t run the hoop, but could get in the jaws or clear White. Knowing that poor old Phyll couldn’t jump (not since her recent hip op), I chose the former and got my Brown exactly where I wanted it. Will then wandered over and said that he had just realised that he and Phyll must have swapped balls some time back, because everyone knows that when playing with secondaries, Phyll plays with Pink and Will with White. Now that he had realised, we should put it right and so he should now play White. Now Will never misses a jump shot from this range, and so I wasn’t amused. Surely there is a rule against this sort of thing? The error happened some time back, and has been condoned many times since.

Bill Tinaday

*Dear Bill*

*Every time a player plays the ball that they did not start with, it is potentially a “wrong ball”, but it doesn’t become a reality until someone stops the game. If you had done so before you played, you could have invoked the full penalty – i.e. you could have had the last ball replaced and that would have been the end of their go. However, once you played your shot you lost this right, and Will was right to say that as he “owned” White, he should play the next shot. I suppose that the lesson here is that all four players need to be aware of who owns which ball, and stop the game as soon as a wrong ball is played.*

Dear Marj

I’ve been watching the World Cup, and now understand football’s off-side law, so I thought maybe I could understand ours! The other day my opponent was due to play black and was in a position where I couldn’t stop him running the hoop with blue. He glanced off my red, and put black bang in front of the next hoop. He duly ran the hoop with blue and assured me that it was all perfectly legal and he was not off-side, but I thought that the rule was there to deal with the situation where (in this instance) yellow knocks black beyond the half-way line. Who was right?

Freda Livery

*Dear Freda*

*It is quite likely that the intent of the original off-side rule was to deal with the situation you describe. However, the rules say that a ball is not offside if it “reached its position as a result of contact with an opponent’s ball”, and so all that matters is that there is contact, not who played the shot. As someone with a keen interest in members imparting correct information to others, I’m pleased to say that your opponent was right*

*More experienced players may like to pay close attention to the words “reached its position”. The rules do NOT say “**went beyond the halfway line** as a result...”. So, I wonder how many players would consider trying to move black with yellow? It might have made it more difficult for black to run the next hoop, and if you made even the slightest contact, yellow would not have been offside.*

Dear Marj

My husband and I were playing a friendly yesterday and the most bizarre thing happened. I had no chance of winning a hoop, and so aimed towards the half-way line, but overshot. He then played his "other" ball and did exactly the same, and hit my ball. We both laughed, and when he had run the hoop we both went to the penalty spot. However, another member to whom we were talking later thought we were both onside. Help!

Iris Kitt

*Dear Iris*

*Please see my reply to Freda. I hope it is now clear that, bizarre as it may seem, the collision rendered you both onside!*

*Marj - (still chuckling at the thought of this)*

Dear Marj

I've been playing a few months, and am totally confused by what most people call the "double-tap" rule – when you play your ball directly towards another ball close to it. Everyone seems to have a different view on how you tell, before the shot, whether you are likely to offend or, afterwards, have actually done so, and some have even said that no one knows, and so don't worry about it! Can you help?

Hugh Mungus

*Dear Hugh*

*I certainly can, Hugh, but I have to tell you that it is the sort of question which can give referees nightmares – so please try to bear with me. First, one important factor regarding whether you are likely to foul is the distance between the balls, which we will call X. The better you become, the more likely it is that you will be able to avoid a foul at any given X, by using a well-executed stop-shot. For example, an expert may well be able to avoid fouling when X is less than 6mm (that's ¼ inch for us baby-boomers), whereas a beginner may not be able to do so if X is as great as 25mm (1 inch). However good you are, if you use a full swing with no attempt at a stop-shot, you could easily foul where X is greater than the diameter of the ball.*

*Some have no doubt told you that you can **hear** double-taps, but experiments have proved that often you can't. Instead, at the sort of distances mentioned above, the most reliable test is the relative distance covered by the two balls. In a clean shot, most of the momentum is passed to the other ball, and your ball will travel a relatively short distance. However, in a foul shot, the mallet gives your ball a second shove forward, with the result that it can travel a significant distance.*

*That's about as far as I can take it without losing my devoted readership, but I would strongly encourage you to experiment. Start with balls 6 inches apart and play a deliberate foul. See how far your ball goes! Then do the same but with a stop-shot, et voila! Reduce the distance until you get to a point where you can be fairly confident of hitting a clean shot. Remember, you can always play a different shot if you're not sure; I hope your opponents remember this too, when it is their turn to play!*

**Please continue to send me lots of exciting articles, photographs, opinions and comments on anything remotely related to croquet and our club.  
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