



Running Hoops

The Newsletter of Kenilworth Croquet

July 2016

This edition of RH contains reports of matches against other clubs and our club matches. The 'external' matches always attract the necessary number of players. However I notice the 'internal' games and tournaments only seem to attract the same very small number of players. Why? letters to the editor please. Anonymous and nom de plumes accepted.

There is also some informative letters to Marj and the answer to the question posed in the last edition of RH. - Editor

Croquet Fun Day

Kenilworth Croquet Club always starts the season with a Fun Day. This year we were lucky that after more than a week of variable but mostly wet weather the Sunday dawned bright and sunny.

Members congregated on the lawns in the afternoon for a combination of short croquet matches and an interesting obstacle course. Here members had to keep their ball under control around a slalom between pegs, hit the ball correct distances and finally aim for a peg.

Even some of the more experienced players found it fun but difficult. But the winner was one of our newer members, Alma Russell, much to the delight of everyone.



Alma Russell and Gladys Briscoe having some coaching from Philip Wood

Charlecote Winter Cup

Traditionally Kenilworth Croquet has been played between Easter and October. But this year for the first time we have played throughout the winter. It has been a great success with many members coming down whenever the weather was reasonable.

As part of this there has been a competition for the Charlecote Cup which had two blocks in which all those entered played each other. In one block Pauline Harvey was dominant and was top by winning all her matches. In the other Gordon Henderson narrowly beat Mike Cheeseman.



So the final was played between Pauline and Gordon. In the first game it was nip & tuck with Pauline eventually just winning. In the second she got a good start and valiantly though Gordon played he never quite managed to catch up.

So Pauline Harvey is the deserved winner of the first Charlecote Winter Cup

Northampton v Kenilworth, Thursday 5th May.

Kenilworth travelled to Northampton on a lovely sunny morning for a medley of AC/GC, singles and doubles, level and handicapped play.

There are not many things more pleasant than playing Croquet on a glorious day with friendly opposition. However, one such would have been to end the day's play with a rather more flattering scorecard; all tribute to the home team who consistently outplayed Kenilworth. The reality is that the visitors never really got on top of the lie and the pace of the lawns, losing 1-7 in the morning GC session of level play and 3-7 in the afternoon session of handicapped play. Kenilworth were able to take to the journey home feeling that it was a grand day out on the lawns and it got a little better as the day went on! Overall the game score was 4-14 to Northampton with Peter K our most successful player participating in 3 of our 4 wins.

The Kenilworth team was: Mike Cheeseman, Peter Kristunas, Alan Clark and Irene Rogers. This was Irene's first match, and she thoroughly enjoyed the day. Take note, GC players – nothing to fear!

It's good to see John Leader (6) on the courts this season, after a long abstinence. However it may have been a touch of rustiness that caused him to take three bisques to get his first hoop against Mike Hills (1^{1/2}). John recovered his touch, but Mike pressed home his advantage to win.

Cliff Daniel (3) came up against Derek Humphrey (1), and couldn't beat this long time top player.

Frank Hibberd (16) took on Richard Cain (10). Richard began to feel quite ill, and decided to go home. He emailed Frank in the evening to say he felt a lot better.

Mervyn Harvey (18) met his favourite *bête noir* Mel Christie (20). Mervyn was not on peak form, and couldn't afford to give Mel, a player of long experience, two bisques. Win for Mel, who also beat Frank in the afternoon.

James Skelton (4) came in to replace Richard. He played Cliff, who found the slopes and occasional slick surface difficult – as did the other Kenilworthians. John renewed a decades long acquaintance with Derek. He got as far as 15 – 15, but no further. Win for Derek.

This left Mervyn exposed to Mike Hills. He made sixteen hoops, but ran out of bisques, and Mike eased himself home.

Northampton 7, Kenilworth 0

As always it was a very friendly occasion, enjoyed by all, on the nicest day of the year up to then.

GC handicap tournament 29 May – The Spring Trophy

There may have been only 4 entrants for this tournament, but the lack of quantity was more than made up for by the quality – in a tournament which will be remembered for one shot. It is fair to say that overall everyone played better than their handicap would suggest.



GC The Spring Trophy - cont.

In the first round, Stella narrowly lost to Pauline in a game noted for the number of times the initiative changed on each hoop. Gordon played Ian in the only game where handicaps were equal, and so no extra turns were involved. Again, they were well matched, with Ian winning by one hoop. In the second round, Ian just got the better of Stella, in a game which they both thought was one of the best they had played in, and Pauline triumphed over Gordon. This left Pauline and Ian with two wins each, and a third-round game which would decide who would go through to the regional final at Nottingham.

We join the match when time was called and the scores level. Ian had hit an excellent blue and a very good black across the lawn near to the next hoop. 8 shots remained. Pauline fired yellow at blue, but missed and went off the lawn just on the running side of the hoop. Ian put blue in the jaws, and Pauline's red was not well enough placed to do anything other than "go half-way". Would Ian knock blue through with black? No, there seemed to be no need, and so he trundled it towards the half-way line. Four shots remained. Pauline's only hope seemed to be to hamper Ian's shot on blue with a well-placed yellow, but it fell short. Ian duly ran the hoop with blue, putting him one hoop ahead, with Pauline having just one more shot. Her only hope was to tie the game by running the next hoop from 11 yards – and that is exactly what she did, with red going straight through without touching the sides.

Being a round-robin tournament, the playing conditions were that ties were allowed, and Pauline and Ian were at the top of the table with the two wins and a draw each. Pauline won on net hoops, and now proceeds to the regional final at Nottingham in August.

Kenilworth v Sapcote away, 22nd June

Despite the weather, which didn't really come too much, just a little drizzle for a time, we all had a very enjoyable afternoon. Unlike last year at home, when we had to loan our visitors several players, Sapcote have had an influx of new members and this time had more people wanting to play than we had; so our competition included some new faces, alongside our old friends.

We played 4 rounds with 2 doubles games and 1 singles in each, with both teams changing partnerships each time. The first round was 3-0 to Kenilworth. Round 2 was 3-0 to Sapcote. Round 3 again 3-0 to Kenilworth. Round 4 was 2-1 to Kenilworth, who won 8 games to 4.

The hoop score was a lot closer, at 59 to 53, so less than 53% of hoops to the winners; it just goes to show how important the timing is.

Well done to our team – Mike Cheesman, Anne Langley, Irene Rogers, Cliff Daniel and Stella Gill.

As usual, we enjoyed an excellent tea and chat afterwards. Many big thank you to the ladies who prepared it, even though they weren't playing.

Kenilworth v Shrewsbury

The first match of the season proved to be most enjoyable one even though we lost 2-3

In the morning the historically successful pairing of Alan with Philip was used for the doubles game; again with success, thanks to an exceptional break by Alan just before time was called. With some challenging long roquets and a number of difficult hoop approaches Alan secured a break of 8 hoops without using a bisque; a personal record it later transpired. The final winning margin was +9 on time.



The other morning game paired Cliff (3) with Sean Sheridan (0). Although there were some good breaks by both players Cliff struggled with the surprisingly slow pace of the lawn and was very unlucky, twice! with the tricky north boundary, and eventually lost by 11 hoops.

So it was 1-1 at lunchtime with 3 singles matches scheduled for the afternoon.

Alan struggled somewhat against Robert Parsons and failed to make good use of his bisques, eventually losing by 15 hoops.

Cliff, playing against the opposing captain Graham Colcough seemed to be romping to victory after 2 hours play. However he made a tactical error by taking one ball to peg with his second ball still on '2 back'. He had not made allowance for his opponent finding some form and with several (by his own admission) huge slices of good fortune that enabled him to reach peg with his back ball, pegging out Cliff's ball and clinching the game +6.



So we were all able to watch the dramatic conclusion to Philip's game.

With time running out Philip clawed his way back into the game v Sean, who with one ball on peg and the other on 'rover', seemed certain to win. However Philip cleverly retained the innings and having 'jawed' one ball in 'rover' the previous turn chose to roquet it the next turn....peel it through 'rover' and then run 'rover' with the other ball...securing a win of +1 on time.



The celebratory/commiseratory gooey chocolate cake was then enjoyed by all.

Kenilworth v Church Stretton

With summer threatening to finally settle in UK the trio of Adrian, Philip and Cliff arrived at Church Stretton hoping the drizzly rain would soon give way to sunshine!

With the sun making its presence felt in the afternoon, Kenilworth AC Team recorded its first league victory of 2016 in emphatic style.

But earlier in the day matters were far from encouraging.

In the morning Cliff faced George who played consistently good hoop-running and roqueting at a standard far better than suggested by his lowly handicap of 14. Despite 2 decent breaks by Cliff, George sealed a victory that was never in doubt and not needing 2.5 of his 10.5 bisques.



In the doubles the wily competitor Philip 'what do I do now?' Wood soon showed Adrian he was in form by reaching 'penultimate' hoop leaving Adrian struggling a little with his hoop-running.

Kenilworth v Church Stretton - cont.

However Adrian eventually conquered the tantalising 'one-back' hoop reached peg with his 'welsh' red ball that matched his new Kenilworth polo shirt that displayed the club logo in red! Even so he inadvertently played the partner yellow ball in one break, much to the amusement of those spectating. Philip finished the game very successfully with a long 'peg out'!



So the score at lunchtime was 1-1 with the three singles matches to be played.

Cliff faced John who had a handicap of 16 so he conceded 12.5 bisques and feared the worst! However, with his opponent squandering his bisques by missing short roquets and blobbing straightforward attempts at running hoops, Cliff hit exceptional form. With rising confidence he completed a resounding win of +17 inside 90 minutes aided by several roquets of a length he frequently misses and by some excellent 'rushes' to the hoops where he usually judged the pace of the lawn to perfection.

Adrian completed his game soon afterwards by the margin of +12 including peeling his partner ball through 'penultimate' hoop; a feat missed by all of the spectators who were engaged in quiet conversation at the time!

Philip had a much tighter game but with some long roquets towards the end won +3 on time thereby ensuring an emphatic team victory of 4-1.

The fantastic home-made lemon drizzle cake provided an excellent celebration for the Kenilworth players!

Letters

Two letters were forwarded to our antipodean croquet guru, Marj, for Her usual pearls of wisdom.

Dear Marj

My opponent has a printout of a topological survey of the lawn. Is he allowed to use it during a game?

Billy Doo

Dear Billy

Good question, blue! I would so like it to be a fault that I have been up all night (your daytime, of course) trying to find a rule this breaks. As a "striking fault" can only be committed from the time the striker's ball is struck by the mallet until the striker leaves the stance under control, it would have to be a "non-striking fault". The list of these is quite short, and regrettably there is no mention of topological surveys, a GPS, or even a laser level.

The best I can do is to find some "etiquette" provisions which could possibly apply. For example, if he fetched the printout from a bag in the pavilion, he may have fallen foul of rule 14(a)(1) "leaving the vicinity of the court during a match without permission from the opponent". However, he probably had it in his back-pocket. But – I think we have him under 14(a)(8) "wasting time. Players are to play with reasonable dispatch. The striker is to play within 1 minute of the last turn ending....". And what is the penalty? You tell him not to do it again.

Sorry, I tried.

Marj

Dear Marj

We know that in AC, you can “pass” on a shot, and “deem” it to have been played. We want to know - are you allowed to do so in GC? If not, what is the penalty?

Sam and Janet Evening

Dear Sam and Janet

Well, here's the thing. Rule 6(b) is very clear – “A player may not deem a stroke to have been played”, but there is no reference to having erroneously done so in any of the rules dealing with faults. I think the reason is pretty obvious. Either the opponent says “you're not allowed to do that”, and turns up rule 6(b) in proof, or both players continue in blissful ignorance.

I can't speak for the rest of the world, but we Aussies play hard and play fair, and the notion of someone saying “I see the rule, but am going to do it anyway” simply does not enter into our thinking. I can see that there are times when you may want to leave your ball exactly where it is (to block the opponent's ball, for example), but elsewhere the rules make it fairly clear that all you have to do is touch the face of the mallet against the ball.

Marj

In the last edition of RH, Marj answered a question, in the form of a poem, from Carol Lewis.

I asked if Anyone had spotted the form in which Carol has written each stanza. There was only two members who attempted to win the marvellous prize. Surprisingly they were both wrong!

The answer is of course is that each Stanza is 3 lines of iambic tetrameter and 1 line of iambic trimeter; surprised no one realised that!

Editor

Did you Know.....

Lewis Carroll featured a surreal version of croquet in Alice in Wonderland. A hedgehog was used as the ball and a flamingo as the mallet, while soldiers doubled over to make the hoops.

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The stanzas in Lewis Carroll's poem Jabberwocky were of 3 lines of iambic tetrameter and 1 line of iambic trimeter. Small world ain't it !

Do you think Running Hoops is a bit dull?

Then please send me lots of exciting articles, photographs, opinions and comments on any thing remotely related to croquet and our section.

**I can be contacted on 01926 855376 or
gordonhenderson28@gmail.com**

Gordon Henderson. Editor