



THE STICKY WICKET

FEBRUARY 2025



Want to Improve Your Game? How About A Fun Croquet "Challenge?"



Priscilla Flowers with a thank
you from the Strikers

Do you love the competition of the game of GC or A 6W, but can't give three days to compete in the regular NC Club Tournament?

The croquet committee (**Bob Van Tassell, Dave Spivey, Lynn Foley, Linda Merk, Julia Johnston, Mike Todorovich, Caryl Firth, Tom Cooper**) came up with this idea to give members more options. The intention is to entice more members into competitive play. Competition helps improve your game!

Members shared with us how much they like having an **Opening Reception** before competing and a **Toast & Tally Reception after**. So, we came up with a new option. We call it "The Challenge."

The idea is simple: Those who wish to play in either Golf Croquet or A6Wicket doubles sign up. Find a partner or we will assign one. We will hold an Opening Reception for the combined GC & A6W players. We also felt this would be a good opportunity for the GC and A6W players to socialize together. A few people might enter both, which you can do because scheduling will be done at your convenience.

We are looking to kick-off "**The Challenge**" in March. Sign up sheets will be located on the sign in desk. The number of players who sign up will determine the number of blocks. The block play works is if there are five teams in a block. **Your team would play the other four teams at a mutually convenient time.** Then call the "Challenge Facilitator" to report your score. The winner is based on wins, net hoops, who beat who and gross points. Once we have a list of those wishing to play, we can get a price for the two receptions and then let the players know what it will cost.

Block play is set up by the organizer, and everyone is given the list of players in their block. Players then schedule their own games within a time period, which, based on the number of players who sign up, could be as little as three weeks or as long as six weeks. At a "due by" date, we will host a Toast & Tally Reception. The only cost to play is the cost of the two receptions. No big prizes are given.

We can host "Challenges" to suit members and change the title to reflect the challenge: A Spring Challenge, a New Members Challenge, Hi-Lo A6W Challenge or Hi-Lo GC Challenge, Welcome Back Challenge, the possibilities are endless. The Croquet Committee is always exploring ways to entertain the members and keep you involved and at the same time offer you something new. What do you think? Please contact me or any committee member with your thoughts, ideas. Thank you!

Priscilla Flowers, Croquet Committee Chair

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Club President's Column All Bright and Sunny



Tom Lindley

(With my apologies to James Baskett,
Walt Disney, and Louis Armstrong)
Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay
My, oh my, what a wonderful day
Plenty of sunshine headin' my way
Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay

Mister Bluebird's on my shoulder
It's the truth, it's actual
Ev'rything is satisfactual
Zip-a-dee-doo-dah, zip-a-dee-ay
Wonderful feeling, wonderful day.

I haven't gone daft. It's time for some good news. Our lawns have been great, the weather has been great, the competition has been great, and playing croquet at NCC has been great! And although I am concerned in the long term about our demographics, our Club is doing wonderfully. We have over 440 active members, a balanced budget, and a "partner" landlord that is working to enlarge and improve our facility.

We have members volunteering for corporate events, teaching newcomers, and helping with Special Olympics; we have several task forces working to update our website, update our rules, and more; and we have active committees working on everything from social events to tournaments to membership. I simply do not have words sufficient to express my enormous pride in our members and their works.



I have a small statue of a bluebird that sits near my desk to remind me of the joy we can and should try to find in this world. I think about how lucky I was when I moved to West Palm, when Hal Denton told me that I had to come learn croquet and then introduced me to the game that I now love.

When you have a friend or acquaintance who needs something to do, or could use something to lift their spirits, remember that you too can introduce someone to croquet. "Wonderful feeling, wonderful day."

Tom Lindley

A6W Club Championship Tournament

January 24-26, 2025

In breath-taking finishes, both the Championship round and the First Flight were decided by a single wicket. Congratulations to all!!



Championship Winner Bob Van Tassell, right, Tim McCormick (TD), Finalist: Randy Cardo



First Flight Winner: Lucas Van Alen (I), Finalist, Larry Lynch



Second Flight Winner: Priscilla Flowers (L);
Finalist: June Rochedieu

Ambassador Program Mentors New Members

So Many Customs and Unwritten Rules. Do You Remember?

Imagine a picture-perfect February Florida afternoon; it's 80 degrees, the sun is shining with the occasional cloud passing by, the humidity is low and there is a gentle breeze rustling nearby palm fronds. That was the setting on February 2nd for our first Get-To-Know-You Social Mixer of the season when the Membership Committee and Ambassadors welcomed new members with mallets at the ready.

Franck Meunier, Membership Committee chairperson and master of ceremonies welcomed the nearly 40 members who gathered (among them were 22 new members, who joined the Club in the past 6 months). New members partnered with a more seasoned player for two different matches. Experienced players shared insights, strategies and some unwritten rules as well as the "basics." New members were full of questions: **"How long does it take to be a good player? How do you get the ball to do what you want? It's really possible to do that?"** And they had spirit! As one new member said to me "I learned so much. This was like getting a private lesson within a fun game."

The Get-To-Know-You Social Mixer occurs every first Sunday of the month (during the Season) and is open to all members. "It is a great way to welcome our new Club members, get them to meet fellow members, integrate them into our community, and foster camaraderie" says Franck.

A big thank you goes out to our new Ambassadors who have reached out to new members, acted as mentors and, in general, shared their love of croquet. How appreciative they were! If anyone is interested in joining our growing list of National Croquet Club Ambassadors, please contact me at dianewaterfall@comcast.net or any member of the Membership Committee.

Diane Waterfall



Spotlights

We are more than just men and women in white. We have lives.
Here are two backstories of interesting Club members.

Lynn Epstein, **California Girl Found Palm Beach** **A Love of Sports Keeps Her Motivated**



Lynn Epstein

Raised in Marin County across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, **Lynn Epstein** migrated East in a very unusual way via Rome, Vienna, and Germany where she lived and worked for several years.

Settling in New York, she met her husband **Stuart** and lived in Westchester for 25 years while he was a "Mad Man" in the advertising business. Stuart came from a family of entrepreneurs, so in 1991 they bought the Devlin McNiff real estate company in Easthampton, LI.

"We were a good combination" says Lynn. "I had been a broker in Westchester and knew sales, and Stuart knew marketing. We sold it in 2011 and stayed active. I still hold my license there, and we have a house on Gardner's Bay with children nearby."

When one of their three children moved to Boca Raton, they wanted to be close to their daughter. The architecture in Palm Beach and its natural beauty and water reminded her of Marin County. Palm Beach is home.

"I was brought up before Title 9 so there were no team sports in school for girls," says Lynn. "I love sports and did join the girls *Aquabatique* water ballet as a child, but in high school we had nothing like that, and I regret it. As an adult I played tennis and golf until an injury stopped me."

A friend in Westhampton had told them about competitive croquet in West Palm Beach. "I remembered that remark, so in 2020 we found NCC, and someone showed us how to play croquet. Like so many others, we joined the summer league and found it a lot of fun."

Lynn joined tournaments. "It's fun to push yourself," says Lynn. She won a doubles tournament and was runner up in a singles tournament. "I really enjoy having a partner and the comradery of creating strategies together," says Lynn.

Marianne Davidson

Bob Van Tassell **A Life of Curiosity and Achievement AND** **Championship Croquet**

Bob Van Tassell's life story reads like a tapestry woven from threads of curiosity, dedication and a deep love for exploring. Born in Quakertown, PA, a quaint town nestled between the Delaware and Lehigh Valleys, Bob's journey has taken him from small town roots to global adventures. He studied chemistry at Penn State, which served as the foundation for a diverse career in chemical marketing sales, boiler room work and later, real estate ventures.



Bob Van Tassell

"I had plenty of time in the boiler room to read," he shares. "I immersed myself in the classics, psychology, philosophy. Then I became interested in real estate. I started by purchasing three family homes in Boston and Cambridge. Eventually, I bought 17 units and that's where my success really began." Retiring in 1998, Bob spent time in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, before relocating to California. A year later, he stumbled upon the Sonoma-Cutrer winery in Napa, a discovery that would profoundly change his life.

"Sonoma-Cutrer has two full sized croquet courts. I joined immediately" Bob recalls. "I practiced six hours a day, six days a week. Croquet became a passion, and I dedicated myself to it fully." His commitment paid off. After honing his skills, Bob moved to the East Coast of Florida in 2012, where he found himself immersed in the vibrant croquet community at the National Croquet Center.

"My love for croquet began when I was eight," he smiles. "My father bought me my first croquet set, and I played with it until I was 22. Over the years, I've competed and won numerous tournaments. One of my proudest moments was winning first place in the National Croquet Club Championship A6W singles this January 2025."

Women's 4th Annual GC Open

The January tournament brought 72 women from around the country who competed for four days of high-level play and fun. **Mary Galasso** won the championship plate, narrowly beating **Jody Rugart**.



Mary Galasso champion
Plate Winner



A hug for runnerup Jody Rugart



Loretta Cooper (TD) , Mary Galasso and
Priscilla Flowers (TM)

TIP FROM THE PRO

by Zack Watson

As I have observed all three varieties of croquet being played at the Club, I have noticed something critical. In the championship flight, players rarely call for an official to make a call, and if they do it is a call on **THEIR OWN SHOT**. This is mainly to show respect for their opponent, a sign of etiquette.



For other flights, it seems 90 percent of calls for a referee are brought up by an opponent, meaning **players making faults do not call on themselves**. Please remember that croquet is a game of **honor**, of **fun** and **honesty**, dependent on etiquette on both sides.

This is not just for tournaments. Practice it in your daily games so that it comes naturally. I know it hurts to call a fault on yourself, but please do it. Your opponent will respect you even more when you're both on the same page. And you can pat yourself on the back for being honest, but as Mel Brooks advised, don't break your arm!



Start 'em young. Zack Watson,
giving a few pointers to Johnny
Wilson, grandson of Alex and
Mary Galasso



Night Owls Games: Bob Smith, Juan
Milciunas, Stephen Tasker, Lucia
Morales-Halaby



A Little Night Game. two pros vs. two
guys having fun: Stephen Morgan,
Juan Milciunas, Richard Allen,
Brian Lozano

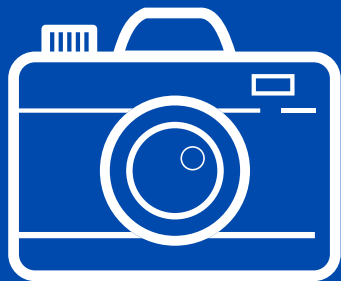
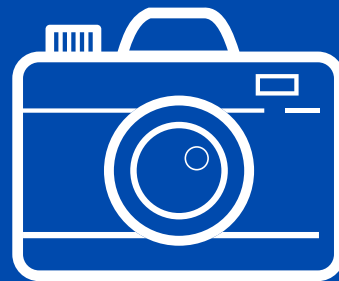


PHOTO CONTEST



JOIN OUR PICTURE CONTEST



Every picture tells a story. Join our photo contest and let your photo speak!
Send your pictures to club@croquetnational.com for a chance to win.
Winner announced in our next issue.

OUR NEW MEMBERS

The Membership Committee and National Croquet Club are happy to welcome our new members:

**Frederick Blount, Lawrence & Patricia Imbesi, Jackie Lorne,
Daniel Reilly, Quinn Reinhardt**

Like us! Follows us!

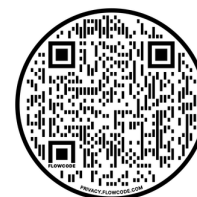
To better communicate with the members and communities, the Club has relaunched its social media presence. Like us! Follow us! Tag your pictures and comments. We want to hear from you!



Just scan (point your phone camera to the QR code)



Or go to following link:
facebook.com/nationalcroquetclub



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[@nationalcroquetclubWPB](https://www.instagram.com/nationalcroquetclubWPB)