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PHYLLIS COURT CROQUET

News

24 September - 'Finals Day' - Von Schmieder (singles) & Fensomes (doubles) are Club Champions
- and three other competitions also settled today -

With very little time before I fly off to The Greek Championship on Corfu with several other Phyllis Court AC players, here are some photos (by Allan Henderson) of our winners and finalists.

A report of today's action is below.

Congratulations today to:

Open Singles Club Championship - **Charlie von Schmieder** beat Chris Roberts

Open Doubles Club Championship - **Helena Fensome & Mike Fensome** beat Charlie von Schmieder & Colin Morgan

3+ Doubles - **Dianne Browne & Russell Robinson** beat Raghu Iyer & Hugh Crook

7+ Singles - **Jeff Smith** beat Colin Hall

10+ Singles - **Andy Jones** beat Christine Searle



Charlie von Schmieder & Chris Roberts,
- Open Singles winner and runner-up -



Andy Jones,
- 10+ Singles winner -



and all of this morning finalists (except Colim Morgan)

- photos by Allan Henderson -

PHYLLIS COURT FINALS DAY

Charlie von Schmieder regained the **Phyllis Court Club Singles Champion's** crown in an exciting match with **Chris Roberts** last weekend that provided a fitting end to the Henley Club's Finals Day.

Von Schmieder's preparation had been very limited, having played very little croquet all year, which contrasted remarkably with that of Roberts who had his busiest season yet, competing in 230 international ranking games which was the most of any player in the world this year.

If that made Roberts the favourite, nobody told von Schmieder who's precise positioning at the first hoop in game one, allowed him to score strongly and land right in front of hoop two to establish a fast 2-0 margin, and he kept that throughout the game to win 7-5.

Game two was a reverse of the first with Roberts freezing out his opponent to win 5-7, to take the match to a third and deciding game.

There was more inter-play at the first hoop before von Schmieder eventually scored, but this time, Roberts was able to trade the first four hoops as the contest built to the two centre hoops that are so often pivotal.

Roberts made it 2-2 at hoop four giving von Schmieder first stroke to hoop 5, which a just seven yards away usually sees the second player at this level, take position with their first ball, and trust their aim with their second ball to clear the opponent's scoring opportunity.

This is the trailing player's best opportunity to take the lead and Roberts executed the chance superbly with a strong centre ball clearance sending von Schmieder to the far-off boundary.

Roberts scoring stroke for 2-3 lead ran the hoop and well enough to command hoop six as well, forcing von Schmieder to shoot from distance to with the best stroke of the match.

Not only did the stroke score, but if landed beautifully, if somewhat fortunately right in front of his other ball with both in-line for hoop seven.

At 3-3, but the advantage with Roberts' first stroke which that he positioned well, von Schmieder had to try something.

He promoted his hoop six scoring ball with a deft stroke that pushed it to an inch perfect position seven yards away, Roberts missed his clearance from 10 yards and von Schmieder scored to retake the lead with a quite brilliant passage of play.

Thereafter Roberts was chasing the game, and as the opportunities came and went he was forced into ever greater risk taking and steady von Schmieder eventually pulled away to win deservedly 7-4. Von Schmieder has now won Phyllis Court Club Championship for a record eight times since his first in 2007, extending his all-time lead over four-time winner Roberts.

Finals Day also saw the concluding matches of five other season-long competitions including the morning [Open Doubles Championship](#) final which again featured **Charlie von Schmieder**, who along with partner **Colin Morgan**, were attempting to react their 2016 success, this time against **Helena and Mike Fensome**.

The Fensomes won a very close first game 7-6 but then were beaten rather comfortably in the second as von Schmieder and Morgan looked to have all the momentum going into the decider. However, the Fensomes established a good lead, and despite a spirited comeback from their opponents, controlled the third game to win 7-4, giving Helena a fourth doubles title with her third different partner.

Alongside that match was the final of the [3+ Doubles](#) which brought **Dianne Browne & Russell Robinson** to face **Raghu Iyer & Hugh Crook** with the former pair as favourites, and it was a surprise therefore that Iyer and Crook took the first game 6-7, deserved victory though it was

Browne and Robinson recovered to win the second well-contested game 7-5 and then controlled the decider from the start to wrap up the match 7-2, meaning that Browne retained her doubles title from the last time the completion was played pre-covid in 2019.

Two other singles competitions also concluded on Finals Day and both saw fitting victories for players who have enjoyed much improvement this season.

In [7+ Singles](#), **Jeff Smith** had a comfortable 7-2 first game win against **Colin Hall** and, although given a stiffer challenge in the second, was always in charge and won 7-5, giving that competition its eleventh winner in as many years.

In the [10+ Singles](#), **Andy Jones** started as the hottest of favourites against **Christine Searle**, due to his remarkable rise through the handicap ranks this season, which he started as a 10 and finished as a handicap 4. Searle had shown good form of her own in qualifying for this final, with and especially impressive 7-3, 7-1 semi final win over steady John Etheridge, but she was no match for Jones in the final who won 7-3, 7-2.

22 September - Spiers wins the 10+ Singes 'Plate' (Seson-long competition)

Daphne Spiers beat Sally Batty 7-2, 7-2 this morning to win her first 'silverware'.

Congratulations Daphne!



21 September - Phyllis Court 'D' are SCF Advantage League Champions

- PCC 'D' 9 - 7 PCC 'C' in close Final -

In a fitting climax to the Southern Federation Advantage League season, Phyllis Court 'D' won a very close final against Phyllis Court 'C'.

Patricia Mulcahy's 'D' shared the first round of games 2-2 and took a 5-3 lead at the half-way stage. Not to be out-done, Andy Jones 'C' won the third round to tie the match score at 6-6 going into the final round.

It looked like being a cliff-hanger ending, with the League title being decided on the match between the two captains in the no.1 berths, but Jeff Smith won the second to last game to finish, to get PCC 'D' over the winning line.

Jones beat Mulcahy as a consolation but that win was too late and Phyllis Court 'D' gleefully hoisted the stand-in cup (because the proper one is still on the Isle of Wight).

'Man of the match' was the undefeated Paul Franklin who took his handicap down to 10.

PCC 'D': Patricia Mulcahy (5), Jeff Smith (6), Carol Wadsworth (10), Paul Franklin (11)

PCC 'C': Andy Jones (4), Michael Christmas (4), Colin Morgan (6), Kevin Ward (8)

Well done Phyllis Court 'D' !

19 September - The funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II

There was no play today as we joined in respectful memory of Her Majesty.

18 September - Iyer runner-up in AC All England Handicap Championship National Final

Raghu Iyer won 4 of his 5 games at the AC All England Handicap Championship Final this weekend and his only loss was to the undefeated eventual winner. Though doubtless disappointing for the Phyllis Court man, the runner-up spot is a very creditable finishing position in such a big national competition.
Well done Raghu!

18 September - Ward beats Warren to win our 'Advantage' Season-Long Competition

Kevin Ward (handicap 9) won our GC Advantage season-long competition final this morning with a 7-5, 7-4 match win over Aly Warren (handicap 12).

By mutual agreement, this final match was played early (our 'Finals Day' is not until next Saturday).

This was our second most popular competition, attracting no less than 60 players, and Ward's long 6 rounds journey to success was via wins over, Jenna Shanks, John Rumford, Patricia Mulcahy, Ralph Chambers and Liz Smith, before meeting Warren today.

Well done to both finalists - see you both at our prize-giving dinner (29 November)

17-18 September - Roberts, Jones and Mulcahy enjoy mixed successes at National Finals

Chris Roberts played to above his ninth seeding to qualify for the quarter-finals of the English National Singles Championship (ENSC), which is the culmination of the Championship Series, at Cheltenham this weekend. He got a game off UK no.7 James Death in a 2-1 'best of three' match defeat, then beat outsider David Thirtle-Watts fairly easily 2-0, before meeting regular rival, and former England International, Lionel Tibble for a 'winner qualifies / loser doesn't' showdown in their last block match.

Tibble is Roberts' most frequently played opponent and the pair had contested 45 ranking games over the last 10 years, with the last only three weeks ago when Tibble beat Roberts narrowly in the semi-finals of the prestigious Selectors Second Eight.

Tibble won their first game this time too, 7-5, but Roberts deft 'flick-off' to position at hoop 13 game him a 7-6 win in the second and, with his tail-up, Roberts dominated the decider to win 7-1.

Sunday morning's quarter-finals line-up pitted Roberts against another England international, Richard Bilton and the latter admitted to having a good share of fortune as he beat Roberts 7-4, 7-5. Roberts finished 7th overall.

Andy Jones finished in a fabulous 3rd place and the C-Level Series National Final, at Camerton & Peasedown CC this weekend.

He won 6 of his 7 games on Saturday to top his block, to qualify and get a favourable draw for Sundays knockout phase.

He beat Jon Carrington 10-8 in the quarter-finals but then lost to mark Innes 7-6, 6-7, 3-7 in the semi-finals (having been well ahead in game two), before bouncing back to get on the virtual 'podium' with a 7-4 win over Colin Spencer in the 3rd/4th place match. - *Well done Andy!*

Patricia Mulcahy had a disappointing first day at the same C-Level Series National Final but did much better in Sunday's Plate event winning 4 of her 7 games.

16 September - Von Schmieder reaches semi-finals of the Irish Open

Charlie von Schmieder made a return visit to his home land today and re-kindled old friendships at Carrickmines CC, near Dublin.

He went well at the Irish GC Open until being stumped at the semi-finals stage by fellow Ireland International Mark Stephens 2-7, 5-7.

16 September - Morgan wins our 3+ Singles tournament and Red Ball Trophy for first time

Colin Morgan saved his best play until the later stages of today's 3+ Singles tournament to record an unexpected victory and the Red Ball Trophy for the first time.

With only five competitors, a first phase 'all play all' block was played in the morning and early afternoon, from which semi-final positions were decided with the bottom player dropping-out.

With half of the games finishing 7-6 or 7-5, the action was closely competitive, but Andy Jones emerged unscathed in first position, followed by Colin Morgan, Dianne Browne and Patricia Mulcahy; the latter edging out Michael Christmas on the 'net hoops' count.

Jones beat Mulcahy 7-2 and Morgan beat Browne 7-6 in the semis and a good interactive final befitted the climax of the day.

Morgan established a deserved 4-2 lead to put Jones under pressure and the rapidly improving Jones responded well to draw level at 4-4 and 5-5.

Morgan then played and excellent angled stroke into the jaws of hoop 11 from distance to take control of the game once more, and when Jones positioned well at hoop 12, Morgan pulled out another top draw stroke to land in the hoop jaws again.

Jones seemed to have rescued the game when he cleared Morgan from the back of the hoop, right back to the centre peg, but with confidence sky high, Morgan calmly ran the hoop cleanly despite the distance, to win the tournament in style.

Click on this button to see the full results:

3+ Singles T



14 September

A Minutes Silence and black ribbons worn in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth

A minutes silence was observed by the first team players of Phyllis Court and High Wycombe Croquet Clubs before the league match today.

Black ribbons were also worn in respectful memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

14 September - PCC 'A' 6.5 - 1.5 High Wycombe 'A'

PCC 'A' rounded-off a mildly disappointing SCF League season with a fine 6.5 - 1.5 victory over near neighbours High Wycombe today.

Captain Chris Roberts was pleased to get past Richard Peperell 7-4, 7-6 with the High Wycombe Charmain playing some of his best golf croquet for some time.

Ian Norris and Roger Goldring also beat the visitor's Ian Shore and Alan Clarke in straight games respectively and High Wycombe answered with one 'last hoop' match win for Michael Bowker over Phyllis Court's Helena Fensome.

The 3-1 half time lead was strong and, buoyed with confidence, Goldring and Fensome recorded straight match wins over Bowker and Clark in the early afternoon to secure the fixture win.

Roberts completed his second straight match win to defeat Shore and, with the fixture well won, the Norris/Peperell rubber has halved at one win apiece.

PCC 'A': Chris Roberts (-2), Ian Norris (-1), Roger Goldring (1), Helen Fensome (1)

13 September - PCC 'D' 11 - 5 Ryde 'C' - taking the 'D' into the League Final v PCC 'C' next week

Phyllis Court 'D' scored a fabulous 11-5 victory over visitors Ryde, from the Isle of Wight, today in the semi-final of the SCF Advantage League.

The win takes the 'D' into the League Final versus PCC 'C' (at Phyllis Court) next Wednesday (21st September).

The start of the match was put back to just before midday when Ryde were delayed on the road and PCC 'D' wasted no time in establishing a 3-1 first round lead with wins from captain Patricia Mulcahy, Jeff Smith and Paul Franklin.

They then really turned the screw in the second round, winning all four matches to go into a delayed lunch 7-1 up and needing only two more wins from the remaining eight games to win the match.

Ryde rallied however and won the third round 1-3, with [Carol Wadsworth](#) providing the only home win, for a match score of 8-4, meaning that Ryde could tie the match with the last four results.

In fact, there was more at stake than that because if the match was drawn, the tie-break would be the result between the two number 1 players, which was still to play in that last round.

Ryde won the first of the last round games to finish, but then Smith won his game, giving PCC 'D' the crucial ninth victory to secure the fixture result, before extra wins for Mulcahy and Franklin iced the Phyllis Court cake.

This was an excellent win for the Henley side, and captain Mulcahy enjoyed the personal achievement of bringing her handicap down to 5 for the first time.

PCC 'D': Patricia Mulcahy (6), Jeff Smith (6), Carol Wadsworth (10), Paul Franklin (11)

12 September - Smith and Roberts win the '10+ Combo' Doubles and the Cave & Wolf Salvagers

Liz Smith was a delighted first-time trophy winner on Monday this week, when she and partner **Chris Roberts** were undefeated in winning Phyllis Court's Restricted Doubles day tournament.



Simth (14) and Roberts (-2) were taken to 7-6 in one of their five block games by Dianne Browne (3) and Gillian Symons (6) and then met the same pair in the final, winning 7-3 to claim the Stella Cave and Josephine Wolfe Salvors.

10 pairs took part this year, which was 2 up on last year and a 'cross blocks format was played in order to keep everyone occupied all day.

Click on this button to see the full results:

'10+' Doubles T



10-11 September -

GOLDRING RETAINS NATIONAL ALL ENGLAND HANDICAP TITLE

Roger Goldring returned to form in spectacular fashion last weekend to retain his National All England Handicap Champions title, creating history as the first player ever to successfully defend that crown.

Goldring started the 14-player 'all play all' event well and chalked up six wins out of seven games at the end of the first day, trailing Watford's undefeated Jason Carley.

However, two losses in his opening two games on Sunday morning seemed to have put paid to his chances, until similar slips by Carley and other rivals, brought the Phyllis Court player back into the picture when he recorded three close 7-6 wins in a row.

The tournament hinged on the last round with up to four players in with a shout.

Cool Goldring held his nerve going to the 13th hoop yet again to prevail over Ryde's Ron Gould with another 7-6 result, and reported afterwards "I began to wonder if I might have ended up with some sort of decent place after all. Someone came on to the court and said quietly - you've won, that last game has given it to you. I was amazed."

Goldring's second win actually keeps the All England Handicap trophy at Phyllis Court for the third successive year after Robin Coates first won it in 2020.

For this year's final, Goldring's first place with 10 wins, headed a quartet of Phyllis Court players who finished in 7th to 9th positions:

Rick Lilley (7 wins), Carol Wadsworth & Michael Christmas (both 6 wins).

7 September - PCC 'A' 5 - 3 Winchester 'A'

Phyllis Court 'A' defeated old rivals Winchester 'A' 5 - 3 with a solid performance that brought a hard-fought but deserved victory today.

Chris Roberts had to come from 1-4 down in his first game to defeat the wily Ian Harrison 7-5 and then lead all the way for comfortable 7-4 second win to take the first rubber.

And there was more success for Phyllis Court when Ian Norris, making a welcome return to their team, also had to come from behind to beat the visitors Nigel Hind 6-7, 7-5, 7-5.

Roger Goldring suffered rather at number three and surprisingly lost to Winchester's Jan Johnston 5-7, 7-2, 5-7 and the hosts number four Helena Fensome was disappointed to lose her morning match to Roger Barnacle closely 7-4, 6-7, 6-7, giving the team match a 2-2 halftime score line.

In the afternoon, straight game wins for Goldring and Fensome, 7-2, 7-5 over Barnacle and 7-4, 7-4 over Johnston respectively secured a draw at least for Phyllis Court, as the two matches in the top half of the fixture toiled away into deciding third games.

Roberts eventually prevailed after losing his first game to Hind and came back to win comfortably 4-7, 7-3, 7-1 rounding off with an 18 yard hoop score, before Harrison salvaged a consolation win for Winchester in a topsy-turvy encounter with Norris that finished 2-7, 7-2, 2-7.

This was good win for Phyllis Court who bounced back will today after two back to back defeats to East Dorset and Ryde in the last fortnight.

PCC 'A': Chris Roberts (-2), Ian Norris (-1), Roger Goldring (1), Helen Fensome (1)

6 September - Third Rainbow social et-together held this evening

Madeleine Probett reports: Following the success of the first two Rainbow socials held in June and July, another one was held this evening. Around a dozen members enjoying an early evening drink and nibbles in the Orangery, meeting some new members of the club, and finding out more about the Rainbow and arranging games with each other. We look forward to continuing to meet socially!

6 September - Phyllis Court are AC Handicap League Champions (to be confirmed)

The two match wins recorded by Phyllis Court 'Ac' in the last two days sees them top of the SCF Handicap League with only the second half of a match with Oxford University to play. Oxford defaulted on two of the rubbers in the date originally set for this match, when wins by Rick Lilley and Roger Goldring gave phyllis Court a 2-0 lead. even if Oxford manage to get two players to fulfill this fixture, and if they happen to win, the match will end in a draw, which (on our reading at least) will be insufficient for Oxford to overtake Phyllis Court who appear to be mathematical league Champions (to be confirmed).

5 September - The Croquet Club defeat the Bridge Group in the annual match

Phyllis Court Croquet Club defeated the Bridge Group 62 - 48 in the annual Bridge/Croquet match, and so retained the Connell Cup today. The scoring system was different to previous years and involved ranking all 10 pairs from 1 to 10 at the end of each session (am Bridge and pm Croquet). The pair finishing first at bridge scored 10 points, second place earned 9 points and so on down to 10th place for 1 point. And the same scoring method was used for the afternoon's croquet. The Bridge Group held a slender 26 - 29 lead after the morning's Bridge session, in which their top scoring pair was Michael Christmas & David Young. However, the Croquet Club dominated their own game 36 - 19 behind top pair Ian and Delia Norris who were undefeated. - This latest win for the Croquet Club completes a great run of victories in recent years which has now seen them draw level with the Bridge Group in the all-time Series of matches..
The Croquet Club: I & D Norris, R.Goldring & C.Searle, R & J Iyer, J.Smith & C.Wadsworth, R.Chambers & D.Melck
The Bridge Group: R.Coates &D. Browne, M.Christmas & D.Young, G.Symons & C.Morgan, M.Sayer & F.Ahara, R.Noel-Clarke & H.Morton

6 September - Ward wins again but Roberts loses in AC match v High Wycombe

Kevin Ward scored another good 20 - 9 win, this time against High Wycombe's Keith Harker this morning, and a match played alongside the number 1 pairs in this fragmented AC Handicap League match this morning. In that other match, Chris Roberts good fifth turn 10 hoop break was undone methodically by High Wycombe's Richard Peperell who used his three bisques to good effect, ridding off a splene second brak with a rover peel to win 12-26. However, it was Ward's fortitude over a long game wit Harker that secured the match win, with thanks also to the prevoursly recorded wins Raghu Iyer and Roger Goldring.
PCC 'AC': Chris Roberts (-0.5), Raghu Iyer (10), Roger Goldring (18), Kevin Ward (22)

4 & 5 September - Ward's & Roberts' AC game wins complete 4-0 defeat of Blewbury

Kevin Ward scored an excellent 20 - 9 victory over Blewbury's Steve Fisher last evening in only the former's second every inter-club match. Chris Roberts defeated Fisher's teammate Deirdre Cochrane comfortably this morning, which added to earlier recorded victories by raghu Iyer and Roger Goldring, completed a 4-0 win for Phyllis Court in this fragmented AC team match
PCC 'AC': Chris Roberts (-0.5), Raghu Iyer (10), Roger Goldring (18), Kevin Ward (22)

3 September - Julia Green triumphs at climax of the 10+ Evening Series

Russell Robinson reports:

As the four finalists for the 10+ Evening Series lined up for the play-offs this afternoon, it seemed probable that the trophy would be lifted by one of two players who have enjoyed very successful seasons, coming through the ranks from their initial handicaps of 10 at the start of the competition in May. Would John Rumford (7) retain his crown, having won the inaugural Series last year, or would he be usurped by Patricia Mulcahy (6)? However, it was clear from the first game that Julia Green (12) had other ideas, as after conceding a 1-3 deficit early on to Mulcahy, with some excellent hoop running and clearances, she recovered to win the next five hoops, before closing out the game with a 7-4 win. Meanwhile, Doug Tonks (12), who having only learnt to play the sport in April, and therefore having done remarkably well to make the play-offs, was not quite on his usual form against Rumford, who won their game comfortably. Green continued her good form into the second game, defeating Tonks, while the pivotal moment in the Mulcahy/Rumford game was at hoop 7 when the latter peeled his opponent's ball through in a failed clearance attempt, which enabled Mulcahy to open up a 5-3 lead at the following hoop and eventually win 7-4. That set up the intriguing possibility of a three-way tie on two wins, with it even being possible that all three would also have the same "net hoops", thus leaving manager, Russell Robinson, working out contingency plans for a "penalty shoot-out"!



In the final pair of games, Tonks played very well to take four hoops off Mulcahy, which was enough to ensure that the winner of the competition would come from the Green/Rumford game. Unbeknown to her, Green actually had done enough on the "net hoops" calculation when she took a 5-3 lead, but the contest went all the way to the 13th hoop, when Green played what was probably the 'stroke of the competition' to clear Rumford's ball from the jaws with power from corner 1, leaving her own ball inches in front of the hoop. However, Rumford was able to deal with that and a few strokes later, with both Julia's balls in front of the hoop, he won the game with an angled hoop shot from the boundary. That was enough only to secure joint second place for Rumford, and there will have a new name on the 10+ Evening Series trophy.
– *congratulations, Julia Green!*

Older news

2 September - PCC 'B' 4 - 4 East Dorset 'B' - Phyllis Court pipped to the B-Level league title

Russell Robinson reports:

PCC 'B' entertained a most amiable quartet from East Dorset in the tie that would decide the champions of the Southern Croquet Federation GC B-Level League today.

Any win would be sufficient for us to take the title.

With the teams well balanced on handicaps, it was always likely to be a close encounter, and so it proved with 11 of the 12 matches going to a third game, and with no fewer than nine games being decided at the 13th hoop.

In the morning, Phyllis Court's Russell Robinson (3) eventually wore down the opposing captain, Tim Hughes (3), who scarcely missed a clearance, while the hosts' captain Dianne Browne (3) found the East Dorset number two, John Speigel (4), playing just a little too well at the end.

Meanwhile, Phyllis Court's Michael Christmas (4) got the better of John Close (5) in three very close games, and all went into a late lunch leaving B team debutant Patricia Mulcahy (6) still out on court putting in a valiant effort in a very long contest with David Haddrell (4).

Mulcahy eventually succumbed at the 12th hoop giving the fixture a 2-2 half-time scoreline.

In the afternoon, Robinson had to work very hard to get the better of Speigel, while Hughes's form was just slightly too good on the day for Browne.

On the other court, Mulcahy claimed the distinction of winning the only 2-game match of the day, while a fortunate "in-off" at the 12th hoop by Christmas's opponent secured the fourth match victory which was enough for East Dorset to draw the fixture, win the league and consign Phyllis Court to second place.

After a very long day, our visiting friends set off back to Poole at 6 p.m., with the satisfaction of having done just enough and the hope that the Friday traffic would have died down.

PCC 'B': Dianne Browne (3), Russell Robinson (3), Michael Christmas (4), Patricia Mulcahy (6)

1 September - Symons & Searle win the 7 + Doubles season-long competition

The first of our seven season-long competitions (and 3 'plates') was decided this morning when, the 7+ Doubles final was won by Gillian Symons and Christine Searle.

The duo beat Jeff Smith and Steve Morton in straight games 7-5, 7-5 to lift the Dorien Belsen Cups, and the vanquished pair were consoled with the Cox Wood runners-up cups.