

Back
to
Home
page

Older news

For older
NEWS
click here:

Older news

The
Committee member
i/c this web site is:
Chris Roberts
079 7378 7710

info@kickphoto.co.uk

Coronavirus

Please heed the
latest advice
issued by the
UK Government
- click [here](#)

PHYLLIS COURT CROQUET

News

27 Sept - Robin Coates completes a 'clean sweep' in our AC 'Poulton Cup'

With a faultless four out of four winning record, Robi Coates swept to the clearest of victories in our season-long AC Handicap block competition to lift the Poulton Cup for the first time. Coates beat Richard peperell (+26), Chris Roberts (+25), Raghu Iyer (+20) and his closest win was against Frances Colman (+3). The Poulton Cup is one of our oldest trophies and has been competed for annually since 1969. In winning this year, Robin reduced his handicap to a new low mark of 11.

Congratulations Robin

26 Sept - Raghu Iyer wins the AC 'Ark' Tournament at Surbiton

Raghu Iyer did extremely well this weekend to beat a 24-player field at Surbiton to win the well known 'Ark' tournament. This one is unusual as it is played to Advanced Handicap rules (usually it is one or the other, not both) but our man used his own, not inconsiderable, tournament nous to navigate the complexities of the situations to win all six of his games. In fact he won it with a games to spare as going into the last round, he had already beaten all his closest rivals, but he won that last game anyway for good measure! Raghu also reduced his handicap back to AC 11.

Congratulations Raghu

26 Sept - Cliffhanger finishes on our FINALS DAY!

GC Club Champion - Roger Goldring

3+ Singles winner - Rick Lilley

7+ Singles winner - Allan Henderson

10+ Singles winner - Gillian Symons

10+ Singles 'plate' - Sally Batty

Roger Goldring became the Phyllis Court GC Champion for the first time today when his season-long Open Singles competition final climaxed in a thrilling cliff-hanger ending at the last deciding hoop. It was really exciting croquet served up for the assembled crowd that had only just settled down from the same knife edged drama that had ended the curtain-raiser match in the final of the second tier 3+ competition that had been won twenty minutes before hand by Rick Lilley. Indeed, such was the closeness of both contests, that there was appreciation for the losers, Ian Norris and Russell Robinson respectively, as much as the eventual winners.

The designated Phyllis Court 'Finals Day' last Saturday, certainly lived up to its billing as one to come and watch, and it started with the final of the fourth tier **10+ Singles** competition between two of the Club's most improved players this season, Gillian Symons and Patricia Mulcahy. Both have enjoyed success representing the Phyllis Court D team this season and Mulcahy has ventured to many a far-off location on the national C-Level 7+ Series circuit this season, culminating in qualification for the National Final tournament on the Isle of Wight a fortnight ago. In this final however, it was Symons who established the upper hand eventually and included a comeback from four hoops behind to win 7-5, 7-5 and become the inaugural victor of this competition.

The morning was completed by the **10+ Singles consolation plate** event where Sally Batty won a topsy-turvy final against Carl Billson 7-5, 3-7, 7-2, to cap a fine season that rewarded many diligent practice hours.

The third tier **7+ Singles** final had already taken place ten days earlier, but the achievement of winner Allan Henderson, who defeated former winner Hugh Crook 7-6, 7-1, in that completion final, was mentioned in despatches at the end of day presentations.

Moving up the grades, the final of the **3+ Singles** started soon after lunch and proved to be an ideal prelude to the Open Singles Club Championship that began an hour later, and so for some time there were two exciting matches being played out on adjoining courts. Russell Robinson took an early command of the 3+ final winning the first game of three 4-7 as Rick Lilly struggled to find his shooting accuracy and nerves clearly affected both players in a mistake ridden second game which Lilley rescued to win 7-6. As the Open Singles was following similarly close pattern, most eyes fixed on the final game of the junior match which Robinson seemed to have in his grasp when he got into the jaws of hoop 11 and converted the advantage into a 5-6 lead with a good position for a potential match winning hoop 12. Lilley than played the shot of the match from some distance to block Robinson's hoop attempt and stayed in the match before getting very lucky when a missing clearance attempt glanced of the hoop leg and found its intended target by the most fortunate of routes, which altered the dynamic and put Robinson on the defensive at that hoop. Robinson was faulted by referee Helena Fensome as he tried to block the hoop from the rear and Lilley scored to take the game, match and title to the 13th and deciding hoop. Robinson had the advantage with the first stoke but was over cautious and took a very deep position that was then replaced by the next two stokes, and surprisingly Lilley's last ball into the fray was the best. Several clearances later, and Lilly was shooting for the match - he puled out of his stroke nervously before re-composing and then scored with a confident stoke worthy of his 3+ Singles title win 4-7, 7-6, 7-6.

Meanwhile, **The Club Championship** was also building to its own crescendo as Ian Norris' first game 5-7 win had been answered by Roger Goldring's steely 7-4 response, setting up third game deciding drama again. Positioning perfection by Norris earned him a commanding 4-6 lead but the competitive experience built up by Goldring over many years now, kept his belief strong and he was quick to capitalise on a miss by Norris to get back to 5-6. Goldring then staying the match with the most difficult of clearances that needed to avoid the centre peg by the tiniest of margins and he nailed it with aplomb, to eventually win hoop 12, tie the match at 6-6 and once again it was 'golden hoop' time. There was rather more interaction than in the earlier match as both Norris and Goldring fought for position rather than taking on a 'do or die' hoop attempt risk. After much to and fro, Goldring earned a good advantage, settled, shot for the win, and with much relief, saw his nervous attempt rattle both hoop legs before mainlining just enough momentum to successfully score. Golding won 5-7, 7-4, 7-6 and was duly presented with the Phyllis Court Champions Cup for the first time.

22 Sept - Dianne Browne & Gillian Symons win the '10+ combined 'Cave & Wolfe Doubles Salvagers

It was fitting that Dianne Browne and her junior partner Gillian Symons won the Restricted (10+ combined handicap) Doubles tournament today for the Cave and Wolfe Salvagers, because Gillian is the niece of trophy donator Stella Cave. On a glorious day the winning pair were undefeated throughout and Symons in particular was in good form for the whole tournament, which nicely rounds her competitive season win which she has enjoyed much improvement. Browne & Symons defeated Roger Goldring & Julia Green 7-4 at the end of a long day in which Symons and Green earned their first trophies. It was good to welcome Andy Jones and Ruth Raunkiaer to their full day tournament debuts as they were partnered by the experienced Delia and Ian Norris. The full results are below.

Congratulations to our winners Dianne Browne and Gillian Symons

21 September - PCC 'C' lose 6 - 10 to Ryde in SCF Advantage League Final play-off

PCC 'C' started badly and, despite a maid match rally, were beaten by a good Ryde 'C' team in their League final today at Phyllis Court. Jeff Smith came in as a fairly late replacement for team captain Bill Pitkeathley who was called away on a family business but stayed in touch with proceedings via text messages. Smith clearly relished the opportunity and was the only Phyllis Court player to record wins in the first two rounds, which left the Henley side 2 - 6 down at lunch with an uphill task to save the match in the afternoon. They did fight back well and won the third round by three games to one, with Michael Christmas, Kevin Ward and Jeff Smith again claiming victories to take the match score to 5-7. And when Christmas won the first fourth round game to finish, the come-back was on, but only for a short while as Ryde scored the next one to put one hand. The remaining two games took some time to compete and two OPhyllis Court leaders were eventually overhauled by the visitors who competed a deserved 6-10 win.

20 September - Colman wins AC class at Budleigh

Frances Colman rounded-off her English AC season with a fine class win at the Budleigh Salterton tournament this weekend. She won four out of her five games to initially end in a three way-tie, but then won a 'corner 4 two ball brake' play-off against her two rivals to win her class trophy. Chris Roberts lost all six of his class games at the same tournament. The pair fly to Corfu on Subday, along with Richard Peperell, to compete in the Annual Greek AC Open.

Congratulations Frances

20 September - Mulcahy flies Phyllis Court flag at C-Level Series National Final

Patricia Mulcahy capped a fine first seson in the wider competitive scene with an appearence in the C-level Series national Final this weekend at Ryde on the Isle of Wight. Despite being the lowest ranked player at the event, she won a creditable three games and hopefully enjoyed the experience as she stepped-up to the challenge of the toughest crouet of the career so far.

16 September - **Phyllis Court are National Team Handicap Champions!**

Phyllis Court are the National Team Handicap Champions thanks to a Hollywood style comeback in the final of the GC Federations Shield competition last week. The Henley side trailed Sussex County for the entire match and had appeared sunk by mid-afternoon at 0-3 down, but came back in dramatic fashion to win 4-3 in an exhilarating finish. A late start due to the Sussex team's travelling delays, made way for an equally slow start on the Phyllis Court courts that are now showing much improvement and which had been presented in splendid condition for this prestigious match. Only the doubles rubber was completed before the lunch interval and Phyllis Court's Roger Goldring (handicap -2) and Raghu Iyer (3) were defeated 4-7, 4-7 by the Sussex pair Tony Jolly (2) and David King (3), who both displayed accurate clearing skills in addition to using their greater number of extra turns to good effect. Unusually the morning singles rubbers took longer than the doubles with the players handicaps providing two excellent tight contests that had to be suspended for lunch at one game apiece. The host's Ian Norris (-2) was evenly matched by the visitors Roger Sutton (-1) with scores of 7-5, 5-7, and likewise Phyllis Court's captain Chris Roberts (-2) was held by Linda Gavigan (7) who's intelligent use of her nine extra turns, left the pair tied 7-5, 4-7. A decision was made to start afresh with the afternoon program of head to head singles matches and only return to the unfinished morning games if the overall team match result was dependent on them. So, Phyllis Court trailed 0-1 in completed matches going into the second session and by half past three, the prospects for a home victory were looking grim, when their semi-final hero Goldring (-2) fell to Jolly (2) 6-7, 4 - 7, and was followed shortly afterwards by Norris (-2) who faded after a bright start against Sussex captain King (3), 7-6, 4-7, 3-7. With the team match score at 0-3, Sussex need just one of the other two matches still in progress for victory and they came very close indeed, but for a life-saving seven-yard hoop score from the boundary by Phyllis Court's Iyer (3) at the last hoop of his second game against Gavigan (7). Gavigan had beaten Iyer in their first game without taking any of her four extra turns and was in good form all day but perhaps had the wind taken from her sails by Iyer's dramatic score and the Phyllis Court man finally got his side on the scoreboard 5-7, 7-6, 7-3. There was drama to on other court too, where Roberts (-2) had to pull out all the stops to contend with Sutton (-1) and succeeded with a string of very long-distance clearances, including a monster 23-yarder to hit a half ball target to turn the first game. Roberts eventually prevailed 7-5, 7-6, bringing the team match score back to 2-3, meaning that all then hinged on the resumption of the two suspended morning singles rubbers, and these were started straight away. Norris (-2) blew away Sutton (-1) more easily than the Sussex player's performance thus far had suggested likely, and with the team match score now tied at 3-3, all eyes fell on the Roberts (-2) versus Gavigan (7) encounter, and the 'picket fence' of nine extra turn sticks that the Phyllis Court man had to overcome. Gavaigan again used her extra turns cleverly and she forced Roberts into two well-executed jump shot scores as he kept her lead in check, as her handicap advantage unwound. Again, Roberts' long-distance clearances were on song and were enough to make-up for some below par hoop running attempts. Gavigan's extra turns finally expired with an untypical error at hoop 10, and with the score 5-5, the more experienced Henley player was able to control the game with a no risks patient approach, to an eventual and much relived finish 7-5. With the team match settled at 4-3, there were compliments all round from competition Director Frances Colman, who commiserated with Sussex who had come so close, and congratulated her own club team, as she presented the GC Federations Shield to National Handicap Champions, Phyllis Court.

Results detail, Phylis Court scores first, (the games marked *, were played at the end to decide the team match)

Roger Goldring (-2) & Raghu Iyer (3) lost to Tony Jolly (2) and David King (3) 4-7, 4-7

Chris Roberts (-2) beat Linda Gavigan (7) 7-5, 4-7, 7-5*
Ian Norris (-2) beat Roger Sutton 7-5, 5-7, 3-7*

Chris Roberts (-2) beat Roger Sutton (-1) 7-5, 7-6
Roger Goldring (-2) lost to Tony Jolly (2) 6-7, 4-7
Ian Norris (-2) lost to David King (3) 7-6, 4-7, 3-7
Raghu Iyer (3) beat Linda Gavigan (7) 5-7, 7-6, 7-3

15 September - Coates & Browne win our Open Doubles day-tournament (Iain Lindsay Cups)

The established doubles pair Robin Coates and Dianne Browne scored a hard fought victory in Open Doubles day-tournament today to lift the Ian Lindsay Cups for the first time. The day started with the eight team field split into two blocks which both ended in ties having to be settled on a net hoop count. The long games forced the abandonment of a second phase of block games, in favour of straight semi-finals and final (and 'plate' versions of the same). Coates and Browne got past Terje Johansen and Raghu Iyer 7-3 whilst the other semi-final was an extremely close affair in which Roger Goldring and Colin Morgan squeezed past pre-tournament favourites Chris Roberts and Frances Colman 7-6. Coates and Brown always had the edge over Goldring and Morgan in the final and maintained that advantage to the end, winning 7-5. In the bottom half of proceedings, Helena and Mike Fensome made some amends for missing the cut for the main event by winning the (non-existent) 'plate' with ease.

See the full results here:

80+ Singles T

14 September - 10+ Singles tournament called-off with courts waterlogged

Heavy and prolonged overnight rain left all three courts unplayable (with stinking water on courts 1 and 2, and the usually dryer court 3 also untypically soggy today). The planned 10+ Singles tournament was called-off as a result (and the courts closed for the day), with conflicting forecasts for the remainder of the day were somewhat averaged out with light rain coming and going throughout the late morning and early afternoon.

12 September - Goldring is the All England Handicap National Champion!

- and Lilly comes very creditable 4th

Phyllis Court's Roger Goldring won the All England Handicap National Final at Sidmouth today to bring the trophy back to Henley again. His success repeats that of club mate Robin Coates who won the title last year. Also doing well this past weekend was Frith's own Rick Lilley who was just piped to third place on a net hoops count, which was a terrific showing the fellow Phyllis Court player. In fact, it was net hops that untimely gave Goldring his victory after an incredibly closely fought out last three rounds on the south coast. Players with handicaps ranging from Goldring's minus 1 to plus 7 provided a very broad spectrum of abilities, yet all were competitive thanks to the Croquet Association's handicapping system which affords weaker players with extra turns that that can be chosen to be played any time during a game. This final was the culmination of a season-long competition which involving over 250 players from 35 different clubs, and as is the tradition for this national final, an 'all play all' format was employed to provided a full thirteen rounds of play. Goldring was 'in the mix' on the Saturday night with no less than six players all tied on five wins from seven games, and the Phyllis Court man was fastest out of his blocks on Sunday morning too and soon after the lunch break he had rattled off another four game wins to go clear of the field. As the Sidmouth town brass band serenaded play from not close by during the afternoon's play, Rick Lilley staged a concerted drive to be in to contention for a time too. But going into the last round, the title was between Roger Goldring (handicap 1, Phyllis Court), Dom Aarvold (0, Bristol) or Andy Loakes (-1, Camerton), all on 9 wins and Charlie Martin (0, Ramsgate) on 8 going into the final round. To make matters more interesting Goldring had to play Martin, and Aarvold was to play Loakes, and two interesting games ensued with so much at stake. Goldring started superbly and blew Martin away to establish a 5-2 lead, which he never gave-up and went on to win 7-4, but he didn't know if he done enough for the outright win. Loakes had defeated Aarvold by the same score line and it was 'calculator time' for the manager to sort out the net hoop sores.

Loakes' late surge in his last two games caused a very close final result, but Goldring's net hoops score of 20 bettered his rival by three and secured the tournament win. As the lowest handicapper player in the tournament, Goldring had, at times, needed to work very hard with up to eight extra turn against him to become the 2021 All England Handicap Champion.

10 September - Follow Roger Goldring and Rick Lilley (on-line) at The All England Handicap National Final this weekend

Good luck to Roger Goldring and Rick Lilley who will be flying the Phyllis Court flag at this National Final at Sidmouth this weekend. The result will be posted in 'real time' of the www.CroquetScores.com website so everyone can enjoy following their progress. The tournament will be played to an 'all play all' 14-player format starting at 0930 on Saturday and concluding at approx 1600 on Sunday.

~

Also in action this weekend are Chris Roberts, and Helena and Mike Fensome at the Sussex Open (part of the Gc Open Series). This one could well be on www.CroquetScores.com too, but if you look at this one, be aware that Helena plays under her Finnish name Helene Jansson.

10 September - Mike Fensome wins the 80+ Singles 'Yellow Ball Trophy' for third time in a row

Top seed Mike Fensome retained the Yellow Ball Trophy today, but was pused all the way by a splendid performance from Michael Christmas. Had it not been for one rouge shot near the end of the pair's head to head game in second phase block, the 7-6 score line and title would have gone in Christmas' favour. As it was, Fensome went through the tournament undefeated in his six games and topped the 7-player event. A late withdrawal threatened the smooth running of the event, and I am indebted to [two guest players](#), Dianne Browne and Gillian Symons, who answered my plea to make up the numbers in the morning and afternoon respectively - thank you again ladies. Finishing order: 1. Mike Fensome, 2. Michael Christmas, 3. Ralph Chambers, 4. Colin Morgan, 5= (the 'plate' block was incomplete), Robin Morrell, Bill Pitkeathley, Jim Walter.

80+ Singles T

8 September - Henderson wins 7+ season-long competition - our first final of the year

Allan Henderson capped a fine season when he won the 7+ Singles season-long competition this morning, in a Final that was played early to avoid a holiday. He squeezed past the determination of former (2013) winner Hugh Crook, by 7-6 in their game, first before having almost everything his own way in the second game, winning 7-1. Winning is straight games had become a habit and Henderson progressed through the entire competition without dropping a game. Alan will be presented with the Suzanne Roberts Quach in due course and Hugh likewise the runners-up Colman Quach.

Congratulations Allan!

8 September - Remarkable Rumford Rally secures 10+ Evening Series title

Manager Russell Robinson reports:

The inaugural 10+ Evening Series competition reached a two-day finale on two of the warmest and sunniest days that we had seen for some weeks. This Series had been played out over 15 evenings through the summer by 45 participants, who mostly each played on three or four evenings. All players were ranked according to % wins, with the top four qualifying for the play-offs. Heading the leader board was Andy Jones with 9 wins in 11 games and a "net hoops" score of +31, eight better than second-placed Mike Sayer who also on 9/11. Four other players also won 9 games, but each lost 3 - John Rumford edging into third place with +31 hoops, closely following by Christine Searle and Gillian Symons who tied in fourth on +28 hoops and therefore had to play-off for a top-four spot. Narrowly missing out on the play-offs, a few hoops behind, was Colin Hall, with Madeleine Probert finishing seventh on 8/11.

The fourth place play-off was a single 19-point game, and was a very closely fought affair, before Symons finally edged ahead, defeating Searle 10-7. This was immediately followed by the semi-final contested by Symons and Andy Jones. The early stages were again very close, with Andy edging into a 5-4 lead before storming ahead to win 10-5. The following day should have seen the other semi-final between Mike Sayer and John Rumford, but unfortunately Sayer was forced to withdraw, leaving Rumford with a bye in to the final against Jones. It is a testament to the quality of the 'Class of 21' that the final was fought out between two of the 15 of this year's beginners who had entered the competition.

The final was a best-of-three 13-point games.

Jones had to work much harder for the first game than is suggested by the dominant 7-0 score line as there were long strategic contests for a number of the hoops in the 50-minute game. Rumford was very relieved to finally get on the scoresheet at the first hoop of the second game, and the finalists traded hoop for hoop throughout this game. Jones was very unfortunate with a missed clearance at the hoop 13, which enabled Rumford to prevail 7-6 and take the match to the deciding game. Unfortunately for Jones, Rumford moved up a gear to complete a remarkable turnaround, winning the third game 7-2 and claiming the Evening Series title.

Results digest here:

80+ Singles T

6 September - Croquet beat Bridge in the annual challenge match

The Croquet Club overcame a large deficit from the morning's Bridge, to win the annual Croquet/Bridge match this afternoon. Bridge had built up an impressive 33 - 67 lead to take into to afternoon's croquet games, with the Bridge team's David Young and Michael Cristmas being the top scoring pair. This lead for Bridge ensured that the match result was going to be close either way as the croquet started after lunch. And so it turned out to be, with Croquet having the upper hand at their discipline and slowly closing the gap round by round.
After round 1 - Bridge lead 49 - 71
After round 2 - Bridge lead 65 - 75
After round 3 - Bridge lead 77 - 83
After round 4 - Croquet lead 93 - 87
After round 5 - Croquet won 105 - 95 (end)
The Croquet team's Roger Goldring and partner Christine Seale made up for their last place position in the morning's bridge, by being the only undefeated pair in the afternoon's croquet, and it was Goldring who hoisted the Connell/ Nichols Cup for his victorious Croquet Club team.
Bridge could take some comfort in knowing that they still lead the 'all time series' by 13 wins to 10, but this year the title sits with the Croquet Club.

5 September - Smith leads Phyllis Court six at Grass Roots National Final

Six Phyllis Court players took part in the National Final of the Croquet Association's Grass Roots competition held at Watford today. Top local performance was the fourth place achieved by Jeff Smith, followed Carol Wadsworth and Steve Morton who both out-played their seedings to make the cut to the main knockout, whilst Allan Henderson was unfortunate to miss out on net hoops and both Keven Ward and Patricia Mulcahy also played with good credit.

1 September - **Phyllis Court reach GC Federations Shield NATIONAL FINAL** *(on 16 September at Phyllis Court !)*

Phyllis Court will host the Golf Croquet Federations Shield National Final on Thursday, 16 September, following a thrilling semi-final victory last week. The Henley side were rocked by a late change to their team and drafted in Colin Morgan the night before the Wednesday encounter with Weston-Super-Mare at the neutral venue of Cheltenham CC. The match got off to a slow start with the combination of tricky courts, firm hoops and good deployment of handicap extra turns by the weaker players, resulting in prolonged contests at most hoops. Raghu Iyer (handicap 3) got Phyllis Court's first win with a topsy-turvy 7-4, 2-7, 7-2 victory over Gary Searle (5) but team mate Chris Roberts (-3) had too many extra turns to overcome against Gordon Taylor (6) and lost a very long match 5-7, 5-7.
The morning doubles took even longer and was suspended after three and a half hours play at one game apiece 6-7 and 7-4, in favour of starting the four afternoon head to head singles matches, with the overall team score at 1-1.
Phyllis Court's Roger Goldring (-1) was first to finish, but like Roberts, found that his handicap was too tough and he lost 5-7, 5-7 to Searle (5). Shortly afterwards however, Roberts (-3) pulled the match score back level with a mightily close 7-6, 7-6 win over Weston-Super-Mare's top player Lance Binning (0). Raghu Iyer (3) then put Phyllis Court ahead with another excellent win, this time 7-5, 5-7, 7-2 over Taylor (6) and then all eyes fell on the Colin Morgan (5) decider against Gerry Williams (2), in the only singles encounter of the match where the Phyllis Court player was the recipient of the extra turns. Williams struggled with the longevity of the day but heroically played on to defeat Morgan 3-7, 7-4, 4-7, which meant that although the time was now after 6pm, the outcome of the match would be hang on the deciding game of the unfinished doubles rubber.
Morgan was by some way the senior man of the quartet of players and this was his sixth long game of the day yet he fully played his part, expertly guided by the experienced Goldring, who out foxed the opposition with the use of Morgan's extra turns.

In fact, both sides delayed playing their extra turns until very late in the game, and as Goldring later revealed, his plan worked to perfection when Weston-Super-Mare's Binning and William's blinked first, When they played an extra turn at hoop 11 to lead 6-7. Morgan then deftly scored hoop 12 and Phyllis Court ten played the first of his extra turns to ensure the first approach advantage to the crucial last hoop 13. It was nail-biting stuff with both Phyllis Court's balls positioned for long hoop scoring attempts and both Western's balls in good clearance positions, but with both sides each having one extra turn remaining, there was poker element to the decision making. Goldring got Morgan to position closer and then take his extra turn to place his ball in the jaws of the hoop, knowing that that would force Weston to counter with a move behind the hoop to then clear with their last extra turn. The gamble paid-off even better that had been expected when Williams over-hit, had to attempt to clear from 45 degrees and importunately hit the hop leg, allowing Goldring to peel Morgan's ball through for the winning score for the game, match and team result 4-3. Croquet doesn't get any closer than that and both sides drew great credit for sticking with the eight and half-hour marathon! Phyllis Court progressed to the National Final and they subsequently won the toss for venue with opponents Sussex County, so the match will take place in Henley on Thursday next week, when a sizable crowd is expected.

31 August - PCC 'A' 4 - 4 High Wycombe 'A'

PCC 'A' retain their SCF Open League title

Phyllis Court A are the Southern Croquet Federation Open League Champions once again, but they certainly 'did it the hard way' this week and last. Their failure to get over the line last week at Winchester, when they only just managed to scrape a draw left them having to get something from their final league match against High Wycombe on Monday. The slow-paced courts and easy to run hops at Winchester worked against the generally superior positional skills of Phyllis Court's top seeded players Chris Roberts and Roger Golding and both fell to lower ranked opposition in Nigel Hind and Ian Harrison, and with Helena Fensome also losing to the hosts' number three Roger Barnacle, Phyllis Court had to thank Robin Coates for recording their only victory of the morning session. Fortunes were completely reversed in the afternoon and began with Fensome seeing-off Winchester's Jan Johnson in straight games around the same time as Goldring got the measure of Harrison to tie the match at 3-3, Coates lost to Barnacle meaning Phyllis Court the trailed 3-4 and all eyes fell on the last match to finish which was the head to head contest between Roberts v Hind. Roberts had lost the first game of their three game 6-7 but then pegged that lead back with a 7-5 win. Training the Winchester captain by one hoop the pair contested every target before a 'snooker' situation was engineered by Roberts following the scoring of hoop ten. This allowed him to control hoop eleven and then score to take the lead for the first time in the match. An excellent approach to the twelfth left Hind shooting from distance to save the game, and although he came close, Roberts was able to score that hoop, win the rubber and secure the match draw 4-4.

Phyllis Court 'A' were again without regular number three Ian Norris for their final league match of the season, away to High Wycombe, where they were met with the news that one of the hosts' players had had to withdraw due to a family matter and the much higher handicapped Catherine Shore had been drafted in as a last minute replacement. Shore did wonderfully well to take the first game from Fensome before the Phyllis Court player moved into a better gear to win the match 6-7, 7-1, 7-3. Roberts survived a game 2 hiccup against Ian Shore which featured a monster eight-yard jump shot from the latter to win 7-2, 2-7.7-5, and Goldring made short work of High Wycombe's Stephen Wright but Coates lost to Ron Carter, all of which all added up to a 3-1 lead for Phyllis Court at lunch. Once again, the morning's losers played much better in the afternoon session and High Wycombe took all the rubbers bar one in which their relative novice player Catherine Shore had already taken one game from the far more experienced Coates. Shore played way above her usual standard and traded clearance strokes evenly with her higher ranked opponents. Coates established a good lead but had it pegged back by Shore with a jump at hoop nine and a jawsed ball at the crucial eleventh hoop to ensure her the 'first approach' to hoop 12; and she duly won that too. This took the contest to the thirteenth and last hoop where two good initial strokes gave Coates the upper hand and one strong clearance was enough to win the hoop, draw the match and allow Phyllis Court 'A' to retain their league title. PCC 'A': Roberts (-3), Goldring (-1), H Fensome (1), Coates (1)