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# PHYLLIS COURT CROQUET

## News

### **31 July / 1 August - Bowdry water removal machine saves the day as flooded PCC Courts nearly ruin our National B- Level (3+) Series "Smokey's Cup"**

Phyllis Court hosted their contribution to the B-Level (3+) Series national competition last weekend with eleven visitors, from as far afield as Reigate and Morton in Marsh, joining five home players bidding to lift 'Smokey's Cup'.

The tournament was jointly hosted by Blewbury CC, but all the day 1 drama was at Phyllis Court, where a prolonged lunchtime downpour flooded both the Henley courts and it took a full 90 minutes heavy pushing work from Assistant Manager Chris Roberts with the club's (excellent investment) Bowdry water removal machine to get one court passably playable.

With the half the facilities and so much time lost, Manager Frances Colman announced the playing of shorter 7-hoop games for the rest of the day in a bid to get to the end of the programme and the field were just pleased to have had the tournament saved as Roberts continued to dry the court keeping out of the way of play.

Phil Davies (Reigate) had an excellent day at Phyllis Court, winning five of his seven games, and Caversham's Brian Jamieson went one better to head the Blewbury block, where the rain largely passed them by. They were joined in qualification for Sunday's Phyllis Court based Cup contest, by six others including the Phyllis Courts own Dianne Brown and surprise package Michael Christmas who had started the tournament as the rank outsider.

Neither Brown nor Christmas could repeat their successes on Sunday as Davies retained the cup that he had jointly won last year, this time losing only to Jamieson who's two losses consigned him to second place.

In the Consolation Plate event at Blewbury, Jane Powell (Ealing) beat Phyllis Court's Russell Robinson on net hoops after the pair tied on five wins.

Phyllis Courts other competitors, Rick Lilley and Raghu Iyer, finished fifth and sixth in the Plate respectively.

### **29 July - Phyllis Court 'Federations Shield' 5.5 - 1.5 Maldon (Essex) - PCC cruise into national semi-finals**

Phyllis Court cruised into the semi-finals of the national GC Federations Shield handicap competition last week, with a convincing 5.5 to 1.5 win over the Maldon club from Essex.

The Henley side played the same gambling hand that served them well in their first round match against Croquet Durham, and that was to field a team of much lower handicappers than their opponents, and hope that the handicap system would unwind in their favour.

The absence of the unavailable Ian Norris (handicap -2) forced Phyllis Court to change their winning team and they plumped to bring in Chris Roberts (-3) despite the larger number of extra turns he would have to concede.

The plan worked well with Roberts blowing aside Neil Clark (7) with a barrage of hard long distance hits to win his first game 7-3, and although Clark was more composed in the second game and used his extra turns to better effect, he improved on his score only slightly as Roberts won 7-4.

Meanwhile, it was all going the home side's way in the doubles rubber too where Roger Goldring (-1) and Raghu Iyer (3) were always on top of Al Brown (1) and Jean Healy (4) and won comparative quickly 7-5, 7-4.

The visitors were not without some cheer however, and their captain Chris Joslin (8) played his extra turns very intelligently to efficiently close out the best efforts of Phyllis Court's Robin Coates, who was force to shoot speculatively from far off positions

Joslin won that rubber 4-7, 4-7 to hold Phyllis Court to a 2-1 half time lead.

After lunch, the teams posed on the Phyllis Court footbridge and Roberts presented Joslin with a club burgee to mark Maldon's long away trip and first visit to Henley, but soon after the niceties were suspended as Phyllis Court turned the match screw in the 'head to head' singles rubbers.

Goldring was first to finish with a comfortable 7-6, 7-4 win over Healy, and whilst Roberts played out a very long first game 7-5 win over Brown, Coates and Iyer both took their matches to deciding third games.

It was Iyer in fact that who completed his three-game match first and secured the team match victory, with an excellent come-back win 2-7, 7-6, 7-5 over Joslin.

Coates added gloss to Phyllis Court's team victory with a 7-4, 6-7, 7-5 win over Clark just as Roberts was held 5-7 in his second game by Brown.

With the team match result established, Roberts and Brown left their deciding game un-played and contributed half a point each for the team score with finished 5.5 to 1.5.

Phyllis Court will now face the South-West handicap champions Western-super-Mare at a time and venue to be decided, but before 7 September.

*PCC: Chris Roberts (-3), Roger Goldring (-1), Robin Coates (1), Raghu Iyer (3)*

### **28 July - Lilley is runner-up at Broadwas B-Level (3+) Series**

Rick Lilley evidently coped very well with the famous Broadwas sloapes in finishing runner-up at the Worcestershire club's B-Level (3+) Series tournament today.

Rick reports that "Broadwas was interesting...beautiful setting and I forgot to take any pics, but difficult to show the "undulating" terrain.... I now have a better understanding of the challenges of golf, where you see a stroke 6ft off the line curve into the hole! I've also never seen a ball stop and then roll back! I played 3 locals in a row on 3 different courts, which was a distinct challenge - and then blobbed in the final, I think partly as we were interrupted 4 times by rain, hail and thunder & lightning. Everything that could go wrong did - like peeling a ball 2ft in front of Hoop1 straight through with a 20 yd perpendicular "clearance". To be fair though Alison Murray (Leicester) played really well all day and deserved to win."

### **26 July - Goldring qualifies for All England Handicap National Final**

Despite giving away extra turns to entire field, Roger Goldring qualified for the National Final of the All England Handicap competition with a fine performance at the Area Final South-East at Surbiton today. He dropped juts one game in his block, and that to the eventual winner of this qualifier, young Todd Ballentine of Ramsgate, and his clear second place in his block secured his qualification for the National Final at Sidmouth on 11-12 September.

Goldring then relaxed in the placing games, and with the pressure lifted, he relaxed to finish in seventh place on the day.

Jeff Smith also took part today, coming in as a late replacement, but he failed to trouble the scorers more than a couple of times

### **25 July - Roberts second to former World Champion at East Dorset**

Phyllis Court's Chris Roberts exploited a purple patch of form to finish runner-up in the top flight East Dorset Championship for former World Champion Stephen Mulliner. Roberts' long range shooting was his best ever and he cleared Mulliner's excellent positioning shots time after time from twenty plus yards in a prolonged fine that saw lengthy contest at every hoop. That Mulliner was forced to change tactic to avoid the bombardment was a compliment to the Henley player who was unfortunate to lose the first game 7-5 when a ricochet left him behind a rouge hoop with no sight of his prey meant he had to surrender a mid-point 5-4 lead and had the initiative to his opponent.

In the second game, Mulliner used all his 30 plus years top class experience to keep Roberts at distance and when finally presented with two touching balls, played a two-ball roll-shot to perfection to a foot in front of a distant target hoop with Roberts ball in a hidden position behind.

More long range hits ensured that game went to the eleventh hoop again before Mulliner wrapped up the match 7-5 again.

This capped a good weekend for Roberts who despite beating England International Steve Leonard early on, then had to recover from two unexpected opening day losses that saw him only just make the cut for the second day main knock-out.

He dispatched England captain Stuart Smith 7-5, 7-4 in the quarter-finals and then the reliable Richard Brooks 7-5, 7-5 in the semis.

In hindsight a long sit-out between the semi and the final did Roberts no favours but the weekend's action and other recent good results moved him up to UK number 23.

### **22 July - Colman, Iyer and Coates in AC tournament action**

Frances Colman was the best performer of the Phyllis Court trio that took on visitors from four other clubs in the annual 8+ Advanced Association Croquet tournament jointly hosted by High Wycombe CC. She finished joint second behind winner Robin Morrison of High Wycombe, one win ahead of Phyllis court clubmates Raghu Iyer and Robin Coates.

### **19 July - Phyllis Court 'A' 6.5 - 1.5 Ryde 'A'**

Phyllis Court 'A' were too good for visitor's Ryde from the Isle of Wight who they beat 6.5 - 1.5 last week.

The writing was on the wall from the start for the islanders who fell to three straight game wins to Chris Roberts, and Norris and Robin Coates who was making a disservice return to first team action.

Only Ryde's number one player Jonathan Smith, the former Davis Cup tennis Player, could live with the pace set by the hosts and he managed to keep Ryde's hopes alive in a topsy-turvy match with Roger Goldring who their first game 7-0 but then lost the second 1-7!

As the other players enjoyed lunch Goldring and Smith played an extraordinarily long deciding game which Smith eventually won 7-6 to take the team match score 3-1 to Phyllis Court at that half-way point.

However, that as it for Ryde and it was more of the same at the resumption, albeit with closer games but the same results as the morning; three more starting game wins for Roberts, Norris and Coates.

The team match was hated with the Goldring v Roy Tilcock afternoon rubber at 1-1, in favour of Ryde not missing their ferry home and they beat a hasty retreat back to the south island as Phyllis Court moved to the top of the SCF Open League.

*PCC 'A': Chris Roberts (-3), Roger Goldring (-1), Ian Norris (-1), Robin Coates (1)*

### **18 July - Roberts debuts for Wales at the Home Internationals**

Phyllis Court's Chris Roberts made his debut for Wales at the Golf Croquet Home Internationals last weekend and was delighted to help his side to a solid second place behind hot favourites England.

Wales were hit by the withdrawal of the highly ranked Angharad Walters thanks for a Covid-19 isolation notice and Roberts moved up to number two in a four-player team, led by Great Britain international Ian Burridge.

The two-day tournament of both singles and doubles matches were played on in blistering heat on the lightning fast Nailsea club courts near Bristol where extremely firmly set hoops where the most challenging encountered this season.

With the absence of an Ireland team who were unable to travel, matches between the other nations were mixed-up so as to avoid long sit-outs and on day one Roberts partnered stand-in player Mike Parry to two unlikely doubles draws against Scotland and a much higher ranked England pair.

He closed the day with a disappointing 7-5 and 7-6 loss to England's James Galpin when he squandered a good lead in the second game with a couple of failed routine hoop shots.

On day two, Roberts and Parry were competitive against the top England doubles pair Burridge Jnr. and Galpin whilst always chasing the games.

Roberts then played the top two Scotland players at singles and won both rubbers in straight games, largely due to superior long-distance clearing shots.

He was fortunate to get past the accurate hoop running Stephen Wright 7-6, 7-6 and rather more comfortably than the 7-5, 7-6 shorelines suggest against Lorna Dewar.

Wales beat Scotland, but lost to England, who on both their matches and the Home International title.

### **17 July - Colman outplays her seeding at the National Seniors in Devon**

Frances Colman out-played her seeding that the National Seniors AC Championship at Budleigh Salterton last week, when she won twice in her class and lost two other games by a single point, despite being the highest handicapper in her D class event.

Phyllis Court were also represented in the A and B classes by Chris Roberts and Richard Peperell respectively, but neither troubled the leaders.

### **16 July - Phyllis Court 'D' 8 - 8 High Wycombe @Kestrels'**

Phyllis Court D hosted High Wycombe Kestrels on Friday and were held to an 8-8 draw when the visitors pulled back a slim lead in the final round of their SCF Advantage League match.

Captain Patricia Mulcahy was the D's top scorer with three wins from four and she started well with a good 7-4 win over the experienced Ralph Baker.

Phil Johnson's 7-2 win against Jane Gloster off-set fort round losses for Phyllis Court's Steve Morton and Julia Green and honours were also shared in the second round where Mulcahy and Green got the victories. Fortunes improved third round when Phyllis Court D took a 7-5 lead thanks to big wins for Mulcahy, Morton and Johnson but High Wycombe pegged that back in the last round when only Morton could deliver for the Henley side.

It was a case of what might have been with four of the hosts losses being by a single point with the improved Julia Green the unluckiest of all with three 6-7 reverses.

Phyllis Court D it mid-table in the SCF Advantage League with three wins and this draw form their seen matches this season.

*PCC 'D': Patricia Mulcahy (10), Steve Morton (10), Phil Johnson (10), Julia Green (12)*

### **10 & 11 July - Phyllis Court host Coaches Training Course - Helena Fensome, Tony Peperell and Julia Green all attend**

Phyllis Court Croquet club were pleased to host a Coaches Training Course last week under the umbrella of the Chiltern Croquet Academy based at High Wycombe.

Renown Examining Coach Cliff Jones lead the two-day course assisted by Academy Manager Ian Shore with time was split between practical on-court and classroom sessions in the club's fabulous riverside pavilion.

Among the students from six local clubs were Phyllis Court's own Tony Peperell and Julia Green, seeking an initial club coaching qualification, and the experienced Helena Fensome who was working towards an upgrade to her Grade 1 golf croquet badge.

The course was blessed with fine weather throughout and good reports have been received from both the leader and students alike.

### **9 July - Phyllis Court 'AC' 2 - 4 Hurlingham**

Phyllis Court's Association Croquet team enjoyed the relaxation, hospitality and superb courts at the famous Hurlingham Club today, despite falling to a 2-4 defeat.

The morning doubles matches were shared one a piece with a win for Richard Peperell and captain Raghu Iyer, but defeat for Chris Roberts and Frances Colman.

Roberts made-up for his error strewn morning display by scoring the visitor's only singles win in the afternoon.

With the last pay of his game, he hit in well, positioned badly at the penultimate hoop, but then ran it from a most improbable angle and kept his cool in pegging-out to win by one point.

*PCC 'AC': Chris Roberts (-1), Richard Peperell (2), Frances Colman (7), Raghu Iyer (12)*

### **7-8 July - Goldring runner-up and Roberts 3rd at Ryde Open**

Phyllis Court's Roger Goldring finished runner-up for the second successive time at the Ryde Open on the Isle of White today.

He got a game off the impressive Nick Archer in their 'best of three' final to cap a fine two-day performance that was his best this season.

It could so easily have been an all-Phyllis Court final but for Chris Roberts' catastrophic error against Archer in their semi-final when, have come from behind in their deciding game of three, Roberts took a first stroke advantage to the crucial lats hoop. good positioning meant he had a routine clearance to anywhere on the island, but instead contrived to send his opponent into the jaws of the deciding hoop, effectively scoring the mother of all own goals.

Roberts re-composed to defeat Ian Shore of High Wycombe for third place but local plaudits go to Goldring whose solid and assured performance moved him back into the UK top 60 and re-confirmed him as a potential banana-skin for the county's best.

### **7 July - Phyllis Court 'B' 2 - 6 Blewbury 'B' - 'The 'B' still awaiting first win**

Phyllis Court 'B' are still awaiting their first win of the season following this 2 - 6 defeat at nearby Blewbury today in this SCF B-Level (3+) League match.

All eight of the matches were high-scoring close affairs with six going to a deciding third game, indicating a closer fought contest that the score-line suggests.

Russell Robinson recorded Phyllis Court's only win of the morning session when he beat David Grinstead 7-6, but both Raghu Iyer and Diane Browne were on the receiving end of last hoop contests against the host Paul Wolff and David Vincent respectively, while Rick Lilly lost in straight games to the improving Peter Allen.

Phyllis Court captain Iyer kept his team in the fixture with a straight games win over Wolff after lunch but despite three more tight games Browne, Lilley and Robinson could not add to the visitors disappointing return.

*PCC 'B': Raghu Iyer (3), Dianne Browne (3), Rick Lilley (3), Russell Robinson (4)*

### **6 July - Phyllis Court 'C' 10 - 6 High Wycombe 'Kites' - Undefeated 'C' still flying high as Ward bags, four wins!**

There is no holding Phyllis Court 'C' this season and they cruised to a fourth league win, 10-6 at High Wycombe today.

They got off to a flying start with three wins out of four in the first round for Colin Morgan, Michael Christmas and Kevin Ward, and the latter two doubled their accounts in round two to give Phyllis Court 'C' 5-3 half-time lead.

Colin Morgan, who is on a good run of form won twice there after and captain Bill Pitkeathley added another victory  
Ward also added two more wins, giving him four out of four for the match, and he too is closing in on a handicap reduction as Phyllis Court 'C' maintained their unbeaten record this season.

PCC 'C': Bill Pitkeathley (5), Colin Morgan (5), Michael Christmas (6), Kevin Ward (9)

**5 July - Phyllis Court 'D' 9 - 7 Harwell** - a fourth win in a row for a resurgent 'D', as Mulcahy reduces her handicap to 10!

What a turnaround for PCC 'D' who opened their SCF Advantage GC (handicap) League campaign with three straight defeats - they have now recorded victories in the next four matches!

Top of the tree this time were captain Patricia Mulcahy and Carol Wadsworth who each bagged three wins and they were ably assisted by Andy Jones and Phil Johnson with one and two wins respectively.

Mulcahy can be doubly pleased as these results brought her handicap down to 10 - **Well done Patricia!**

PCC 'D': Phil Johnson (10), Andy Jones (11), Patricia Mulcahy (11), Carol Wadsworth (12)