

PHYLLIS COURT CROQUET

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The
Committee member
i/c this web site is:
Chris Roberts
079 7378 7710
info@kickphoto.co.uk

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30 September - Robinson caps super first season with 3+ 'Red Ball' Singles tournament win

Perhaps we should not have been surprised, such has been Russell Robinson's meteoric rise through the club ranks, but he stepped up to another class today and still won - taking our 3+ Singles tournament title and the Red Ball trophy.

The decision to postpone this event from the middle of the summer because of player unavailability, was vindicated when a field of 10 (more than double last season's number) lined up this morning.

Showers were endured and, when possible, dodged and a friendly yet competitive air ran through proceedings which got off to an unexpected start when four of the five opening round games were won by the under-dog.

A 'Swiss' format was preferred so as to avoid sit-outs and as a precaution against the forecast weather interruption (which arrived late and after we had finished).

Only Robinson took an unblemished record into Round 3, which was pointer to the closeness of rest of the field, and a third win saw Robinson as 'the man to beat' with a one win advantage going into lunch.

As the chasers whittled themselves down for the right to be pitted against Robinson, his stiffest test were still to come, but he held his nerve going to the last hoop 13 to record two 7-6 afternoon victories against Raymond Wood and Collin Morgan to end with a final tally of one game win advantage over the latter (and a 'head to head' victory to boot).

Robinson added his name to the Red Ball trophy for the first time, following in the footsteps of other 'rapid risers' who have gone on to be 'minus' players (Roger Goldring and Ian Norris), which portents well for his and the Club's competitive future.

See the full results here:

3+ Singles T

In winning today, Russell Robinson reduced his handicap for a remarkable 6th time this season, getting down to a truly splendid 5 rank - *congratulations Russell!*



28 September - Inter-Club National Final - Phyllis Court 1, Nottingham 6

Nottingham cemented their position as the strongest club in English croquet today with a solid performance that froze out the game challenge of the hosts as they retained the Inter-Club Championship title with a 6-1 victory at Phyllis Court today.

The visitors team selection of three players with -4 handicaps and one -3 saw them as strong pre-match favourites against Phyllis Court's -3, -2, -2 and 0 and in an ominous start, England International Richard Bilton's quick-fire 0-7 demolition of Ian Norris in their first game lived up to the billing.

Norris did remarkably well to come back from that drubbing to take Bilton to the 13th hoop in their second game before losing 6-7 and there were close results elsewhere too, with Chris Roberts' agonisingly close 6-7, 6-7 loss to 18 year-old Euan Burrige and Phyllis Court doubles pair cross with them selves to have let a 5-1 lead evaporate in their second game against International duo James Death and Ian Burrige.

Faced with a 0-3 deficit at lunch, Phyllis Court needed to win all four of the afternoon matches, which looked like a tall order but as so often this season a good fighting back spirit was again produced for the entertainment of the spectating galleries who had turned up in good numbers despite the overcast day.

It was especially nice to see support for the fixture from players from neighbouring and not so nearby clubs, Blewbury, Caversham, High Wycombe and Ealing all loured by the opportunity to see the top class players on show, and they swelled the viewing numbers which were always 35 plus and 50 strong at the height, despite the weather.

If Nottingham had expected it all their own way in the afternoon, they would have been taken aback by the performance of the lowest ranked player in the field Ian Norris, who calmly exploited Euan Burrige's growing frustration in his own game to record an unexpected win for Phyllis Court 7-4, 7-6.

There was home heart too shown in thread to head matches between the number 1 and 2 players as Phyllis Court's von Schmieder won the first game against Death and Allim won the second game of his rubber against Ian Burrige.

However, Nottingham weathered that come-back well some super centre ball strikes by Death and Burridge to wrestle back control for 7-4, 4-7, 4-7 and 5-7, 7-6, 7-1 victories, while Roberts toiled well but untimely rued missing too many hoop shots in going down to the dead-eyed Bilton 3-7, 6-7.

The overall match 1-6 match result was a fair reflection of proceeding's and whilst Nottingham will rightly be proud of their win, Phyllis Court should be pleased with the fight they made of it against the odds.

Phyllis Court: *Charlie von Schmieder (-2), Raouf Allim (-3), Chris Roberts (-2), Ian Norris (0)*

Nottingham: *James Death (-4), Ian Burridge (-4), Richard Bilton (-4), Euan Burridge (-3)*

Good club member involvement

One of the most satisfying things that we can take away from the big match today was the involvement of the many club members who got involved.

There were plenty of volunteers to staff the scoreboards, including (and apologies if I miss anyone out here) Dianne Browne, Helena Fensome, Steve Morton, Tony Peperell, Bill Pitkeathley and Diana Zatouroff - and at various times Main Club Chairman Stan Ainsley, Chief Executive Chris Hogan and a number of other council members lent their support on the side-lines.

Thank you Russell Robinson

My top thanks go to our own Russell Robinson, who worked tirelessly with me in the lead-up days to erect the catch fencing, CA banner flags and repair the scoreboards - indeed setting the whole scene.

Then, on match day, he ran the 'Front of House' hosting with programme distribution and general 'bon amie'. Russell you are a trooper!

27 September - Browne & Morgan win the 3+ season-long competition

Dianne Browne and Colin Morgan won the Final of the 3+ Doubles season-long competition this morning in a very close match against Raymond Wood and Delia Norris.

The full scores will be come known in due course, but the main detail is that the match was won at the last hoop of the deciding game.

Congratulations Dianne & Colin.

Come and watch our **BIGGEST MATCH EVER!**

Phyllis Court v Nottingham ~ Saturday 28 September

GC Inter-Club Championship NATIONAL FINAL

(see news)

on show!

on show!



22 September - Robinson 4th at C-Level Series National Final

Russell Robinson finished a very commendable 4th at the C-Level Series National Final this weekend at Cheltenham CC.

He was disappointed to win only 4 of his 8 games on Saturday but came back strongly with 6/7 on Sunday to end with an excellent 10/15.

This is fantastic result given that he only started playing croquet six months ago!

Congratulations Russell!

20 September - PCC 'B' win the Handicap League!!

Well it couldn't have been a much closer result that ended a nail-biting finale SCF Handicap League Final today - but we won 9-7 and are now League Champions!

PCC 'B' got off to a good start by winning three of the four games in the 1st Round and then halving the match wins in Round 2, to go into lunch with a 5-3 lead.

The two wins lead was marinating at the end of the 3rd Round too, but then it got decidedly uncomfortable in the last Round of the match.

Dianne Browne, who had won her first two games before being piped in Round 3, lost her last game at the 13th hoop, narrowing the match score line

The overall match score was now 7-6.

Next to finish was Robin Coates who had enjoyed a simply splendid day and in winning his final game he ended unbeaten on 4 out of 4.

The overall match score was now 8-6.



Captain Raymond Wood had poor results today and unfortunately found his opponent's mountain of extra turns too much to overhaul and he lost for a fourth time. The overall match score was now 8-7.

All eyes then fell on the last game still in play, it was the no. 1 players' 'head to head' game with all Phyllis Court's hopes pinned on Mike Fensome. If Mike could win, the League title was ours, but if he were to lose, the match would be a draw and the rules decreed that the deciding factor would be the result in the 1 v 1 game, meaning Bransgore would win the match and title.

As our attention gathered, we joined the match at 4-4, then 5-5 and then a commanding 6-5 to Mike, with all was looking promising for him with two scoring balls in front of hoop 12.

But no, his opponent produced not one, but two extra turn tokens and he turned fortunes his way.

Mike helped him by clearing his own partner ball in error (Doh!) and eventually it was 6-6 and the game went to the final hoop 13.

Both players missed hoop shots from 6 yards, some clearances followed before the Bransgore player missed one and Mike ran the winning hoop from only a yard out.

Champions! Well done PCC 'B' - Mike Fensome (0), Robin Coates (2), Dianne Browne (2), Raymond Wood (4).

AN EXTRA PRIZE

PCC 'B' will now be the representatives of the Southern Croquet Federation in the GC Federations Shield in 2020.

This is a National knock-out competition, directed for the Croquet Association by our own Frances Colman, and it features the nine winners of each Federation's Handicap League, plus the holders. So, there is every prospect of welcoming teams from all corners of the country to Phyllis Court - and likewise there could be away matches as far afield as Tyneside, the Lake District or Cornwall!

17 September - von Schmieder third at Championship of Ireland.

Charlie von Schmieder was the only 'overseas visitor' who made the trip back to the land of his birth for the Irish Championships at Carrickmines CC near Dublin.

He got all the way to the semi-finals and got ahead in that encounter against fellow World Championship attendee Mark Stephens before losing his best-of-three match 7-5, 5-7, 5-7.

17 September - Come and support PCC 'B' in their League FINAL this Friday

PCC 'B' play Bransgore (from the New Forest) in the SCF Handicap League FINAL on this coming Friday (20th) at Phyllis Court.

Our team will welcome spectators to cheer them on and the action will be in two sessions (1030 - 1230 and 1330 - 1530 approx.) wrapped around lunch.

Good Luck PCC 'B' !!

17 September - New date announced for the 3+ Singles Tournament - MONDAY 30 SEPT.

The postponed 3+ Singles Tournament will now take place on Monday 30 September.

Please join-in with your entry using the poster in the pavilion.

14/15 September - PCC players at National Finals this weekend and next

On the road in the past week were:

Chris Roberts and Raouf Allim - played to their seedings having qualified for the prestigious English National Singles Championship at Hurlingham.

Roger Goldring (with partner Louise Smith of Sidmouth) - in the English National Singles Doubles Championship at Hunstanton.

Helena Fensome and Dianne Brown - All England Handicap at Camerton in Somerset.

Unfortunately Allim and Browne were struck by illnesses which forced their withdrawals mid-tournaments.

Together with previous outings at the National Grass Roots Final and Robinson's C-Level attempt this weekend, Phyllis Court have had players qualified for all six National Finals right across the skills range, which is a first for any club in the country.

13 September - PCC 'Development' 7 - 6 Roehampton

A Phyllis Court 'Development' team beat a team of largely better handicapped players from Roehampton today, in the first of what we hope will be, an annual friendly (yet competitive) match.

PCC got off to a good start, winning both doubles games and thereafter had captain Raghu Iyer and rapid improver Russell Robinson to thank for delivering 3 and 2 singles wins respectively and thereby securing a narrow match win.

PCC 'Development' team: Raghu Iyer (3), Hugh Crook (5), Russell Robinson (7), Jeff Smith (10), res: Raymond Wood (4).

- Robinson achieves a record FIFTH handicap drop in his first season!



Hot on the heels of his 7+ Singles competition win yesterday, Russell Robinson's two wins today were enough to see him over the trigger point for a handicap reduction down to 6. This was a most remarkable plummet in handicap grades, being his 5th automatic reduction in his first season in the sport. I can not remember anyone at Phyllis Court achieving such a feat before - *congratulations Russell.*



12 September - Robinson beats Probert in 7+ Singles Final (season-long competition).

A good match graced the final of the 7+ Singles season-long competition this morning with both eventual winner Russell Robinson and opponent Madeleine Probert giving good accounts of themselves. Ultimately Robinson was just that bit more accurate with some long hops attempts than Probert and he pressed home that advantage in the second game particularly, winning the match 7-4, 7-3. Both players showed good tactical awareness and have a keen interest in moving up a level next season, and on this showing, certainly have the raw skills to do so. Congratulations to winner Russell Robinson who wins the Suzanne Roberts Quaiach. Commiserations to runner-up Madeleine Probert who wins the Colman Quaiach.

07 September - PCC 'A' beat Roehampton to reach the NATIONAL FINAL

I am delighted to bring you the news that we won a marathon semi-final today 4-3 to reach the Inter-Club Championship National Final. PCC 'A': *Charlie von Schmieder (-2), Chris Roberts (-2), Roger Goldring (-1), Mike Fensome (0).*

Equally big news is:

**THE NATIONAL FINAL will be played at PHYLLIS COURT on SATURDAY 28th SEPTEMBER
~ Phyllis Court v Nottingham ~**

Please write this in your diary now - it will be lovely to have your support on the day.



These action photos of Chris Roberts (above) and Charlie von Schmieder (below) are by Michael Zaturoff.

07 September - PCC 'A' 4-3 Roehampton - match report

(Report for Henley Standard and CA website):

Phyllis Court 'A' reached the National Inter-Club Final on Saturday with an impressive come-back at the end of a nine-and-a-half-hour marathon match with Roehampton.

They won this long-awaited semi-final 4-3 and will now host the holders Nottingham, a team laced with international stars, in the Final at Phyllis Court on Saturday 28 September.

Reprising the style of their recent Federation League title win over Winchester, Phyllis Court 'A' showed great spirit and belief in chasing a cause that looked lost before another dramatic turnaround in the last two games.

Play in the morning's doubles match between the numbers 1 and 2 players was very slow and only the first two games of the best-of-three rubber were complete in four hours before lunch was taken with the score at 1-1.

Phyllis Court's Charlie von Schmieder and Chris Roberts were cross to have let a 6-3 lead evaporate in the first game to the AC expert but GC novice duo Mark van Loon and Tim Russell to lose 6-7 but reversed that score-line in the second.

Meanwhile Roehampton had drawn first blood with David Mooney's 5-7, 4-7 defeat of Mike Fensome, and the Roger Goldring v Dan Pearson match was also halted at 1-1 for an already much delayed lunch.

After the break, the unfinished rubbers were suspended, in favour of starting the four afternoon session singles that could potentially settle the fixture.

Von Schmieder made quick work in defeating van Loon 7-2, 7-2, and not too far behind the numbers 3 and 4 head to head singles were shared with Goldring beating Mooney 7-3, 7-0 and Pearson re-levelled the match score for Roehampton with a 3-7, 4-7 win over Fensome.

In the number 2 singles, Phyllis Court's Roberts had peeled (scored an 'own goal') Russel through two hoops and gifted him two more by hitting his ball into the jaws of hoops for 2-7, 7-5 score lines, so that rubber headed for a third and deciding game to settle that match result.

With the overall fixture poised at 2-2, Goldring and Pearson returned to their suspended morning singles encounter and the visitor ran away with it 3-7, so all eyes fell back on the Roberts v Russell decider which the Phyllis Court captain need to win to stay in the competition.

A missed opportunity at hoop nine cost Roberts dear when he failed to jaws his ball, a tactic that would have given a significant advantage to the next hoop as well, but the gamble backfired when Russell, displaying good accuracy through the day, won that hoop and ran his ball down to in front of hoop ten.

A long battle ensued at that target, with Roberts pulling out some marvellous long-distance clearances to turn that hoop to his advantage and eventually level the score at 5-5.

With first approach to hoop 12, Russell re-took has one score lead and another desperate struggle took place at the penultimate hoop with Roberts not wanting to score and concede the first approach to the last hoop 13 without some sort of advantage as a counter.

Reluctantly he was forced to score by Russell's intelligent manoeuvres and his angled hoop shot, whilst successful in scoring left his ball hampered with no sight of the last hoop.

He decided to go for broke and sent it other ball off the north boundary so that he couldn't be cleared and would have a hop shot to win if Russell failed to convert his first scoring attempt.

Russell shot wide but his second ball positioning was excellent and a sure scorer if Roberts failed.

He didn't.

He nailed the 7-yarder from the boundary, won the game 7-6 and Phyllis Court still lived.

Now, at a quarter to seven in the evening the fixture rested on the postponed doubles decider and on a real high Roberts and von Schmieder made short work of decisive game, aided by some poor fortune for van Loon, winning 7-3.



Phyllis Court duly progressed to the National Final which will be a repeat of last season's encounter with Nottingham, who have again foregone the convention of playing at a neutral venue in favour of playing at the Henley club where the setting and prospect of large spectator gallery are most appealing.
PCC 'A': Charlie von Schmieder (-2), Chris Roberts (-2), Roger Goldring (-1), Mike Fensome (0).



06 September - Allim's promotion to the AC '3rd Eight' is a Phyllis Court first

Raouf Allim players in the AC Selectors Third Eight at Pendle this weekend - and he is the first Phyllis court player to have been chosen for such a prestigious event. last season Allim and Chris Robert played in the 'Selector's Weekend' which is an effective 5th tier event, so Allim's promotion by two levels in one year is quiet an achievement.



05 September - Iyer wins Hurlingham AC Vets class

Raghu Iyer won an impressive 5 out of 6 games to win his (9+) class at the Hurlingham AC Veterans tournament this week hat usually attracts a large good quality field. Congratulations Raghu *(please send a photo of you with you trophy)*



05 September - Browne to join Fensone in All England Handicap National Final

Dianne Browne (*far left*) who originally missed out on qualification for the All England Handicap National Final (by a tie-break calculation of just one hoop), has won a place after all following the withdrawal of another qualified player. She joins Helena Fensome (*left*) in that National Final next weekend 14/15 September at Camerton & Peasedown CC (near Bath).

Roger Goldring, who also qualified, is unable to attend.



04 September - Goldring & Robinson win Open Doubles ('Iain Lindsay') tournament

Roger Goldring and new partner Russell Robinson won an very enjoyable Open Doubles tournament today. For Goldring, it was his third victory in a row (all with different partners). For Robinson, this is a unique achievement for a player in his first season in the sport. The pair won their last game against Helena & Mike Fensome to tie with the Fensome duo at top of the block phase, qualifying the pair for the final. Goldring & Robinson won that final 7-4 to lift he Iain Lindsay Cups and the Fensomes won the John Chalfont Cups.

02 September - Croquet win annual match v Bridge

Another larger than usual, and apparently ideal number for bridge organising, 20 players (5 pairs a-side), played a very enjoyable tournament yesterday. The match score was 46 - 54 to Bridge after the morning



bridge games, and Croquet won our discipline 15 - 10 in the afternoon. When the croquet scores were multiplied by four for parity between the two scoring systems, Croquet were the overall winners 106 - 94.



1 September - An excellent showing by PCC Four at Grass Roots (8+) National Final today.

A great third place for Tony Peperell topped an excellent showing by all four Phyllis Court players at the Grass Roots (8+) National Final today. The Phyllis Court quartet all finished in the top half, thus:

- 3rd - Tony Peperell
 - 5th - Russell Robinson
 - 6th - Steve Morton
 - 10th - Madeleine Probert
- (in a 20-player field)*



Our four were all separated in to one of four blocks of five players.
Peperell was 1st in his block, progressed to the four-player 'Main' knock-out semi, lost and was placed - 3rd overall
Robinson was 2nd in his block, progressed to the four-player 'Shield' knock-out' semi, won that and beat Morton in the Shield Final - 5th overall
Morton was 2nd in his block, progressed to the four-player 'Shield' knock-out' semi, won that and lost to Robinson in the Shield Final - 6th overall
Probert was 3rd in her block, progressed to the four-player 'Bowl' knock-out' semi, won that and won the Bowl Final - 9th overall
Full cores can be viewed at www.croquetscores.com.

Well done all four of you!