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PHYLLIS COURT CROQUET

News

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 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)

27 August - Colman & Roberts win the (much) delayed 2020 AC Handicap Doubles title

Frances Colman and Chris Roberts retained their AC Doubles title today when they defeated Richard Peperell and Raghu Iyer in their now traditional deciding game.

Playing this match on time seems to be beyond its participants and its game was in fact to decide the 2020 title and it is hoped that the quartet may be able to contest the 2021 contest before the end of the season!

Congratulations Frances and Chris

27 August - Iyer beats Colman in 'final' of the AC Caversham Plate

Raghu Iyer completed a clean sweep in the Autumn AC Hnadicap Singles tournament today with a narrow victory over Frances Colman. Both had beaten Chris Roberts and Richard Peperell yesterday and so today's last block game was de facto 'final'. The scoreline was close throughout as Iyer used his bisques well, and eventually he eked out a four hoop break to establish a lead that he kept until 'time'.
Congratulations Raghu!

26 August - Goldring beats Lilley for the AC Zia Stirling Cup

Roger Goldring won the Zia Stirling Cup, for beginner AC players, with a well contested 2-1 match victory over Rick Lilley. Both playing in their first competitive singles games, Goldring and Lilley improved markedly from the first to third games of this best of three contest. Lilly got on the scoreboard with a low-scoring win but Goldring fought back well to take one of his bisques to peg in both the subsequent games.
Congratulations Roger!

25 August - PCC 'A' 4 - 4 Winchester 'A'

Phyllis Court A failed to wrap-up the Southern Croquet Federation Open league title today at Winchester, when they only just managed to scrape a draw. This leaves 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 Goldring 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 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.
PCC 'A': Roberts (-3), Goldring (-1), H Fensome (1), Coates (1)

23 August - PCC 'C' 10 - 6 High Wycombe 'Kestrels' - PCC 'C' win the Northern Division!

Phyllis Court C are celebrating a hard-earned Southern Croquet Federation Advantage League North Division title which they secured on Monday in their last match of the season. The 10-6 defeat of High Wycombe Kestrels was not as comfortable as the score line suggests and the result had been in the balance going into the final round of four. Against the background of a stuttering latter half of the season for the C, in which they had failed to secure the division title in their previous two fixtures, this match against the mid-table Kestrels had the air of the 'last chance saloon' about it. A lost 7-9 to Blewbury C six days earlier had been unexpected and the confidence that had resulted from a string of undefeated matches in the first half of the season was but a memory going into Monday's crucial match. The topsy-turvy nature of the Phyllis Court C season was again played out in this match, with the Kestrels taking a 1-3 lead in the first round, being pegged back to 4-4 in the second, before the C nosed in front 7-5 going into the last round. The Kestrels newcomer Pat Winning had lived up to her name and won all three of her games and looked to be the pre-game favourite against David Young, but the Phyllis Court man played the game of the day to give the Henley side one of the remaining two wins needed for victory. Moments later Michael Christmas got that second win and, with the division title secured, Jeff Smith iced the cake with a fine win over the visitor's captain Kay Vickery. Phyllis Court C' captain Bill Pitkeathley will now take his north division title winners into a league final against the south division winners Ryde from the Isle of Wight and the side are pleased that it is the turn of the north to host the final fixture on a September date to be arranged.
PCC 'C': Pitkeathley (5), Christmas (5), J.Smith (7), D.Young (9)

22 August - Goldring and Roberts steer Oxfordshire to Inter-Counties promotion

Phyllis Court players Chris Roberts and Roger Goldring helped steer Oxfordshire to promotion in the Inter-Counties Championship second division at Cheltenham. Together with former Phyllis Court member Raouf Allim and Scotland international Stephen Wright, both from the High Wycombe club, they finished on equal match wins and equal game wins with Hertfordshire, but lost the division two title on the head on head result between the two teams. Their only other loss had been to a CA Select team who fielded 18-year old New Zealand age grade international Ellie Ross and 15-year old UK B-Level Champion Jack Good, displaying the success of croquet's youth drive. Oxfordshire defeated Devon, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, Gloucestershire and Berkshire, with the latter featuring another Phyllis Court player Richard Peperell, who will no doubt dine out on his doubles victory over Roberts and Allim which turned out to be one of the defeats that robbed their side of the second division title. However, the runners-up spot was good enough for Oxfordshire's promotion to division one for next season as Phyllis Court member Frances Column representing the President of the Croquet Association, presented the winner's shield to Hertfordshire.
Oxfordshire: Chris Roberts (-3), Raouf Allim (-3), Stephen Wright (-1), Roger Goldring (-1, captain)

18 August - PCC 'C' 3 - 5 Ryde 'B'

PCC 'B' competed well but came away second best for their efforts on the Isle of Wight today as they fell to a 3-5 defeat.
PCC 'B': Iyer (3), Lilley (4), Morgan (5), Henderson (6)

16 August - PCC 'C' 7 - 9 Blewbury C,

High flying PCC C lost this match that they were hoping to win and the confidence that had resulted from a string of undefeated matches in the first half of the season was but a memory going into crucial match, where a win would have secured them the SCF Advantage League title. They got off to a corking start, winning all four first round games but were pegged back straight away when Blewbury C won the second round contests 1-3, and things then got worse when they lost all four games in the third round. PCC 'C' needed three wins in the last round to escape a draw but only captain Bill Pitkeathley and David Young could deliver.
PCC 'C': Pitkeathley (5), Christmans (5), J.Smith (7), D.Young (9)

15 August - Roberts is the 'bridesmaid' yet again - this time at Colchester

Phyllis Court's Chris Roberts is keeping alive the old saying 'always the bridesmaid and never the bride' as he finished runner-up in yet another national circuit tournament last weekend. His fall at the final hurdle this time was that the top flight East Anglian Open at Colchester where he couldn't cap a fine overall performance with victory in the final against Welsh captain Ian Burridge. Roberts finished in a strong fifth position at the end of Saturdays 'all play all' block phase and thus avoided a quarter-final tie against top seed and former Women's World Champion Rachel Gee, British Open winner Aston Wade and the aforementioned Burridge. Instead he tangled with former Phyllis Court player Raouf Allim, now playing exclusively out of the High Wycombe Club, who had been his passenger for the drive to Colchester! Roberts had the psychological advantage of having beaten Allim 7-4 on day one but Allim, showing no regard for the security of his seat on the way home, got quick revenge by reversing that score line in the first game of the two friends' best of three quarter-final. The next two games were real nail-biters as Roberts crept into the semis by the narrowest of margins 7-5 and then 7-6 when Allim hit a terrific 25-yard game saving clearance but then missed the next from less than a quarter of the distance. Roberts then had an equally tough semi against surprise package Tony Butcher, who had knocked out top seed Gee. The pair shared the first two games 7-6, 5-7 before Roberts' experience showed at the sharp end of the deciding game when he gambled that Butcher's nerves would get the better of him on the brink of his first major final and Roberts was able to capitalise on two errors by Butcher to win 7-5 with a deft in-off. Roberts competed well enough in the final against Burridge, but the UK number 5 showed his worth at that rank with only one missed 14-yard clearance all match and he came from behind in both games to win 4-7, 4-7. Meanwhile, Allim had some great tussles in the plate, eventually splitting the teenagers Euan Burridge and Albi Willett to finish plate runner-up and sixth overall. For Roberts, his season's tally so far, of two second places and one third in the top tier Championship Series, coupled with one second and two third places in the next tier Open Series, is a consistency that is new to his game and bodes well for him in the national selectors' 'Eights' weekend in eight days' time.

12 August - Roberts wins the (much) delayed 2020 AC Club Championship

Chris Roberts finally won the delayed 2020 AC Club Championship today with the narrowest of wins over Richard Peperell.

Roberts had beaten 9 time Phyllis Court AC Champion 2-1 at the end of last season, and had held a 1-0 lead over Richard Peperell for most of this season as the pair struggled (with other commitments) to fit in the deciding games(s).

The pair finally got it together today and Roberts scraped the win +2.

This is the first time that Roberts has won the Club AC title, and together with the GC title that he won in a more timely fashion last season, he is only the third player to compete the Phyllis Court 'double'.

11 August - PCC 'C' 8 - 8 Blewbury, but match ends in controversy

Phyllis Court C, contested a very close match with SCF Advantage League title rivals Blewbury D, but the match ended in uncertainty with some results being compromised due to an error with one player's handicap and, separately, an incorrect score line being reported by one game.

It seems likely that the match will have to be replayed if the League title is at stake.

PCC 'C': Pitkeathley (5), Morgan (5), Christmans (6), Ward (9)

10 August - Phyllis Court 'Friendly' team enjoy a splendid day at the All England Club, Wimbledon

Madeleine Probert reports - "We had a really wonderful time at Wimbledon today. Everything was very well organised, the hospitality was excellent and we were made to feel very welcome.

Raghu will give us the results of our games, but just to say that we had a very enjoyable time playing.

Our two supporters were well looked after, with a very informative tour from the head coach, Dan Bloxham.

PCC 'Friendly': Helena Fensome (1), Raghu Iyer (3), Rick Lilley (4), Colin Morgan (5), Joanna Iyer (9), Madeleine Probert (10)

10 August - Roberts wins AC class block at Hurlingham

Chris Roberts won four of his five games at the Hurlingham AC summer tournament over the past two days, to win his 'Super B' block.

Heavy rain disrupted the tournament and reduced the court capacity from 9 to 6 courts, with the result that there was no time for a play-off final with the winner of the other block, Andrew Wise of Bristol, and that match will be played at a later date.

Raghu Iyer finished third in his class and he won some Hurlingham glasswayre

9 August - PCC 'D' 10 - 6 Wingrave

Phyllis Court 'D' notched up fourth win of the season against visitors Wingrave today, and in so doing they avenged the defeat of Phyllis Court 'C' to the same opponents two weeks ago.

The 'D' got off to a flyer winning seven of the first eight games and, although Wingrave came back to boss the round three ties, the foundations for the hosts' 10-6 match victory had already been laid.

Captain Patricia Mulcahy, Gillian Symons and Carol Wadsworth all recorded three wins from their four games while Andy Jones, still in his first year in the sport, contributed the extra score.

Symons deserves special mention, as her mid-season performances have cumulated to reduce her handicap by three steps to grade eight for the first time.

PCC 'D': Gillian Symons (9), Andy Jones (10), Patricia Mulcahy (10), Carol Wadsworth (14)

6 August - Lilley qualifies to join Goldring at the All England Handicap National Final

Phyllis Court's Rick Lilley won the Southern Area Final of the All England Handicap last week to qualify for next month's National Final, where he will join his already qualified teammate Roger Goldring.

Lilley looked in good form during this qualifier which was the latest of recently Phyllis Court hosted tournaments to have been bedeviled by the weather, as the rain arrived to shorten the planned seven game programme back to a simple six player all play all block.

An interesting final round scenario transpired in which only Blewbury's John Garnet, on four wins from four games, was assured of one of the two qualification places, with three other players vying for the remaining spot.

Lilley needed to beat Garnet or miss-out completely on net hops to Vernon Gibbs, who'd travelled all the way from the Isle of Wight, or Phyllis Court's own Patricia Mulcahy.

The calculation certainly appeared to concentrate Lilley's mind and he quickly established a good lead with intelligent use of two of his three extra turns and, with Garnet forced to chase the game, Lilley remained in control for an ultimately comfortable looking 7-3 score line.

Gibbs retained third position (and first reserve for the national final) when Mulcahy was unfortunate to lose 6-7 to Caversham's Carol Jamieson, causing the local pair to finish fourth and fifth respectively ahead of Phyllis Court's winless Carol Wadsworth.

A fortnight earlier Roger Goldring had secured his national final qualification with another assured performance at the South-Eastern Area final of the All England competition held at Surbiton.

This was a much larger affair compared to the Henley hosted edition, with 24 players chasing eight qualification places and Goldring topped his group to book his place for the end of season finale at Sidmouth.

5 August - Mulcahy earns a 'podium 4th' at Bath

Patricia Mulcahy did well at the Bath C-Level (7+) Series tournament today and finished in a creditable fourth position. Fourth place earns Patricia 2 more Series points to go with the 4 that she earned for a third place at Ealing in June. Patricia's 6 points put her in contention for a 'points gatherers' place in the National Final (if future results and vacancies work out well).

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.