

# PHYLLIS COURT CROQUET

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### [30 August - PCC 'B' v High Wycombe 'Kites' - PCC 'B' - WIN the North Division](#)

They didn't realise at the time but the North Division title rested on the result of this match. PCC'B' came from well behind, won the fixture and were jolly surprised when they found that they had indeed won the Division! Mike Fensome, Robin Coates and Raymond Wood all won three games each and unusually Dianne Browne chipped in with just one. PCC 'B': Mike Fensome (0), Robin Coates (2), Dianne Browne (3), Raymond Wood (4).  
**Congratulations everyone!**

### [28 August - PCC 'C' 8, - Blewbury 'C' 8](#)

Raghu Iyer lead his team well today with 3 wins from his 4 games, backed up 2 wins each from Ralph Chambers and one from debutant Steve Morton.  
PCC 'C': Raghu Iyer (3), Ralph Chambers (7), Jeff Smith (10), Steve Morton (10).

### [26 August - Allim wins the block but loses semi-final at the GC National Selectors 2nd Eight](#)

Raouf Allim lost in straight games to A-level Series Champion Stuart M Smith (Sidmouth) today in the semi-finals of the Selectors Second Eight event. He won the qualification block, with a straight games win over Stephen Custance-Baker and so went into the semis on a high. Alas, it was not to be - and its a long drive back from Pendle . .

### [25 August - Allim doing well at the GC National Selectors 2nd Eight](#)

At the end of day 2 (of 3), Raouf Allim looks certain to qualify for the semi-finals of this prestigious tournament. Just being selected to play in this one is a 'feather in the cap' and it is a good show for our club that Raouf is representing us at this one which is being held at Pendle CC on the Lancashire / Yorkshire border.  
Last year Chris Roberts and Roger Goldring also played alongside Raouf, but although selected this time, the pair were not able to attend. Good luck for today's last block match and then then the semi and hopefully final too Raouf!

### [25 August - Runner-up Iyer misses National Final chance but drops his handicap to 3 for first time !](#)

Raghu Iyer (*left*) just missed-out on qualification for the B-Level Series National Final when he lost 1-2 in the three game final of the Hurlingham tournament today. Raghu won all seven of his games yesterday to win his block and qualify for the semi-final this morning. He won that in straight games too, but then fell at the deciding game of the final.  
**He did however gain 86 index points over the two-day event and has reduced his handicap to 3 for the first time - Congratulations Raghu!**



### [21 August - Helena Fensome qualifies to join Roger Goldring at the All England Handicap National Final](#)

Helena Fensome (*left*) qualified for the National Final of the All England Handicap competition today, edging out the unlucky Dianne Browne by the margin of one hoop. She joins Roger Goldring in the starting line-up after he qualified at Surbiton a fortnight ago. A hasty change of venue, with only two days notice, was needed when it was discovered that Phyllis Court's lawns were to receive the long awaited 'Nematodes' treatment to deal with our chaffer grubs that are loved by the crows that destroy our courts looking for them. National competition Director Chris Roberts had an anxious morning on Monday trying to find a new venue for the Area Final South, and how grateful he was that the courts of Watford CC were free and that the club were happy to come to the rescue. Defending National Champion Simon Carter (handicap -4) who was the title sponsor of the recent World Championships, was in wonderful form and saw off large numbers of extra turns in all his games to finish with 6 wins from 7 in first place, however the battle for the second qualifying spot was hotly contested by four players and going into the last round any of them could have prevailed. Remarkably they all lost in that last round and so all tied on 4 wins, so the crucial placings hung on the players' net hoops tally. The Fensome and Browne were well ahead of the others on this count and it was soon revealed the Fensome had a single hoop advantage over Brown, so the former got the decision and the second qualifying place for the National Final.



Two other Phyllis Court players took part and recorded two wins each, slightly below par for Don Rutherford who battled on despite feeling unwell, and Richard Owen made light of the fact that this was his first tournament away from the familiarity of our club and enjoyed himself enormously. Fensome and Goldring will play at the National Final at Camerton & Peasedown CC (near Bath) on 14/15 September.



### **20 August - Phyllis Court 9, High Wycombe 7 - 'Local Friendly' match**

A PCC Freindly team had an enjoyable afternoon at High Wycombe today and, under captaincy of Pat Eades, recorded a 9-7 win, so "well done team!"  
PCC 'Friendly': Pat Eades (7), Margaret Broughton (10), Richard Owen (10), David Young (11), Diana Zatouoff (11), Sally Batty (12), Dot Owen (12), Maggie Young (12)

### **19 August - Peperell wins AC Summer tournament 'Caversham Plate'**

Richard Peperell was undefeated in our AC Handicap Singles Tournament today and collected our prettiest trophy, the Caversham Plate as his prize. Six players took part today, which was an increase by one on participation in 2018. It was good to see Peter Haydon on a rare visit to the club and also to see the progress made by Robin Coates. Robin received a handicap cut from 16 to 12 after his opening game where he was almost flawless, wen on to win another game and was close in his other two. - Well done Robin and congratulations to champ Richard Peperell.



### **19 August - Christmas retains the AC Summer tournament 'Zia Sterling Cup'**

Mike Christmas recovered from losing the first game in his 'best of three' match with Edmund Shirley to decide the higher handicappers AC event at the Autumn tournament today. In doing so he retained the Zia Sterling Cup that he won last year. He departed without having his photo taken, so here is last year's image of the winner!

### **18 August - Allim reduces his handicap to a fabulous -3**

Good performances in the Inter Counties Championship this weekend saw Raouf Allim take his GC handicap down to -3 for the first time. It is possible this he is the first Phyllis Court player to ever sport a handicap as low as that , but I need to check with Charlie von Schmieder. - Congratulations Raouf!



### **18 August - County Championship - Day 2 of 2**

Oxfordshire had another day of mixed results and in the final analysis will likely have finished 3rd or 4th in the six team Second Division with concluded at Eastbourne today. Dianne Browne made her county debut, won some doubles games partnering captain Roger Goldring and Raouf Allim, and she was competitive in her singles games too, in going down the three 5-7 results against much higher ranked opponents. Chris Roberts also joined the team today but struggled to three losses in the morning before recovering to record two wins this afternoon. Allim was the star turn over the two days with eight wins from his nine games which is a good record in anyone's book. Oxfordshire finished 5th, one place ahead of Berkshire in 6th. Oxfordshire: Raouf Allim (-2), Chris Roberts (-2), Roger Goldring (-1), Mike Fensome (0), Helena Fensome (2), Dianne Browne (3). Berkshire: Richard Peperell (2) & players from other clubs.

### **17 August - County Championship - Day 1 of 2**

Oxfordshire found it surprisingly tough going on the opening day of the Country Championship at Eastbourne today. Captain Roger Goldring reports that Oxfordshire are in the Second Division with five other counties and all will be faced twice over the two day tournament. Matches consist of three games (one doubles and two singles) and there are restrictions on the number doubles dn singles games individual players can play. Roger say that Oxfordshire recorded two 3 - 0 match wins against Essex and Berkshire, but went down 1 - 2 in their other three matches. Helena Fensome won her three doubles games but lost her three singles, Mike Fensome won two of his three singles and Raouf Allim and skipper Goldring won both their singles games. As the Fensomes head home for a prior engagement, they will be replaced by Chris Roberts and county debutant Dianne Browne in tomorrow's team:



### **17 August - Phyllis Court six make up the Oxfordshire County team (incl. a debut for Dianne Browne)**

Roger Goldring again leads the Oxfrdshire County team made up entirely of Phyllis Court players, at the GC County Championships this weekend. Joining him for both days of the two-day tournament is Raouf Allim, and they start off in the company of Mike and Helena Fensome on Saturday, and then Chris Roberts and Dianne Browne [making her County debut] on Sunday. Richard Peperell is playing for our rivals Berkshire (boo hiss!).

### 16 August - No joy at Nottingham Week this time for Colman & Roberts

Victories at the Nottingham AC Week were thin on the ground for Frances Colman and Chris Roberts at the 40+ player Nottingham Week which ended today. Roberts fared worst and lost his minus handicap status, with a string of defeats that see him return to AC scratch.



### 16 August - Pitkeathley and Probert earn handicap drops

The really good performances of Bill Pitkeathley (in our 'Smokey's Cup' B-Level tournament) and Madeleine Probert (in today's PCC 'B' match) have earned the pair very deserved automatic handicap reductions. Bill now sports a 7 handicap and Madeleine is now an 8. - *jolly well done both!*

### 16 August - PCC 'B' 11, Blewbury 'C' 5 - Dream debut for Madeleine Probert

Captain for the day Dianne Browne reports on an excellent 11 - 5 win. Madeleine Probert was the star of the show this afternoon; using her extra turns skilfully, she winning all four of the games! Colin Morgan also did well in winning three times, while Robin Coates and achieved 50% in winning twice each. The opposition were a nice crowd and one of these men was a very good 7 handicap... We had a good afternoon, although it rained all the time and everyone was sodden, so we dried off with e all had tea and cake afterwards and it was all very friendly.

PCC 'B': Robin Coates (2), Dianne Browne (3), Colin Morgan (6), Madeleine Probert (9)

### 12 August - PCC 'C' 7, Wingrave 9 - Russell Robinson debuts

Russell Robinson enjoyed a good debut in the Handicap League today, winning two of his four games, a feat matched by Don Rutherford and 'one upped' by Captain Raghu Iyer. Unfortunately these seven wins were just not enough and PCC lost 7 - 9.

PCC 'C': Raghu Iyer (4), Don Rutherford (5), Russell Robinson (8), Barry Scott (9)

### 11 July - Court 4 is playable at last.

Although delayed far beyond what is acceptable, Court 4 has finally been returned to playing service. It is much slower than our other three courts and further reductions in the grass height and 'thatch' will hopefully be achieved in the days and weeks to come. Court 4 is now available for all members to book (outside the usual mix-in times of course).

### 11 July - Allim, Norris and Fensome give PCC a strong presence at the 12-player London Masters

There were mixed results for three Phyllis Court players, Raouf Allim, Ian Norris and Helena Fensome this weekend at Surbiton CC's grandly titled London Masters tournament.

The format was for 'best of three' matches throughout with the 12 players split into two six-player 'all play all' blocks.

Allim was in the tougher block on paper and managed a creditable 3/5 match winning record (8/13 games) which included 2-0 wins over England AC International James Death (-4) and Tim King (-3).

Norris and Fensome ended up in the same block, and their 'head to head' game went Norris's way 7-5, 5-7, 7-5, and he went on to achieve another good 3/5 matches (7/12 games) record, whilst Helena won 1/5 matches (3/12 games).

The block winners only progressed further to a straight final, in which Death beat Mark Daley of Dulwich.

### 10 August - Mike Bilton retains 'Smokey's Cup' by closest of margins, as Phyllis Court trio exceed expectations

Yorkshireman Mike Bilton (father of England international Richard 'The Biltonator') retained 'Smokey's Cup', which is our contribution to the National B-Level Series.

He tied on 11 games wins with Brian McCausland of Nailsea, and remarkably the pair also tied on +29 net hoops after a gruelling schedule of 14 rain interrupted games over two days.

The tournament was decided on the result of the match between the two tied players, which occurred in the penultimate round 7-4 by Bilton.

There was success too for the three Phyllis Court players in the event who all exceeded their expected number of wins.

Dianne Browne got off to a flying start with four victories in her opening four games that included playing club mates Raghu Iyer and Bill Pitkeathley early in the 15-player 'all play all' tournament.

She went to record nine games wins overall, a feat equally by Iyer who played a big part in keeping the tournament alive when he was the first to take a game off Bilton as the Phyllis Court pair tied for fifth place.

Also out-playing his expectations was bottom seed Pitkeathley who was significantly stepping-up in class at this tournament.

He showed no sign of nerves in winning his first game and went on to add four more victories in a very creditable performance in this company.

### 7 August - PCC 'A' stage a come-back to beat Winchester and ... WE WIN THE LEAGUE!

PCC 'A' looked dead and almost buried at lunchtime today at 0-2 down having lost two singles matches and having only equalised in the doubles rubber.

Ian Norris and Roger Goldring were undone in those singles matches, both going down in straight games, and in the doubles Raouf Allim and Chris Roberts had had to work hard to stay in the contest after a poor opening game.

Things still looked less than rosy after the break, when although the deciding doubles game was won by Allim and Roberts, this was matched by Winchester winning both of the opening games in Norris and Goldring's afternoon singles rubbers.

Norris lost his next game too (although one has to feel for him because his results for the day were so close: 5-7, 6-7, 6-7, 6-7) giving Winchester a 1-3 lead with three match results to come - We now had to win all the remaining matches!

Goldring gave us much heart by winning his second game to level his match, and then with a quite superb centre-ball clearance at hoop 13 of his decider, won that hoop, the game and his match.

Allim and Roberts had by now lost the first games of their singles matches but, soon after each other, both won the second games and we were able to start to 'believe'.

Roberts got away and was soon enjoying a commanding lead in his last encounter and duly wrapped it up at the tenth hoop, and so all eyes fell on Allim v Winchester's David Nicholson (-3 handicap).

Allim had already scored a wonderful hoop 8 from somewhere near hoop 6 to stay in the game but trailed 5-6 as play approached hoop 12, where our man came off his opponent's ball nicely to run up to the North boundary and then

he scored hoop 12 with a deft jump that left Nicholson hoop bound without decent shot at hoop 13.

Allim pressed home the advantage with a good approach to 13, Nicholson missed narrowly with his first long range cleared but he hit with his second shot from close to the centre peg.

We all had to hope the Nicholson missed with a potential match winning shot angled from the boundary - he did and Allim scored from 8 feet for the game, match, fixture and (as we later found out) **LEAGUE TITLE !!**



### **6 August - Tony Peperell wins the delayed 8+ Singles Tournament Final**

Tony Peperell held on to beat Russell Robinson 7-6 in the closest of games befitting a tournament final this evening. Delayed from two weeks ago (due to flooded courts), this final of the 8+ Singles Tournament had a cliff-hanger ending when Robinson, trailing 6-4 bossed hoop 11 before running a superb hoop shot to within two feet of 12, but a poor run through that hoop, left him blocked by the hoop for a shot up to 13. Peperell was then short with his first ball but positioned well enough to contest the hoop to see Robinson miss with two hoop shots from the boundary, and eventually a good 'hide' allowed him to run the hoop for victory. Peperell was presented with the Black Ball Trophy for the first time.

### **5 August - Goldring qualifies for the All England GC Handicap National Final**

Roger Goldring qualified for the All England GC Handicap National Final with a pressured performance at Surbiton today. He endured a very long day as the lowest handicapped player, conceding extra turns to all his opponents. The National Final is on 14-15 September at Camerton & Peasedown CC (near Bath) - **Well done Roger!**



### **4 August - 8 PCC players volunteer at BBC Countryfile Live**

Croquet returned to the BBC Countryfile live show at Blenheim Palace from Thursday to Sunday last week and Phyllis Court players contributed hugely to the volunteer effort that made it happen. Fifty plus croquet players were recruited from a host of Southern based clubs, by Phyllis Court's Frances Colman, who is the area's representative to the Croquet Association's National Council. A reasonable sized croquet 'court' had been marked out on the Village Green in the central area of the large showground and visitors, including BBC presenters Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison, were invited in to try the sport. Colman herself attended the croquet area on the first day, Thursday, to get the volunteer effort under way and our Dee McKibbin attended that day too. Steve Morton volunteered on the Friday and our biggest contribution was on the busy Saturday, when under Richard Peperell's leadership, Madeleine Probert, Coin Morgan, Tony Peperell and Russel Robinson all donned their leader's eye-catching polo shirts and made a colourful slash to attract visitors into the croquet area. This is the third year that croquet has featured at Countryfile Live and huge numbers of visitors once again got a croquet mallet in their hands, mostly for the first time.

### **4 Aug - The WFC Simon Carter GC World Championships - Rothman of USA in new World Champion**

Ben Rothman of the US is the new GC World Champion after a 5 game / 6 hour marathon in the world final at Southwick today. As yesterday for the semi-finals, our Frances Colman was drafted in as 'stand-by' referee for the big match.

All the action, including the Final can be watched at you leisure on **You Tube** - simply type in **'ENGLAND CROQUET'**

### **3 August - The WFC Simon Carter GC World Championships - Progress in the Plate event - Day 8 report**

Today's semi-finals were of a super high quality befitting the occasion with inch perfect positional play and half-court plus clearance attempts converted with a staggering 90% plus success rate. Ben Rothman (USA) came back from two games down to beat Josh Freeth (NZ) 3-2 in a marathon 7 hour contest. In the all-Egyptian semi, Hamy Erian couldn't claw back the similar lead established by Mohammed Karem despite a wonderful 13th hoop jump from the boundary over two balls to stay in the contest and win the third game. Karem then ran away with fourth game to win through to the final 4-1. on the evidence of today, tomorrow's World Championship final should be really quite something to behold. You can follow the results as they happen in real time on [www.CroquetScores.com](http://www.CroquetScores.com)

### **2 August - The WFC Simon Carter GC World Championships - Progress in the Plate event - Day 7 report**

Today spelt the end of the road for Charlie von Schmieder and Chris Roberts in the Plate event. Von Schmieder failed to add to his overnight tally of wins whilst playing at Southwick, while Roberts returned to West Worthing where he recorded a 1-1 result with young South African Murray Buchanan and a 2-0 over Mark Stephens of Ireland. Neither Phyllis Court player made the top two in their Plate blocks as was necessary to progress. The Main Championship event quarter finals were played at Eastbourne and saw the elimination of the remaining England players. Tomorrow's semi finals will be Ben Rothman (USA) v Josh Freeth (NZ) and Egyptian pair Hamy Erian v Mohammed Karem. You can follow the results as they happen in real time on [www.CroquetScores.com](http://www.CroquetScores.com)

### **1 August - The WFC Simon Carter GC World Championships - Progress in the Plate event - Day 6 report**



Photo by Elinly Carter

Once again Charlie von Schmieder and Chris Roberts have been drawn in different blocks (this time in the Plate event) and will also play at opposite remote venues - we are just not meant to be together!

Charlie had a 'middling' day today, securing two wins from his four scheduled games.

Chris was beaten 0-2 by Australian Kevin Beard and then was grateful to share a 1-1 result with new croquet 'find' Dursan Turser from Portugal whose high percentage centre-ball clearances were something to behold!

In the main event, it was a 'Day to Remember' because no less than FOUR World Champions were eliminated on the same morning!

As a result we now know that we will have a first time winner of the title this year.

You can follow the results as they happen in real time on [www.CroquetScores.com](http://www.CroquetScores.com)



**1 Aug - The WFC Simon Carter GC World Championships - WATCH THE LIVE ACTION ON YOUR COMPUTER!**

The action is being streamed live on YouTube, with commentary from many of the top players.

To tune in - Go to **YouTube** and type in **'ENGLAND CROQUET'**

**1 August - Russell Robinson enters another C-Level Series - and he WINS! - and is now in the National Final !**

Brilliant news from Russell Robinson this evening - he tore himself away from his endless practice at Phyllis Court and went all the way down to Worcestershire to play in the inaugural Broadwass CC C-Level Series tournament.

**AND HE WON!** - so has qualified for the NATIONAL FINAL!

Not bad for a player in his very first year of croquet!

**Congratulations Russell.**