



Cammeray Croquet Club



NEWSLETTER May 2010

<http://www.cammeray-croquet.org.au/>

Special General Meeting and Reconvened Annual General Meeting

These meetings were held on 17 April 2010. At the Special General Meeting the following Special Resolution was passed unanimously:

"Resolved that the Rules of the Club be amended by deleting the whole of Clause 10 and the whole of paragraph (g) of Clause 15."

Clause 10 and paragraph (g) of Clause 15 relate to the appointment of an auditor, an appointment that is not a requirement of the Associations Incorporation Act ("the Act"). The deletion of the whole of paragraph (g) of Clause 15 also deleted reference to the appointment of a public officer. The appointment of the public officer is done in accordance with section 23 of the Act.

At the adjourned Annual General Meeting of the Club the financial statements for the year to 31 December 2009 were formally submitted to members, as required under section 26(6) of the Act, and were accepted by unanimous vote.

Cammeray Birthday Tournament

FRIDAY MAY 21st TO SUNDAY 23rd

Handicap tournament open to players from **0 to 18**.

Prizes include bottles of wine and engraved glasses as well as the Birthday Trophy. The entry fee of \$35 includes lunch sandwiches Friday & Saturday and a barbecue on Sunday.

All club members and guests are invited to attend the barbecue at 12:30 on Sunday, for the very reasonable cost of \$15 per head.

Closing date for entries is Wednesday 12th May. Entries limited to first 16 applicants. AHS cards will be used.

On Friday and Saturday there will be four playing sessions from 8.30 am to 9 pm (the last session under lights), but we hope to avoid having anyone playing more than three games in a day.

In order to enter:

1. Send in the entry form (available in the clubhouse) by email or mail, or
2. If you don't have an entry form, send us an email with your name, contact phone, email address, handicap, club, and availability.
3. Please send us a cheque for the entry fee before 17th May

Mailing address:

Games Captain
Cammeray Croquet Club
PO Box 289
CAMMERAY NSW 2062

Further information from:

Barbara McDonald
telephone: 9958-5764
email: barbara.mcdonald@optusnet.com.au

Wollstonecraft Bowling and Recreation Club

No further developments with this project at this stage. Watch this space (but don't hold your breath!)

MacRobertson Shield Team Training

Pam Gentle, secretary of Croquet NSW, has asked that we bring the following to the attention of members:

The Australian MacRobertson Shield team will be training at Tempe on 15th and 16th May in preparation for their trip to England to compete. They would like to encourage club members to come along and watch the team train, and would appreciate some spectators, especially as it will provide extra "stress" for the players - a good thing!

They will be playing a match over the weekend, 6 v 6, singles and doubles. There will be 4 "extra" NSW players playing to make up the numbers (including Tim Murphy - not sure on the other 3 yet) as well as Peter Landrebe, who is the captain of the Australian MacRob team.

The hours of play will be approximately as follows:

- Doubles 1: Saturday 9:30 am - 12 noon
- Singles: Saturday 1 - 3pm
- Doubles 2: Sunday 10am - 12:30pm
- Reverse singles: Sunday 1:15 - 3:30pm

It would be great to have a large number of spectators to encourage our team, and to watch some top class croquet. Members of the MacRob team are Kevin Beard (Victoria), Martin Clarke (WA), Ian Dumergue (WA), Robert Fletcher (Vic), Stephen Forster (Vic) and Peter Landrebe (NSW).

Country Tournaments

Playing in country tournament in NSW is a different experience from playing in Sydney tournaments. Neil Hardie recently played in tournaments in Bundanoon and Orange and he reports:

"In both there was an impressive range of players, from Jim Hicks (from Port Macquarie) on a handicap of 0.5 up to players who well-deserved their handicap of 20. In both there was a delightful carnival atmosphere, with the local members making the visitors very welcome. For the most part, players played only one game per day, so there was plenty of time to explore the area and try the local delights.

In Orange (where Stephen Howes also took part) this was a particular pleasure, as the tournament coincides with the Orange Food and Wine Festival, with food markets, cooking lessons, special meals in fine restaurants, and wine-tastings. There were also many interesting sights in the area, one of the most remarkable being the Age of Fishes Museum in Canowindra (about 70 km away). This has one of the world's greatest fossil finds displayed - hundreds of strange fish from the Devonian era, 350 million years ago.

Bundanoon adjoins one of loveliest National Parks in NSW, the Morton National Park, with fine walks and a glow-worm cave, and the chance of seeing wombats.

The games were a challenge for visitors: the lawns were very difficult, with slopes and humps and varying speeds in different places (though for the tournament, Bundanoon borrows one lawn from the Bowling Club, which is good). The ball can sometimes fall into a hole near the hoop, from where it takes great skill to run the hoop. Or you have to aim thirty degrees away from a ball on the boundary to avoid rolling out.

Jim Hicks showed great skill in playing on these lawns, pegging out several times, and won the top block at both tournaments. Stephen Howes won the top block at Orange last year, but was less successful this time. If Stephen and Neil had both won their last games, they would have been in a three-way tie for first, but alas! they both lost."

Croquet NSW Events

The **Beryl Chambers State Handicap Competition** Northern Region competition was played at Mosman Croquet Club on 19-20 April. Play was in three blocks of four players, with all three block winners proceeding to the finals at Tempe in June. Block winners were Ron Humpherson, Lesley Fransen and David Stanton (who reduced his handicap to 12 as a result of winning all his games).

Cammeray Tournaments

1. Wright Trophy Egyptian Tournament

This tournament was won by Brian Smith from Eastwood club, with Greg Deakin, also from Eastwood, runner-up.

2. High-Low Doubles Tournament

This tournament got under way on Saturday 10 April with eight players entered. Teams are Neil Hardie & Penny Garrett, Neil Hartley & Graham Maynard, Brian Smith & Warren Yates and Alan Walsh & Lucy Rees. Two games have been played so far, with Walsh/Rees victorious by a golden hoop over Hartley/Maynard, and Smith/Yates too strong for Hardie/Garrett.

3. Club Championship

This competition has been taking place as players are available over the last few weeks, with Mike Hughes (three wins from three games) the current leader. Competitors are Ted Griffin, Neil Hardie, Neil Hartley, Stephen Howes, Mike Hughes and Alan Walsh.

Mallet Purchase

If you are looking for a cheap mallet, have a look at the advertisement reproduced at the right.

All you need to do to take advantage of these prices is to work out a way to go back 140 years in time!

(taken from The History of Croquet, by DMC Prichard, in the club's library)

Bronze Pennants

As mentioned last month, we are once again entering two teams in the Croquet NSW Bronze Pennants. The teams are Warren Yates (captain), Peter George, Graham Maynard and Sue Nicholas, with Doug Nicholas as a reserve, and David Stanton (captain), Matt Carden, Georgie Ofner and David Surridge. We will need at least one more player to fill in occasionally on Thursdays during June and early July. If you are interested, contact Barbara McDonald on 9958-5764.

Beginner Coaching

Neil Hardie will be starting another beginners coaching course in the first week of June. If you know anyone keen to try croquet, get them to contact Neil on 9958-7261. Cost is \$60.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

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SETS 21s., 25s., and 30s., in Boxes complete.

The Balls made of beech, of the second size, but accurately turned and highly finished, and recommended for beginners and ladies, to whom the boxwood balls are too heavy. The Mallets to all the sets are of Canadian rock elm, introduced by Mr Buchanan (see revised FIELD Rules, 1868, a copy of which is sent with every set), and used by him in bow-making. This wood runs very straight, and is not apt to lose its shape; it has great spring and elasticity, and is much superior to the old ash handle, and well adapted for warm climates.

The LADIES' SET, Boxwood, 50s. } in Box complete.
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Both the above sets are highly finished, the difference in price being owing to the size. Boxwood Balls are recommended for good players in preference to beech, as they retain their shape much longer, and run more accurately.

The CHAMPION SET, containing Four Balls and Four extra size Mallets, weight 1lb. 10oz., particularly recommended, 37s.

The TWENTY GUINEA SET contains Eight Mallets, with Ivory heads, and Eight Ivory Balls highly finished; Gilt Hoops, and Balls beautifully coloured and gilt, in Mahogany Box lined with red velvet.

REGISTERED MAHOGANY CROQUET STAND.

BUCHANAN'S CROQUET MALLETS,

SOLD SINGLY :

Ivory head, Canadian rock elm handles, at 25s. and 21s.	}	See revised FIELD Rules, 1868: "The Mallets should be made with ash, cane, or Canadian rock elm shafts. In the opinion of this committee cane is the best material for single-handed play; and Canadian rock elm for two hands."
Box heads Do. Do. at 7s. 6d., 5s. 6d., and 3s. 6d.		
Do., cane handle, for one hand, 6s. 6d.		
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All Sets forwarded carriage free on receipt of Cheque or Post-office Order, payable at Piccadilly.

Address, JAMES BUCHANAN, 215, Piccadilly.

Choking in Sport – A Tale of Two Brain Systems

The following is an extract from an article in *The Times*:

Choking is one of the most perplexing phenomena in sport and life. It is not just top athletes, but musicians, politicians, actors, artists, surgeons, painters and all manner of other expert performers who have been afflicted by its curse. You may have choked at some point, too — unable to utter a word on a hot first date, unable to string a sentence together when giving a big presentation (or unable to run a hoop!).

But why does it happen?

I am standing towards the back of the hall at the Cippenham Table Tennis Club in the South of England. Ken Phillips, the coach, is working with a group of 12-year-olds who are relatively new to the sport, and he is barking instructions at them.

They are learning how to play the forehand top spin, one of the most important strokes in the game. “Keep using the wrist!” Phillips shouts. Lauren, a brown-haired girl on the table nearest me, furrows her brow with concentration. She repeats the coach’s instruction under her breath, and then, on the next rally, makes an effort to get her wrist rotating. She misses the ball completely. Phillips comes across, guides her through the correct movement, and she gives it another go.

This time she connects with the ball, but now she has neglected to rotate her shoulders and bend her knees. Her forearm has also gone out of kilter, as has the connection between the hips and the torso. Phillips, however, does not mention any of this: he is preoccupied simply with getting the wrist moving in the right way.

As I watch, I begin to get a sense of the sheer complexity of the forehand top spin: the symphony of moving parts, the requirement for synchronicity between each of them. Phillips has broken it down into a few simple instructions, but over time his young players will have to integrate literally hundreds of biomechanical rules into the construction of their motor programmes.

I ask Lauren to try something new — to count the number of times I tap my foot on the floor during the next rally — but she immediately breaks down, her stroke petering out even as she starts it. She looks confused. “I can’t do it,” she says. “I can hit the ball or count the number of taps of your foot, but not both at the same time.”

A couple of hours later, Phillips is coaching a smaller group of youngsters: 14-year-olds who have been playing for at least six years each. Phillips asks them to play along the forehand diagonal and this time all the youngsters play their top spins with elegance, making the infinitesimal adjustments to technique and position as each new ball is fired towards them.

I repeat the experiment I had attempted with Lauren by asking a boy called James to play his top spin while counting the number of times I tap my foot on the ground. It is not even a challenge. He nails 15 top spins, during which I have stamped my foot 17 times. He smiles as he gives me the correct answer. On the next rally, I talk with James about what he has been doing at school today, but once again the distraction makes no difference to his ability to play the rally.

The reason is simple: James has “automated” his stroke-making. Many hours of practice have enabled him to encode the stroke in implicit rather than explicit memory. It wasn’t always like this: when he started out, he was just like Lauren, consciously monitoring the way he was hitting the ball as he painstakingly built up the neural framework supporting the shot. Only after many hours was he able to execute the shot without having to think about it.

James and Lauren are, in effect, using two entirely different systems of the brain. Russell Poldrack, a neuroscientist from Los Angeles, has conducted a number of brain-imaging experiments to trace the transition from explicit to implicit monitoring. He has discovered that the prefrontal cortex is activated when a novice is learning a skill, but that control of the stroke switches over time to areas such as the basal ganglia, which is partly responsible for touch and feel.

This transition between brain systems can be most easily understood by thinking about what happens when you learn to drive. When you start out, you have to focus intently to move the gearshift while keeping the steering wheel in the right place and pushing on the clutch. In fact, at the beginning these tasks are so difficult to execute simultaneously that the instructor starts you off in a car park and slowly helps you to integrate the various elements.

Only after many hours can these various skills be performed effortlessly, without any conscious control, so that you are now able to arrive at your destination without even being aware of how you got there, your mind having been on other things, such as what to make for dinner.

But now imagine if an expert were to suddenly find himself using the “wrong” brain system. It wouldn’t matter if he were the greatest player of all time or merely a decent club player because he would now be at the mercy of the explicit rather than the implicit system. The highly sophisticated skills encoded in the implicit part of his brain would count for nothing. He would find himself striving for victory using neural pathways he last used as a novice. This situation has been recreated by Robert Gray, a psychologist at Arizona State University. He took a group of outstanding baseball players and asked them to swing at a moving ball while listening for a randomly presented tone to judge whether the tone was high or low in frequency.

As expected, the tone-listening task had no detrimental effect on the efficiency of their swings (just as counting the number of foot taps had no impact on James’s forehand top spin). Why? Because the baseball hitters have automated their shot-making.

But when the hitters were asked to indicate whether their bat was moving up or down at the instant the tone sounded, their performance plummeted. Why? Because this time the secondary task forced them to direct their attention towards the swing itself. They were consciously monitoring a stroke that was supposed to be automatic. Explicit monitoring was vying with implicit execution.

Their problem was not a lack of focus, but too much focus. Conscious monitoring had disrupted the smooth workings of the implicit system. The sequencing and timing of the different motor responses were fragmented, just as they would be with a novice. They were, effectively, beginners again.

Hoch the Choke

In 1989 Scott Hoch stood on the 10th green of the Augusta National with an 18-inch putt to win the Masters. It was the second hole of a sudden-death play-off with Nick Faldo. Faldo had bogeyed the hole and Hoch, a rank outsider, stood before a simple putt that could transform his life. Had he faced such a short putt on the opening hole, or the 7th or the 15th, the American would have knocked it in without a great deal of forethought, but with the Masters within his grasp, Hoch spent an age checking and rechecking the line. Only after two minutes of analysis did the American settle over his putt. Then he rechecked the line. And rechecked his grip. And refocused his mind. Rechecked everything, in fact.

The putt didn’t even touch the lip — and Faldo won the title at the next hole. Unsurprisingly, the American was known thereafter as “Hoch the Choke”.

Unlike the baseball hitters, Hoch hadn’t been asked by a researcher to monitor explicitly his hitting action. But his desire to win the Masters was such that his attention to the line, the wind, and every other variable spilt over into a very different — and fatal — kind of attention. He consciously monitored the stroke itself. He yearned for the ball to drop so much that he inadvertently took explicit control of a putt that would surely have dropped had he but left it to the implicit system.

(read the full article at http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/sport/columnists/matthew_syed/article7107842.ece)



Cammeray Croquet Club



PROGRAM: May 2010

	8-45	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-9.30	
Saturday 1			High-Low Doubles <1 lawn>				Bronze games								
Sunday 2		Golf Croquet (Denis Rolles' group)													
Monday 3		Games for all grades				Bronze games									
Tuesday 4									Beginner Coaching <1 lawn>						
Wednesday 5	Lawn mowing and spraying											Bronze games			
Thursday 6							Bronze games								
Friday 7		Handicap games (all grades)									Golf croquet (all welcome)				
Saturday 8							Bronze games								
Sunday 9		Golf Croquet (Lyndey Milan's group)													
Monday 10		Games for all grades				Bronze games									
Tuesday 11									Beginner Coaching <1 lawn>						
Wednesday 12	Lawn mowing											High-Low Doubles <1 lawn>			
Thursday 13							Bronze games								
Friday 14		Handicap games (all grades)													
Saturday 15	Committee meeting						Bronze games								
Sunday 16		Golf Croquet (all welcome)													
Monday 17		Games for all grades				Bronze games									
Tuesday 18									Beginner Coaching <1 lawn>						
Wednesday 19	Lawn mowing											Bronze games			
Thursday 20							Bronze games								
Friday 21	Cammeray Birthday Tournament														
Saturday 22	Cammeray Birthday Tournament														
Sunday 23		Cammeray Birthday Tournament			Barbecue										
Monday 24		Games for all grades				Bronze games									
Tuesday 25															
Wednesday 26	Lawn mowing											Bronze games			
Thursday 27							Bronze games								
Friday 28		Handicap games (all grades)													
Saturday 29							Bronze games								
Sunday 30							Golf Croquet <1 lawn> (Jake Henzler's group)								
Monday 31		Games for all grades				Bronze games									

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|---|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
|  | Lawns available for independent play |  | Bronze games |
|  | Wine & cheese (lawns available) |  | Committee meeting (lawns available) |
|  | Games for all grades |  | Golf croquet |
|  | Tournaments |  | Lawn mowing and maintenance |
|  | Private hire |  | Coaching Sessions |