



CROQUET MATTERS

MAY 2019

Contents

Note from the Editor..... 1
 From the President 1
 GC Trans-Tasman Trophy 2
 Epsom-Remuera AC Easter Tournament 4

Note from the Editor

Now that the season has pretty much drawn to a close, this issue of Croquet Matters is very much focussed on reporting the success of our Kiwi team in the Golf Croquet Trans-Tasman Trophy played in Melbourne at the end of last month.

Just a reminder about the nominations for the Executive positions and also for award winners to be presented at the AGM later in the year. Closing date for both is July 31st, and full details can be found in last month’s edition of Croquet Matters.

Regards

Jackie



Left to right; Phillip Drew (Manager) Dallas Cooke, Edmund Fordyce, George Coulter; Felix Webby (Captain); Sonya Sedgwick; Helen Reeves; Ellie Ross and Duncan Dixon.

From the President



Kia ora,

Everyone please give the **Golf Croquet Trans-Tasman Team** a standing ovation for winning again! The team: **Felix Webby (Captain), Sonya Sedgwick, Edmund Fordyce, Ellie Ross, Duncan Dixon, Helen Reeves,**

George Coulter, Dallas Cooke, and team manager **Phillip Drew.** What an amazing test series to watch over the five days in Melbourne during some quite chilly weather. This team bonded together well, thanks to the leadership of captain, Felix Webby, and with the team members developing a cohesiveness that grew stronger each day.

Our NZ team won the first test with Helen winning her match to take the test. Australia dominated in the second. The third was equal all the way until the last match, the last game and the 13th hoop that was won by Sonya to clinch the third test. What a joyous time! The team was young with many first time Trans-Tasman players—and they were amazing. Their human spirit made a difference in the results of the test series.

The GC Trans-Tasman was streamed live for the last two tests. The viewership grew each day around the world. Many people who watched the live streaming said it was addictive. The live streaming definitely promoted croquet in a positive way throughout the world. I am very proud of our team.

I hope that all of your club and association AGMs go well, and that you continue to elect enthusiastic, dedicated, and knowledgeable committee members and leaders. The Executive is starting preparation for the AGM in October, and information will be sent.

Our reports will be prepared for distribution in the next couple of months. The aim is to send them to the associations well in advance of the AGM.

Have a great month and for those who have winter events planned, have a great time.

Warm regards,

Annie

D. Annie Henry

GC Trans-Tasman Trophy

On 23rd April the team of eight selected to represent New Zealand in the 2019 Trans-Tasman Trophy, together with their intrepid manager, set off on their quest to defend the trophy won by New Zealand in Nelson in 2015. Perhaps the date, 23rd April (Shakespeare's birthday), proved to be a significant omen of what lay ahead as there were many twists and turns in the plot of the event, culminating in a nerve-wracking but triumphant final act, worthy of any of the playwright's finest works.

Hosted this year at the Australian Croquet Association's magnificent facility at Cairnlea in Melbourne, the format of the competition was that there were to be three test matches, each consisting of two rounds of doubles play and one of singles. With there being 16 matches in each test match, the first team to 9 wins would win that test. In the event of a tie at 8 wins all, there was provision for a play-off in each test to ensure a positive outcome.

Each team consisted of 8 players, 4 men and 4 women, and play included mixed doubles, same sex doubles and same sex singles matches. There was a mix of experience and youth in both teams, with the 'Black mallets', in particular, having a distinctly youthful appearance. Duncan Dixon had the honour amongst the men of being born the earliest and yet only in his late 20's, with the youngest team member being 16 year old Ellie Ross. Two of the NZ team had played in the last event four years previously, Dallas Cooke and Duncan Dixon, and on the Australian side, Wendy Dickson, Peter Landrebe and Alison Sharpe had also competed four years ago.

Day One of the competition commenced on a bitterly cold Melbourne morning, thankfully without any wind, with a set of mixed doubles matches. First blood in each of the matches went to New Zealand who won the first game in every match, to leave some worried looks on the faces of the Australians. However, Australian competitors being what they are, came back strongly, and after the first round of matches the score stood at 2 apiece. Dallas Cooke and George Coulter emerging victorious after a particularly tight match against Fleur Brockway and Greg Fletcher. It was immediately obvious, although not unexpected, that this was going to be one tough battle.

The Round 2 set of matches for the 1st Test were same sex doubles. Each of these matches was won in two straight games, but the overall result was again 2-2 leaving the score overnight at four matches apiece going into Round 3, which were the singles.

The lawns at Cairnlea were turning out to have some quite unique characteristics with interesting slopes to be aware of. That said, the lawns were in excellent condition and certainly of a quality to match and challenge the skills of players taking part.



Kiwi ladies with their secret weapons to combat the freezing conditions.

Day 2 was another very chilly day, made to feel worse by increasingly blustery conditions. There were some very tight battles throughout the field, including a great win by Edmund Fordyce against Edward Wilson, but ultimately, with five match wins, New Zealand took out the first test match by 9 – 7, meaning no play-off was required.



Dallas Cooke and George Coulter discussing tactics

After lunch, the teams re-grouped for the second test which again commenced with a round of mixed doubles matches.

A great initiative by the hosting Australians saw the action from the start of the 2nd test throughout the rest of the tournament being live streamed via Facebook and the live streaming app. The popularity of this grew and grew with, as it turned out, thousands of people across the globe tuning in to watch and listen to the fantastic commentary provided mainly by the “Double-Gees”, Will and Rachel Gee, and Chris McWhirter and Terry Hopkins. The expert opinion and analysis of what was happening on screen made for fascinating and addictive viewing. This can only be good for increasing awareness of what croquet is all about.

The live streaming also heaped even more pressure onto those players on the show court, as if the competition wasn't enough!

The mixed doubles round of Test 2 saw the Australians come out fighting with only Helen Reeves and Edmund Fordyce winning their match against Fleur Brockway and Greg Fletcher to leave the score after Round 1 at 3-1 to Australia.



Edmund Fordyce and Helen Reeves on their way to victory

Day 3 kicked off with Round 2 was again mixed doubles, and this time there were wins for Sonya Sedgwick and Felix Webby, as well as Ellie Ross and Duncan Dixon, both in straight games. This left the result 5-3 to Australia heading for the singles.

The singles saw wins for Duncan Dixon, Ellie Ross and Edmund Fordyce, but this was not enough to overcome the Australians who won the 2nd test match 9-6. The outstanding match of this round was probably that between Robert Fletcher and Felix Webby, which saw croquet of the highest quality played, resulting in a narrow win for Robert Fletcher. As it was getting late, and the test had already been decided, Wendy Dickson and Sonya Sedgwick took the sensible decision to declare their match a draw at one game all.



Robert Fletcher (Australia), Trans-Tasman 2019 Player of the Tournament.

So, on to the third Test Match with everything to play for by both teams. Round 1 was again mixed doubles, and as with the 1st test match, the opening game in each match went to New Zealand. Yet again Australia fought back strongly, and the teams went into lunch tied up once again at two matches each.

Round 2 was same sex doubles, and another round of very tight matches ensued, finishing up at two matches apiece. Played out on the live streamed show court was an outstanding victory by Helen Reeves and Ellie Ross, against Alison Sharpe and Judy Wembridge, with the Kiwis coming out of the traps to ambush the top Australian pair 7-2, 7-2.

The overall competition could not have been any closer, though, and the two countries were locked at one test and four matches each, heading into the last day and the final round of singles.

Warmer conditions were in evidence for the final day, and there was a certain level of apprehension that the test may have to go into the scheduled play-off to decide the fate of the trophy.



Felix Webby and Sonya Sedgwick

Early play saw very even games. After seven results from the initial games, New Zealand were up in four matches, and the 8th match between Sonya Sedgwick and Judy Wembridge was proving to be intense, Sonya eventually winning game one by 7-6.

The first two match results actually went to Australia, with eventual "Player of the Tournament" Robert Fletcher beating Edmund Fordyce, and Alison Sharpe getting her revenge against Ellie Ross. The overall situation in the Test was now standing at 6 matches to 4, to the Australians. The Kiwi team manager extraordinaire, Phillip Drew, was dashing from lawn to lawn keeping players updated and offering support, as he had done throughout the tournament. Next win went to Kiwi captain, Felix Webby beating Greg Fletcher, closely followed by a great win from George Coulter overcoming Australian captain Peter Landrebe. Test score was now 6 matches all, with four results to come in.

On the show court Duncan Dixon had taken an early lead, winning the first game against the impressive Australian youngster Edward Wilson, who then seemed to find another gear and narrowly won the last two games to take that match. Meanwhile, Dallas Cooke and Helen Reeves both capped off outstanding performances throughout the test series by winning their matches, leaving the test match tally at 8-7 to New Zealand. If Judy Wembridge could beat Sonya Sedgwick, there would then be a play off to establish the result.

Once again, this match went to the 13th hoop in the second game. With everyone gathered around the lawn watching and supporting, on tenterhooks for the result, Sonya had stayed calm and focussed throughout, never letting the pressure show and made the winning hoop, to win the final game on the final day 7-6. This match win saw victory in the third test sealed, as well as the series for New Zealand.

Both teams and their respective captains, Peter Landrebe (Australia) and the inspirational Felix Webby, together with managers, Anne Quinn (Australia) and Phillip Drew, deserve all the accolades not only for the quality of play under severe pressure during five long days of competition, but also for the spirit and camaraderie in which the contest was played. Roll on the next match in 2023!!

Epsom-Remuera AC Easter Tournament

For many years, ERCC has run a successful AC Handicap single tournament on the Saturday and Sunday of Easter weekend. This year was no different with 16 players with handicaps ranging from -1 to 20. For many players, it was a great opportunity to challenge themselves against more experienced competitors.

The first day saw four sections of 4, with players evenly split to make sure they would be exposed to a whole range of handicaps. The top 2 of each section played in a modified knock-out on Sunday, with a similar modified KO for the plate for those that finished 3rd and 4th. The modified KO consisted of a standard KO with the loser of each round playing their equivalent loser, to ensure that everyone had 3 games on the Sunday.

Another format introduced was that if two players, both on 14 or above, were playing each other, they would have their handicap divided in half to determine the number of bisques, and both players would play with their new allocated bisques. Handicap cards were not used for this kind of encounters, but all involved players enjoyed the experience of having both extra turns.

The tournament was generously sponsored by Hillary Retirement Village, which allowed prize money to be split between winner/runner-up and 3rd for both the main event and the plate, and also for best improver.

All players are already looking forward to Easter 2020!"