



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE CROQUET CLUB

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NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2014 Volume 15 Issue 2

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"It's Time to Get Your Mallet Out!"

Welcome to the second newsletter of 2014. With only a few days to go now before the playing season commences on the 29th March, we are pleased to be able to report that the sudden welcome change to dry weather from the 7th March at last enabled us to get on to the lawns. They were rotary mowed on the 11th, and some repair work was carried out on the part of Lawn 1 which was damaged by a group of footballers over the recent half-term holiday who obviously have little respect - particularly as the adjacent five-a-side area was playable on. With the work we have carried out, (detailed elsewhere in this issue), and hopefully heavy rolling and then cylinder mowing by the Council Groundstaff in due course, we are confident that the lawns will be available for the 29th.

As well as the current diary and competition information, this issue contains some important information which will affect all members - a new version of the Golf Croquet Rules, plus changes to the Golf Croquet Handicapping System. As far as the rules are concerned this is mainly a tidy-up and clarification of many points that have arisen since the 2008 set - however there are some changes and the one of most interest to members will be that concerning the Wrong Ball law.

The Handicapping changes will only affect those players with a handicap of 3 or lower - although there is some good news for other players who enjoy handicap games that they will now get 'extra' extra shots! See later.

Enjoy the season and let's hope for some warm, sunny weather.

Playing Sessions

Below is a reminder on the 'official' playing sessions for 2014 - no change from 2013:

- 10-12 Tuesday (Singles Handicap)
- 2-4 Tuesday (Singles Handicap)
- 10-1.00 Wednesday
- 10-1.00 Thursday
- 10-12 Saturday
- 2-5 Saturday
- 10-12 Sunday (Singles Handicap)
- 2-5 Sunday

Our Lawn Rent arrangements allow for playing sessions to be flexible to work around the weather - either good or bad - e.g., if morning is wet we can regroup pm or even on another day; if good then stay on as required. Also, members are able to go along for practice sessions at will.

The only provisos are that a) if the Council Groundstaff or our own members are working on the lawns, then they will have priority and players will have to wait until they are finished; and b) certain Mondays and Fridays when League and

Friendly matches are scheduled when no club play will be possible. On rare occasions there may be events on regular session play days which will be highlighted on the club noticeboards.

2014 Dates for your Diary

Our Fixtures Secretary John Thorp has already been busy working on this year's calendar and it looks like we will have another busy season. All fixture dates so far arranged are included below. Remaining EACF League dates, etc., will be posted in the Clubroom as and when these become available.

PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE SOME DATE CHANGES FROM THOSE PUBLISHED IN OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER IN JANUARY SO PLEASE CHECK AND CHANGE YOUR DIARY ENTRIES NOW!

March

- 14 Annual Dinner - Leighton Buzzard Golf Club
- 19 Committee Meeting
- 29 **LAWNS OPEN - weather permitting**

April

- 6 **Official Opening by Town Mayor Amanda Dodwell - 2.00pm**
- 24 Watford Friendly - Away
- 25 Dunstable Friendly - Home

May

- 2 Wingrave Friendly - Home
- 10/11 Club 'Mix 'n' Match' Handicap Doubles
- 21 CA B-Level Tournament (3-8) - Wrest Park
- 29 EACF Level League - Watford - Away
- 31/1 Club Ladies Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match'

June

- 8 East Anglian Counties Tournament - Hunstanton
- 14/15 Club Handicap Singles
- 18 Committee Meeting
- 20 CA B-Level Tournament (3-8) - Leighton-Linslade
- 29 EACF Club Champions Tournament - Colchester

July

- 13 EACF High Handicap (8-12) Tournament - Newport
- 25 Wingrave v Phyllis Court - lawns loaned - no social play
- 28 U3A Dunstable Visit Fun Day

August

- 9/10 Club Mens Doubles 'Mix 'n' Match' John Fogg Trophy
- 13 Committee Meeting
- 14 Dunstable CC Fun Day
- 18 Watford Friendly - Home

September

- 1 Wingrave Friendly - Away
- 6 Club Garden Party and Fun Day at Page's Park (10.00am - 4.00pm)
- 10 Committee Meeting
- 12 LJB 70+ Trophy
- 20/21 Club Doubles
- 27/28 Club Singles

November

- 14 AGM & Party

Official Opening by LL Town Mayor

All members are warmly invited to attend the official opening of the season by Town Mayor Councillor Amanda Dodwell at 2.00pm on Sunday 6th April. Please be in attendance by 1.30pm. It would also be nice if whites were worn. **NOTE this is a date change from the January newsletter.**

Social Club finishes 9th April

The Social Club at Page's Park on Wednesday mornings has been well attended for most of the winter months with upwards of 14 attendees. Even though the croquet season starts on 29th March, the pavilion will be available up to and including 9th April, therefore if we are unlucky with the weather, there will be somewhere warm and sociable to meet and enjoy a game of cards or dominoes.

Annual Club Dinner

The dinner held on Friday 14th March at the Leighton Buzzard Golf Club was attended by 29 people - members, wives and guests. A very pleasant evening was enjoyed by all with some excellent food and convivial conversation in excellent surroundings. We missed a number of regular attendees who were on holiday or unwell. The whole party joined in thanking David Ball for organising an excellent evening.

EACF Club Champions Tournament

It was at this event that David Ball won the Handicap trophy last year. This year the venue has changed from Newport to Colchester where each club in the region is invited to send both their level play and handicap club champions from the previous year, or suitable substitute. Our representatives will be John Thorp in Level and Roger Stroud in the Handicap category.

EACF High Handicap Tournament

This tournament is now into its third year. Diana Phelps and Margaret Brown attended in 2013 and had an enjoyable day. It is aimed specifically at those players whose handicap falls between 8-12, designed to give the less experienced player a chance to play in open competition relatively locally, and hopefully to tempt them into entering more senior Croquet Association events. This will be at Newport on 13th July. The entry fee is £7.50. Entry forms are available from John Cundell.

New Golf Croquet Rules

On The Croquet Association website at the end of December was an item introducing a possible new edition of the GC Rules. We can now tell you that this has become reality and the new 4th Edition of the Rules of Golf Croquet is now available from the CA Shop and is also available on-line at the Golf Croquet / Laws and Rulings

pages of the Croquet Association website at www.croquet.org.uk. The following is a brief extract from the introduction to the rules on the CA website.

The laws for both Association and Golf Croquet are made by international committees - the International Laws Committee for AC and the World Croquet Federation's GC Rules Committee for GC.

It has taken many decades for the AC laws to settle into their current stable form. It is no surprise that GC rules, which only first appeared in their current form 14 years ago, are still subject to greater change.

While Golf Croquet is based on a fairly simple concept, some rules quickly become very complex in some situations - like the Wrong Ball rule. There has been a strong desire to "fix" the Wrong Ball rule - although not much agreement on how best to do that.

The WCF GCRC has been working for the past few years on a new edition with a number of aims:

1. *Clarifying the rules so most of the Official Rulings are no longer needed.*
2. *Fixing the known problems, such as the Wrong Ball rule.*
3. *Simplifying the rules and using standard text for aspects common to AC and GC (e.g. the specification of courts, mallets and balls).*

In this new edition, good progress has been made on the first of these, and some on the third.

The good news is that the new 4th Edition means very few actual changes for the players. It is primarily a tidied-up version of the 3rd Edition laws, with many of the Official Rulings integrated into the rules. This shortens and simplifies many rules. The Wrong Ball rule is simplified somewhat, but needs further work.

The members in our club who are coaches are currently studying the new rules and will be offering advice and help on the changes as soon as the season starts. However, if you intend to participate in CA tournaments, the EACF League, and Friendlies, we would suggest that you obtain a set of the rules from the CA or at least take a look at them on the website.

The 'Trial Wrong Ball' rule of 2013 thankfully is no more. The new version is less confusing and will be explained to members as the season starts.

One welcome addition is emphasis on time wasting with the recommendation that the striker is to play within one minute of the last turn ending.

Changes to the Golf Croquet Handicapping System

The CA Handicapping Committee have decided to introduce some new lower handicap levels of -1, -2 and -3. They will be separated by trigger points 200 apart, setting the trigger point for -3 at 1600. This is designed to resolve the situation where the bottom levels (0, 1, 2) are becoming log jammed with a massive range of different abilities. It has also been realised that players with low handicaps were simply not giving away sufficient additional shots in handicap games to give a fair contest. Therefore the Handicapping Committee has made a change to the method of calculating 'extra turns' for Golf Croquet handicap games by increasing the bias against the lower handicap players. **This only effects players with handicaps of 3 and below.**

This ruling covers all GC Handicap games, be they club

internal affairs, Federation Leagues, or National Tournaments and Competitions organised by the CA .

The table below should be used to calculate extra turns with immediate effect.

Actual Handicap	'Effective Handicap' for calculation of extra turns in handicap games
-2	-6
-1	-5
0	-4
1	-2
2	0
3	2
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12

As per the new Golf Croquet Rules, our coaches and tournament members will explain the new Handicapping System to members as the season commences.

Just remember that if your handicap is 4 or higher this will not effect you except that in Handicap games you will receive extra shots from players with handicaps of 3 and lower.

EACF Leagues

As stated in the January newsletter, after the introduction of a Level Play League as well as the long running Handicap League in the East Anglian Croquet Federation in 2012, this will again be part of the 2014 season. The new EACF League Manager for 2013, Jason Carley, has spent the winter, along with Terrey Sparks and representatives from most of the EACF clubs, in sorting out some of the anomalies within the two leagues. The resulting rule changes were published last month, however there have been one or two later changes, mainly resulting from modifications to the Golf Croquet Handicapping System, and to the new 4th Edition Golf Croquet Rules effective from now. The amended EACF League Rules are now published on the EACF website at http://www.angliacroquet.co.uk/2014/gc_leagues.php.

The main change is Rule 4 which now reads: 'Each player shall have a handicap within the range -2 to 12 (effective handicap in the range -6 to 12) and shall play off their current EFFECTIVE handicap on the day of the match.' The total handicap minimum limit of 20 per team no longer applies - there is now no limit - therefore if they have them a team could play all very low handicapped players! However the higher handicapped players will receive more 'extra' shots with the new handicapping system. The outcome of these changes will be interesting.

This year the committee has decided to enter one team in the Level Play League and one in the Handicap League. The entry forms will be posted in the clubroom at the start of the season.

Selection Committee

The general consensus from members was that the 'selection committee' arrangement for last year was

successful and the committee has agreed that it will continue for 2014. The committee members for 2014 are John Cundell, David Ball, John Thorp, Peter Cole and Peggy Kenny.

Lawn Maintenance and Equipment Storage

Further to the comments in the January newsletter the Christmas and New Year period has obviously been very wet and Page's Park has suffered badly with the general park area being extremely wet and muddy. So much so that some park users preferred to walk across our lawns rather than use the paths. Also at half term a group of footballers decided to play on Lawn 1 rather than use the five-a-side area which has caused a fair amount of damage in terms of divots, grooves and indentations.

The continuing wet conditions gave us little chance to get on the lawns until 10th March. John T, Ross Bagni and John C spent all day mowing the three lawns, and aerating and applying some top dressing to the damaged areas. We are promised that the Council groundstaff will apply the large powered roller to the lawns shortly and start their cylinder mowing to get the lawns ready for our opening day.

We will position the hoops next week on Tuesday 25th March. On Wednesday (26th) we will move out all the lawn maintenance equipment from the clubroom into the green container - and give the clubroom a wash and brush up. This will be carried out after the Social Club gathering which finishes at 12.00 noon.

We have ordered some more top dressing to help consolidate and level off the more bumpier areas. We have also ordered bags of Moss Killer as all three lawns have suffered from the deluge.

We were pleased that the allocation of the Referees Room as a storage arrangement for our maintenance equipment and some playing equipment again worked reasonably well last year. We will certainly need this facility again for 2014 as we need somewhere to locate all the additional equipment and materials required for maintenance and the general running of the club. We are hopeful that as soon as some of the football moves to Astral Park, we can have permanent use of the Referees Room for storage and as a small committee/meeting room.

Club Clothing

As many of you know, in 2012 Judith Cundell located a supplier for club branded clothing such as polo shirts, sweat-shirts and caps - all in white - plus a fleece in navy-blue - from a local manufacturer.

Orders are to be placed through Judith and we require cash or cheque when you place an order. Cheques need to be made payable to 'Judith Cundell'. Delivery will be approximately three weeks. A number of members already have sweatshirts, caps and fleeces and are very pleased with the quality. Please contact Judith at 01525 374620 or email judith.cundell@btinternet.com for more information.

Scorers

First of all I'm sure all members will join with me in extending our grateful thanks to Irene Davis for acting as Scoring Manager for many years. Irene has decided that she would like someone else to take over the reins.

I am pleased to announce that Sheila Beal has

'volunteered' to take on the task, therefore please put your names down on the list which will appear in the clubroom in due course. In addition to scoring League and Inter-Club games, this year we are hosting our first Croquet Association tournament with the B-Level event to be held on Friday 20th June. Our scoring system has been much admired by visiting clubs and it will be a great opportunity to show this off to competitors from all over the country.

If you want to jump the gun and give your name to Sheila now then you can contact her on 01525 221185 or email sjbeal@onetel.com.

Member News - "The Only Way Is Up!" says Roger Stroud

In January we reported that Roger Stroud would be attempting an ultimate hoop - one that is 19,300 ft high - by climbing Kilimanjaro in Africa. Well he did it and here is his report.

'I flew out to Tanzania on 19th February arriving at my trek base midday the following day - the trek scheduled to start on Friday February 21st. My route up Kilimanjaro was the 'Rongai' route which is a little used route starting in the northern part of the mountain near to the Kenyan border - the plan being to climb to the summit in five days

and descend in two. We climbed to 'Kibo Huts' in four days and made the final push to the summit at midnight on the fourth day in freezing temperatures.'

'The summit is at 19,300 ft and pretty well covered in snow. We arrived at Gilman's Point on the crater rim at 6am with another two hours to reach the summit, having to walk very slowly due to the lack of oxygen.'

'I made the descent in three days, collecting my 'Gold' certificate awarded by the Kilimanjaro National Park for achieving the climb. The statistics covering the age groups show that my age group, 70+, represent 0% of those who do the climb - most climbers were in the age group 30 - 40.'

Well done Roger.



Subscription Reminder - Club Membership

In case you haven't yet paid this year's subscription and have mislaid the form sent out in January, you will find another membership application form below. If you have an email address please include this as we would like to send as many newsletters and other communications as possible by this method. Postage costs are very expensive and as club outgoings have risen significantly now that we are doing much of our own court maintenance, then every penny we can save is important. Also please include a mobile number if you have one. Those on email will receive acknowledgement that your subscription has been received. The small number of members who are not on email will be telephoned. The membership cards will be distributed as the season commences.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - 2014 SEASON

I/we wish to join / rejoin the club.

Name(s):

Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel No: Mobile No:

Date: Email:

I am happy to receive all communication by email, including 'return forms': YES NO
 A subscription for the full season is £75 per person. Potential new members may also pay a £5 fee for two trial sessions. This fee will be deducted if full membership is subsequently taken out.

I / we enclose a cheque for £..... payable to Leighton Linslade Croquet Club.

Please return this form and cheque to: Judith Cundell (Membership Secretary), 18 Saxons Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. LU7 3LT. Tel: 01525 374620.
 Email: judith.cundell@btinternet.com