

WESTERN CANADA OPEN 2026

THE WEST HAS ITS CHAMPIONSHIP

Building a competitive home for Golf Croquet in Western Canada and the Pacific



Chris P-Smith/Adam Barr



Chris P-Smith



The pioneers of the inaugural
Western Canada Open GC

From the President's Desk: Final Reflections

Dear Members,

It is my great pleasure to introduce the final edition of *The Mallet* for 2026.

First, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our editor, **Gopal Gowda**, for assembling such a comprehensive and engaging record of what has been an exceptionally active and successful second half of the season. My gratitude also goes to every player, manager, volunteer, and club leader whose dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work have made this one of the most memorable years for croquet in Canada.

As I complete my final year as President after nine years on the Board of Croquet Canada, I am immensely gratified to see our sport stronger and healthier than ever. I am especially proud that our leadership now reflects the diversity of our membership and the broad geographical reach of croquet across the country. While there remains tremendous opportunity for growth, particularly in regions where the game is still developing, this edition of *The Mallet* clearly demonstrates the vitality, passion, and commitment flourishing in clubs from coast to coast.

This season was marked by several notable achievements. We celebrated the inaugural **Western Canada Open GC Tournament**, in **Victoria** which attracted talented competitors from across Canada. Its success strongly suggests the beginning of an

exciting new tradition. The **Bayfield International Croquet Club** once again demonstrated exceptional organizational leadership through its hosting of the CroqCan Association Tournament. We were also delighted to see the CroqCan Golf Croquet Tournament at the **North Toronto Croquet Club** benefit from first-time sponsorship by **Oakley Woods Croquet**, creating a significant prize fund that attracted both national and international competitors.

At the same time, established favourites such as the **Aboyne**, the **Quebec Open**, and the **Falling Leaves Tournament** continued to challenge and inspire players of all skill levels, reinforcing the strength and depth of croquet competition in Canada.

I have also been proud to watch Croquet Canada's programs evolve over the years. Through the efforts of many dedicated board members and volunteers, we have strengthened clubs with upgraded equipment, supported Canadian players competing internationally, hosted clinics and development initiatives to grow participation, and secured sponsorships that have helped elevate our tournaments to world-class standards.

Equally important has been our commitment to keeping members connected. Through **croquet.ca**, *The Mallet*, regular President's Reports, and individual initiatives such as Adam Barr's **CroquetTools.com**, our community has become more

informed, engaged, and connected than ever before.

As another successful season comes to a close, and as I prepare to step down as President, I encourage all members to bring their ideas, energy, and leadership to their local clubs and to Croquet Canada. The future of our sport depends on the willingness of dedicated volunteers to contribute, innovate, and inspire. I am confident that croquet in Canada will continue to go from strength to strength, building on the remarkable progress we have achieved together.

Thank you for the privilege of serving this organization and its members over the past nine years. It has been both an honour and a pleasure.

Warm regards,

Jim Wright
President



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On The Cover

The inaugural Western Canada Open Golf Croquet Championship establishes a premier GC event for the West.

Croquet Canada on the Internet

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<https://croquet.ca>

f Croquet Canada Page:

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f Croquet In Toronto Group:

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Gopal Gowda: **Western Canada Rep**

Mike Pennock: **Western Canada Rep**

Members!

This is Your Newsletter

1. The space is yours to fill
2. We will print:
 - Announcements
 - Tournament reports
 - Photos
 - Ideas
 - Letters to the Editor
 - Technical articles
 - Club Profile
 - Etc.
3. Send your material and Questions to:

Gopal Gowda, Editor

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A VISION REALIZED



The championship final showcased the skill, concentration, and competitive spirit at the heart of the Western Canada Open.

One audacious jump shot late in the championship final captured everything that made the inaugural Western Canada Open memorable: skill, nerve, sportsmanship, and the determination to compete until the very last hoop. More importantly, the tournament marked the beginning of something much larger: a championship created to serve Golf Croquet players throughout Western Canada and the Pacific West.

Every successful championship

begins with a vision. For the Western Canada Open, that vision was to create a tournament that would bring together the best of competitive Golf Croquet in Western Canada and the Pacific West while fostering the friendships and sportsmanship that define the game. The result was an inaugural championship that exceeded expectations and laid the foundation for what could become a cornerstone event for players throughout the region.



Balance and concentration on display as Adam Barr lines up his next shot



WHY THE WESTERN CANADA OPEN MATTERS

Bringing Championship Competition West

A premier tournament created to serve Golf Croquet players throughout Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest.

Strengthening a Thriving Community

With more than 130 active players across five clubs, Victoria has become one of Canada's strongest croquet communities.

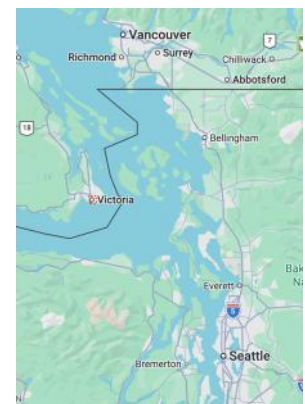
Developing the Next Generation

Players compete under nationally recognized standards while building their skills and competitive experience.

Building a Legacy

The inaugural championship lays the groundwork for Victoria to host future provincial, national, and international croquet events

View Victoria On Map



The Tournament That Had to Happen

How Victoria seized the opportunity and created the Western Canada Open

Gopal Gowda

Fifteen years of growth, a shortage of competitive opportunities, and a community ready to do something ambitious. The inaugural Western Canada Open Golf Croquet Championship did not emerge by chance. It was the result of a vision that Victoria could become the centre of competitive croquet in Western Canada.

The Western Canada Open Golf Croquet Championship was born from two contrasting realities. Victoria's croquet community had grown steadily over the previous fifteen years, creating a strong base of players, volunteers, and organizers. At the same time, competitive opportunities throughout the Pacific Northwest had been shrinking as established events in Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland became less frequent.

"The goal was never to stage a single tournament. The goal was to establish Victoria as the home of competitive croquet in Western Canada."

Recognizing both the need and the opportunity, organizers set out to create an event that would be more than another stop on the tournament calendar. Their goal was to establish a championship capable of serving players throughout Western Canada and the Northwestern United States while helping to position Victoria as the region's leading croquet centre.

THE LEGACY OF THE INAUGURAL CHAMPIONSHIP

The Western Canada Open achieved far more than a successful weekend of competition.

- ✓ Established a new championship for Western Canada
- ✓ Demonstrated that Victoria can host major croquet events
- ✓ Strengthened partnerships between croquet and lawn bowling clubs
- ✓ Created new competitive opportunities for players across the West
- ✓ Raised Victoria's profile within the Canadian croquet community
- ✓ Attracted renewed interest from players throughout the Pacific Northwest
- ✓ Built momentum for future Golf Croquet and Association Croquet events
- ✓ Laid the foundation for Victoria's emergence as Western Canada's croquet hub



In a doubles match Ontario pair (in whites) take on BC pair

The effort faced significant challenges. No single venue could accommodate the event, requiring cooperation among multiple lawn bowling clubs. A new tournament had to build credibility, attract competitors, secure volunteers, and demonstrate that Western Canada could successfully host a major Golf Croquet championship.

That challenge was met through an unprecedented partnership among three lawn bowling clubs, support

from Croquet Canada, and the dedication of local volunteers. Together, they transformed an ambitious idea into reality.

The result was far more than a successful weekend of competition. The inaugural Western Canada Open demonstrated Victoria's capacity to host major events, strengthened relationships within the sporting community, and created new momentum for croquet development throughout the West.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME

- ✓ Multiple Venues, One Event
- ✓ Three clubs worked together to provide the required lawn capacity.
- ✓ Building a New Tradition
- ✓ The tournament had no history to rely on and had to earn support from players and volunteers.
- ✓ A Regional Competition Gap
- ✓ The championship set out to replace opportunities that had gradually disappeared elsewhere



OBLBC



VBCC



CPLBCC

The Tournament Delivers

Gopal Gowda



A double-banked doubles game in progress

The inaugural **Western Canada Open Golf Croquet Championship** concluded on August 24 following four days of competition, camaraderie, and outstanding play in Victoria, British Columbia.

As the first fully **Croquet Canada-sanctioned Golf Croquet championship in Western Canada**, conducted under **World Croquet Federation regulations**, the event marked an important milestone for the sport in the region. More importantly, it demonstrated that Western Canada is ready to support high-calibre Golf Croquet competition and provide players with opportunities that have traditionally required significant travel.

Interest in the championship exceeded expectations. The tournament attracted a strong field of **16 competitors** from Ontario, the Lower Mainland,

Vancouver Island, and the Gulf Islands. Particularly encouraging was the participation of many players competing in their first sanctioned Golf Croquet tournament. For several local competitors, the Western Canada Open provided a rare opportunity to test their skills in a fully competitive environment without having to travel across the country.

One of the championship's most significant achievements was its ability to bring together players spanning a broad range of experience and backgrounds. Seasoned national-level competitors shared the lawns with first-time tournament players, creating an environment that was both highly competitive and welcoming to those new to the Golf Croquet discipline

Championship at a Glance

16 competitors

4 days of competition

48 preliminary-round matches

2 playoff divisions

✓ Championship Flight

✓ First Flight

One-Hoop Challenge Champion

✓ Graham Garlick (BC)

Doubles Champions

✓ Sandy Hodel (BC) &

Jorn Soegard (BC)

Championship Winner

✓ Chris Percival-Smith (BC)

Championship Runner-Up

✓ Adam Barr (ON)

First Flight Champion

✓ Pierre Dunn (BC)

First Flight Runner-Up

✓ Gopal Gowda (BC)



Continued....



*One Hoop Champ
Graham Garlick*

To accommodate this mix of experience, organizers developed a unique tournament format that combined balanced preliminary competition with meaningful playoff opportunities. Every participant played six preliminary games against six different opponents before advancing to either the Championship Flight or First Flight playoffs. The structure ensured competitive matches throughout the weekend while allowing newer players to gain valuable tournament experience.

The championship opened with practice sessions and a popular **One-Hoop Challenge**, which quickly became one of the week's most talked-about events. In a memorable upset, **Graham Garlick of Salt Spring Island**, competing in his first WCF-sanctioned Golf Croquet tournament, defeated several highly ranked opponents to claim the title and remind everyone that croquet often rewards focus, nerve, and determination as much as experience.



One Hoop Startig Position

The competition took place on beautifully manicured lawn bowling greens at Oak Bay Lawn Bowling Club and Victoria Bowls & Croquet Club. Combined with exceptional clubhouse facilities, ideal summer weather, and the efforts of a dedicated team of volunteers, participants enjoyed an experience that consistently drew praise throughout the championship.



Adam Barr/Graham Garlick - One Hoop Finalists

ONE HOOP CHAMPIONSHIP

- ✓ Picture yourself at Hoop 13, game 5, World Championship. Win one hoop, and you're the champion! Now picture doing it a handful of times to become the ONE HOOP CHAMPION!
- ✓ This is a knockout. Win the hoop, and you advance.
- ✓ Start from the offside penalty area between hoops 3–4 if you're playing to hoop 1, and between hoops 1–2 if you're playing to hoop 3.
- ✓ Toss a coin. The winner chooses to go first or second. The first ball is blue.
- ✓ After the blue ball is played, the second player may choose to swap and take blue as their own. If they do, player 1 plays red from the starting position. If they don't, player 2 plays red from the starting position. Black and yellow are played as normal: if you own blue, you also play black; if you own red, you also play yellow.
- ✓ Balls (and sides) can only be swapped after the very first shot. So, the blue player must think carefully about where their ball finishes. Too good, and your opponent will swap with you; too poor, and you're stuck with it.
- ✓ *This type of start was promoted by Reg Bamford for golf croquet because it reduces the value of winning the coin toss, which can otherwise have a large impact on who wins.*

Competition on the lawns was matched by outstanding hospitality off them. Players enjoyed a traditional British Columbia sockeye salmon dinner, generous breakfasts and lunches, and the welcoming atmosphere created by volunteers from the host clubs. The combination of serious competition and warm hospitality was frequently cited by participants as one of the highlights of the week.

The final day featured playoffs in both divisions, culminating in two fiercely contested finals. In the

Championship Flight, **Adam Barr of Ontario, a two-time Canadian National Golf Croquet Champion**, faced **Chris Percival-Smith of British Columbia**, one of Canada's

top Association Croquet players competing in his first fully sanctioned Golf Croquet championship.

Their 19-point final showcased the very best of competitive croquet. Tactical play, precise shot-making, and mental resilience were on display throughout a closely fought contest before **Chris Percival-Smith prevailed 10-8**, capturing the title of

Inaugural Western Canada Open Golf Croquet Champion.

The result reflected one of the championship's most encouraging outcomes: established champions,

accomplished Association Croquet players, emerging Golf Croquet competitors, and first-time tournament participants all found meaningful competition in the same event.



Championship Flight

1. Chris P-Smith
2. Adam Barr
3. Mike Tevlin
4. Jorn Soegard
5. Jim Crawford
6. Brian Wasylyk
7. Lynn Davies
8. Graham Garlick

First Flight

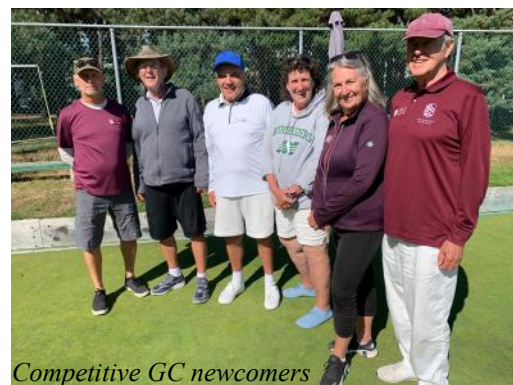
1. Pierre Dunn
2. Gopal Gowda
3. Bruce Gillespie
4. Tim Pilon
5. Nicole Tevlin
6. Sandy Hodel
7. Elizabeth Randell
8. Gordie March

1 - Hoop Winner

Graham Garlick

Doubles Winner

Sandy Hodel/Jorn Soegard



Competitive GC newcomers



P. Dunn - First Flight Winner

In the **First Flight Final**, **Pierre Dunn** defeated **Gopal Gowda** to claim the division title. Earlier in the weekend, **Sandy Hodel and Jorn Soegard** captured the Golf Croquet Doubles Championship.

For a first-year event, the results were encouraging on every level. New players gained valuable tournament experience, seasoned competitors



P. Dunn/G. Gowda

enjoyed high-quality competition, and clubs worked together to showcase croquet at its very best. Most importantly, the Western Canada Open established a strong foundation for future growth and demonstrated that Victoria has all the ingredients needed to become a premier destination for competitive croquet in Western Canada and the Pacific Northwest.

Organizers are already looking ahead to the 2027 championship. With a successful inaugural event now complete, the goal is to continue expanding participation throughout Western Canada while welcoming competitors from across Canada, the United States, and beyond. The foundation has been laid. The next chapter begins next year.



*First Flight Finals
P. Dunn - G. Gowda*



S. Hodel/J. Soegard

Why Players Should Consider the Western Canada Open

- ✓ Competitive Golf Croquet under WCF rules
- ✓ Meaningful competition for players of all levels
- ✓ Championship and First Flight divisions
- ✓ Beautifully maintained lawns and excellent facilities
- ✓ Outstanding hospitality and social events
- ✓ Victoria's ideal summer playing conditions
- ✓ A growing championship tradition in Western Canada



As Autumn Arrives, the 2026 Quebec Open Shines

Jim Wright/Andrew de Courcy-Ireland (Edited by Gopal Gowda)



As the Labour Day haze fades and autumn begins its descent, the Canadian croquet calendar turns to one of its most enduring and polished traditions: the Quebec Open Croquet Championships. From September 10 to 13, the verdant lawns of Montreal's Westmount Lawn Bowling and Croquet Club played host to a weekend of high stakes and high style.

The event is effectively a double feature, blending the timeless elegance of Association Croquet with the fast-paced energy of Golf Croquet. The field was truly international, drawing talent from the host club, neighbouring Mount Royal, clubs across Ontario, and several stalwarts from south of the border. For four days,

players competed beneath a flawless autumn sky on courts that were as fast and green as they were unforgiving.

The AC division culminated in a heavyweight clash between Brian Cumming of Elora, Ontario, and Stuart Lawrence of the Lenox Club in Massachusetts. The two are no strangers to one another, having previously shared a US Six-Wicket Doubles title. Their best-of-three final proved a marathon contest. Brian claimed the opening game, but Stuart answered in the second with a breathtaking hit-in at a critical moment before pegging out to level the match.





The Gallery - GC Finals Game



Chris Olsen Jump Shot



George Claffey

After nearly five hours of play on Sunday morning, the competitors faced a choice between continuing and beginning long journeys home. With Stuart holding the momentum, Brian graciously conceded the deciding game, giving Stuart his seventh Quebec Open title and a memorable birthday celebration.

Doug Grimsley, a seasoned veteran making his Montreal debut, claimed third place with a victory over Jim Wright of North Toronto. Patrick Little of the Royal St. Catherine's Croquet Club captured the consolation honours.

Over in the Golf Croquet arena, the competition was equally fierce. Chris Olsen and Liliana Saliba emerged victorious in the High-Low Doubles event. In the singles championship, reigning champion KS Tsang of North Toronto met Olsen in a rematch of last year's final. Their encounter stretched to three hours before Olsen prevailed 10-7 to claim the title. Linda Kemerer, representing both Westmount and Mount Royal, won the second-flight singles competition.



GC Doubles Champs



KS Taking Aim



Jim Wright



Louis Tends the BBQ

Of course, the Quebec Open is as much a culinary pilgrimage as it is a sporting event. The weekend's menu was a masterclass in indulgence, ranging from casual midday feasts of pizza and sausages to a Friday barbecue featuring filet mignon and the indispensable luxury of Montreal smoked meat sandwiches.

The festivities peaked at the Saturday evening banquet held at a local tennis club, where the drinks flowed generously, perhaps a little too generously for some, as traces of the previous evening's enthusiasm were subtly evident on the courts the following morning. The feast itself featured lamb shank, fresh salads, baked potatoes, and a zesty lemon tart that left no guest wanting.



Heartfelt thanks are due to tournament director Andrew de Courcy-Ireland for his unwavering hospitality and to the army of volunteers whose efforts ensured the tournament was a seamless and spirited success. Their dedication continues to make the Quebec Open one of the highlights of the Canadian croquet season.

Linda-George-patrick-Jim



Alain Giraud Repeats at Rain-Soaked Aboyne AC Tournament

Jim Wright (Edited by Gopal Gowda)



Despite a weekend of persistent rain, the annual Aboyne Association Croquet Tournament, held August 21-23, 2026, once again delivered excellent competition, warm hospitality, and outstanding play.

Hosted at the Aboyne Club in Elora by club president Brian Cumming, the August tournament attracted a strong field from both Canada and the United States. Cumming, himself a longtime tournament champion on both sides of the border, welcomed players to one of Canada's premier Association Croquet events.

This year, however, the spotlight belonged once again to Alain Giraud. The British champion, currently residing in Canada with his wife Caroline, demonstrated why he is regarded as one of the game's finest players. For the second consecutive year, Giraud swept through the field undefeated, winning all of his block matches before carrying his winning form into the knockout rounds to successfully defend his title.

Stuart Lawrence of Massachusetts finished as runner-up after a strong tournament. The top block also included American players Doug Grimsley and Michael Albert, while Donna Dixon and Bill Sullivan competed in the third block.

Bayfield players made their presence felt throughout the weekend. Mike Sully captured the second block and earned promotion to the championship flight for the finals. Patrick Little of St. Catharines also enjoyed an excellent event, winning all of his matches in Block 3 to move up in the final round.

As always, the tournament was about more than results. Players were treated to the generous hospitality for which Aboyne is well known, highlighted by a memorable Saturday evening gathering hosted by Brian Cumming and Tammy Rutherford. The event provided a welcome opportunity for competitors to relax, share stories, and enjoy the fellowship that is such an important part of the croquet community.

Congratulations to **Alain Giraud** on another impressive victory, and thanks to Brian, Tammy, and all the volunteers who helped make the **2026 Aboyne Tournament** a success despite challenging weather conditions.

Editor's Note: The weather on tournament weekend was considerably wetter than this photo suggests; as no suitable images from the event were available, I have used a photograph from another croquet venue.

Brian Cumming Captures 2026 US 6-Wicket National Championship



Congratulations to **Brian Cumming**, who won the **2026 US 6-Wicket National Championship** at the National Croquet Center in West Palm Beach, Florida, defeating Stephen Morgan in the best-of-three final.

This latest achievement adds another major title to Brian's impressive croquet résumé and further establishes him as one of North America's leading players.

Congratulations, Brian!



2026 US NATIONAL CHAMPION

Falling Leaves Croquet: Competition & Camaraderie

Richard V Dine (Edited By Gopal)

The Toronto Cricket Club's annual Falling Leaves Tournament returned September 26, bringing together newbies, novices and intermediates for a day of spirited competition, generous sportsmanship and the occasional reminder that the hoop really is right there.



If You Roll It, They Will Come

Falling Leaves has become a showcase for croquet at the Cricket, drawing players and guests from other clubs. Yes, croquet at the Club is played on the cricket pitch rather than a conventional lawn-bowling-style green. But competitors arriving that morning found the grounds crew putting the finishing touches on the surface with a turf roller. The reviews were glowing. Kudos to **Groundskeeper Chris Chappell and crew**, who once again provided superb playing conditions.

Players may occasionally blame the lawn for a missed shot. This time, they definitely couldn't.

Tevlin Takes the Trophy

This year's champion, **Mike Tevlin of North Toronto Croquet**, delivered a top-notch performance while also demonstrating what Falling Leaves is all about. Mike, like many of the more experienced players, generously helped newcomers get comfortable with tournament play. Cricket rookie **Mary Thomas**, competing in her first Croquet Canada-sanctioned event, appreciated the advice Mike offered, even while the two were opponents.

“He reminded me to take my time and offered some set-up tips. It was done in the spirit of true sportsmanship.”

And Mike was hardly alone. Throughout the tournament, intermediate players appeared to have almost as much fun helping the rookies as they did chasing the trophy. One newcomer summed it up nicely:

“What better way to learn than to play against players a notch or two above?”

Nothing sharpens your croquet quite like watching a carefully constructed plan disappear through a hoop.



M. Tevlin/E. Longhurst/A. Forgione



Ellie Longhurst (l.) and Jackie Henry (r.)



Mary Thomas



Maura McQueen/Bob Owen

And the Winners Are...

- In the **Championship Flight**, Mike Tevlin defeated Cricket's **Aldo Forgione** in the final.
- In the **consolation**, Cricket's **Ellie Longhurst** defeated 2025 Falling Leaves champion **John Miles of North Toronto**.

First Event prize winners

- Nicole Tevlin, North Toronto
- Maura McQueen, Cricket
- Martin Block, Cricket

Second Event prize winners

- Jackie Henry, Cricket
- Roger Higgin, Cricket
- Ron Schwartz, Cricket

All three Second Event winners are first year players.



The Real Winner? Croquet

Ultimately, Falling Leaves 2026 was about much more than trophies. Newbies, novices and intermediates played, learned, competed and laughed together as one big **Croquet Family**.

Great competition. Even better camaraderie.
And thankfully, the only things falling all day were the leaves.

Georgetown Open House Sparks Interest in Golf Croquet

Introducing a new lawn sport to Georgetown Lawn Bowling Club members

John Richardson (Edited by Gopal Gowda)



greens than the normal effects of birds, wildlife, weather, and regular play. As a result, an increasing number of clubs are embracing croquet and discovering that the benefits far outweigh any perceived drawbacks.

Clubs that may once have been reluctant to consider croquet are now actively exploring opportunities to add the sport, creating vibrant multi-sport environments where lawn bowlers and croquet players can thrive together. Across Canada, and particularly in British Columbia, many clubs have demonstrated that the two sports can coexist successfully, strengthening their organizations, broadening their membership appeal, and enhancing the long-term sustainability of their facilities.

It has been particularly gratifying to witness this evolution in perspective at the Georgetown Lawn Bowling Club. What was once viewed with caution is now being embraced as an opportunity to grow membership, increase club vitality, and help secure a sustainable future for the organization.

Overview

I was contacted by the President of the Georgetown Lawn Bowling Club regarding the possibility of hosting an open house to introduce their members to golf croquet. The club had noticed that a number of lawn bowling clubs were incorporating croquet and were interested in exploring whether it could be a good fit for Georgetown.

The club presented the idea to its membership of approximately 90 members. While there had been some understandable hesitation when the concept was first discussed a decade ago, the response from the current membership was overwhelmingly supportive. Like many lawn bowling

clubs, the Georgetown Lawn Bowling Club had previously been cautious about introducing croquet, largely due to concerns about its impact on the greens, uncertainty about how the two sports would coexist, and, perhaps most significantly, limited awareness and understanding of the sport itself.

However, as clubs across the country face declining lawn bowling participation, many are recognizing the value of diversifying their activities to attract new members and make better use of their facilities. Experience has shown that croquet hoops cause no more wear on

Approach to the Open House

Because Georgetown was interested in **trying the sport and determining whether their members would enjoy it**, I felt it was important not to overwhelm them with the more serious or technical aspects of croquet. Proper court lines, detailed rules and competitive structure were secondary on this first visit. The priority was simple: **get people playing, have fun, create some excitement, and leave them wanting to play again.**

I structured the two-hour open house accordingly.

I began with a short introduction explaining who I was within the Canadian croquet community, including my competitive background and my role on the Croquet Canada Board. I then gave a brief history of golf croquet and explained some of the basic principles of the game.

From there, I demonstrated beginner-friendly stances and mallet techniques, including how to position yourself, hold the mallet and make a basic stroke. I also briefly introduced the concept of stalking the ball, planting yourself and the mallet, keeping your eye on the ball, and using a controlled back-and-forward swing.



Court Setup

The existing playing area at Georgetown is approximately **97' x 80'**, rather than the regulation 105' x 84' golf croquet court.

Before the open house, I used three corner flags and a 25-foot string marked at two specific lengths to establish the approximate hoop positions. I used a similar method to establish the inner hoop locations.

The setup proved to be remarkably simple and demonstrated that a reasonably accurate playing layout can be established without requiring a significant amount of equipment or preparation. I used proportional measurements to adapt the regulation court layout to their smaller playing area.





Getting Everyone Playing

Once the introductory portion was complete, I started everyone at Hoop 1.

Each participant took a ball, attempted to run Hoop 1, and then continued around the court, playing through all six hoops. Some participants wanted to go through the exercise a second time, which was encouraging because they were already interested in improving their shots. A big thanks to the Georgetown LB president for mentioning this style and I agreed immediately that it was a great idea.

Once everyone had an opportunity to try the basic stroke and experience the court, we moved into games.

I deliberately kept the transition into games very informal.



Rather than explaining every rule and trying to organize everything perfectly, I would simply announce something along the lines of: "Hey! We have one person going to the start corner — we need three more please!"

The intention was to make joining a game feel easy and spontaneous. People could simply step in, play, and learn as they went.

We played numerous games throughout the session. In a few cases, I even stopped or "killed" a game that was moving too slowly so that we could get another group playing. The objective was to keep the court active and maintain the energy of the open house.





Participant Engagement

One of the most encouraging aspects of the session was how quickly participants began asking questions about strategy.

Even on their first day, players were starting to recognize the importance of ball position, order of play, making particular shots, and how an opponent's mistake could create an opportunity.

This was exactly what I had hoped to see.

Rather than simply hitting balls through hoops, participants were beginning to **think about the game**. They were starting to understand that golf croquet has a strategic element, and this seemed to increase their enjoyment and competitiveness.

Most importantly, there was a lot of laughter and

genuine enthusiasm. The atmosphere was relaxed, social and competitive at the same time.

Participation

The club currently has approximately 90 members. There were 15 Georgetown members participating in the open house, along with two members of the public. Having approximately **17 members participate represents roughly 19% of the club's membership**, which I feel is a very encouraging initial response for a brand-new activity.

The response was strong enough that the club has already indicated that they would like to hold **two additional open houses**. The first is scheduled for September 9, with the date of the second session still to be determined.

Evidence of Serious Interest

The club's interest appears to be moving beyond simply "trying something new."

They have already obtained quotations for **two sets of equipment from Oakley**, through Oakley's website. I also provided them with information regarding Croquet Canada's equipment-sharing opportunities, and the equipment purchase matching program, and connected those possibilities with the Board.

This suggests that the club is actively considering how to establish croquet rather than simply hosting a one-time recreational event.

I am very interested to see what develops from here.





A Memorable Ending

There was one final moment that I felt was particularly valuable.

After the official open house had finished, several participants were still lingering around the court and continuing to play. I decided to take the opportunity to hit a few balls myself and move around the court.

Fortunately, my accuracy seemed to have followed me from the recent Nationals. I was able to run every hoop I attempted, from a variety of angles and distances.

The reaction from the people watching was fantastic. There were genuinely some dropped jaws and expressions of disbelief at what they were seeing.

I actually felt that this was a perfect way to end the session.

The purpose was not to show off, but it demonstrated something important: **Croquet Canada has someone nearby who is not only willing to help them establish the sport, but who can also demonstrate what is possible when the game is played at a high level.**

I live only one town away from Georgetown and have made it clear that I am willing to spend time with the

club, help them learn the game, answer questions and assist them as they determine where they want to take croquet.

Overall Assessment

I came away from the open house very encouraged. The club has leadership that is genuinely interested in introducing croquet, members who appear receptive to trying it, and enough initial participation to suggest that there is a real opportunity for growth.

Perhaps most importantly, the session reinforced something I believe is critical when introducing golf croquet to a new club:

The first objective should not necessarily be to teach people how to play perfect croquet. It should be to make them want to play croquet again.

Once people are having fun, becoming competitive, asking strategic questions and talking about equipment, the more technical aspects of the sport can follow naturally.

Georgetown appears to be at that stage now. They are already talking about additional open houses and equipment, and I am excited to see where this develops.

For me personally, there was also something very satisfying about seeing a club that had once been resistant to the idea of another sport now have new leadership willing to embrace the opportunity. More than ten years after my original discussions with the Town of Halton Hills, I found myself standing on a Georgetown lawn introducing golf croquet to a new generation of potential players.

That made this particular open house especially rewarding.

John Richardson

Director of Selection
Croquet Canada

CROQUET CARNIVAL: DUCKS, DRACULA, AND DEADLY ACCURACY

Gopal Gowda

If there was ever proof that croquet players will enthusiastically embrace a little silliness, the 3rd Annual Croquet Carnival delivered it in abundance.

On August 29, Victoria Bowls and Croquet Club's lawns were transformed into a playground of croquet challenges, colourful costumes, friendly competition, and more laughter than one normally expects around a wicket.

Alongside regular croquet games, players tested their skills at a series of carnival stations. The star attraction once again was the ever-popular Duck Pond challenge, where competitors attempted to launch balls up a ramp and into the waiting pond. Despite appearances suggesting otherwise, the success rate was remarkably impressive. Other stations challenged players' touch, accuracy, and weight control, while a new One Hoop Challenge, complete



with "snake in the grass" rules, kept everyone guessing and occasionally muttering good-naturedly at their ball.

Of course, no Croquet Carnival would be complete without costumes. A salute goes to the many players who arrived in character, including Count Dracula, Sherlock Holmes, Indiana Jones, The Cat in the Hat, and perhaps most memorably, a pair of walking ears of corn. Fortunately, all participants behaved themselves and no detectives were required to investigate missing vegetables.



The Carnival is more than just an excuse to dress up and attempt improbable shots. As lawn bowling clubs across the country introduce croquet to make greater use of their greens, clubhouses, and facilities, events like this play an important role in attracting new players and keeping existing members engaged. A healthy club needs opportunities for both competitive play and social fun, and VBCC continues to find creative ways to provide both.

Readers may recall the popular Interclub Potluck Ladies' Night Croquet featured in an earlier issue of The Mallet. The Croquet Carnival followed the same philosophy:

create an event where everyone can participate, laugh, and enjoy the game together, regardless of handicap or experience level.

Judging by the costumes, smiles, and enthusiastic participation, very little encouragement was required.

Special thanks go to everyone who helped set up and run the various stations, and of course to Kathy and the hospitality team for keeping players fuelled with tea, coffee, and an excellent assortment of treats.

The ducks may have survived another year, but only just.



List of Annual Croquet Tournaments in Canada - 2026

Victoria Interclub Doubles Snake Croquet Tournament... (completed)

Venue: Victoria, BC

Date: April 17-19, 2026

Contact: Jack Showers

Email: jackshowers@shaw.ca

Victoria Day AC Open... (completed)

Venue: Victoria, BC

Date: May 15 - 18, 2026

Contact: Pierre Dunn

Email: breakrunner@vancroquet.com

Canadian Open AC National Championship... (completed)

Venue: Bayfield, ON

Date: June 4-7, 2026

Contact: David Druett

Email: david.druett@gmail.com

Oakley Woods Canadian National GC Championship... (completed)

Venue: Toronto, ON

Date: July 16-19, 2026

Contact: Adam Barr

Email: adamcbarr@gmail.com

Inaugural Western Canada Open GC Championship... (completed)

Venue: Victoria, BC

Date: August 22-24, 2026

Contact: Gopal Gowda

Email: Vdcacriketgopal@gmail.com

Aboyne Open AC

Venue: Elora, ON

Date: August 21-23, 2026 ... (completed)

Contact: Brian Cumming

Email: b.w.cumming@gmail.com

Quebec Open AC/GC

Venue: Montreal, QC

Date: September 10-13, 2026... (completed)

Contact: Andrew de Courcy-Ireland

Email: andrewdci@outlook.com

Falling Leaves Invitational GC Tournament... (completed)

Venue: Toronto, ON

Date: September 26, 2026

Contact: Richard Van Dine

Email: rsvandine@rogers.com

A More Dignified Retirement Plan

Phil Parsons (Edited by Gopal Gowda)

Every croquet player eventually owns a mallet that has seen better days. Most end up in a corner of the garage, quietly reflecting on championships won, hoops missed, and years of faithful service.

Phil has chosen a more dignified retirement plan.

While cleaning the basement bathroom in preparation for an overnight guest, he transformed an old mallet into what may be the world's first croquet-themed toilet paper dispenser. The design is elegant in its simplicity, environmentally responsible, and conveniently located for those moments requiring careful thought and strategic planning. Unlike many modern inventions, it requires no batteries, no software updates, and no debate about handicaps.

As far as we know, this is the only piece of croquet equipment guaranteed to be used every day, whether or not the lawns are open. And should the supply run low, players can take comfort in knowing that, unlike a crucial rover ball, replacements are readily available.



A Day of Croquet and Camaraderie in Nottingham

Pierre Dunn

In late September of this year, I found myself in Nottingham, as one does. And when one is in Nottingham, it is only natural to stop in at the Nottingham Croquet Club, where Canada's official 2026 team competed in Tier 2 of the World Teams Association Croquet Championships.

Nottingham's Roger Steeper responded to my inquiry and set up a day of activity: I guided four club members through a game of Snake, then joined in for a second game. After lunch, three members and I played a mixed-alternative AC game — my partner Debbie and I played alternate strokes, while our opponents played alternate turns. As the game progressed, players were occasionally replaced. In the end, we all had good practice, but it would be hard to claim that any particular players "won". Opportunities to meet new players and make new friends around the world are among the great benefits of playing our sport.



Pierre (center) was welcomed to the Nottingham Croquet Club by four members ready to explore the "Snake" variation — Cathy Turski (GC lead for the club), Alan Middleton, Roger Steeper, and Chris Middleton. Photo by Sarah Butler

The Nottingham Club provides nine full courts for its 190-plus members. In the colder periods of the year, the club allows groups of courts to lie fallow on a rotating basis, so the health of the lawns is maintained while those eager to play still have adequate access. The games played are usually Association and Golf, though the members are interested in considering options — like Snake — that show up on their doorsteps. The courts are occasionally divided into smaller sections for various purposes, including training new members in the skills and rules of the games.

In addition to full participation in local, regional, and national tournaments, the club provides ongoing training for both established members and new recruits, including school age youngsters involved in a range of "Juniors" activities.

Watch for a report in the near future on how the Nottingham club recruits and maintains its junior members.



Three of Nottingham's nine courts get full use on a late September Tuesday.

International Championships & Canadian Representation

Celebrating Canadian players earning the opportunity to compete among the world's best

We are proud to recognize the players who have earned opportunities to compete on the world stage and represent Canadian croquet in upcoming international championships. Their selections, qualifications, and achievements reflect the depth of talent within our community and the dedication required to compete at the highest levels of the sport.

2026 GC World Championship

Egypt | November 2026

Congratulations to **Amr Hamdy** and **Hanan Rashad**, who have been selected to compete at the 2026 GC World Championship in Egypt.

We also celebrate the achievements of **Ahmed Alshurafa** and **Aly Radwan**, who have secured qualification places for the event. Aly will compete under the Egyptian flag (EGY), although he remains a familiar and valued member of the Canadian croquet community.

With many of the world's strongest players expected to attend, this promises to be an outstanding championship. We extend our best wishes to all four competitors as they prepare for this exciting challenge.

2027 AC World Championship

New Zealand | January 2027

A special congratulations goes to **Brian Cumming**, who has earned a coveted ranking-place entry into the 2027 AC World Championship. Securing a ranking spot is a significant accomplishment and reflects Brian's consistently strong performances at the highest levels of competition.

Congratulations also to **Mike Sully** and **Chris Percival-Smith**, who have been selected to fill Canada's membership positions for the championship. Serving as alternates are **Jane Beharriell** and **David Druiett**, who stand ready to represent Canada should a replacement be required.

The championship in New Zealand is certain to provide another stern international test, and we look forward to cheering on Canada's representatives as they compete against the world's best.

2027 GC Women's World Championship

Likely Egypt

While no expressions of interest have been received to date, we remain hopeful that Canadian representation will emerge as planning for the championship progresses. We will revisit this event as it draws nearer and encourage interested players to explore the opportunity.

2027 GC Over-60 World Championship

Likely England

Interest has already been expressed by several members, and we are optimistic that Canada will once again be represented on the international stage.

This championship carries a formidable challenge. Egypt has captured every title since 2010, when the event was contested as the Over-50 World Championship before evolving into its current Over-60 format. Canadian competitors who take part will have the opportunity to test their skills against one of the most successful programs in international croquet.

Looking Ahead

The next two years promise exciting opportunities for Canadian players to compete at the highest levels of world croquet. We congratulate all those who have earned selections, qualifications, and championship consideration, and we look forward to following their journeys with pride.

Good luck to all our players as they prepare to represent Canadian croquet on the world stage. We wish them every success and look forward to celebrating their achievements in the years ahead.

John Richardson (Edited by Gopal Gowda)

RENEWAL REMINDER

Croquet Canada memberships run from November 1 through October 31. Renew early to maintain uninterrupted benefits and eligibility

YOUR MEMBERSHIP AT WORK

Supporting Players, Clubs, and the Growth of Croquet Across Canada

Whether you're renewing your membership or considering joining for the first time, Croquet Canada membership offers valuable benefits while helping strengthen and grow our sport nationwide.

Benefits for Individual Members

- ✓ Receive The Mallet
- ✓ Compete in Croquet Canada Championships
- ✓ Qualify for Player of the Year awards
- ✓ Represent Canada internationally
- ✓ Vote on Croquet Canada matters
- ✓ Serve on the Board of Directors
- ✓ Accident insurance coverage

MEMBERSHIP AT A GLANCE

Membership Year

November 1 - October 31

Annual Fees

Individual: \$25

Student: \$10

Club: \$75

E-Transfer

treasurer@croquet.ca

DID YOU KNOW?

Croquet Canada helps new clubs purchase equipment and supports special initiatives at existing clubs that attract new players and grow participation.

Benefits for Member Clubs

- ✓ Host sanctioned tournaments
- ✓ Build national connections
- ✓ Club of the Year eligibility
- ✓ Liability insurance coverage

Growing the Sport

Membership fees help Croquet Canada:

- ✓ Assist new clubs with equipment purchases
- ✓ Support equipment for special club growth initiatives
- ✓ Promote croquet in new communities
- ✓ Support tournaments, rankings, awards, and national programs
- ✓ Maintain membership at WCF
- ✓ Support members at International events

Every membership helps grow the game.

JOIN OR RENEW TODAY

Membership Forms

✓ [Individual Member Application](#)

✓ [Club Member Application](#)

Email Applications To:

treasurer@croquet.ca

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING CROQUET IN CANADA

