



# THE STICKY WICKET

MID-SUMMER 2023



## Birth Of a Winning Idea: The Summer League 15 Years and Going Strong



Dick Brackett

Once upon a time some 15 years ago, after the annual snowbird migration north, NCC member and Hall of Famer **Dick Brackett** noted that NCC's 12 recently vacated grand green lawns cried out for players vigorously swinging mallets, scoring wickets, and just having a good old time. It occurred to Dick that the club could issue an invitation to non-members and to the local community to come play and see what the sport of croquet being played behind the tall, imposing hedges was all about. "The NCC gave me carte blanche to try new things which I did. Some hugely successful, some not," he says. Thus, was born the concept of an NCC Summer League.

The first two years there were 16 teams. Today, as many as 36 teams play once or twice each week for five weeks. Each team needs to have a compelling name, and at season's end the most creative name receives an award. Among the most memorable names - *Awww Good Try*, *Wicketpedia*, *Lawn Rangers*, *Summer Reign* and the 2022 winner, *With Mallets Aforethought*. Now that's clever! (Continues Page 3)

## On the Horizon: Zack Watson to Bring Highest Professionalism to NCC 2023-4, a Big Year for the Club

The big news for NCC is the arrival of **Zack Watson** as Head Pro starting in October. Zack, at age 35, who just two weeks ago finished in the final eight playoff games at the World AC championships in England, is also one of the best players in the country in Golf Croquet and American Rules. Zack aims to teach and inspire NC Club players at all levels to learn, improve, and play to win if interested in competing. Thanks to **David McCoy** and the **Croquet Foundation of America Board** for this very prestigious addition to the NCC.



"I'm incredibly excited to be joining the NCC community," Zack says. "The Center and its thriving Palm Beach County surroundings offer the best venue for croquet in the country. I hope to help NCC in its mission to promote and develop the sport and to help the resident National Croquet Club and its members to be the best they can be."

Zack joins **Dick Scherf**, our Resident Pro and all-important NCC stalwart, who continues to offer teaching opportunities for players from beginners to competitors.

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## NC Club President's Column



Tom Lindley

### It Might Be Summer, But It Sure Is Busy Here!

On June 12, the Club's members overwhelmingly adopted new Articles of Incorporation and new Bylaws. Ever since, many of us have been very busy implementing the changes.

Going forward, Club members will elect specific Club officers to staggered two-year terms. In this transitional year members will elect the President, the Treasurer and the Director At Large, each for a term of two years, and a Vice President and Secretary each for a term of one year. (Thereafter, in future years, only 2 or 3 of the officer positions will be up for election.) The slate of candidates will come to members from the Nominating Committee, which is now fully independent from the Board. That Committee's members are **Gerry Eubank, Bruce Hindin, Kathryn Robertson, John Strasser** (Chair), **Lynda Sudderberg, Stephen Tasker,** and **Allison Worthington,** and they are already hard at work. Any member desiring to be elected to an office must submit a nominating packet to the Committee. If the Committee's slate of candidates does not include a member who nevertheless still wants to run for office, she or he may petition to run for a specific office. Some details are in Article V of the Bylaws and some will be in procedures the Nominating Committee is now developing.

As for all our other committees, where much of the Club's work is accomplished, they are fully engaged. The new Bylaws extended their terms to June 30, 2024, and later this year the Board will create staggered two-year terms for their members. We really value the energy, commitment, and thought our committees provide.

We also have Task Forces that focus on specific projects on specific timelines. For example, this summer **Suzanne Turner** leads the effort, required by our new Bylaws, to draft operational policies, procedures and rules governing the Board's activities. (And the old Governance Handbook and old Committee Charters are being abolished because the new Bylaws and the new procedures will displace those outdated documents.)

Finally, despite all the work and the heat and rains, several of your Board members are still trying to improve how they play croquet. I got into this because I fell in love with croquet. Board work is important, but it takes time away from actually playing. So I end this by urging each of you to get out on the courts and have fun!

*Tom Lindley, President, NC Club Board of Directors*

## Croquet Round the World...

JAPAN, from **Sonia Alexandra** and **Francine Pellegrino**

Determined to find a croquet court in Japan, we found Showa Kinen Park, the one and only in Tokyo! **Mr M. Yamado** and **Mr. T. Ozawk,** were totally surprised to see us. In true Japanese hosting tradition, they were very welcoming and played a few games with us. It was a lovely experience.



SPAIN, from **Kelly Callahan** and **Frank Merschman**

Cartagena's primary sport is Futbol, That doesn't stop the locals from celebrating the old sport of croquet. As we began our exploration of the City, we came upon a group of locals dressed in vintage clothing, with wicker picnic baskets filled with wine, bread and cheese. The ladies and gents playing croquet on the town park lawn, while sipping wine. Ankle deep grass, wire wickets and colorful wooden mallets made charming way to spend a warm summer day in Spain!



## Summer League (Continuation from Page 1)

Croquet is the game, and fun and experience define its purpose. Dinners before and bar time after often make for a terrific evening. Competitive. Fiercely fun. New players sometimes become members. "We live in the area and love to try new things," said **Kris Hugo** and **Matt Myers** playing this year as Here for The Beer team. "We came to NCC, tried the sport, were hooked and signed up immediately."

This year the Summer League is trying out a novel concept called Player/Coaches. Created by members **Cami and Tate Russack**, a player can be assigned a coach who mentors participants while playing. The Russack's, proud winners of the Championship Block in 2022, started playing croquet in The Summer League as guests a mere five years ago.

"We came to play in the Summer League, and had so much fun we immediately joined the club. We loved the game, the people, the staff, the music and Christian's cocktail cart." Another veteran of five years of Summer League, **Marie Rittman** started playing in the Social Group and now plays in the Championship level "I love to socialize and have fun post matches with the crowd in the elegant NCC bar," she says.

The Summer League is half over. Stay tuned for winners and fun awards.

*Sheila Petersen*



Matt Myers &  
Kris Hugo



Dick Brackett & Stephen Tasker



Anne DeLisle & Tate Russack  
Player and Coach



Marie Rittman &  
Barbara Weltner



Lynn Foley, Bob Broadway, Nancy Sansalone,  
Meg Macy, Michael Todorovich



John Strasser  
& Franck Meunier



Christian & the "drinkmobile"

**"A community that is engaged and working together can be a powerful force"**  
-Idowu Koyenikan

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Snowbirds & Flamingos**  
 NOVEMBER 1 & 2, 2023



After an absence of two years, the ever fun and popular Snowbirds & Flamingos will gather once again on the lawns at the National Croquet Center. This **FRIEND/FUN-D-RAISER** over the past years has raised money to purchase items for the club used by all the players. The ambition for this Tournament is even bigger: raise enough money to name one of the new lawns *Snowbirds and Flamingos*. For tournament information or to inquire about donating or underwriting opportunities please contact: **Priscilla Flowers** 828-421-3543 or pmflowers375@gmail.com.

**And the rains came.**  
 Evening storms often water  
 the lawns in summer.  
 Good news for the bar!



**OUR NEW MEMBERS**

**The NC Club welcomes:**

Richard Alle, Jody Gill, Susan Langston,  
 Nick Logothetis, Bettina Mamone,  
 Timothy St. Onge, Marcos Rivera,

**Travel Rally Partner Award**

The National Croquet Center won the **Travel Rally Partner Award** presented by **ThePalmBeaches.com** at a large Awards Breakfast held at the Loggerhead Marinelife Center in Juno Beach last May. Congratulations to **Marie Sweetser** for her successful efforts in reaching out to the Palm Beach County community.

This recognition of the importance of the service the NCC provides for Tourism and the work we do to promote the sport of croquet and the Center itself was heartwarming.

Also to be congratulated are the many Club volunteers who make the visitors' experience of the sport at the Center so delightful and unique, and the **Sandy James Fine Food and Productions** staff, who make the dining and hospitality experience so special.

