

## Ealing Short Croquet Tournament

The second annual Croquet South East Short Croquet Teams Tournament took place at Ealing CC on Sunday 7th July.

Apart from an hour's heavy rain, which mercifully fell mostly during the lunch break, the weather was kind, and the courts played well. The hoops were mostly set fairly generously, although one hoop did require resetting after a ball wedged in it!

It is a great shame that more clubs within our Federation don't enter this enjoyable event, as Short Croquet, in addition to being a properly satisfying game in its own right, is an excellent introduction to match play for players who have grasped the rudiments of Association Croquet and are keen to exercise and develop their skills.

One club, who had entered the Tournament some months previously, unfortunately discovered they could not raise a team of four after all, so that left us with only three Federation clubs competing. However, we were pleased to welcome Reigate Priory and Merton, who had both played in the 2023 tournament, while Ealing fielded two teams. The Ealing Eagles comprised Sean Doherty, Emma Bowen-Doherty, Fred White-Overton and John Hutchinson, while the Falcons comprised Tony Elliott, Roger Mayhew, Lindy Jordan, David Graham and Ron Carter. The Falcons team had to be formed at short notice to replace the 'missing' club.

The tournament was played on six half-lawns, which accommodated six teams, so we also invited High Wycombe CC and were particularly happy to host a team from the new Gransden club, led and mentored by legendary coach Cliff Jones.

Everyone played four 14 point matches (with time limits of 75 minutes), a mixture of singles and doubles, two before lunch and two after. By mid-afternoon there was still all to play for in the fourth and final set of matches, with three teams (Ealing Eagles, High Wycombe and Reigate Priory) on 6 points and Ealing Falcons just one point behind. After the fourth round, Ealing Eagles and Reigate Priory were tied on 8 points, so the tie-break procedure was operated, which involved all players in the relevant teams shooting two balls from the boundary to run Hoop 1. It is kinder not to dwell on Ealing Eagles' performance here, so let's just say that Reigate ran out as convincing winners, taking home the small but perfectly formed trophy.

Everyone enjoyed the day, and we look forward to hosting the tournament again next year. We just hope to have more participation from other Croquet South East clubs. Big thanks to Roger and John for setting out the half-lawns, to Lindy for organising the catering and Carole for the trophy.

Tony Elliott