

Open Handicap One-Ball on 13 October 2024 for the Bingham Bowl

The process

A full entry of 16 played for the Bingham Bowl on a rather autumnal day close to the end of our front lawns season. A dry morning was followed by a shower in the afternoon with the sun making an occasional welcome appearance. One-Ball handicaps ranged from 0 to four players on 20 (all handicaps calculated using the recommended CE method that takes account of both AC and GC handicaps). As ever success depended on tactical nous, knowing when to attack and when to defend, how best to use bisques as well as the more obvious skills of roqueting the opponent, taking good positions and running hoops reliably. With matches of different duration, some finishing 7, others 8, the flexible Swiss format allowed the winner to be judged on percentage of wins to matches played.

The play

Hurlingham players were in the majority but at lunch with either 4 or 5 games played a strong Ealing contingent appeared to be in the ascendant. 8 players were on 3 wins and Margaret Page (Ealing) had won all 4. The manager arranged afternoon matches to ensure leaders played each other. It was still tight going into the last round, with at least 4 in contention. Ludolph van Hasselt (Hurlingham, 3), last year's winner and now more heavily handicapped, came 4th with 5/7. Tony Elliott (Ealing, 7) made the best break during the day but could only manage 3rd on 5/7 having earlier beaten Ludolph. David Horlock (Hurlingham), a complete One-Ball beginner and playing off 20 did very well to come 2nd with 6/8, but the overall winner was Mark Wellby (Hurlingham, 10), the 2022 winner, with 6/7, carrying all before him when it came to the last few crunch matches. All those on 4/7 and in 5th equal place deserve a mention: Yvonne Bottenheim (Hurlingham, 17.5), Michael Broadway (Enfield, 9 and as ever the smartest dresser!), and from Ealing: Simon Turner (6) and Margaret Page (12.5), the latter unable to sustain her morning heroics but definitely one to watch.

The conclusion

Tony presented the Bingham Bowl and glassware to winner Mark Wellby, and David Horlock received the runner's up glassware. All matches were played in a very good spirit and Tony was thanked for making it a well-run and most enjoyable tournament. The lawns played brilliantly as ever.

The event had been preceded by coaching for several of our members who had been encouraged to develop their one-ball skills or try this fascinating croquet variation for the first time. It was good to see them do well and we hope they will continue to enjoy this form of croquet and perhaps play or develop their AC. Hurlingham will hold a Friday morning fortnightly One-Ball roll-up during the winter and will welcome new as well as more experienced players.

Tony Bingham, Manager