

USCA NATIONALS - 1983

As our Canadian croquet community celebrates the recent ascendancy of Canadian croquet at the international level, it is interesting to look back exactly forty years to 1983, seemingly the first time Canada participated in an international croquet competition.

In early 1983, the Bayfield International Croquet Club (BICC) accepted an invitation to represent Canada at challenge matches to be held in conjunction with the week-long USCA National Championships and pitting the US against both Bermuda and Canada at Florida's Palm Beach Polo Club.

Joe Beechie, Lorne Cook, Fred Erb, Hugh Gregory and Joe Laudénbach were selected to represent not only BICC, but Canada!

Welcome to the 1983
POMMERY CHAMPAGNE PICNIC
and
INTERNATIONAL CROQUET EXHIBITION MATCHES

March 27, 1983
Palm Beach Polo & Country Club

Visiting distinguished International Croquet Champions have been paired with USCA Team Members and National Club Team Championship Flight competitors in one day exhibitions.

	10:30	
Dana Dribben USCA (P.B.P. & C.C.)	and	Colin Baxter Bermuda
	VS.	
Kiley Jones USCA (New York C.C.)	and	Joseph Laudénbach Canada
	VS.	
Stan Patmor USCA (Arizona)	and	Frederick Erb Canada
	VS.	
Jim Bast USCA (Arizona)	and	Lorne Cooke Canada
	VS.	
	12:30	
Jack R. Osborn USCA (New York C.C.)	and	Hugh Gregory Canada
	VS.	
John C. Osborn USCA (New York C.C.)	and	Nelga Young Bermuda
	VS.	
Teddy Prentis USCA (P.B.P. & C.C.)	and	Joseph Beechie Canada
	VS.	
Xandra Kayden USCA (Boston C.C.)	and	John Young Bermuda
	VS.	
	1:30	
G. Nigel Aspinall (London)	and	Ian Gillespie (South Africa)
	VS.	
J. Archie Peck USCA (Palm Beach C.C.)	and	Archie Burchfield USCA (Stamping Ground, Kentucky)

International Champions

EVENT PREPARATON

As the date approached, Gregory reported to the BICC membership that "our representatives are becoming a little uneasy with respect to our abilities to perform with at least a reasonable degree of efficiency". Perhaps in recognition of this, the hosts provided our team the coaching services of Nigel Aspinall from England, the perennial and reigning world champion. After all, they were competing against an intimidating US team with Soloman, Prentis, Bast, Burchfield, Peck and Patmor. Some of these names would no doubt have been recognizable to our team members.

TECHNICAL ISSUES RESOLVED

Apparently, the trip had quite a start when a disagreement flared between airline staff in Toronto and several BICC members concerning the transportation of the mallets, escalating to the point of threats of a lawsuit should any damage occur to instruments of such extreme precision and importance. It is unclear what means was eventually agreed upon.

Croquet Picnic and courtside luncheon at The Palm Beach Polo and Country Club (across from the Golf and Tennis Clubhouse). Admission to the matches is free, with the Sunday Pommery Picnic lunch available at \$15 per person.

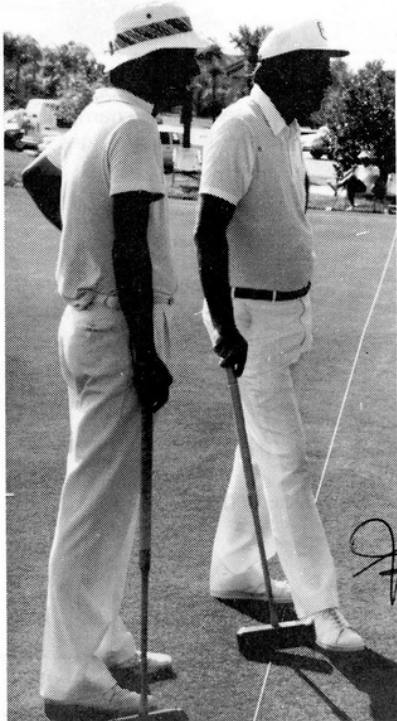
THE CANADIAN NATIONAL TEAM

The Canadian Croquet Association will cut its International Competitive teeth in this its first year by fielding a team from its cornerstone club, The Bayfield International Croquet Club of Ontario.

In its role as the focal point for the formation of its country's association, The Bayfield Club parallels the New York Croquet Club's efforts fifteen years ago with the USCA.

Affiliated with the Croquet Association of England, the Canadians play under their laws and have little or no experience with USCA rules but will be assisted in this part of the Challenge Cup matches by Nigel Aspinall, their guest player/coach.

The USCA looks forward to a long and friendly relationship with our northern neighbors and welcomes them warmly.



G. Nigel Aspinall JOSEPH LAUDENBACK
England



FREDRICK A. ERB



JOSEPH A. BEECHIE



LORNE C. COOK



HUGH A. GREGORY, Q. C.

Handwritten signature: Joseph Laudенback
Handwritten date: May 16/05



The Canadian and Bermuda teams are introduced during Pommery Champagne Picnic and Exhibition matches prior to the US International Challenge Cup.

HUGH GREGORY REMINISCES

In the early 2000's, when his croquet playing career had effectively waned, Hugh Gregory sat on the BICC sidelines at Foamy Acres and reminisced about the event that had occurred some twenty years earlier. He reflected on how team members had been the beneficiaries of exceptional hospitality, with accommodations provided and transportation including a driver at their disposal. Reasonably formal social activities were included as part of the overall event and kept them pleasantly occupied on a number of occasions.



Accommodations



Baseball

During breaks in their croquet and social obligations, they had also found time to attend a spring training game and a polo match.

As the event was winding down, in preparation for the last of these social activities, Beechie advised that he had learned that this party would be less formal and that, for once, wearing neckties would not be expected, only to later pull one from his pocket and put it on as they approached the venue. This was done much to the chagrin of other team members who, as a consequence of Joe's guidance, became the only tieless participants at the not so informal party.

The whole experience had been somewhat surreal. Going from a court in rural Huron County surrounded by a corn field to a formal international competition on pristine courts at an upscale Florida location represented a significant challenge, but a challenge for which BICC members felt themselves worthy. Since the creation of BICC almost a decade earlier, croquet had been played according to the Laws of Association Croquet, to the exclusion of the USCA rules game which was then dominating North American play. Since one phase of the competition was to feature the US game, BICC members would be at a distinct disadvantage. Cook's comment about not even knowing what "three ball dead" meant eventually became an often repeated humorous conversation piece and the stuff of BICC lore.



Pondering



Courtside

HOW DID THE BICC TEAM FARE?

The Canadian team played sixteen matches of various kinds and finished with an overall record of one win and fifteen losses. Our one win came when Joe Laudenbach and Nigel Aspinall (now elevated to the role of player-coach) were victorious in a doubles match against Ned and Ted Prentis. Otherwise, as can be seen from the detailed results, the Canadians were typically soundly defeated, with Cook and Erb losing 19-16 to Peck and Patmor in a doubles match being the closest result. However, the team felt the overall experience far outweighed their lack of success and considered their participation as a victory for BICC and Canadian croquet. The trip was always described glowingly.

A couple of years after Gregory's passing, Beechie was asked about two specific Gregory recollections and offered these terse comments. On the topic of the airport brouhaha, his comment was "We were half cut". Concerning the necktie fiasco, his comment was "Greg never forgave me for that".

So, as Canadian players embark on achieving even more success internationally, it can be both informative and entertaining to consider our roots.

Tough act to follow indeed!

1983 US INTERNATIONAL CROQUET CHALLENGE CUP

March 29 - April 3, 1983
Palm Beach Polo & Country Club

	USCA		INTERNATIONALS		USCA	INT.
Tues. (Beach Club) PBP&CC	E 9:00	K. Jones	vs.	H. Finsness (B)	26	7
	E 9:00	S. Patmor	vs.	J. Finsness (B)	4	15
	E 9:00	N. Prentis	vs.	J. Laudенbach (C)	15	6
	E 9:00	T. Prentis	vs.	F. Erb (C)	26	1
	E 10:30	A. Peck	vs.	L. Cook (C)	26	2
	E 10:30	J. Osborn	vs.	H. Gregory (C)	17	6
	E 12:00	J. Bast	vs.	J. Beechie (C)	26	2
	E 12:00	T. Prentis	vs.	N. Young (B)	9	15
	E 1:30	J. Bast	vs.	J. Young (B)	15	12
	E 1:30	N. Prentis	vs.	C. Baxter (B)	26	5
	A 3:00	A. Peck	vs.	J. Young (B)	9	26
	A 3:00	J. Osborn	vs.	N. Young (B)	24	12
	A 4:30	J. Bast	vs.	J. Finsness (B)	26	9
	A 4:30	K. Jones	vs.	H. Finsness (B)	26	2
Friday	A 9:00	N. Prentis	vs.	C. Baxter (B)	23	19
	A 9:00	A. Burchfield	vs.	J. Laudенbach (C)	26	13
	A 10:30	J. Bast	vs.	F. Erb (C)	26	4
	A 10:30	T. Prentis	vs.	L. Cook (C)	26	10
	A 12:00	J. Osborn	vs.	J. Beechie (C)	26	16
	A 12:00	A. Peck	vs.	H. Gregory (C)	26	9
	E 1:30	A. Peck-S. Patmor	vs.	N. Aspinall-C Baxter (B)	4	26
	E 1:30	J. Bast-A. Burchfield	vs.	John & Nelga Young (B)	26	4
	E 3:00	J. Osborn-K. Jones	vs.	Hal & Josi Finsness (B)	26	7
	E 3:00	Ned & Ted Prentis	vs.	N. Aspinall-J. Laudенbach (C)	2	17
	E 4:30	A. Peck-S. Patmor	vs.	L. Cook-F. Erb (C)	19	16
	E 4:30	J. Bast-A Burchfield	vs.	H. Gregory-J. Beechie (C)	26	1
Sunday	A 9:00-11:30	A. Peck-A. Burchfield	vs.	D. Prentis-J. Laudенbach (C)	26	12
	A 9:00-11:30	J. Osborn-J. Bast	vs.	H. Gregory-J. Beechie (C)	26	16
	A 11:30-1:00	K. Jones-N. Prentis	vs.	L. Cook-F. Erb (C)	25	10
	A 11:30-1:00	T. Prentis-S. Patmor	vs.	Young & Young (B)	22	19
	A 1:00-2:30	J. Osborn-J. Bast	vs.	N. Aspinall-C Baxter (B)	22	13
	A 1:00-2:30	A. Peck-A. Burchfield	vs.	John & Nelga Young (B)	20	21

Final Results

E - English Rules

B - Bermuda

USA - 11

Bermuda - 5

A - USCA Rules

C - Canada

USA - 15

Canada - 1