

Croquet Court Complete

Club Finishes Work On Tournament-Size Court At Sandwich Hollows

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Croquet has come to Sandwich Hollows Golf Club.

The Sandwich Croquet Club completed work earlier this month on a regulation tournament-sized court on the town-owned golf club, very near the clubhouse.

They had been using a smaller space at the golf club since last year. But for tournament play, they needed more space.

Measuring 105 feet by 84 feet, the newly completed court is large enough to be divided into two courses to accommodate eight players playing two separate games simultaneously. In the event of a tournament, however, the full size court will be used.

Before the croquet club arrived, the land where the court is located was unused by the town golf club. The golf club's director, John B. Johnson, had considered turning the land into another tee. But to clear it and get it ready for play would take a lot of work.

When the croquet club approached him with the idea for a croquet court, and offered to take care of all the work, Mr. Johnson jumped at the idea.

"Sandwich Hollows welcomed us with open arms," croquet club member William Day of Sagamore said. "We did all of the excavation work and clearing to make this a croquet course."

They finished the first court in time for play last year. The newly expanded court was just christened on September 8.

Mr. Day said his club plays two versions of the sport, American six-wicket, which can be complex in terms of rules, or golf croquet where the rules are a bit more straight forward. Like the game of golf, there are certain rules of etiquette that should be followed in croquet. For instance, players' uniforms should be all white, although the Sandwich Croquet Club will relax that particular rule and allow for other colors. On Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Day was donning a white shirt with blue shorts.

"I'm a bit of a rebel," he said.

In describing the sport, Mr. Day said, croquet is "a combination of golf, chess, and billiards," he said.

Calling the game "the thinking sport," because it requires both skill and strategy, Mr. Day said some of the best reasons for taking up this sport is that a person can learn to play it at any age and that it is not



Grace Day of Sagamore, a member of the Sandwich Croquet Club, takes a shot at the wicket during a game Tuesday afternoon at Sandwich Hollows Golf Club. The croquet club just finished work on a tournament-sized croquet court at the town-owned golf course.

discriminating, played by all members of the population, young and old, male and female.

"It does not require different leagues for men and women," he said.

Considered a social game, the sport of croquet has a long history. According to www.croquetamerica.com, croquet began in the British Isles and dates back to the mid-19th century. Although it quickly gained popularity in the United States, it suffered a bit of a set back in the 1890s when the Boston Clergy spoke out against the drinking, gambling, and other licentious behavior that was occurring on the Boston Common as a result of the sport.

While the game of backyard croquet was able to maintain its reputation as a wholesome pastime at family gatherings, picnics and outdoor barbecues throughout the 20th century, it was not until the 1970s that the more sophisticated and competitive game of six-wicket croquet, saw a resurgence in popularity.

Mr. Day was quick to point out that the competitive versions of croquet are very different from the backyard version. He said backyard croquet can be played on rough terrain and involves nine wickets along with lightweight and inexpensive equipment. In the competitive version, he said, the mallets are much heavier and more expensive, with one mallet costing as much as \$600.

The Sandwich Croquet Club does provide equipment for new members. The wickets, which are made of iron, are also different from the wire wickets found in the backyard equipment. Mr. Day's wife, Grace, pointed out that the iron wickets in the competitive style of the game provide only a quarter inch clearance for the ball to roll through, making it a bit more challenging than the backyard wickets.

Though the Sandwich Croquet Club now boasts 38 members, Mr. Day said he is always looking to recruit new members. To that end, the club offers three-hour clinics through the Sandwich Community School during the summer months in an effort to introduce the sport to people who have never played it before or may have only played the back-yard version. "We did get some members who joined as a result of the clinics," he said.

While most of the members of the Sandwich Croquet Club are retirees, Mr. Day said he would like to see younger people picking up the sport. His wife agreed. "We don't have many young people but we would love to reach out to that population," she said.

Mr. Day said the club members plan to play through the end of October, depending on the weather, and then shut down for the winter. "We'll start playing again in May," he said.

For more information about the club, the clinics, or to join the club, visit sandwichcroquet.com or e-mail the club at sandwichcroquet@gmail.com.



DON PARKINSON/ENTERPRISE

Members of the Sandwich Croquet Club play a game on their newly-completed field at Sandwich Hollows Golf Club. The croquet club funded all of the work necessary to create the playing surface, including clearing and grading the land.