

Swanage Croquet Club

AGM Report January 2024

League Secretary / Match Captains

- Handicap league matches.
 - As a result of the team's success in 2022 Swanage qualified to represent the South West Croquet Federation in the Federation Shield in 2023. This is a CA knockout competition between all the Federations in the country. We were drawn against Phyllis Court for our first match which was played at East Dorset; however it soon became apparent that the opposition were fielding an especially strong team (one of their player's handicap was -1) and we were well beaten.
 - In the handicap league we fared better winning two matches, losing two matches and drawing one; ending the season in third place in the section of 6 teams. It was extremely close between the top three teams and had we won one more match we probably would have won the section.
 - We were always able to field a strong team; however our inability to host home matches meant that all games were played away and often involved a drive in excess of two hours, which is a huge tactical disadvantage and inevitably had a bearing on our performance. To achieve third position given these difficulties is as good achievement, for which the players should be proud, and stands us in good stead for 2024.
- High Handicap league matches.
 - For the second successive year the Swanage High Handicap team won their section of the league with 4 wins from 4 matches. In 2022 they had lost in the playoff semi-final but in 2023 they went one better by winning the semi-final 11-9 against Taunton Deane in the first ever league match to be played at our new ground. However they then lost 8-12 to Llandaff in the final at a neutral ground, a match notable for the large imbalance of handicaps, meaning that Swanage conceded 53 extra turns and received just 4.
 - 9 people played in at least one match (including Helen in all of them). The outstanding individual result was that of Virginia with 21 wins from her 25 games.
 - A handicap reduction meant one player became ineligible mid-season and several others are heading in that direction so some new blood will be needed for 2024.
- External achievements.
 - Swanage members provided more than half of the East Dorset team that regained the Murphy Shield, having previously won it (also with Swanage contributions) in both 2019 and 2020. This is the second-tier national club KO competition run by the CA for teams of 4 with an aggregate handicap of at least 12. In this year's competition Keith and Sandra played in all four rounds and Tim in three.
 - East Dorset teams had a good season in the Southern Federation leagues. The A team, managed by Keith, won the open league and the B team, managed by Tim, were narrowly beaten into second place in the 3+ league.
- 2024 season.
 - The South West Federation has decided that all handicap leagues will remain with the extra turn format for 2024 rather than moving to Advantage Croquet. There are mixed views around the country about the relative merits of these two formats.
 - In 2024 Swanage will again play in both the Handicap and High Handicap leagues. There is a slight change of format in that each league will involve both home and away fixtures against each opposing team. The Handicap team will play Budleigh Salterton, Exeter and Taunton Deane; the High Handicap team will play East Dorset and Winterborne Valley. Swanage's 'home' matches will be played at home.