

A New Era in the Village Green Bocce League

by Bob Mills

Early on, at the January 12th Village Green Bocce League kick-off meeting, Vince and Maryann Botti welcomed us to the 2017 bocce season and provided team assignments. Then, loading us all onto a shiny new, but leaky ship, the **HMS Bocce Bawls**, they proceeded to push us offshore without a captain to lead us through the stormy seas of the season. Wayne and Terry Lloyd, our bocce program “captains” for the last eight years did not return this year. While weathering heavy storms -it rained hard enough to require use of the bilge pump to empty the bocce court only once during our six week season-, navigating lumpy seas, which rearranged some teams’ membership, and dodging unseen flying objects, bocce balls with no visible white lines, we wondered whether or not we could keep the **HMS Bocce Bawls** afloat for another season. However, we persevered –all hail the “The Spirit of Village Green Bocce”- and successfully brought the ship back to her home port of Naples on March 1st with the Italian flag flying smartly in the breeze. And what were our achievements? Every one of the fourteen teams, consisting of 56 players and numerous subs, which were launched on January 12th completed their six matches and seven teams, with two teams tied for the 6th playoff spot, were ready to start the Playoff Tournament on March 4th.

And the Champions are....



After the dust from the playoff games had settled, team #6, Dolphin, (seeded 3rd in the playoffs) had won three straight games and the championship against some outstanding competition. Congratulations to team members, Pete Breloff, Captain Janet Breloff, Bob Koch and Louise Koch. This is Janet’s and Pete’s second Championship along with a 3rd place finish in the last four years of Bocce Finals. This championship is Louise’s and Bob’s first. They also had a 2nd place finish in 2014.

And the runners up are:...



Well, it’s the same old 2nd place team, the Bob and Jackie connection, with yet another set of partners. This time it is first year players Al and Bernice Ulrich. Congratulations to Captain Jackie Finn, Bob Mills, Bernice and Al Ulrich for an exciting season with some great, (and some not so great) shots during the playoffs. The team was seeded 5th and was a surprise winner of two games against higher seeded teams before succumbing in the Finals. Maybe not such a surprise when you consider that Jackie and Bob with four different sets of partners, have been in the last four finals, with one championship and three 2nd place finishes in those four years.

History in the making!

Bocce has a rule that, at the end of any frame if there is a ball touching the pallino, the team owning that ball is awarded an extra point. Such touches have been called “Kisses” and there is usually a fair amount of hoopla in a game when one occurs. The rule has been in effect only the last two years and even though there has been a number of 5 point frames (2 for the Kiss and 3 more for the other three close balls of the same team), to our knowledge there have never been two balls touching the pallino simultaneously at the end of a frame at Village Green. However, this year, in two separate games late in February, two Double Kisses were documented and recorded for posterity.

1st Double Kiss at Village Green Bocce Game, Feb, 2017



Congratulations to Jackie Finn and Bernice Ulrich for the 1st Double Kiss and also to Vicky and John Denning for the 2nd Double Kiss. Now all we need is a Triple Kiss. Note: With the size pallino being used at Village Green it is physically not possible to have more than three full size bocce balls touching the pallino simultaneously. Sorry folks, once a Triple Kiss is achieved; no more history making Kisses can be recognized.

Founders of the Bocce community at Village Green

Usually Sports Award Night emphasizes team awards but since we are in a new era for the Bocce League we want to take the opportunity to recognize strong individual achievement as well. The game of bocce was introduced to Village Green in 2005 by a group of people affectionately called the “Italians.” They built a court, taught others how to play the game and in general nurtured the bocce community in its formative years. For that effort, which has touched literally hundreds of people’s lives over the last 12 years, we thank you, Anthony **Bellapigna**, **Umberto Bellini**, **Vince Botti**, **John Divivo**, **Sal Federrico**, **Frank Litterio**, **Elisseo Mazzona**, **Charlie Melazzo**, and **Dick Walley**. For giving us the opportunity to continue building the “Spirit of Village Green Bocce”, we thank you. A plaque recognizing this achievement was presented to six of the original nine members at the Sports Award Night, and can be viewed in the club house. Please stop by to take a look at it.

Individual Awards for Volunteer Service in 2017

Without Wayne and Terry around to facilitate our season, we had to rely on volunteers to handle such things as court grooming, refereeing, scheduling, being a sub, score keeping, painting stripes on bocce balls, cleaning the morning dew and daily dust from the chairs, and so on. We are indeed fortunate in the Village Green Bocce Community to have so many people willing and able to “man the oars” to keep the organization operating smoothly. To recognize this effort, community service awards -decorative paper weights- were given to **Gary Giltner, Pete Breloff, Bill Lacroix, Paul Zietlow, Vince and Maryann Botti, Larry Best, Pierre Arnold, Ray McLevish, and Bob Koch**. I am absolutely sure that there are many others who have done things for the betterment of the bocce community that should be publically recognized and I applaud every one of you, as well. We **ALL** thank you **ALL** -sounds a little circular but you get the idea, eh?-. As a community which survives, and even flourishes on, and from, each other, **THANK YOU!**

Village Green Bocce League Outstanding Service Award, 2017: Mike Rice



Service to our bocce community can be recognized easily. Look around for Mike Rice. When you find him on any given day he is probably doing something to benefit the community in which he lives, eats, plays, and socializes. Ask him to help you do something and he is there for you. Suggest that the bocce court needs a repair. In a short time he comes back to you and tells how he has fixed the problem. Tell him you need help grooming the court and he asks: “When”? Put up a schedule of games being played that day and he volunteers to referee one or more of them. Fix equipment, re-hang the door on the Bocce/Shuffleboard shack, get some sand for the court? All things Mike has willingly done to help. In addition he has subbed, has been a captain of his team, is an excellent player, back problems or not, and has been

responsible for leading the group of volunteer laborers (Frank Litterio, Joe Sheppick, Pete Breloff, Al Ulrich, Gary Giltner, Bil Lacroix, Paul Zietlow and others) to do a serious reconstruction of the bocce court framing, ball racks, and scoreboard. Next season the new walls will give players a consistent bounce and reflection angle because of the reconstruction. Mike Rice is an outstanding community oriented service leader. **Bravo Mike!** Congratulations on a well-deserved award



.Most Improved Players, Bocce 2017: Pierre and Maureen Arnold

Smiling faces and dramatically improved bocce playing talent! What more could you ask? Congratulations Pierre and Maureen!



Most Valuable Player Award, Bocce 2017: Janet Breloff

Athletic, intense (remember the face on the screen at the Sports Awards), and a leader. Add in bocce talent and you have the female MVP of 2017. Congratulations Janet!

Most Valuable Player Award, Bocce 2017: Bob Koch

Casual (walks up to the line and throws the ball within a second), quiet and unassuming, yet evokes instant fear in his opponents, (recall the dancing knees picture on the screen at the Sports Awards). Add in consistently accurate throws and you have a smiling Bocce Champion, and male MVP of 2017. Congratulations Bob!



2018 Bocce Season Registration

A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Clubhouse. Please register for next season **before** you leave for the summer. With plans afoot to work on the team assignments and schedules prior to January 1st 2018, you need to make sure to include all the information asked for on the sheet (particularly the contact information). Interested in volunteering to help in the operation of the League? Let us know on the sign-up sheet. Thanks.