

MASTER *of the* Mallet

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TOP RANKED CROQUET PRO & FORMER TENNIS
CHAMPION WAYNE DAVIES IS HOSTING
AN INTERNATIONAL CROQUET TOURNAMENT
AT THE WESTMOOR CLUB THIS AUGUST.



What is the key ingredient to winning as a professional athlete? Is it eating your Wheaties? Drinking Gatorade? If you ask Wayne Davies, it all boils down to a good pint of beer. A former world-champion “real” tennis player and currently a top-ranked croquet pro in the United States, fifty-nine-year-old Wayne Davies blames some of his early losses in his decorated sports career on an inability to relax. The cure, he discovered, was an ice cold brew the night before every match. “I was so thin and had such a high metabolism I could get a bit drunk on one pint,” Davies says with a

twinkle in his eye, “but it really relaxed me before a big match.” All jokes aside, the athlete chalks his successful career up to some very hard work and a penchant to learn everything there is to know about his chosen sports.

A native of Geelong, Australia, about fifty miles outside of Melbourne, Davies became one of the most decorated real tennis players in modern history. Also referred to as royal or court tennis, real tennis is the game from which lawn tennis was derived. Among his many accolades in the sport, Davies is a four-time world champion (1987, 1988, 1991 and 1993) and has won the Australian and

U.S. Opens once and nine times respectively. Although he was a strong athlete as a young man, Davies was injury prone and had to find a way to win on his own terms. “I’ve always been a frenetic player,” he says. “I beat people with my own style. Instead of going with the traditional methods of playing, I played with just brutal power and heavy cuts.”

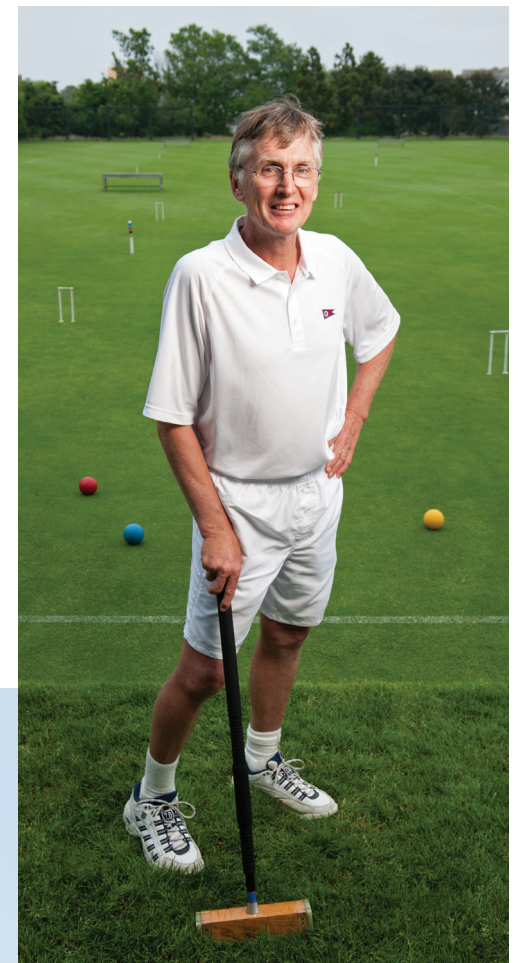
Now the founding sports director of The Westmoor Club here on Nantucket, Davies is in the process of organizing an international croquet match between the United States and Ireland to be held in late August as part of the tony Cliff Road club’s 10th anniversary sea-

son. Davies will also be playing in the tournament. Over the last eight years, Davies has become a top-ranked croquet player in the United States. His path to playing croquet, however, wasn’t an easy one.

After winning his last real tennis open in 1999, Davies suffered a debilitating injury that required surgery and forced him into retirement. He and his wife Beth had moved their family to Australia where he co-owned a tennis club and created a career in software in Sidney. Beth Davies has long ties with Nantucket, and when Wayne learned about the new Westmoor Club being built in 2004, he

applied for the job of sports director and became its first employee. His first assignment from developer and principal owner Graham Goldsmith was to learn to play croquet and be able to teach it to the club’s members.

“He told me to go down to West Palm Beach and learn how to play, and I wasn’t into it at all at first. But then I got down there and my teacher started talking about [Sun-Tzu’s] *The Art of War*,” he remembers. “This really piqued my interest as he talked about the immense psychological aspects of the game.” Davies continued to train in Florida for weeks, often playing ten hours a day or more. Just a



year later, he competed in his first national croquet championship and finished fifth.

“The other pros laugh at me, but my favorite aspect of the game is that psychological part. It doesn’t guarantee a win, but if you can force another player to do something, to make him make a mistake and set him up to fail, that’s a big part. As it is with many sports, the player with the best stroke doesn’t always win. It’s the one that does his homework, the one that knows the patterns and knows where to leave the ball that often wins. Croquet is weighted to the player with the most knowledge.”

As Davies gets ready to take on some of the best in Ireland (including the reigning national champion) with his fellow teammates representing the United States, he is excited for a return to competition. “And you can’t get a more beautiful venue than Westmoor and Nantucket,” he concluded.

Many of the matches during the four-day, Aug. 20–23 tournament will be open to the public. A program will be released closer to the event. Please email reception@thewestmoorclub.com for more information on attending. **N**