
2010 Boccia National Championships

(Chicago, IL) Three days of intense competition with more than 100 matches came to a conclusion Sunday, July 11 at the 2010 Blaze Sports America National Boccia Championships. Although the competition was dominated by veteran members of the National Team, this year's event including strong play by a number of young competitors.

The BCI Division was won by long-time US Team member and Paralympian TJ Hawker (OH) after six consecutive victory, outscoring his opponents 53 to 6. Andy Olvarez (KS) captured the silver, while Jennifer Jay (FL) won the bronze. Keith Haarmann (NY) and Cornelius Oatis (OH) both had strong showings, placing fourth and fifth respectively.

In the BC2 Division, AB Anwar (CA) defended his 2009 title with a strong win US Team member Brigid Mason (IL). Chris Sandoval (Chicago, IL) a young upstart representing the Rehab Institute of Chicago, won the bronze medal beating another new comer, Troy Berry of Rockford, IL, in a fifth end tie-breaker.

The BC3 division had the greatest number of competitors, but again play was dominated by National Team members. Austin Hanson (KS) defended his second consecutive national title by defeating Sam Williams (IL) in the finals and won a strategically played match 5 to 1. Lee Lobmeyer (KS) was tested in the bronze medal match by second year player Fawad Zakai (GA). Zakai scored 3 points in the fourth end to force a tie-breaker, but Lobmeyer's experience prevailed for the Bronze.

In Pairs play, the Pure Kansas team of Lee Lobmeyer and Austin Hanson led the field and beat the Nassau (NY) Thunderbolts Charlie Fleisch, Mark Paramadami and Howie Cohen for the gold. The "Gentlemen of Boccia" Sam Williams (IL) and Fad Zakai (GA) won the bronze with a shutout victory over the Rockford (IL) pairs of Chris Ballintyne and Diana Ballintyne.

The tournament concluded with Teams competition in which the Boccia Balls of Fire team of Jennifer Jay (FL), Rachel Altergolt (IL), Elaine Ballintyne (IL) and Brigid Mason (IL) outlasted the Rocking Power Warriors team of TJ Hawker (OH), Chris Ludwig (IL), Matt Hiltner (IL) and Jack Berti (IL) for the gold medal. The KC Power and Speed team of Andy Olivarez (KS), Troy Berry (KS), AB Anwar (CA) and Cornelius Oatis (OH) beat the won the bronze over the Nassau (NY) Thunderbolts team including Keith Haarmaan, Danny Dalton and Raphael DeJesus.

Special thanks to the Chicago Park District and World Sports Chicago for the efforts in hosting a great national championship. Thanks to all the volunteers and officials for a job well done!