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## Lincoln tournament to wave the flags for croquet players

By Gordon Johnson

Members of the granddaddy of croquet tournaments will host the 10th annual Flag Day open in Lincoln May 19 and 20.

The Lincoln tournament is called the granddaddy of croquet tournaments because it was the first one, said Bill Tesmer, alias Frenchie, a board of directors member.

About 200 people will attend the Flag Day open, with about 50 of those coming from Chicago, Denver or Kansas City, he said.

The same people who travel miles to play in the tournament will often go to other tournaments such as the Colorado Open, Tesmer said.

What started out in 1968 as a fraternal organization of Der Loaf und Stein bar has grown to national proportions, Tesmer said.

### Croquet enthusiasts

There is no organization which sponsors the tourney, Tesmer said. The tourney is organized by a board of directors which is made up of croquet enthusiasts, he said.

Like pool, Tesmer said, a circuit exists in which some players are well known for their croquet playing skill.

Lincoln, much like Minnesota, boasts a player of exceptional skill called Fat Dawg, alias Steve Hatten, Tesmer said.

Tesmer said he foresees the day when people may play croquet professionally.

"We have discussed at the board meeting in Kansas the possibility of bringing in cash prizes," Tesmer said. "If we did this I think people would follow croquet for the money."

However, for those interested in other things, wrist wrestling and volleyball are offered. Tesmer also said he expects an exhibition by a local skydiving club.

### Green fee

Players in the tourney are required to pay a green fee in order to play, he said.

Before play starts, Tesmer said, players are divided into flights of six players. Each flight receives instructions on the rules before the games begin.

In the years since the tourney's conception, many changes have taken place, he said. During the first tournaments, it was illegal to practice beforehand, Tesmer said.

Now, people have custom made clubs which they carry in attache cases, and practice well before the tourneys begin, he said, adding that the tournament even attracts some semi-pro golfers.

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