



Contact:

Michael Bentley
510.549.1645
info@norcalshinty.com
P.O. Box 8284
Berkeley CA 94707-8284
www.norcalshinty.com

Media:

- Interview opportunities are available with club members & founders upon request.
- Press kit available online, additional material available upon request – www.norcalshinty.com/media



Northern California Camanachd – A Decade of Firsts

Northern California Camanachd (NCC) is America's first and longest running shinty club! Based in the greater San Francisco Bay Area and playing the Scottish sport of shinty (camanachd is the Scots Gaelic name, pronounced *common-awk*), NCC has progressed by leaps and bounds in its first ten years. With three trips to Scotland, as well as the founding of a competitive league and dozens of appearances at local Highland Games, the club is taking awareness of shinty to the next level.

What is Shinty?

Shinty is a stick and ball game thought to be a direct ancestor of Golf and Ice Hockey and a cousin to Field Hockey and Irish Hurling. Historical evidence points to almost 2000 years of shinty in the Highlands of Scotland, and tales have the mythic heroes Cuchullin and Fionn MacCumhaill playing this most Gaelic of pastimes long before that. Traditionally part of New Year's celebrations throughout the Highlands, shinty is older than kilts by far. Today more than a hundred teams play the sport, from primary school through to Premier League.

Camanachd in California

In the 1980s a youth group with an interest in Scottish culture happened across a mention of shinty in a history book. The description captured their imagination and soon a selection of camans (the shinty stick) had been carved from curved branches and scrap wood. Without a set of the modern rules, the games had a very organic feel, but after a few members returned from Scotland with professionally made sticks and rulebooks the move was on to form a proper shinty club. After a circuitous route through two decades, three of the original shinty boys formally founded Northern California Camanachd in 2001.

In the decade since its founding, NCC has played in Scotland three times and hosted the Isle of Skye team in California, playing the first ever US-Scotland International matches both in the UK and the US. The list of firsts goes on to include founding the first US shinty league, first US shinty cup winner, and many other historic firsts. The club has fostered the development of other American teams and greater awareness of the sport. In 2008 and 2009 NCC players presented shinty in front of over 30,000 attendees at the Pleasanton Scottish Gathering and Games.

Come and play with us!

As the above history suggests, most of our early members came to shinty through an interest in Scottish culture and their own ancestry. Since then many members have been attracted purely on the basis of the sport itself, which is a mix of hand-eye coordination, field strategy and athletic fitness. In short, you don't have to be Scottish to play shinty! The NCC holds regular co-ed practices and welcomes anyone interested in learning this great Gaelic sport. Our league season runs from February to June, and we hold year around practices and new members are welcome any time. For further information and schedule please visit our website www.norcalshinty.com or email us at info@norcalshinty.com.