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In The Hack

SCHOONER CURLING CLUB NEWSLETTER



Volume 56

April 2014

April 8 th – 12 th	Closing Spiel
Sunday, April 13 th	Family Skating Party
Wednesday, April 16 th	Spring General Meeting
Saturday, April 26 th	Closing Banquet
June 2014	Schooner Golf Event and BBQ

NOTE: All dates are tentative and subject to change. Check the club website or bulletin board for changes and additions.

League Roundup



Regular season play wrapped up for all leagues and playoffs got underway in early March. The Men's league was the first to finish up and crown a champion. Taking the regular season title was the Gordie Cormier Rink with skip Gordie, mate Keith MacEachern, second George Plumridge and lead Mike Cormier. Mike Cormier was a late addition to the Gordie Cormier squad, replacing Walter Nichols at lead after the Holiday break. Playoffs began in the Men's league on the first Monday in March and were played in a round-robin format between the six teams. At the halfway point there were four of the six teams tied with identical records of 2-1. Regular season champ Gordie Cormier had suffered two losses but was still in contention. Going into the final week of play it was still undecided with five of the six teams having a chance to take the playoff championship. The Cal Thistle and John Bonaparte rinks each had three wins and 6 points but there were three teams close behind with 2 wins. The final night of play would determine a winner with 5 teams in contention. It was scheduled for March 31 but, unfortunately, it was postponed due to weather. Things will wrap up in early April when games are rescheduled. Check the Schooner website for results.

The Team Entry was the next league to be decided and things were very close. It came down to playing late season make-up games to determine a winner. In the end it was the Wally MacDonald rink claiming a come-from-behind victory against the Greg Ferguson rink in their last game to snatch the title away from the surging Wayne "Bull" Bonnell rink. Bonnell had an undefeated record in the second round of play in Team Entry but it wasn't enough to catch the upstart MacDonald who had opened up enough of a lead on Bonnell in round one and played well enough in round two to fend him off. Joining MacDonald in the victory was mate, Sid Murray, second Chris "Slugger" MacLeod and lead Walter Nichols. Making this win a little sweeter is the fact that it's MacDonald's rookie year at skip. It's no secret to anyone that MacDonald and Bonnell had a split at the end of last year, each going their own way after playing together for a couple of seasons. Both were hungry for victory to prove to the other that they were the stronger part of the previous team. While MacDonald may have won the regular season battle, Bonnell entered the playoffs hotter than any other team in the league and was looking to avenge losing the regular season crown by winning the league's playoff title. When round one ended in late March there were a few surprises in the Team Entry. Regular season champs the Wally MacDonald

rink, matched up in a division with Brian Laughlin, Ray Cameron and Darrell MacAulay, went winless in three games and failed to advance to the leagues title round. With MacDonald out of the picture it wound up that the three remaining rinks finished with identical 2-1 records and a draw to the button was required to break the deadlock. After the three skips made their shots it was the Ray Cameron rink and the Brian Laughlin rink advancing. In the other division made up of Bull Bonnell, Greg Ferguson, John Donovan and Abbie Boudreau, the Bonnell rink, red hot moving into the playoffs, quickly cooled off and could only muster a 1-2 record, not good enough to advance. Bonnell needed a victory against the Abbie Boudreau rink, a team who struggled this season in Team Entry and finished at the bottom of the standings, in the final round one game but it was Boudreau who was victorious and played the role of spoiler to end Bonnell's hope for a playoff title. The John Donovan rink, a team who had been around the top of the standings for a lot of the regular season before falling off at the end, was able to defeat Greg Ferguson and earn themselves a spot in the championship round. Ferguson also advanced with a 2-1 record, having won his first two games, one of which was against Bonnell. For Ferguson this was a turnaround of his season as he also struggled in the regular campaign but has seemed to find his form in the playoffs. Round two got underway late in March with Ray Cameron, Brian Laughlin, Greg Ferguson and John Donovan all in contention for the Team Entry playoff crown. The single knock out format saw Cameron take on Ferguson and Brian Laughlin take on John Donovan with the winners of each game facing off for the overall title. In the first game it was the Ray Cameron rink that was victorious over the Ferguson squad and they moved on to the final game where they will face the Brian Laughlin rink who was also victorious, defeating the John Donovan rink. The final game in this year's Team Entry League is scheduled to be played at 2:00 pm on Sunday, April 6th. Final results will be posted on the Schooner website. In the Mixed League it was Gordie Cormier who took his team to first place, his second top finish in league play for the season. Aiding Cormier was mate Sid Murray, who also garnered his second league title for the season having already won in Team Entry with the Wally MacDonald rink, Mary Foley at second and Debbie Murray playing lead. Cormier had a chance to lock up first in his last game of the season when he played Darrell MacAulay who sat one point behind in second place. Cormier lost that game to MacAulay who then leap-frogged past him into first place. Make-up games would come into play and, due to a lack of time, it turned out that these games would have to be decided by a draw to the button. Cormier had one makeup game against the Greg Ferguson rink in which he ended up victorious when he out drew Ferguson to the button to claim victory and again vault himself into first place. The only rink that had a chance to overtake Cormier was the Brian Laughlin rink who had two makeup games in hand and could end up in first by one point if they could win both, again to be decided with draws to the button. In his first matchup against Wayne "Bull" Bonnell, Laughlin drew a little heavy and went through the rings, leaving Bonnell the chance to win and end Laughlin's championship hopes by just getting a piece of the paint. The veteran Bonnell would not be denied his chance to play spoiler and drew his rock calmly into the eight foot to take the win and end Laughlin's bid to be league champ. Draw master Cal Thistle says he regrets having to decide games this way, especially when they determine league winners, but, with all of the bad weather and cancellations this season, time constraints in getting all of the make-up games played forced this not so ideal course of action. Playoffs had already gotten underway in the mixed even before the crowning of the league's schedule winner. Again in a round robin format, this time with four divisions

with winners of each advancing to the championship round with a single knockout format. Getting through and playing for the league playoff championship in the mixed was Gordie Cormier, regular season champ, who will face Cal Thistle, undefeated in his division of three teams, in one game and the other game will have the John Bonaparte rink who really turned it on in the playoffs so far and went undefeated in round one against another team who really turned their season around in the playoffs, the Thomas Drover rink. The winners of these games, being played early in April, will face off for the league title. Final results will be posted on the Schooner website. Here is a wrap up of the Junior League who had a great 2013-14 season (submitted by Nadine Neima-Drover) - The year is wrapping up for our junior curlers, and what a year it was!! We welcomed 2 new curlers this year and started with our first "full junior" membership. The full junior membership is open to high school aged junior curlers, at the coaches' discretion, to curl in the adult leagues for experience and skill building. One of our juniors took part in this initiative and found it was a great success as she was able to gain some truly valuable experience, while learning from some of our long-standing members.

There were 4 junior spiels on the island this year, and our kids competed in all of them. They represented our club with maturity and sportsmanship. Our coaches were very proud! We travelled to Baddeck and Port Hawkesbury, and 2 spiels were held at the Sydney club; one was co-hosted by Schooner. The spiel that was co-hosted by Schooner was held in February and all of our attending parents brought food, and our coaches held a floor curling event to keep some of the younger family members entertained and introduce them to the sport of curling. We thank the CBRM curling association for allowing us to use the equipment.

The programming itself underwent some fine tuning, as 5 of our coaches became certified "Club Coaches" in December, attending a weekend seminar hosted by Dave MacRae from the provincial curling association. We instituted some fun training aids which included games and skill building exercises, allowing us to work on the fundamental movements of our sport. I think all kids will agree these games were a ton of fun!

In closing, I would like to thank all of our junior curlers and their parents for supporting the Schooner Curling Club and getting out this winter to enjoy one of Canada's finest pastimes! A big thanks to the other members of our club for their ongoing support of our program as well! Well done, Juniors and Little Rockers!! Can't wait to see you all again next year!!



Coors fun nights are done for another season and, although they were a little slow to get going this year, finished the season off with a bang as both the February and March fun nights were big successes. The club would like to thank everyone who attended these events this season and we hope that you all had fun and will consider returning next year. We would also like to send out a big thank you to Abbie and Robina Boudreau who were back again to coordinate and run the fun nights throughout the season. As always, you did a great job. Abbie and Robina have stated that they may be giving up the Coors nights next season and, if they do, will surely be missed. We would also like to send a thank you out to Dave MacMullin and the Coors Light Brewing Company who have sponsored our fun nights for a number of years now. Coors are a big supporter of our club, not only sponsoring all of the fun nights but also the Coors Fun Spiel that has been a regular event at the club for a number of years and was played this season in late March. Thanks to everyone who helped out and participated this year and we hope to see you all again next season.

Blarney Stone Spiel

The annual Blarney Stone Women's Spiel was held in the Baddeck Curling Club March 15th and 16th. Schooner was once again well represented when twelve curlers comprising three teams from the club got their Irish on and sported the Schooner colors which, at least for this weekend, were some shade of green. Lynnette Chiasson, Jolene MacLellan, Laura Rafuse, Charlene Kokocki, Lynn Kelly, Mary Foley, Yvonne Donovan, Janet Gallivan, Amy MacPherson, Nadine Neima-Drover, Georgette Sparkes and Amy Sparkes all made the trip to play in the Blarney Stone. The ladies put on a good show and had some success on the weekend. We would like to thank you all for representing the club proudly. There are a few pictures on the club website that you can check out.

Inter-Club Curling

The final inter-club curling event of the season, scheduled for March 14th, was cancelled. The cancellation of this event along with others dropped the number of events that actually happened to three from what was originally supposed to be six, one held each month of the season. One of the three was a scaled back event that was held only on two sheets at the Schooner. Scheduling conflicts and trouble generating interest in some months forced the reduction in the frequency. These inter-club events were initiated by the CBRM Curling Association and were meant to be a building block in bringing the two local curling clubs, Sydney and Schooner, closer together and help facilitate and smooth the eventual amalgamation of the two clubs. Overall, inter-club curling, although more infrequent than hoped, was somewhat of a success for the CBRMCA as it saw many members from both clubs take part and enjoy themselves. We can expect to see more such events and more out of the CBRMCA in the future as aging facilities and dwindling CBRM population will put more pressure on both clubs to come together as one. This is, of course, still a plan for the future and will be a few years before we see it come to fruition I'm sure. In the interim, it will be business as usual at both curling facilities but you should keep an eye open for upcoming CBRMCA events over the summer and into the next curling season.

Coors Spiel Results

The Annual Coors Light Fun Spiel was held at the club March 28th and 29th. This year there were 32 curlers making up 8 teams that took part in the weekend event that was again sponsored this year by the Coors Light Brewing Company. All prizes for the spiel are donated by Coors so 100% of money raised went into the club. We would like to extend our thanks to Dave MacMullin of Coors and to the Coors Light brewing company for their continued support and also thanks to Abbie Boudreau who coordinated the prize donation from Coors with Mr. MacMullin.

This year the spiel took a slightly different twist as curlers could enter as teams, as skip/mate, as single entry or pretty much any combination you can think of. This made for some good competition and some juggling by bonspiel chair Kelley Laughlin who did a good job to keep things fair and made sure everyone was competitive. And while the numbers for this spiel were down a little from previous years, the level of fun had by all who participated certainly was not. All curlers were given three, six-end games, one Friday evening and two on Saturday and there was some great curling and, as mentioned, lots of fun had by all. Curlers were treated to pizza on Saturday purchased by the club from club sign sponsor Kenny's Pizza. In the end, first place wasn't decided until the final end of the final game. Going into that game, the Cal Thistle rink held first spot but the Thomas Drover rink was taking the ice with a chance to overtake them. Drover needed to win the game and claim five

out of six ends to be victorious and claim their second spiel victory in as many weeks as they were just coming off winning the "D" division on the Moosehead Mixed Spiel at the Sydney Curling Club the week before. The Drover rink was taking on the Laura Rafuse rink who had rebounded from a Friday night loss with a big victory earlier that afternoon and were in the hunt for a top three finish if they could come out with a victory. Drover was also coming into the game on a high note having won a decisive victory on Friday, winning five of six ends, and then defeating a strong Brian Laughlin rink on Saturday afternoon. The Rafuse rink won the first end and took an early lead but the Drover rink came storming back, winning the next four ends and needed only one more end to take first place. It was not to be for the Drover foursome as the Rafuse rink played spoiler, winning the last end and relegating the Drover rink to second behind Thistle by just half a point. A great finish to a great weekend. Joining Skip Cal Thistle in victory was mate Tom Drover Sr., second Eric Boutilier and lead Donnie Boutilier. Joining skip Thomas Drover in second place was mate Matt MacPherson, second Amy MacPherson and lead Nadine Neima-Drover. Third place was taken by the Wayne "Bull" Bonnell rink with skip Bonnell, mate Rick Windsor, second Eilleen Bonnell and lead Amanda Windsor. Congratulations to you all. Full results are available on the website under 'spiels and events'. Thank you to all who participated, bonspiel Chair Kelley Laughlin for all the work you put in to organize and run this spiel, and also to everyone else who helped out in any way to make the 2014 Coors Spiel another great success at the Schooner.

Closing Spiel

The closing spiel, the last curling event of the 2013-14 season, will be held from April 8-12 at the club. Curlers have a choice of curling Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday or Wednesday/Friday/Saturday. Signup sheets are at the club and entry is \$20 per player for three six-end games. Prize presentations will follow curling on Saturday and then there will be a dance at the club with music provided by DJ Jimmy. Plan to attend and bring your friends.

Moosehead Mixed Spiel

Congratulations to the Thomas Drover rink for winning the "D" division title at the annual Moosehead Mixed Spiel held at the Sydney Curling Club from March 21-23. Thomas was joined in victory by mate Amy MacPherson, second Matt MacPherson and lead Nadine Neima-Drover. Also having some success at the spiel was the Wayne "Bull" Bonnell rink who sported a 2-1 record in the top "A" division but lost in a semi final against a strong team out of the Sydney Club skipped by Fred Gillis. A win in that game would have moved Bonnell into the "A" final. Joining Bonnell on the weekend was mate Eilleen Bonnell, second Rick Windsor and lead Amanda Windsor. Also representing the Schooner Club at the Moosehead were Brian Laughlin, Gordie Cormier, Kelley Laughlin and Elaine Arseneau, Cal and Barb Thistle and Sid and Debby Murray and Wally MacDonald, Lynn Kelly, Chris "Slugger" MacLeod and Janet Gallivan. Thank you all for a fine showing and congratulations again to the Drover rink.

Club Elections

Anyone wishing to sign on for the 2014-15 season in any club executive or committee position are reminded that they can sign up at the club. All positions are up for grabs, even those where the current position holder is reoffering and, in the event there is more than one person vying for a position, elections will be held at the spring general meeting to decide who will get that position.

Spring General Meeting

All members are reminded that the spring general meeting will be held at the club on Wednesday, April 16th, starting at 7:00 pm. The meeting is open to both current Schooner members and the general public. Only club members will have the right to vote on motions and/or in the club elections. Everyone is strongly encouraged to attend as there will be discussions on the past season as well as discussion and decisions on topics that will affect the future of the club. If required, any elections for club executive positions or committee heads will also be held at the meeting. We hope for a good turnout to help shape the future of the club.

Skating Party

Once the final rocks are thrown in the 2013-14 season and we have curled our last ends, the Schooner ice will be opened up for a much different activity, the annual end of season skate. Schooner members are invited to the club and to bring their kids, grandkids or whoever they want to take a skate on the Schooner ice. There will be snacks and treats for everyone as well. The fun goes from 2-4 pm so come on out and take part in the Schooner's last on-ice event of the season.

649 Fund Raiser

The club began another 649 fund raiser in late March to take the place of our usual spaghetti dinner project that was cancelled this year when Tommy Young stopped doing the cooking. The executive decided to follow this path instead of seeking out another way to run the spaghetti dinners given that the 649 event that was run in the fall was pretty successful and generated over \$650. The hope was that more members would participate and the clubs share of the 50/50 prize would be larger. The entries are in and the sales are roughly \$400 more than the fall 649 with a prize in excess of \$800. Thank you to everyone who participated. A results sheet is posted on the club website and will be updated after each 649 draw so you can track your progress. Good luck!

Closing Banquet and Dance



The Schooner Club's annual Closing Banquet will be held this year on Saturday, April 26th. The venue, as it was last year, will again be the Sydney Pensioner's club on the corner of Prince and Inglis Streets. This allows more room for guests and less hassle for those organizing the banquet as they don't have to decorate, organize seating or clean up. This year's meal will be roast beef. Things get rolling from 6-7 pm with cocktail hour, dinner will be at 7:00 pm followed by prize presentations. Dancing will begin at 9:00 pm with music being provided by DJ Jimmy. All members are asked to register at the Schooner bar and pay a \$10 deposit that will be refunded the night of the banquet. If you plan to bring a guest to dinner the cost is \$12 and they should also be registered ahead of time. So make plans to attend the Schooner Closing Banquet and party with your Schooner friends one last time to end the 2013-2014 season off with a bang.

New Club Brooms

Most curlers have noticed by now that the club is the proud owner of new brooms. The new equipment is made possible by a grant that the club was part of on account of our affiliation with the CB Curlers Association and the Sydney Curling Club. The Schooner executive wanted to get good quality brooms for the club so they went with the Goldline brooms for their light weight, durability and easily changed pad. All members who use these brooms are asked to take care with them and to clean the pad before and after each game. Your cooperation with this will ensure long life for the new brooms and better quality and cleaner ice to curl on.

End of Another Year

While I sit here and finish the final newsletter of the 2013-14, I look out the window and see heavy snow, ice pellets, freezing rain, the worst winter has to offer. Not really the scene one would expect when talking about the end of a curling season. Although the calendar says April it looks more like early February outside and feels like we should be talking about the heart of the curling season when we get ready for lots of spiels and lots more league play. The reality is that it is April and we are very near the end of another curling year. And, overall, another good year at the Schooner. A few bumps in the road as always. We had three or four power failures this year but were able to save the ice each time. There were lots of cancellations due to weather but games were made up, there were a few leaky pipes that needed patching and one or two unwanted critters that invaded our club but everything was resolved and we moved on. Just as we always do. This season was one that will be remembered as the beginning of a potentially big change to the curling landscape in the CBRM as we saw the start of inter-club play between our club and Sydney. The CBRM Curlers Association has been formed to try and bring the two clubs together into one new facility and this was one of the first attempts to start that process. Success of inter-club curling was undetermined as there were many cancelled and scaled back events through the year but the events that were held were enjoyed by all who took part. Only time will tell if the Association will find success in bringing the two memberships together and forming one big club, an eventuality that may not be very popular among curlers in either club but may be a necessity when aging infrastructure and other factors force that situation upon us if we want to continue to curl. The Schooner Club lives on for now and that is mainly due to the strength of its members and their willingness to keep the club alive. Volunteers are the heart of the Schooner Club and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helps out in any way. I would like to thank the Schooner executive for all of the work they do, much of which is not seen but is very important in the day to day running of the club. Of course, the ice crew, who work countless hours and were pressed into emergency service a number of times during the season when power went out to the club and shut down our ice plant. We all curl on the ice but it's not until you are involved with making and maintaining it that you realize the huge effort it requires. Congratulations and thank you to the Junior program coordinators and volunteers who have not only maintained the program but have grown and expanded it to make it better each season. Then there's the bar steward, housekeeping, draw master, spiel coordinator, membership coordinator, Coors night and the list goes on. All jobs that are essential to the operation of our club and take up countless hours of time that many of us are not aware of. Thank you all. Lastly I would like to thank the everyday volunteers at the club, those that don't have a set position but offer up their time whenever required. The people who pitch in to serve food and snacks at the spiels, the people who pitch in to work the bar, the people who pitch in to decorate the club for just about every season, the people who get their hands dirty doing repairs, all of whom are very important and deserve our thanks. Even the members who participate in the snowball and other fundraising efforts play an important part. Thank you. Now our season is almost done and we look forward to the closing spiel to finish our curling year and the closing banquet so we can party with our Schooner friends one more time. I want to wish everyone a wonderful summer and I hope to see you all back at the Schooner Club next year for another great season of curling and fun. Take care everyone. *Bill*