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In The Hack

SCHOONER CURLING CLUB NEWSLETTER



Volume 80

December 2017

December 5-9	Turkey Spiel
Thursday, December 21	Last League Play before Holidays
Friday, December 22	Christmas Break Begins
Thursday, January 4th	Curling Resumes - Men's League
Saturday, January 6th	Junior Curling Resumes
Saturday, January 6th	Mid-Season Meeting and Wine and Cheese Social
Sunday, January 7	League Play Resumes
January 12-13	2 on 2 Spiel
January 19-20	Club Championship (Traveler's Playoff)
Saturday, January 27	Schooner Fun Night
January 26-28	Ship Hector - New Glasgow
February 9-10	Sweetheart Spiel
February 16-18	Schooner Open Cash Spiel
Saturday, February 24	Fun Night
Saturday, March 3	Fun Night
March 8-11	Traveler's Championship (Sydney CC)
March 20-24	Schooner Fun Spiel
Saturday, March 31	Junior Program Easter Party
April 6-7	2 on 2 Spiel
Saturday, April 14	Junior Program Closing Party
April 24-28	Schooner Closing Spiel
Sunday, April 29	Skating Party
Saturday, May 12	Schooner Closing Banquet

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

League Play



League play got underway in November and is in full swing now. The Don Cherry's Team Entry league got the season going and is sporting pretty much the same ten teams that competed last year with a few minor changes in personnel on a few of them. Wally MacDonald lost lead Anthony Boudreau who aided them to a playoff championship last season. Boudreau could not return do to work commitments. Dave Boudreau has joined the MacDonald rink as lead. The Gordie Cormier rink has added new Schooner member Kevin Gouthro to replace Rob Agnew. Gouthro started at the second spot but has recently been doing Mate duties with Stephen Leslie filling the second position. The Chris 'Slugger' MacLeod has a new lead in Matt Tubrett, replacing Jeff Steele and Omar Roach also added a new lead in Justin Humphrey who takes Matt MacPherson's place. The biggest change in a team, and you could almost call them a new team, is the one that transitioned from the Martin Campbell rink to the Russell Fitzgerald rink. Martin decided not to commit to Sunday curling this season and it looked like the team would not compete when Kristal Coffin also did not return. Fitzgerald and last year's second, Samantha Campbell, added Julia Cormier and new member Brandon MacSween to the roster to compete on Sunday.

The big story from Team Entry so far is of two teams, the Wally MacDonald rink and the Chris 'Slugger' MacLeod rink, one who is on the way up and one who is on the way down. Last season could only be described as mediocre for MacLeod who finished with a losing record and tied for second last in the competitive Sunday league. This year, the story is much different so far with MacLeod being one of two undefeated teams in the league and sitting in first place overall after a month of play. Omar Roach is also undefeated but has one less game played. MacLeod's team is playing well at all positions and have shown a lot more discipline in their shot selections and improvement in their shot making. MacLeod himself, who missed the first two games of the season, is showing no ill effect from the late start and is curling very well as was evident in a recent win against the Greg Ferguson rink. MacLeod drew to the button against two to take a single point in the seventh end of a tied game and then made two great shots in the eighth to steal and solidify the win. In another win they embarrassed the strong Gordie Cormier rink in a shortened game. If this strong play can continue, MacLeod will be vying for the Team Entry title this season for sure.

On the other hand, the Wally MacDonald rink could not have gotten off to a worse start. They are currently the only Sunday team without a victory and things aren't going to get any easier for them. They play their first game in December against the undefeated MacLeod rink, a game that could breathe life into MacDonald's season if he wins or a game that could put MacDonald out of title contention at a very early juncture of the season. MacLeod has already defeated MacDonald in an exhibition match, erasing a seven point deficit and winning in an extra end. No one would have predicted this abysmal start for skip MacDonald who is normally one of the top teams in this league, having finished tied for second in last year's regular season before taking the playoff title and having won either the regular season or playoffs in the four previous years, taking both of them one year. Along with facing MacLeod early in December, MacDonald also has a number of difficult challenges ahead in round one with games against strong rinks like Gordie Cormier, Brian Laughlin and Omar Roach. Don't count MacDonald out just yet as we have seen how well his team can play in the past but, if he can't muster up wins against the top teams now, he will have to wait for the playoffs to see if he can extend his title streak to five years because the regular season will slip away.

Along with MacLeod and Roach, other teams with a good start in the Team Entry are the Brian Laughlin rink, the Cormier rink, the Ferguson rink and the Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell rink who all have two wins. Bonnell rebounded from a week one annihilation at the hands of the Laughlin rink that stretched the limits of the score board even after only a few ends but has figured things out quickly and has won the last two weeks. Given the number of teams who are grouped closely at this early point in the season it looks like there will be a few teams vying for the league title this year.

The Cape Breton Beverages Pepsi Mixed League was the second league to begin play and sees another year with twelve teams taking part. This is a perfect number for the league as it allows us to avoid a late draw on any evening unless there are outside circumstances. After a trial run last year that was very popular, the Mixed League will once again play two regular seasons as opposed to one and a playoff. There will be a round robin played in the first half with a winner being crowned, then teams will be remade and a second round will begin. There is good parity among the teams in this league and no one has come out as the obvious favorite after the first month of play. The Old Triangle Men's League is also underway again this year and is, again, a very competitive league with many good teams. Parity is also evident here as all teams

have points on the board and there have already been four ties registered in the first month of play. The Keith MacEachern rink is the only undefeated team but owns two of the four ties, keeping them close to second place rinks Gordie Cormier and Sid Murray who are just one point behind. Even this early in the season it's safe to say that the Men's League will be close all year and the winner won't be decided until very late in the schedule. At this point, any team in that league can win.

The Schooner Junior Program started up for the season on Saturday, November 18, with a hugely successful orientation and fun day that was free for kids who wanted to come and try curling. A large number of kids showed up included a few international students that are attending high school in Cape Breton for the year. While everyone who attended the first day didn't join, numbers are up in the Junior Program and that's great news. The Juniors have also been running a fundraiser again this year in partnership with the Cape Breton Fudge Company. They were selling a variety of gift-boxed fudge and a part of the sale was kept by the program. While the fundraiser was still going on until December 2nd, junior coordinator Nadine Neima-Drover said that early sales looked good and was optimistic that the sale would be very successful, much like the one they had done two seasons ago. The Junior Program takes the ice on Saturday afternoons at the club but sometimes does make up practices on Sunday if there are club events on Saturday such as spiels. They also have attended spiels in Port Hawkesbury and at the Sydney Curling Club in past seasons and will likely do so again this year. It's been a fantastic start and we wish them great success for the coming season.



Opening Spiel Wrap-up

The Stephen's Rona Opening Spiel was held at the club from October 30 to November 5 with a break in curling on Halloween. A total of twelve teams took part in the first curling event of the season, six teams on the Monday/Thursday/Saturday division and six in the Wednesday/Friday/Saturday division. This was the first spiel that was handled by the newly appointed Bonspiel Committee and they did a great job as was evident by the competitive games and the close finish at the end by a number of teams. The Wally MacDonald rink took top spot in the event with a total of thirty points but only three and a half points separated teams that finished second through seventh, many of the spots being decided by plus minus and some where a very slim margin. Keith MacEachern took the runner up spot with 27.5 points and Stephen Leslie came third with 27. Joining Wally in the champions spot was Lonnie Howe, Kathy Gale and Janet Gallivan. Keith had Kevin Gouthro, Julia Cormier and Georgette Sparkes with him in second and Stephen Leslie was joined by Mike Cormier, Lynn Kelly and Chris Webb. Cal Thistle and Richard Lorway finished tied with 26 points but Thistle edged his way into fourth spot with a +5 while Lorway only had a +3 to earn fifth place honors. Cal was joined by Barb Thistle, Bryant Cormier and Marg Kingsbury while Richard had Cheryl MacKinnon, Todd MacAulay and Steve Jurcina aiding him.

Thank you to everyone who took part, especially those joining us for the first time. Four of those curlers, Kevin Gouthro, Marg Kingsbury, Maureen Smith and Bob Smith, have all joined us as members for the season.

A big thank you to the newly formed Bonspiel Committee who did a great job with their inaugural event. Thanks to the bartenders, the ice crew, the housekeeping committee and to everyone else who helped to make this first event of the 2017-18 season a big success. A special thank you to Frances Ford and Lynn Kelly for the

Fun Nights

delicious soup they each made on Saturday. Lastly, thank you to our sponsor, Stephen's Rona, for their continuing support of this event and of the Schooner Club. Without the support of community minded businesses who support our club, we would not be able to thrive as we do.

The first Fun Night of the season was held on Saturday, November 24 and was a great success. There were approximately 40-50 people who attended throughout the evening and everyone who was there had a great time. Nadine Neima-Drover and Thomas Drover were on hand early to give new curlers a quick lesson and curling went on all evening with games going past 11:00pm. There was lots of delicious pizza to enjoy and Cal and Barb Thistle starting a rousing dice game called left/center/right that was enjoyed by a large group.

While there had originally been no Fun Night scheduled in January, one has since been added. It will be held on Saturday, January 27th and is the next fun night since there is none in December. The Fun Night Schedule is rounded out with two more events, one on Saturday, February 24 and the final one on Saturday, March 3. Posters with the full schedule are available on the Schooner website that can be printed or there are some club to take. Members are encouraged to distribute them or post them up wherever there may be interest. Put them at the grocery store, a church hall, at work, wherever. The more people we get, the better.

A big thank you to this year's Fun Night coordinators, Janet Gallivan and Kathy Gale, to Nadine and Thomas for doing the instruction, to Cal and Barb for organizing the dice game, to everyone else who helped out in any way and, last but certainly not least, to everyone who came up for the Fun Night and made it such a success. See you in January.

2019 Scotties Coming to Cape Breton

It's official. The 2019 Scotties Tournament of Hearts will be held at Sydney's Centre 200 as was announced at a public event on Friday, November 3. Representatives from Curling Canada, the local bid committee and government along with a large group of Cape Breton curling fans were on hand for the announcement. This will mark the first time the Scotties has returned to Nova Scotia since it was held in Halifax in 1992. Curling Canada said the Sydney bid was strong, having deposits on over 900 full event packages, support from local and Provincial governments and a good response from the local business community.

The 2019 Scotties will boast a sixteen team field, one from each of our ten provinces and four territories, Team Canada, the 2018 Scotties winner, and one wild card team that will be decided just before the main event begins. The tournament will run from February 16-24, 2019, with the eventual winner given the honor of calling themselves Team Canada and wearing the maple leaf when competing at the World Championships in Esbjerg, Denmark. TSN is the official TV partner of the event and will have complete coverage from the opening wild-card game to the gold medal match.

Now the real work begins. Organizing the event and the hundreds of volunteers required will be no small task. The payoff is great for Cape Breton however with national TV exposure for the Island and an estimated economic benefit of between six and twelve million dollars. Tickets are expected to go on sale sometime in the first part of 2018. Keep up to date at the Cape Breton Scotties webpage:

<https://www.scottiescapebreton.com/>

Lighting Upgrade

The project to upgrade the Schooner lighting is a go. At a special general meeting held at the club on Thursday, November 9, the membership in attendance approved the expenditure allowing the project to move forward. Efficiency Nova Scotia will be covering 65% of the total cost and the club will shoulder the remaining 35% with the help of financing through Nova Scotia Power. We will be able to spread the cost, interest free, over a two year period. It is hoped that the money saved in power with the new LED lighting will almost cover the monthly costs of the project, essentially making our net cost almost zero for the first two years and after that the saving will be pocketed by the club. We are currently trying to coordinate installation over our Holiday break but that is not yet confirmed.

Turkey Spiel



The Schooner Turkey Spiel is set to get underway on Tuesday, December 5 and will run until Saturday, December 9 when all teams competing will go head to head to determine our winners and who will take home the turkeys. Throughout the week there are two divisions, Tuesday/Thursday and Wednesday/Friday. There will be prizes for everyone and the club will provide lunch on Saturday. Teams are pretty much set and we are ready to get underway. During Turkey Spiel week there will be no league curling in the Mixed and Men's Leagues and the Junior program will move to Sunday, December 10. Drop by and take in some of the great curling action and fun. Check back next month for a full wrap up of how teams did.

New Years Eve Party



A New Year's Eve party is being planned for the club and will be open to members and guest. There is no charge to attend but there will be a pot luck held and everyone is asked to contribute to that in some way. The bar will be open for refreshments. If you don't have plans for New Year's Eve and just want to have a fun, relaxed evening with friends, plan to join us at the club. Watch the Schooner website and the club bulletin board for more info. Anyone interested is asked to sign up at the club or send us an email so we can gauge the interest and plan the event accordingly.

Fundraiser



The club is running a 649 fundraiser to help pay for the new lighting upgrade and cover other club expenses. For each entry, buyers pick six different numbers from 1-49, just like they are buying a 649 lottery ticket. Entries are \$5 each or three for \$10. After each 649 draw, the numbers drawn will be ticked off and the first entry or entries to have all six numbers ticked off will be our winner(s). The prize will be 50% of total sales. All entries will be tracked and updated on the Schooner website. All entries must be in by Sunday, December 3 and draws will begin on Wednesday, December 6. For more information or to get a printable entry, visit the Schooner website and click the 649 item in the main menu.

Matinee Curling

Members are reminded that there is Matinee Curling held at the club every Friday from 1-3 pm. This is open to all Schooner Members. There are no set teams and no sign up is required, you can just drop in any Friday and curl. Teams will be formed from those in attendance. It's a great way to get a little bit more out of your Schooner membership.

Weekly Tarabish Games

The weekly Tarabish games will continue to be held every Tuesday evening at the club. Play gets underway around 7pm. The way it is setup is that everyone is entered as an individual, not a team. Depending on the number of players on a given night, you are designated to play a set number of games, sometimes within a group, and after each game, individual wins and scores are recorded and then you move on to play with a new partner in the next game. After each member has played the number of designated games, scores are tallied and winners determined. The games are well attended and are a great boost to the club and our bar. The games are not just club members so you can bring a friend if you like.

Port Hawkesbury Cash Spiel

The Schooner Club was once again represented at the Strait and Area Curling Club's annual cash spiel that was held from November 17-19. The team was skipped by Gordie Cormier also included Stephen Leslie, Kevin Gouthro, Brian Laughlin and 5th Kelley Laughlin. The Schooner rink got off to a slow start on Friday evening, dropping their first game, but rebounded on Saturday when they won all three games they played and wound up finishing regular play in second place. They played in a playoff game on Sunday morning to get into the 'A' final and have a chance at winning as much as \$1000 but, unfortunately, ran into a hot Donald McCuspic rink from the home club, lost that game and were eliminated. Overall another strong showing at a spiel that has had Schooner involvement for the last few years. Attendance at the Strait spiel has paid dividends to the club in that, last season, we had a team from the Strait club at the cash spiel and this season we may see at least two and possibly three come down to take part. Thanks to the Cormier rink for making the trip and representing the club proudly.

Mid-Season Meeting and New Year's Social

There will be a Mid-Season general meeting at the club on Saturday, January 6 starting at 7pm. This meeting was added a few years ago as a way to get members up to speed on items that had gone on in the first part of the season and was also meant to be a social activity for club members to come together and celebrate the new year. The meeting will be brief, just an update of what's going on at the club and how we are doing, and then there will be a wine and cheese social immediately following. Plan to join us and help ring in the new year at the Schooner.



Chase the Ace will be making a return to the Schooner Club starting in early January. Draws will be held on Tuesday evenings starting after the Holiday break. Tickets will once again be sold all week long at the club's bar and at designated vendors and will also be sold on draw nights from 7-8 pm at a table setup at the club. We are hoping that the vendors from last time, Disco Tirecraft, Compu Clone Computer Solutions and Cape Breton Glass will be back on board and we are looking at possibly adding a few more locations. In the last draw we got down to under 20 cards and saw the jackpot grow to around \$6000. We are hoping we can do that well again or even better as this event raises important funds for the club that allows us to do a lot of extras like electrical and lighting upgrades, buying new furniture and sprucing up the club with fresh paint and decorations. It also allows us to keep costs down for members. Please help us by buying your Chase the Ace tickets every week and buy selling as many books as possible. The price will be the same as the last, three tickets for \$5.

Snowball



All members are reminded that the Snowball even split is played at the club during every regular curling event. Entry is \$2 per draw with \$1 going to the club and \$1 going towards the jackpot, it's open only to club members and you must sign in yourself for each draw. Every club member is assigned a number and if your number is drawn when you are signed in for the draw, you win the jackpot. If a number of a member not signed in is drawn, the jackpot carries over and 'Snowballs' into a bigger jackpot for the next draw. So far this season we have seen a couple of jackpots in the \$100 range won by lucky members. This is an important fund raiser for the club and allows us to keep costs to members low by helping to cover day to day operating expenses. So the next time you are curling at the Schooner, remember to sign in for the Snowball. You don't want to miss out on winning that next big jackpot.

Holiday Break

The final day of curling before the Holidays will be Thursday, December 21 when the Old Triangle Men's League will wrap things up. Curling will resume after the Holidays, once again with the Men's League, on Thursday, January 4. The Juniors will take to the ice on Saturday, January 6 and then the regular weekly schedule for league play will continue after that. Don't forget about the New Year's Eve party at the club and about the general meeting and social on Saturday, January 6 at 7pm. Also keep in mind some of the events that are taking place in January starting with the 2 on 2 spiel running January 12 and 13, the Club Championships on the 19 and 20 and the Schooner fun night that will take place on Saturday, January 27. It's going to be busy at the club after the Holidays and for the rest of the season so keep an eye on the club's bulletin board and the Schooner website for all the event dates and times and make sure you don't miss out.

To all the Schooner members and friends of the club, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year. See you in January.

