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In The Hack

SCHOONER CURLING CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 132 **December 2025**

Schooner Turkey Spiel	December 4-6
Turkey Spiel Holiday Dance	Saturday, December 6
Holiday Break	December 20th to January 3rd
Jackie Pearson Memorial Doubles	January 16th – 17th
Fun Night	Saturday, January 24th
Womens Sweetheart Spiel	February 6th – 7th
Schooner Cash Spiel	February 13th – 15th
Valentine's Dance	Saturday, February 14th
Fun Night	Saturday, February 21st
Triples Spiel	March 13th – 14th
Fun Night	Saturday, March 14th
John Bonaparte Memorial Closing	April 9th – 11th
Closing Banquet	Saturday, May 2nd

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

League Roundup

League play got underway on November 2 and will continue in December until December 19th which will be the last day of curling before our Holiday Break.

In the Sunday Team Entry League we have seven out of the eight teams tied with two wins and four points each. Even at this early juncture in the season that is a bit rare. While there have been some games postponed, most are already made up. Things couldn't be much tighter in the standings than it is right now.

The Monday Mixed Social League is also somewhat of a logjam at the top of the standings with four teams tied with three wins for six points. Julia Cormier, Val MacIntyre, Butch MacLean and Keith MacEachern have all guided their teams into a winning record so far but both MacIntyre and MacEachern have a game not played against each other. This game could mark the rise to first for one of those two teams. The Tuesday Mixed Social League also sees teams very close after one month of play with only a point separating them all in the standings.

The Schooner Women's League has made a return to the club this year and plays a bi-weekly schedule on Wednesday evenings. So far, we see Julia Cormier and Carrie Cress on top with two wins each and Lynn Kelly has one win in her only game of the season. With seven teams taking part in this league, there is a bye for one team each week.

The Schooner Doubles League plays on the alternate Wednesday evenings to the Women's League and this year sees a full roster of twenty-four

players. Doubles has seen two weeks played so far and there are three players who have started the season with two wins, Jennifer Brain, Bill Farr and Robbie Biron. Partners alternate in this league each week so everyone is playing with someone new from one game to the next. The format has proven to be popular and there are a number of newer members taking part in the league this season. It's a great way to practice and to learn more about the game, strategies and calling line.

Finally, the Schooner Men's League has seven teams competing this season, up from six last year. The Chris Sutherland rink has gone 4-0 to start the year but the Walter Nichols rink is also undefeated at 3-0. Nichols has sat out a bye week already and Sutherland's rink is still waiting for their night off. Sutherland and Nichols have yet to play head to head in round one as well.

All leagues seem to be off to a great start this season. With only a month of play behind us, it's way too early to predict any winners for sure. There's lots of great curling ahead in all leagues.

Matinee curling is also off to a good start this year, now being held two days a week on Wednesdays and Fridays from 1pm to 3pm. Matinee is open to all Schooner members. It's a drop-in format and teams are made from those in attendance on any given day. If any member has some time on a Wednesday or Friday afternoon, drop in and take part. It's a great way to get more out of your club membership.

All members are reminded that league play will be taking a break for the Holiday Season starting on December 20th and running to January 3rd. Men's League will see the last league competition on December 18th and there will be Matinee Curling on December 19th. League play will resume on Sunday, January 4th when Team Entry will take the ice and play the first games of 2026.

Draw Master's Notes

We are now well into the curling season with the Annual Turkey Spiel just ahead. So I thought I would take this opportunity to mention a few things to our members.

DRAW TO THE BUTTON

Sometime soon, all league teams will participate in draws to the button re: the third tie-breaker for ties in the standings of league play. Each team will throw two (2) rocks and the total distance in inches to the button for both rocks will be the score for that team.

Sweepers are allowed. Any two team members can be chosen to throw. Both stones cannot be thrown by the same person.

Teams can choose not to participate. If so, they will be assigned the maximum number.

KNEES ON THE ICE

The ice at Schooner takes a lot of time and effort to maintain. Something that players may not realize is how easy it is to "burn" divots in the ice surface with knees, hands, and other body parts.

Once a stone leaves the hand of the delivering curler, players should try to lift their knees and hands off the ice as soon as possible. I have seen players stay down on their knees to watch their stone, which essentially melts little potholes in the ice. This can cause rocks to "pick," or turn direction when entering the house from the opposite direction in the following end. Nothing is more frustrating when you know you have thrown a great shot only to see the rock pick and to lose the line at the last second!

So please try to get up off the ice as soon as possible after delivering your stone.

SPARES
It is not the Drawmaster's responsibility to find spares. If you can't make your game, it is your responsibility to make a reasonable effort to find a spare. I.e. you should do more than simply posting on Facebook.

Please make a few calls to people on the Spares List. If no luck, at least inform your skip so they are aware that you can't make the game.

Good curling and see you on the ice!
Kristen

Schooner Turkey Spiel and Dance

Entries were filling fast for the Schooner Turkey Spiel that is being held at the club from December 4-6. Entry deadline was pegged at Sunday, November 30. Teams and schedules will be available shortly after that on the Schooner website. Everyone is invited to drop by the club and take in some of the great curling action, food and fun. Don't forget to join us on Saturday, December 6th for our Holiday dance with DJ Jimmy. It's open to everyone (19+) and there's no cover. Bring your friends and help us celebrate the season at the Schooner Club.

Jackie Pearson Memorial Doubles Spiel

The Jackie Pearson Memorial Doubles Spiel will be held at the club on January 16th and 17th. This is a team entry spiel so you have to enter as a team of two. Curlers can do single entry and we will attempt to pair you with a partner but there are no guarantees that you will play. Entry fee is $60 per team and entries are limited to the first sixteen teams. There will be cash prizes to the winners and there will be lunch served on Saturday. Rules are a modified doubles/stick curling hybrid. Registration will open soon and anyone wanting to take part should enter early as this spiel normally fills up quickly.

Schooner

Schooner Fun Nights are making a return to the club again this season with the first of three scheduled for Saturday, January 24th. There will also be fun

Fun Nights

nights held on February 21st to celebrate Curling Day in Canada and on March 14th, our St. Paddy's Day Fun Night.
Fun Nights are a great way to introduce people to the sport of curling. Everyone (19 yrs. +) is invited to join us for a great night of curling fun and delicious pizza, all for the low price of only $10 per person ($5 for Schooner members). We supply the equipment you need, just bring clean sneakers for the ice. We'll give you some basic instructions, let you practice a bit and then play a short game. Curling is a sport that can be enjoyed by almost everyone regardless of age and physical ability. The fun gets started at 7pm and we go all evening. Members are encouraged to take part and bring some friends and family to introduce them to the sport and the club itself. Many members at the club have gotten their start at one of the fun nights so plan to join us.

649 Fundraiser

The Schooner Club is running a 649 fundraiser that is starting with draws on December 3. Entry forms were required to be back into the club by November 30. Participants pick 6 different numbers between 1 and 49 for each entry and those numbers get checked off as they are drawn in the Atlantic Lottery Corporation's 649 draw each Wednesday and Saturday. Bonus numbers are NOT included. Draws will begin on Wednesday, December 3rd and run until we have a winner. The first one to check off all the numbers from any one entry that they have will win the jackpot of fifty percent of total sales. If there is more than one entry that checks off all numbers on the same draw, all winners will spit the jackpot amount. Entries are $5 each (one set of six numbers) or 3 for $10.
Updates will be available at the club and online at a private page on the Schooner website. Total sales and jackpot amount will be announced once there is a final tally of sales.

Strait and Area Cash Spiel

The Strait and Area Community Curling Club held its annual Cash Spiel from November 14-16 at the club in Port Hawkesbury. The overall winner of the event was Team Travis Stone from the Sydney Curling Club. They defeated Sebastien LeFort in the 'A' final. The 'B' division final saw Schooner's Kevin Gouthro rink take on the Justin Fox rink of the Truro Curling Club. Unfortunately, Gouthro fell to Fox in that final and had to settle for the runners-up spot. Joining Kevin was Stephen Leslie, Dane Rudderham and Robbie Biron. The 'C' final also had a Schooner team taking part in the Gordie Cormier rink. Cormier defeated Sydney's Lisa MacDonald rink to take the 'C' title. Skip Cormier was joined by Fred Gillis, Benito Delorenzo and Dan MacDougall. Congratulations to all the winners and congratulations to the Strait and Area Community Curling club on running another great cash spiel.

Sydney Rink Plays for

The Sebastien Lefort rink from the Sydney Curling Club recently represented Nova Scotia at the Canadian Club Championships at the Granite Curling Club in Winnipeg, Manitoba from November 18th to 23rd.

National Championship

The Sydney foursome made it through to the playoffs after amassing a 4-2 record in the round robin portion of the event. They were successful in their first playoff game, beating Northern Ontario, but a game against BC to get them to the semi-finals resulted in a 4-3 loss and the end of their quest for a Canadian title. BC went on to win the event. It was a great showing by the Sydney rink and the Schooner club sends along our congratulations on a strong effort. Joining Skip LeFort was Todd Mercer, Michael Garden, Nolan Drover and Devin George (alternate).

Olympic Trails

There was an exciting week of curling held in Halifax from November 22-29 when the Canadian Curling Olympic Trials came to town. The week-long event would see the best teams in Canada, both men's and women's, compete for a chance to go to the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympics. The week would start with a round robin for both the men and women with only the top three teams making it on either side. The first place teams would have a bye to the finals while second and third would play a one game semi-final to see who would take them on in the best of three championship. Nova Scotia was being represented on the women's side by Sydney native Christina Black and her team that play out of the Halifax Curling Club. Christina put on a great performance, not only making the final three but then going on to defeat a very powerful Kerri Einarson team to earn the right to play Rachel Homan for the right to represent Canada. The first game was a barn burner with Homan jumping out to an early lead. Christina Black and her squad made the game close in the later ends and almost snatched victory on the final shot but skip Black's rock just failed to remove a Homan stone and they fell just short on the scoreboard. Game two wasn't as close as Homan cruised to an easy victory but, no matter, Christina and her team have a lot to be proud of. With the victory, Rachel Homan and her team, Tracey Fleury, Emma Miskew, Sarah Wilkes and fifth Rachelle Brown have earned the right to represent Canada at the Olympic Games in 2026.

On the Men's side, Team Brad Jacobs finished in first place and earned a spot in the final while Matt Dunstone and Mike McEwan battled it out in the semi-final to see who would earn the right to face him. Dunstone defeated McEwan in the semi but was unable to muster a win against the strong Jabobs rink and fell in two games in the final. Brad Jacobs, Mark Kennedy, Brett Gallant and Ben Hebert will be Team Canada for men's curling. Overall a great week of curling and a great event. Many Schooner members made to the trip to be in attendance and a few even volunteered for the event. The consensus from everyone that is was a fantastic time and lots of fun. Don't forget to watch Team Homan and Team Jacobs represent Canada and cheer them on to gold.

Curling loses a legend

As many of you already know, the curling world lost one of its legends recently when Colleen Jones passed away at the age of 65 after a battle with cancer. Jones was a curling icon on Nova Scotia, competing at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts 21 times, winning six times and winning the world women's curling championship twice. She also skipped Canada to a world women's senior championship in 2017. More than just a player, Jones coached he son's team at the 2025 Brier Canadian Men's Championship. She is also a member of the Canadian Sports Hall of fame and the Nova Scotia sports hall of fame, both as a team member and as an individual. Jones was also a reporter for the CBC for many years, joining the broadcaster in 1986 and retiring in 2023. She broke boundaries for women with her hiring, being the only female sports anchor in Nova Scotia at the time.

In her 2015 autobiography, Throwing Rocks at Houses: My Life in and out of Curling, Jones said surviving a serious case of bacterial meningitis in 2010 made her strive for balance in life.

"My feeling is: Do the things that make us happy now, because tomorrow isn't guaranteed. Appreciate life, don't sweat the small stuff, and enjoy the ride." True words for sure.

Colleen Jones was a true Canadian and Nova Scotian sports and curling icon and has been the inspiration for thousands of young curlers, both boys and girls. Rest in Peace Colleen, you will be missed.