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In The Hack

SCHOONER CURLING CLUB NEWSLETTER



Volume 54

February 2014

Club Calendar

Saturday, February 1 st	Super Saturday – Cancelled
Saturday, February 8 th	Coors Fun Night
February 14 th – 15 th	Sweetheart Spiel
February 21 st – 23 rd	Schooner Cash Spiel
Saturday, March 1 st	Coors Fun Night
Friday, March 7 th	Inter-Club Curling (tentative)
Friday, March 14 th	Inter-Club Curling (tentative)
March 21 st – 23 rd	Sydney Moosehead Mixed Spiel
March 28 th – 29 th	Coors Fun Spiel
April 8 th – 12 th	Closing Spiel
Sunday, April 13 th	Family Skating Party
Wednesday, April 16 th	Spring General Meeting
Saturday, April 28 th	Closing Banquet

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

Sweetheart Spiel



The annual Women's Sweetheart Spiel, a Schooner Valentine's tradition, will be held on February 14th and 15th. This is a single entry spiel open to any woman curler, either Schooner members or the general public. No experience is necessary and any equipment required will be provided to new curlers. Entry fee is \$20 for Schooner Club members and \$30 for non-members. This will get you three, six-end games, Wine and Cheese on Friday and dinner on Saturday. A light lunch will also be served on Saturday as well. The spiel is sponsored again this year by CompuClone Computer Solutions of Sydney, Wine and Cheese on Friday is compliments of Martin Campbell and dinner on Saturday is sponsored by donations from the Schooner Men. The Sweetheart spiel is always one of the highlights of the Schooner year and this year promises to be just as good as in the past. There's always lot's of great curling, good food and good fun to be had to plan to join us, either as a curler or a spectator, at the annual Sweetheart Spiel.

League Roundup



Mother nature continues to be the big story this season as storms and high winds have forced more cancellation of league play in January. Another power outage due to bad weather forced the cancellation of another Team Entry day and snow has forced cancellations in the mixed. Of all the leagues, the men's league seems to have escaped the weather for the most part and has been running on schedule.

The Men's League has not only see the least amount of weather cancellations this season, it has also seen some of the most competitive play and very close standings as well. With lots of curling left in the season, anyone still has a chance at top honors. Right now it is the Gordie Cormier Rink that has opened a slight lead in first place followed very closely by the Brian Laughlin Rink only two points behind and then we

see the Gary Landry Rink in third, two points behind Laughlin and four shy of Cormier. A very close race that will likely come down to the last games of the season before being decided.

The big story from the Sunday Team Entry League remains rookie skip Wally MacDonald. After a split with former skip Wayne "Bull" Bonnell and the end of last season, MacDonald's future in the league was uncertain but he took the reins of his own squad and has lead them to a first place standing in the league so far this season. MacDonald stumbled a bit in January with a decisive and demoralizing loss to his former skip, Bonnell, but his record is still good enough to hold a two point lead over the second place John Donovan rink, although Donovan holds one game in hand due to a cancellation. With his recent victory over MacDonald, skip Bonnell has vaulted himself into a third place tie with the Brian Laughlin rink and the Ray Cameron rink, two points shy of the Donovan rink. With climbing back up the standings and the obvious confidence boost of beating the first place MacDonald rink, it may be that Bonnell is finally on his way to having some success in the team entry league, a success that has seemed to elude him for the past few seasons. Starting fresh with an almost all new squad may have rejuvenated the wily veteran and the team seems to be coming together nicely just in time for a run at the league title and possibly a playoff crown as well. Bonnell will be in tough if the strong Laughlin and Cameron rinks can get things back on track. Both teams have underachieved in the league this season after getting off to strong starts. It will remain to be seen if they can get things turned around in time to vie for the league and/or playoff titles. One thing we know for sure, there will be lots of great curling and things will come down to the wire before a Team Entry champ will be crowned.

In the Mixed League we see the Gordie Cormier rink in first place with a narrow two point lead over the Cal Thistle rink and the Russell Fitzgerald rink who are tied for second. Cormier has a near perfect record at 6-0-1 with the only blemish, a tie, coming at the hands of the John Bonaparte rink. Fitzgerald took over for Bill Farr who had to bow out for health reason and has improved on the 4-1-0 record he inherited with a win and a tie, good for a share of second place with an identical record to Thistle at 5-1-1. Also in the mix are the Brian Laughlin rink and the Daryl MacAulay rink with 5-1-0 records and a game in hand over Fitzgerald and Thistle. Still a wide open finish to league play is ahead and it's anyone's game in the playoffs.

With league play being interrupted so frequently this season it will be a hard job for draw master Cal Thistle to make up all the games that have been missed. Couple that with playoffs looming on the near horizon and Cal will certainly be a busy man. We have confidence that he can pull it all off, just as he has done in previous seasons. Good luck to all teams involved in league play and playoffs over the next few months and *Good Curling Everyone!*

Coors Fun Nights



Mark your calendar and plan to attend the final two Coors Fun Nights of the season being held Saturday, February 8th and Saturday, March 1st. Coors Fun Nights are a great way to introduce friends and family to the sport of curling and get them involved in the club. Many of the clubs new members have come to us by way of the Coors Fun Nights. Not only will everyone have lots of fun, Coors Nights are a real bargain as well. At only \$7 for the public and \$4 for Schooner Members, you get curling, pizza and a chance at great prizes provided by the Coors Light Brewing Company. All equipment and instructions are provided for new curlers, just bring a pair of clean, dry shoes for the ice area. Hope to see you there!!

Open Cash Spiel



The Schooner Curling Club will be hosting an Open Cash Spiel on February 21st – 23rd at the club. This annual event was cancelled last season due to a lack of teams but the Schooner Executive has been working hard to promote the event this year and bring it back to its former glory. Entry fee for the spiel is \$160 per team with all money being returned in prizes and the spiel is open to the first sixteen entries. Teams can be any combination of men and women curlers. All teams will be treated to dinner on Saturday night and there will also be light snacks and lunches throughout the weekend. So why not get a team together and take a shot at winning the cash. Even if you don't participate, drop by and take in some of the great curling and cheer on the Schooner teams. This weekend always provides good curling, good food and good fun. Hope to see you there.

NS Provincials Held in Sydney



The Sydney Curling Club was the proud host of the 2014 Women's Nova Scotia Provincial Scottie's Tournament of Hearts Championships from January 7th – 12th 2014. The very best of women's curling in Nova Scotia were there to compete and, in the end, it was Heather Smith's rink that took home the title with a perfect 8-0 record and will represent the Province at the National Scottie's Championship event being held in Montreal from February 1st – 9th at the Maurice Richard Arena. Joining skip Smith will be mate, Jill Brothers, second, Bliss Joyce and lead Terri Lake. TSN will be covering the Scottie's all week starting on Sunday, February 1st at 3:00pm Atlantic time with draw one and culminating on Sunday, February 9th at 8:30pm Atlantic time with the gold medal final. Congratulation to Heather Smith and her team and congratulations also to the Sydney Curling Club and tournament co-chairs Phyllis Barron and Jane Coady for putting on a great event and providing such entertaining curling to the Sydney area.

JDRF Spiel



The 9th annual JDRF Fund Raising Spiel was held on January 10th and 11th and, as in previous years, was a rousing success. This year saw twenty teams compete in two divisions, experienced curlers and non-experienced curlers. After some great curling and well fought games, Ethan Kent and his rink prevailed in the curlers division while Landry's Vacuum, skipped by Schooner's very own Wayne "Bull" Bonnell, took top honors among the non-curlers. Skip Kent was joined in victory by mate Tom Drover, second, Amy MacPherson and lead Matt MacPherson. Skip Bonnell was aided by the stellar play of mate, Jolene MacLellan, second, Eric Boutilier and lead Belinda Beaton. Of course, when all is said and done, the real winner of this event is the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation who gets much needed funds to help all the young people whose lives are affected by the disease and to help in the effort to find a cure to wipe out Juvenile Diabetes all together. Along with the \$100 entrance fee, money is raised through a silent auction, even splits and other donations. This year, another \$3800 plus was raised to fund the effort, bringing the total raised over the nine years of the spiel to over \$30,000. This spiel would not be possible if not for the efforts of Lena and Lynnette Chiasson and their family who have been organizing and running this spiel since its inception. They put in countless hours of work organizing the spiel, getting sponsorships and prizes and running the event all weekend. The spiel organizers recognize the importance of all the local business, organizations, corporations and individuals who contribute food, money, prizes, auction items and entrance fees that help make the spiel such a success and would like to thank all of them whole heartedly. For a listing of major sponsors and supporters, please visit the

Ship Hector Spiel

Schooner website. And, of course, the spiel would not be complete without Lena's grandfather, Frank Kokocki, making a huge pot of the most delicious soup around for all the curlers and guests to enjoy. A big thank you goes out to the Schooner Curling Club and the ice crew for providing the venue and some great curling ice and to its membership for helping out and for taking part in the spiel and all its other events. Also, a huge thank you to all other volunteers who give their time to make this spiel such a success. This year, the JDRF came to a bitter sweet close when it was announced that Lena, her mom Lynnette and the rest of the family who work so tirelessly to organize and run the JDRF fundraiser won't be doing it next year. After nine years and thousands of dollars raised it's time to move on to other projects. On behalf of the Schooner Curling Club and its members we send out a huge thank you to everyone who worked so hard over the years to run the spiel and provide us all with a great weekend every year filled with fun, good food and good curling. This event will surely be missed on our schedule.

The 42nd annual Ship Hector Bonspiel was held from January 24th – 26th at four area curling clubs in New Glasgow. The Schooner Curling Club was well represented again this year with three teams from our club taking part in the event. The Brian Laughlin rink with Brian, Gordie Cormier, Kelley Laughlin, Rick Billard and fifth Russell Fitzgerald, the Cal Thistle rink with Cal, Barb Thistle and Sid and Debbie Murray and the Wayne "Bull" Bonnell rink that saw skip Bonnell and second Rick Windsor reunite with mate Wally MacDonald and lead Chris "Slugger" MacLeod to compete at the Hector. Eileen Bonnell joined the team as a fifth as well.

The Laughlin rink has had some success in previous visits to the Hector and they continued with that success this year. While the Laughlin rink lost a well curled game on Friday in their first draw, wins on Saturday, one of which was sealed when Gordie Cormier, who was filling in as skip for that game, drew his last stone past a couple of guards to score one point and snatch victory. A bye on Saturday night meant the Laughlin rink was guaranteed to play on Sunday to get in to a money game. Unfortunately they fell just short, missing a draw in the last end of the Sunday morning playoff game that would have given them victory. The Wayne "Bull" Bonnell rink also got off to a slow start, possibly having difficulty finding their old chemistry after not having been together for a while, and dropped their first three games before winning their final draw Saturday and gaining a chance to play in a Sunday morning playoff to get into a money game Sunday afternoon. Team Bonnell, like team Laughlin, fell just short of victory and had their spiel end on Sunday morning. The third team from the Schooner Club to compete, the Cal Thistle rink, was also a little slow out of the gate, dropping their first two matches before finally hitting the win column on Saturday afternoon. Cal needed just one more victory on Saturday night to advance to Sunday play but fell just short and did not advance. Overall, all Schooner teams had a good spiel and, as always, a good time at the Hector. Thank you to all the Schooner Curlers who represented our club well both on and off the ice. Anyone thinking about icing a team for next year's Hector should act quickly next season as this event always fills up fast and has a long waiting list for those that don't register as early as possible.

Super Saturday

Due to a lack of interest again from participating clubs, it looks like Super Saturday, scheduled for Saturday, February 1st, will be cancelled. This is the second all-club event this year that has been cancelled due to lack of participation. Super Saturday events are designed to bring curlers from all Island clubs, Strait, Baddeck, Sydney and Schooner, together for a day of curling. According to draw master Cal Thistle there just wasn't enough people signing up to warrant having the event. Given that this is the second cancellation of such an event, it is unlikely that future events will be planned, at least for this season.



Halifax 2015

In an announcement on Tuesday, January 28th, Halifax, Nova Scotia, was named the host city for the 2015 Ford World Men's Curling Championship. The press release named the Halifax Metro Center as the venue for the event but no official dates or ticket information was given. The event is typically held in late March or early April. The 2014 World men's Championship is being held in Beijing, China. This marks the 22nd time the World Championship event has been held in Canada but it's the first time it will be held in the Province of Nova Scotia. Moncton was the host city in 2009. This is certainly an exciting curling event coming to our province that will give fans the chance to see the best in the world compete.

Inter-Club Curling

After having an inter-club curling event held in December scaled back due to lack of curlers, the January 31st event rebounded and was well attended by both Schooner and Sydney Members. Draw master Cal Thistle said interest was much higher at both clubs for this event and both he and fellow organizer, Neil Morrison of Sydney, were happy with the turnout. Anyone who signed up was assigned a team and a venue before the event. An inter-club event allows members to extend their membership benefits to an extra night of curling and also allows many curlers to experience curling in a different club on different ice. The inter-club events are the initiative of the CBRM Curlers Association and are designed to bring the members of the Sydney and Schooner clubs together on a social level. The next event is tentatively scheduled for March 7th or March 14th depending on ice availability. These events are also subject to change based on interest of the members to take part. Any Schooner member interested in participating in any inter-club curling event can sign up at the club before the event or contact Cal Thistle.

Membership Dues

All members are advised that any outstanding membership dues are now PAST DUE and may be subject to penalties or, in extreme cases, your membership privileges can be revoked. You are asked to pay your outstanding dues as soon as possible. Payments can be made at the bar or to Schooner's membership director Frank Kokocki. Please pay ASAP.

Happy Valentine's Day