

Schooner Curling Club
 61 Military Rd.
 Sydney NS B1N 3K6
 (902) 539-3992
 schoonercurlingclub.com
 schoonercurling@gmail.com

In The Hack



SCHOONER CURLING CLUB NEWSLETTER

Volume 61

February 2015

February 6-7	Men's In-house Club Championship
Saturday, February 7th	Junior Fun Spiel - Baddeck
February 13-14	Sweetheart Spiel
Saturday, February 21	Coors Fun Night
February 27-28	2 on 2 Spiel
March 6 th - 7 th	Coors Fun Spiel
March 14th - 15th	Blarney Stone - Baddeck
March 20 th - 22 nd	Moosehead Mixed - Sydney Club
Saturday, March 28	Coors Fun Night
Saturday, April 18 th	Coors Fun Night
April 20 th - 25 th	Closing Spiel
Saturday, May 2 nd	Closing Banquet

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

Mid Season Meeting

The club held a mid-season general meeting for the first time on January 3rd. Afterwards there was a wine and cheese social. The meeting saw over 20 members attend and there was lots to discuss. Club President Gordie Cormier spoke first and said he was very happy with the way things were going at the club after a somewhat rocky beginning financially. He thanked the members of the executive, committee heads and the general membership who he said had all worked hard to get the club going in the right direction again. Next to give a report was club treasurer Laura Rafuse. Laura reported that the club is doing pretty well financially with a healthy bank balance. She did say that, even though the balance is high now, there are bills coming all the time and we will need to manage our money well to maintain a good position. Fundraisers like 649 and Chase the Ace play a big part in where we are now financially. Laura also reported that a separate bank account has been setup for fundraising, mainly to monitor Chase the Ace revenue so we can remit the portion of proceeds we need to send to the government for our lottery license. Laura presented a printed financial report that detailed the revenue and expenses of the club up to December. The attendees next heard a report from the bar committee. With no one taking the bar steward position this season, the Schooner bar is being run by a committee instead. Gordie Cormier and Laura Rafuse are handling things like deposits, bartender schedules and everyday management while Cal Thistle is doing stock. This seems to be working out well and it was reported that bar sales are up over last year. With the addition of things like coffee and hot chocolate last year and of Paul's Food Factory sandwiches and pizza burgers this year, the bar is catering to

everyone by providing a wider variety of products. Another way the club bar is catering to its patrons is with the addition of an interact machine that allows customers to pay electronically. It was also reported that the liquor laws have been followed much more closely this season after we received a warning from the liquor inspector last year for a violation. Laura Rafuse was back on deck again, this time as bonspiel chair, to give another report. She said that the two spiels that had run so far, the Opening and the Turkey, had each been very successful, both on a curling level and on a financial level. Revenues and profits were way up on both spiels this year, partly dues to sponsorships from local businesses Rona and Tamarind Optical, higher bar and even split sales and the reuse of prizes left over from previous spiels. Both spiels also had high participation with the Opening filling up with sixteen teams and the Turkey having fourteen teams. Finally, Laura told everyone of the upcoming Cash Spiel and that they had contacted all provincial curling clubs by email to promote the event and have seen interest from a number of Schooner and Sydney teams. It was suggested that closer clubs like Baddeck and the Strait be contacted by phone to ask if they had any interest in sending teams. We have had teams in spiels at both of these clubs in the last two seasons. It was also decided that the Schooner Ladies would again look for volunteers to prepare food for the Cash Spiel supper and that the Schooner men would provide dinner for the Sweetheart. It was also mentioned that sign-up sheets for the Cash Spiel and the Sweetheart spiel were both now posted at the club. The Draw Master's, Ice Director's, Ways and Means and Membership reports were up next and were brief. Cal Thistle reported that league play was going well and that there had been no major issues with schedules so far this season. He also reported that there were a couple of new members joining the club for the remainder of the season and that they had been placed on teams. Brian Laughlin reported that there had been ice maintenance done over the Holiday break and that all was well with the ice and equipment. Regularly scheduled maintenance will continue as well as special preparations for upcoming spiels such as the cash spiel. Lynn Kelly reported that many of the ice shed signs were paid but there were still a few that were outstanding. It was also suggested that some of the signs that haven't been paid for in a few years since the companies have gone out of business or are no longer interested should be removed and new advertisers sought out. Frank Kococki reported that all first half membership dues were paid and reminded everyone who gave post dated cheques for second half that they would be processed in mid-January by the club. He also said that there were a small number of members who did not supply post dated cheques and they will be contacted soon and that he will also remind them that their dues can be paid through our debit machine at the bar.

Following committee reports we moved on to other new business. The first item on that agenda was the Nova Scotia Curling Association and whether or not the Schooner Club should rejoin the Association after opting out of membership for the last few years. President Gordie Cormier presented the details of members and the pros and cons of joining. There was a long discussion that followed with the details of that being presented in a separate section of this newsletter below. The end result was a motion made to rejoin the NSCA for the remainder of this season at a reduced rate of approximately \$660 that was voted on and carried by members in attendance. The next item

Schooner to Rejoin NSCA



of new business related to the reimbursement of dues to members who are forced to quit the club through the season after paying member dues for a full year. This happened to a couple of members last season and it came up again this year already. After some discussion it was decided that these cases would be decided on an individual basis by the club executive after they received an application for refund in writing from the member in question. A motion was made, voted on and accepted. Now, any member who cannot complete the season can apply in writing to get a refund of dues prorated to the point in time of the application to have the executive committee consider their case. With no further new business being presented, Gordie Cormier called for a motion to adjourn that was carried and the meeting ended after more than an hour and a half of information and discussion.

Following the meeting there was wine, cheese, crackers and cold cuts provided by the club. The bar was open as well for those who didn't care for wine. Many of the attendees stayed to socialize and talk about their Holidays with one another. The party finally broke up sometime after 11 pm. Overall it was a great meeting and a good night. This is a thing that will very likely become a regular event on the Schooner calendar in the future.

The on-again, off-again situation with the Nova Scotia Curling Association and the Schooner Curling Club being a member is on once again. It was decided at the mid-season general meeting in early January that we would indeed rejoin, at least for the remainder of this season. The club has not been a member of the Curling Association for a few years but in the 2013-14 season it was agreed that we would raise membership dues to help cover the cost of rejoining. It was argued that we would see benefit from having membership in the form of grants that may become available to us, grants that would not be accessible unless we were members of the NSCA. Membership would also put us on equal footing with the Sydney Curling Club in regard to the Cape Breton Curlers Assoc. that was then more active in trying to further curling in Sydney and possibly see the amalgamation of the two clubs at some point. During that season the Schooner executive made repeated attempts to get information from the association with regard to the options we had to renew our membership that might allow us to rejoin but save us some money. Membership in the NSCA costs \$120 per sheet of ice, \$10 per adult member, \$7 per junior and \$5 per little rock member. After many emails and phone calls that didn't provide us with many answers, the idea of joining for that year was abandoned and, at the closing general meeting, it was decided that the funds that had been collected would be better used for general club expenses as the club was tight for funds at the time. It was also decided at the same meeting that the issue would be revisited in the current 2014-15 season. We did receive some benefits of grants in the 2013-14 season which were used for equipment. These grants were received through the CB Curler's Association and were only possible due to the Sydney Curling Club's involvement and their current status as members of the NSCA.

Current club president Gordie Cormier has had more success in contacting and getting information from the NSCA. He has found out that the yearly NSCA membership runs from September to August and that, given we are part way through the season, they will prorate the membership fee for us to

reflect what is left in their current membership period. Gordie stated at the mid-season general meeting that to rejoin the NSCA at this point in the season would cost the club \$660. This would get us NSCA membership through to August 2015. Some potential benefits for the club having NSCA membership are access to possible grant money, the ability to participate in provincial training events for things like coaching and ice making, Provincial exposure for the club and our events and spiels and the ability for the club to host Provincially sanctioned events and for members, including those in our junior program, to compete in those events. The final benefit, the ability to compete in Provincial events, is of particular interest to the club right now. This year, the Men's Club Championship, sponsored by Travelers Insurance, is being held at the Sydney Curling Club in late February. President Cormier and the Schooner executive would like to see our club represented at this event and some members have expressed interest in playing in it. With NSCA membership for this season only running until August, our club members will once again be asked to decide on whether or not to continue that membership for the 2015-16 season at the closing general meeting that will take place in the spring. At that time, if we do decide to rejoin, we will have to pay a full year membership at whatever the rate is then. Our abbreviated membership for this season may tell us whether or not it is worthwhile to continue it into next year.

League Roundup



As league play enters February and playoffs in some leagues are coming into site, things continue to move along smoothly and cancellations have been kept to a minimum. Late in January there were a couple of weather cancellations in the mixed league but these were quickly made up by adding a 9:00 pm draw to some other nights to get things back on track. Draw master Cal Thistle says he is happy for the good weather and good luck and hopes it can continue for the remainder of the season.

In the mixed league, regular play will finish up after the first week of February and there will be a playoff schedule started at that point. All twelve teams in the league will compete in the playoff round and it will be run as some sort of round robin event with details yet to be decided. First place for the regular schedule is up for grabs as there are multiple teams within a few points of top spot. Gordie Cormier's rink continues to lead the mixed but are now joined by the Sid Murray rink who share the lead with Cormier. Murray also has one less game played than Cormier. Also with striking distance is the Cal Thistle rink who is just two points shy of the leaders. Wally MacDonald sits one point behind Thistle and three out of first but, with only one game left for this foursome in the regular schedule, they won't be able to catch the top teams. Greg Ferguson still has an outside chance as he sits four points off the lead but seems to have three games left to play. The right combination of wins for Ferguson and losses by the leaders would allow him to sneak in for first. One of Ferguson's games is against the front running Murray rink. The final week of regular games and the possibility of makeup games will have to play out before we crown a winner.

The Sunday Team Entry League has started a second round of play and there is still lots of curling to go. The final Sunday of January saw an abbreviated schedule in this league as a number of the competitors were away curling at

the Ship Hector Bonspiel in New Glasgow. As play moves into the month of February we see the Brian Laughlin rink sitting alone atop the standings, still having suffered only one loss but having missed a game in January against the always tough Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell rink and starting February against the Ray Cameron foursome, a team that is close on their heels in second place. Laughlin has been solid all season on Sunday and there is no sign of him faltering so far but the game against Cameron would certainly have to be considered a pivotal one. Sitting in a tie for second with Cameron is the Greg Ferguson rink. Ferguson has three losses this year, one of which is to the first place Laughlin rink and another to Ray Cameron, but has, for the most part, been very consistent this season as is shown in the high placement in the standings he currently enjoys. Ferguson will get a second crack at playing the other top teams in the league and a victory or two over these teams could make for a first place finish for Ferguson. While consistent play has been the hallmark for most of the top teams in the league that certainly cannot be said for the Wally MacDonald rink and the result has been a drop from a share of first place to a share of third place. MacDonald and his team have struggled since that devastating loss to the Rick Billard rink late in November and have yet to really get things back on track completely. Up and down play has plagued the squad and unless they can get back to the form they showed early in the season they may fall even further in the standings before the end of regular play. MacDonald was last year's regular schedule champ before a collapse in the playoffs made for an early exit. We may be seeing some of that collapse happening a bit earlier this season. Tied for third with the MacDonald rink is the Thomas Drover rink who, like Greg Ferguson, have had a consistent season that has resulted in high standing in the league. Drover has the only junior member curling in the adult leagues this year, Ethan Kent. Ethan plays lead for the team and has been having a great year, playing a large role in the teams overall success. Close behind Drover and MacDonald we see another two teams tied for position, this time it's the Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell rink and the Gary Landry rink locked in at fourth. Given that there are so many teams so close in the standings it's anyone's guess who will prevail in the Team Entry. If the Laughlin foursome can maintain the level of play we have seen from them this year so far then they will be a sure bet, but, if they start to struggle, there are any number of teams close behind that can take advantage and vault over them in the standings. Time will tell.

The men's league is about half way through the second round that has seen Gordie Cormier continue his winning ways and stretch his lead out by a few points. Cormier is four points ahead of Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell who had opportunity to close the gap but a loss to Cormier and a tie with third place Gary Landry in round two have kept Bonnell further behind. Landry is tied for third with the Brian Laughlin rink, one point behind Bonnell and only one point ahead of three other teams. Cormier looks like he is in the driver's seat in this league but there are still teams who can overtake him for first.

All Mixed League curlers are reminded to keep a close eye on the schedule in February as the start of a new schedule for the playoffs and a couple of special events causing the cancellation of Thursday and the addition of 9pm draws will make things a bit confusing this month. Curlers in all leagues are also asked to make sure they contact their skip if they can't make it so a spare can be arranged. ***Good Curling Everyone!***

Sweetheart Spiel

The annual Schooner Sweetheart Spiel will be held at the club on February 13th and 14th. There is no membership required to play and both club members and the general public are invited to take part. This spiel is open to women curlers only for a single entry-cost of \$20 for Schooner members and \$30 for non-members. Each curler will be guaranteed 3 games and scoring will be in a point format with 3 points for winning the game and 2 points for each end won during the game. Overall winners will be presented with the coveted Sweetheart jackets. Curlers and guests will also be treated to wine and cheese on Friday night and dinner on Saturday sponsored by the Schooner men. Over the past few years this spiel has proven to be one of the most popular events on the Schooner Calendar with great curling and a fun time had by both curlers and spectators. This spiel is once again being sponsored by local business [Compu Clone Computer Solutions](#) and we would like to thank them for their continued support.

Travelers Men's Club Championship



The Travelers Nova Scotia Men's Club Championship spiel will be held this year at the Sydney Curling Club from February 26th to March 1st. The women's event will be held in the Wolfville Curling Club the same weekend. These events allow each Nova Scotia curling club to send one men's and one women's team to represent them and compete to be provincial champions to then go on to the national playoff which will be held next November at the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club in Ottawa, Ontario, for both men and women. A total of fourteen teams will compete for each national title which includes ten provincial entries, Northern Ontario making it eleven, the Yukon, North West territories and Nunavut.

With the Nova Scotia Playoffs in Sydney this year, there has been interest from Schooner club members to put a team together and enter the event. With our recent decision to rejoin the NS Curling Association, this is now possible. The club has registered to send a rink to the event but, since the interest seems to be from more than one team, there will be a club playoff to determine who will represent us. The in-house playoff will be held on February 6th and 7th with the winner to represent the club at the provincial event. The format of play will be determined by the number of teams entered. Anyone interested in entering a team can sign up at the club. Team entry is preferred but single entry will be accepted as well. There will be no guarantee of being placed on a team for single entry. There will be an entry fee to compete and teams taking part in the playoff must be committed to participating in the provincial event at the Sydney Club where the entrance fee will be covered by the club.



Chase the Ace continues at the club into February since no one has been lucky enough to cut the ace of spades at any of the weekly draws so far. There has been a time change for the event with ticket sales being moved to 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm from the original time of 6:00 - 8:00. The weekly draw now takes place at 5:45. Ticket prices are still \$1 each with lots of five tickets being required. While the ticket must be present at the draw, you, personally, do not as participants can designate a representative to claim the ticket on their behalf and cut the deck for the jackpot. The final draw for January saw an Ace Jackpot of \$715 so the estimated jackpot for the first February draw will be

Open Cash Spiel

over \$800. Daily winners also get 20% of that day's ticket sales. This is an important fund raiser for our club so members are encouraged not only to participate but also to help promote the event in the community. We hope that as the jackpot grows so do the ticket sales.

The much anticipated Schooner Cash Spiel went off in January with eight teams, two from the Sydney Club and six from Schooner, taking part and competing for the prize money. Things got underway on Friday night, January 16th, when two Schooner rinks, Brian Laughlin and Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell, faced off on one sheet and Sydney's Kurt Roach played Schooner's Ray Cameron on the other in draws one and two at 6:30. Later that same night, draws three and four were held at 9:00 when Wally MacDonald of Schooner and Kenny Keough of Sydney faced each other and Thomas Drover and Trevor Billard, both from the home club, took to the ice. The first two games of the night were quick affairs when both Kurt Roach and Brian Laughlin opened up big leads on their opponents and both ended in fewer than eight ends. The second round of the evening was closer with both games going the distance and one even requiring an extra end. Thomas Drover defeated the Trevor Billard rink easily on the scoreboard but each end was close and could have gone either way so the score wasn't a good indication of the overall play. The game between Wally MacDonald and Ken Keough was a back and forth affair that needed an extra end to decide a winner. MacDonald seemed to be on his way to an easy victory when he scored four in the first end but Keough came storming back with three of his own in the second to make it a game again. The teams exchanged points all night and Keough got two with hammer in the last end to force the extra after MacDonald had stolen one in the seventh to go up by two. MacDonald scored one in the extra end with hammer to take the victory.

Play on Saturday got underway at 11:30 when the losing rinks from Friday took to the ice in the 'B' Division. Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell took his rink up against the Trevor Billard rink and the Kenny Keough foursome took on the Ray Cameron rink. Win or lose these same four teams would be back on the ice at 6pm on Saturday playing to advance to Sunday and play in the 'B' semi final game at 1pm for a chance to advance to the 'B' final at 4pm that same day. The result was winner Bonnell taking on Cameron who lost his 11:30 draw and on the other sheet was winner Kenny Keough taking on Trevor Billard who had lost to Bonnell earlier. This was a last chance game for all teams involved as the loser would be eliminated from further play. The Keough versus Billard match up saw Kenny Keough cruise to victory but things were a lot tighter on the other sheet. Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell pulled off a miraculous comeback with a steal in the eighth to force an extra end and then a second steal in a row to snatch victory from the surprised Cameron squad. The victories for Keough and Bonnell solidified a spot in the 'B' semi-final for both rinks.

Play also continued in the 'A' Division on Saturday when Friday's winners took to the ice at 2pm. The Brian Laughlin rink faced the Kurt Roach rink while Thomas Drover went up against Wally MacDonald. Winners of these games would advance to the 'A' final on Sunday at 4pm and be guaranteed prize money while losers would drop to the 'B' semi final and have to win that

game on Sunday at 1pm to make it to the money in the 'B' division final. Spectators at the club were expecting close games on both sheets given the high caliber of all four teams taking part. Surprisingly, neither game was close with both Kurt Roach and Thomas Drover jumping out to early leads and not looking back, easily winning their respective games and ensuring themselves prize money in the 'A' division final, win or lose. The Wally MacDonald rink and the Brian Laughlin rink would now have to compete in the 'B' semi-final before they would get to a money game.

After the 2pm draw on Saturday all curlers were treated to dinner which was a pot luck style prepared by the Schooner ladies. There was a good variety of dishes that were all highly enjoyed by the curlers and guests. There was even lots left over for lunch on Sunday. A big thank you to all the Schooner members who volunteered to cook and helped out serving.

Sunday's play started at 1pm when Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell and Wally MacDonald locked horns and the Brian Laughlin rink faced the Kenny Keough rink, all hoping for victory and a chance to play in the 'B' division finally. Winners would be guaranteed money while losers would be eliminated and go home empty handed. After two well-played games, the teams for the final were decided with Ken Keough and Wally MacDonald victorious and moving on to play at 4 pm. MacDonald and Keough played each other tough with the Sydney foursome jumping out to a small, early lead only to see MacDonald come back and pass them on the board. The teams traded points in the middle ends but MacDonald was able to take advantage of a couple of Keough's key misses and expand his lead a bit, eventually holding on for victory when he ran Keough out of stones in the final end.

Also taking place at 4pm on Sunday was the 'A' division final that again saw a Sydney rink taking on a Schooner rink. Kurt Roach and Thomas Drover, who had both won their first two games to put them in this position, were playing for the top spot in the spiel with Drover hoping to equal MacDonald's win and sweep both top spots for the Schooner club. The Drover and Roach rinks each had great games but it was a few key misses by Drover that Roach was able to take advantage of and build a lead that he would not relinquish. Drover and his foursome tried to mount a comeback but, given the experience and talent of the Roach foursome, it was not to be. The 'A' Division crown went to the Sydney Club and the Kurt Roach Rink.

Even though there wasn't a full complement of teams competing, the Schooner Open Cash Spiel was a big success for the club both on and off the ice. There was a lot of great curling, great food and, of course, great fun. The Schooner Club would like to thank all teams who took part, especially those from Sydney who supported our spiel, and all the volunteers who helped out in any way and made the event possible. We hope to see you all back next season for the 2016 Schooner Open Cash. To see photos from this year's event [go to our Facebook page](#).

Juniors to Travel to Baddeck

On Saturday, February 7th, members of the Schooner junior program will travel to the Baddeck Curling Club to compete in a one-day fun spiel. The main focus of the spiel, other than having fun, will be to allow the kids to get used to playing in a game situation with set positions. Curling gets underway

Ship Hector Spiel

at 10:00 am but all Schooner curlers are asked to arrive at the rink by 9:30 to get organized and finalize rosters. Lunch will be provided by the Baddeck club. Best of luck to our juniors and have fun!!

The 43rd annual Ship Hector Bonspiel was held from January 25th – 27th at four area curling clubs in Pictou County. Three Schooner entries made the trip to represent our club and enjoy a great weekend of curling with other players from around the province and beyond. The Brian Laughlin rink made another return trip to the Hector. Out of the teams that went, they have the most experience playing in this event. Joining skip Brian Laughlin was Gordie Cormier at mate, second Kelley Laughlin, lead Dennis Cormier and 5th Richard Lorway. Skip Wally MacDonald made another trip to the hector as well, this time being joined by Chris 'Slugger' MacLeod, Walter Nichols and Dave Boudreau. A third team from the Schooner was supposed to be skipped by Wayne 'Bull' Bonnell but Bonnell was unable to make the trip this year. Another member of Bonnell's team, his wife Eileen Bonnell, was also forced to cancel. With the Bonnells unable to play, Rick and Amanda Windsor were joined by Sid Murray and Stephen Leslie. While no Schooner rink made it to Sunday play, a great time was had by all and we thank all the Schooner rinks for representing our club again this year at the Hector.

Nova Scotia's Scotties Representatives Set

The Nova Scotia Women's Provincial Championship was held at the Dartmouth Curling Club on January 21-25 to decide the team that would represent our province at the Scotties national event being held at Mosaic Place in Moosejaw, Saskatchewan from February 14-22. The final saw Mary-Anne Arsenault of the Mayflower Curling Club take on Theresa Breen of the host Dartmouth Club. Last end heroics from Arsenault saw her draw for two with her final stone to overcome a one point deficit and take the victory to earn herself and her team a trip to the Scotties. Arsenault sported a 7-2 record for the week. Sydney native Christina Black plays mate for Arsenault and was very excited about the win. She said in a post game interview that she got into curling because of watching the Scotties on TV and was living out a childhood dream to play in the event. Black got her start in the junior program at the Sydney Curling Club. Joining Arsenault and Black in Saskatchewan will be second Jayne Snyder and lead Jennifer Baxter. Best of luck to Christina and her teammates at the national event.

Two on Two Spiel

Two on two curling is gaining in popularity in the curling world and at the Schooner Club it's no different. A group of members have been using some free time to play two on two games and it has been very well received. The club will be holding its first two on two spiel late in February on the 27th and 28th. This will be a team entry spiel, not a single entry. You must enter as a team of two curlers.

A two on two game consists of six ends and takes about one hour to play. One member from each team plays at one end of the ice and the other curler plays the other end. You are not permitted to cross the midway point of the sheet at any time during game play. The first end sees curler one from each team

throw six rocks while curler two skips the house from the opposite end. There is no sweeping until the rock crosses the hog line at the opposite end from the thrower. Once the rock crosses the line, the skip of the throwing team can then start sweeping. The same rules apply to sweeping an opponent's rock as in a regular game, you cannot sweep it until it is behind the T line. The first three rocks of each end whether they are in front of or in the house, cannot be removed by the opposing team. Once the six rocks from each team are delivered in the end, the points are counted and the curler two of each team throws their six rocks back while curler one now skips in their end. Scoring is done the same way as in regular team curling.

Two on Two curling is commonly played by both slide and stick curlers and curlers of all skill levels can be competitive in this format. With a six end game, each team member will throw eighteen rocks, six rocks in three ends each. Given the high repetition and lack of sweepers, it's a great way to hone your shot making ability. Watch for a sign-up sheet at the club in February and put together a team for two on two curling. It's lots of fun.