

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 109

March, 2022

Friday, March 4	Curling Clinic (members only)
March 10-12	Schooner Fun Spiel
March 11-13	Ship Hector New Glasgow - Cancelled
March 18-20	Schooner Open Cash Spiel
Saturday, March 19	Cash Spiel Social
Saturday, March 19	Fun Night - Rescheduled
March 25-27	Sydney CC Spring Fling Mixed Spiel
Saturday, April 2	Fun Night
April 7-9	2 on 2 Spiel - Team Entry
April 8-10	Sydney CC Cash Spiel
April 21-23	John Boneparte Memorial Closing Spiel
TBA	Schooner Banquet
TBA	Schooner Golf

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

## League Roundup



With government restrictions finally easing a bit we are, at long last, able to get back to regular league play. Hopefully we have seen the last of these restrictions and won't have to deal with them moving forward this season or in future seasons.

In the East Side Mario's Mixes League we have seen the number of teams shrink from sixteen to fifteen, meaning there will now be a bye each week for one of the teams. That also means there will be a free sheet of ice once a week during mixed that can be used to makeup missed games, not only in Mixed but in Men's and Team Entry as well.

With only a couple of weeks gone in the new schedule we are too early into it to see any one or two teams start to distance themselves from the pack. The Mixed will continue until the end of the season in April and then a winner will be crowned for round two.

The Don Cherry's Teams Entry league has finished its regular schedule and playoffs are now under way. Winner of the regular season title was the Kevin Gouthro rink with skip Gouthro being joined by Wally MacDonald, Walter Nichols and Anthony Boudreau. Teams have now been split into two divisions of six teams each, playing a round robin in each division with the top two teams from each side playing a cross-over semi-final with the winners of that game playing for the playoff title. So far, the Gordie Cormier rink has come out quickly in division 1, winning their first two playoff games, one over regular season champ Kevin Gouthro. Gouthro is 1-1 in the playoffs so far. Regular season runner up, Stephen Leslie, sits atop division 2 with two wins under his belt so far.

The Schooner Men's league is now into round two of its season where all

## Drawmaster's Musings

teams will face each other for a second time. The Gordie Cormier rink sits atop the standings by a slim margin, the Wally MacDonald, Robert Agnew and Kevin Gouthro rinks all very close behind. With time winding down in the season the Men's schedule may not allow for a full round-robin style playoff this year and we may be looking at a semi final and final with the top four teams making it in. That makes the final games of the season very important as the bottom four rinks are well within striking distance of a top four finish. That is all speculation of course as the playoff structure in Men's remains undecided.

The Schooner Doubles league continues to enjoy a successful inaugural season. There have been some changes to competitors with a few people dropping out and a few new faces taking their places but the league has maintained its twenty four participants all season. The format of the league, changing partners each week, was put in place to keep the league fair and even for all competitors. That seems to have worked out well with twelve players, half of those taking part, within six points of first overall. With play continuing through March and April in the league, it could be any of those twelve, or even a few others, who take the top spot. With the popularity of the league among its members, it is very likely we will see it make a comeback to the schedule next season as well.

Matinee curling is still enjoying a good year at the club as well with numbers on Friday afternoons remaining good. Things dipped a little during the pandemic restrictions but, overall, have been way up for the year over the previous few seasons. Matinee Curling will continue to be held on Friday afternoons from 1-3 for all members to take advantage of. No registration required, simply drop by.

Starting this month we are adding a new section to the Schooner newsletter, the 'Drawmaster's Musings'. Schooner drawmaster, Richard Lorway, has submitted his first article for the March newsletter that you will find below. Each month there will more league info, etiquette and general curling discussions that will show up in this section. We hope you enjoy it and we hope it will be a permanent addition to 'In the Hack'. As always, your feedback is welcome and can be submitted to myself, Bill Farr, or to Richard Lorway. So, without further delay, here are the very first 'Drawmaster's Musings'.

As we enter the home stretch in an eventful year at Schooner, I thought I would pass on some observations and reminders.

I'd like to first say thank you to all members for hanging in there and supporting us during a time in which health restrictions and schedules have changed on an almost weekly basis. I really appreciate your patience and good will. It hasn't been easy for volunteers, and a little positive energy goes a long way.

Despite everything, it's been a remarkably successful season and our membership has swelled to 92. I have been curling at Schooner for 15(?) years now, and I have never seen our club as full of people and energy. As new and old curlers know, there are a lot of rules and conventions to think about. Even our wily veterans need to be reminded from time to time.

Some customs - like the winners buying the losers a drink - are purely social. (BTW that practice is universal to every curling club I have ever played in. It's not just a Schooner thing.)

Others are more practical - which brings me to comment on knees and hands left down on the ice.

I am fairly frequently seeing people (old and new members alike) leave their knees and hands down on the ice after delivering a stone, usually out near the hog line. Yes, I understand the temptation to stay low and watch the path of your stone vs. standing up, however if your knee or hand stays on the ice longer than 2-3 seconds, you start to burn a divot in the ice at the point of contact. That is literally all the time it takes.

These divots or depressions in the ice cause problems with the paths of stones, especially in draw situations. The running surface of a stone is a ¼ inch ring on the bottom. And sometimes this ring will catch the edge of a divot and cause a "pick," i.e. cause the stone to change direction. When you have a great shot going and it picks at the last minute, it's frustrating to say the least.

Our ice making team does an amazing job. I have been in many clubs in Nova Scotia, and I have yet to see ice that is consistently as good as ours. I think it's worth taking some time to appreciate how blessed we are, and also to realize that it takes hours and hours of hard work by Brian and his team. So let's do our part by getting our hands and knees up as quickly as we can.

Thanks for your help, and good curling!

Richard

## Doubles Event

With the cancellation and rescheduling of the Schooner Cash Spiel due to government mandated restrictions on tournaments, the Schooner executive decided to hold an informal doubles weekend for Schooner members on the original Cash Spiel weekend rather than see the ice and the club sit idle. It was a team event so you had to register with your partner. A total of 24 members took part. The event ran over two days, beginning on Friday evening and carrying over to finish on Saturday. Everyone was treated to pizza on Saturday. Top curlers on the weekend included Brian Laughlin and Gordie Cormier with Benito DeLorenzo and Brittini Fernandes close behind. Then we had Joe Erickson and Keith MacEachern who edged out Bob Smith and Bryant Cormier. Thanks to everyone who took part and to everyone who organized the weekend on short notice. The doubles game is a great way to practice and hone your curling skills and it's lots of fun to play. There is a doubles spiel still tentatively scheduled for April so keep an eye open for that and plan to take part if it is a go.

## Sweetheart Spiel

With the official Sweetheart Spiel, originally scheduled to run on February 11-12, cancelled due to government mandated Covid restrictions, a big hole was left in the Schooner curling schedule for the season. Luckily, an informal weekend of lady's curling was able to happen on February 25 and 26. While tournaments were still restricted in February and will not be allowed until March 7, a group of the Schooner ladies got together to play

some practice games on the weekend and socialize over a drink or two. On Friday night there was wine and some snacks and on Saturday the ladies sat down to share a meal of Chinese food from the New Moon restaurant in Sydney. The New Moon provided a great meal and gave the ladies a good price. Even though this was just an informal weekend, long time Sweetheart Spiel sponsor, Compu Clone Computer Solutions of Sydney, made a contribution to help cover the cost of the meal and other expenses as well. Schooner member, Russell Fitzgerald, and former member, Martin Campbell, still helped out with the wine on Friday as they have been doing since the lady's event was started.

While not quite the same as the regular Sweetheart that sees ladies from other clubs also join us to take part and compete in the spiel, this was still a good substitute and all the Schooner women who participated had a great time. We even had a couple of special guest members fill in some open spaces on Friday. A big thank you to Ginger, Bianca and Sindy for helping out and performing so well. We would also like to congratulate Frances Ford, Marcie Bungay, Brittini Fernandes and Marnie MacDonald who were some of the top performers of those who were involved. They were helped by Sindy on Friday. A special thanks goes out to all who helped out in organizing the practice games and the refreshments and thank you also to all the Schooner members who participated. Next year we hope things are more back to normal and we can get back to our official spiel but this was a good alternative given the times we are in.

## **Schooner Cash Spiel**

Arguably the premier event on the Schooner calendar for the season, the Schooner Open Cash Spiel was scheduled to take place on the long weekend in February running from the 18th to 20th. Again, with tournament play still prohibited at that time, the Schooner Cash wasn't able to happen on its scheduled dates and had to be rescheduled, now being held on March 18-20.

Official registration is now underway and there are a number of teams signed up already. This spiel is a team entry event, teams can be any combination of male and female curlers from any club, not just Schooner, and it will be run in a draw format. Entry is \$200 per team and all entry money will be returned in prizes. All teams are guaranteed three games and there will be dinner on Saturday. There will also be snacks and entertainment provided throughout the weekend. There will also be a social held on Saturday night, March 19, from 9-1, in the club house. The social is open to all Schooner members and guests.

## **Schooner Fun Spiel**

The Schooner Club will be holding an in-house Fun Spiel from Thursday, March 10 to Saturday, March 12. Open to members only, this is a single entry event, cost is \$20 per player and you are guaranteed three games, one on your choice of Thursday or Friday and two on Saturday. Lunch will be provided on Saturday as well. Registration is now open and you can sign up at the club. This will be one of the Schooner Club's first special events after the easing of Covid restrictions by the government. Plan to join us and have some fun curling. Sign up soon.

## **Instruction**

The Schooner Club will be opening its ice to members who want to learn a little bit more about and practice their techniques of both throwing and sweeping on Friday, March 4 from 7-9pm. It's a great way for new members to learn from more experienced curlers and further your game. There will also be some discussions on game etiquette and strategy so you will learn more about the game of curling in general as well as how to better your skills. Open to all Schooner members, just drop by.

## **Spring Fling Mixed - Sydney Curling Club**

It looks like there may still be a few spots open for the Spring Fling Mixed Spiel that will be held at the Sydney Curling Club from March 25 to 27. This is a 'true' mixed format meaning that there must be two male and two female curlers on each team and that they must play alternating positions. This is always a great weekend at the Sydney club with lots of fun, food and great curling. If anyone is interested in entering a team, you should do so quickly as this spiel normally fills up to its capacity. Contact the Sydney Curling Club for more info.

## **Schooner Fun Nights**

Schooner Fun Nights were scheduled to return to the club on Saturday, January 22 but, given restrictions to events, we had no choice but to cancel. The next two Fun Nights, February and March, also had to be cancelled due to restrictions in place and scheduling conflicts. We have rescheduled the March Fun Night to Saturday, April 2. It looks like we will finally be able to get back to having our Fun nights after two seasons of uncertainty. Fun nights are social nights at the club that are open to both members and the general public. They are designed to introduce more people to the sport of curling and all members are encouraged to attend and bring some friends. They get going at 7pm and curling takes place all evening. There's pizza for everyone and maybe even a few prizes to be given away. The cost is \$7 for the public and \$4 for Schooner members. There's no better deal in town for a night of fun. Participants must be 19 years and older. We supply the equipment, you just need clean, dry shoes for the ice. Schooner Fun Nights are a great way to get out of the house with family and friends and enjoy a night out for just a few bucks. Plan to join us.

## **Schooner Awards Banquet and Other Off- Season Events**

With government mandated restrictions due to Covid 19 now becoming eased and soon completely lifted, we are now able to look forward to a return to some events that were impossible to hold when restrictions were in place. The Schooner awards banquet and dance, always a popular year-end event, will likely be possible this year after it has been cancelled for the last couple. A date, a venue and other details are still being worked out but updates will be made available to all members through the club, email and Facebook as they become available. Other off-season events such as the Schooner Golf Day and Steak BBQ and washer toss tournament may also be able to return with the easing of restrictions. Again, members will be notified of further details as they become available. Keep an eye on your email and on the Schooner Facebook site for updates on these and other potential events to be held during the spring and summer months.

## Snowball



Schooner members are reminded of the nightly Snowball Draw fundraiser that is held at the club during all regular scheduled league games. Each night it is held, members can sign in to play for an entry fee of \$2. For each entry, \$1 goes to the club and \$1 goes towards the prize. While you don't have to be present to win, you do have to sign in yourself, no one else can do it for you, and you must sign in on the night of the draw, you cannot sign in ahead of time for a future draw. Each member has been assigned a number that is posted at the bar. At the end of each night, one number will be drawn and, if that member has signed in for that draw, they win the jackpot. If that member is not signed in, the prize carries over and "Snowballs" into a bigger prize for the next draw as entries for that night are added to the accumulated prize. The accumulated jackpot will carry over and grow until it is won, then we start again. We have seen some pretty big prizes this year so far even with the shutdowns due to the pandemic. The Snowball is also an important source of revenue for the club that helps pay monthly expenses and keeps costs to members at a more reasonable level. So the next time you are at the club for a league game and the snowball is running, drop a twoonie into the box and sign up to play. You could win a great cash prize. Imagine how disappointing it would be if you were at the club and missed out on the money when you didn't sign in or how really, really, REALLY disappointed you would be if you were the one who drew your own number when you haven't signed in and missed out on the cash. It's happened. It only costs you \$2 and it helps the club and saves you all that disappointment.

## Schooner Goes Scent Free

Just a reminder, in a recent decision by the Schooner executive, the club is now a scent free zone as it has been discovered that some members are sensitive and/or allergic to some scents and fragrances. We ask all members to respect the new policy by refraining from wearing fragrant products and colognes when attending the club. This policy comes into effect immediately. Thank you for your cooperation.

*Happy St. Patrick's Day*

