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Hit and tap to stardom for younger curlers

By Shellee Morning

King Curling Club

Huntsville was the place to be last weekend, not only for the Men's Ontario Provincial Tankard (winner represents Ontario at The Brier), but for some very lucky youth curlers who qualified to participate in the Youth Ontario Hit and Tap event.

Austin Broad (aged 11 to 13), Sierra Sheardown (nine to 10), Kyle Strano (six to eight), and Austin Ford (six to eight) of King Curling Club were ushered onto ice level just like the pros with the crowd cheering them on like this was the main event. These four youngsters became eligible for the highly-coveted event after qualifying within their own club competition and submitting their scores into the Ontario Data Base against 700 other youth curlers. Placing in the top 10 of Ontario in their respected age groups qualified them to advance to the finals at the Huntsville Summit Centre.

The events included the Hit: hit a rock and where it ended up in the house indicated the score received; and the Tap: tapping a rock up into the rings and where it stopped indicated the score. The last event was the Draw: closest rock to the button. Scores were awarded according the rings of the house ? five points on the button, four for the four-foot rings, three for the eight-foot area and two for the 12-foot outer ring area.

Excitement radiated on their faces that spread rink wide as each threw their rocks in an atmosphere that was electrifying. These future stars relished with legends Glenn Howard and John Epping watching closely from the boards and no doubt wishing they too had the confidence and nerves of steel that these kids displayed.

Cheers of ?hurry hard? were raised to new levels on the sound radar with every hit made and the smiles got bigger with every tap to the button. Pride was evident with Coach Julie Oakley as her charges did their best and made their club proud.

First time participant Kyle Strano placed third in his age group, collecting the trophy for those aged six to eight.

?All the kids did very well and seeing Kyle with the biggest grin on his face is moments like this that makes a coach very proud and keeps me coaching,? Oakley said.

Afterwards, they were all treated to watching the men's semi-final and during the fifth-end break, the kids were brought back out to ice level for a victory parade and announcement of the winners.

A Pizza party concluded the days' events.

Little Rockers

The 36th Annual Future Champs Bonspiel was recently held at the Bayview G.C. Club, and King Curling was proud to send a team of Little Rockers for the three-game contest.

Skip Carson Strano and his squad of Vice Kyle Strano, Second William Ford and Lead Austin Ford played in their first ever spiel.

The challenge presented itself with the kids used to only practising three-end games and never before playing on ice rather than at their own club. Although they lost two games and tied the third, the kids placed a very respectable sixth overall.

The games they lost both came down to the last rock in the last end for a single point difference.

Great sportsmanship by each player and the fun they had was tenfold.

Coach Julie Oakley was very happy with their accomplishments and was elated by their excitement when she was asked where their next Bonspiel was. Congratulations team Strano on a fine debut performance.

Austin Broad, Sierra Sheardown, Kyle Strano and Austin Ford participated in the Ontario Youth Hit and Tap event held at the Huntsville Summit Centre. The King curlers advanced to the final event after qualifying in the top 10 in Ontario in their respective age groups.

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Little Rockers Austin Ford, William Ford, Carson Strano and Kyle Strano represented King Curling at the Future Champs Bonspiel held at the Bayview Golf and Curling Club.