

Classic curling in mixed team action

By Shellee Morning

King Curling Club

Putting some curl into the rock may sound difficult to the non-curler, but for the Thursday night Mixed Team players, it's an essential part of their game.

Ice conditions also play a major factor for these athletes and more importantly, it's how the skip (and who) reads the ice first. Ice maker Richard Quick has once again prepared a fast pebbled surface that keeps the players on their brooms as the ice conditions change throughout the game. Once the ice reading is conquered, the skip can then guide his/her team to perform to the best of their ability and ultimately achieve victory.

Sheets 1 through 4 on the early draw were full of action this past week as they headed into week three of regular season play. The night's team contests were as evenly matched as the Jays' and Indians' bull pens, minus a star rookie.

Team Karl Davis against Team Dan Steenhoek always certifies a back-and-forth, hit-for-hit style of game. Tied going into the last end 4-4, Skip Steenhoek led his squad brilliantly toward a last rock hit and stick shot for the 5-4 win.

Team Robinson and Team Gerrits, both missing key players due the current fall hunting season, required skillful spares to be competitive against their opponents. Skip Larry Sheardown (spared for Skip George Gerrits) commented on his front-end playing great and throwing their rocks to what was asked for. Nancy McCarron stepped up into skip position for her team as Clay Jackson was off to hunt for that prestigious prize. Mid-way through, Team Gerrits had the lead and control of the game, but knowing quite well to never underestimate Wilf Robinson and Kaye Groen as they chipped away at the board eventually squaring off for a 6-6 tie. Sheet 3 was well represented by Teams Gorsline and Broad. An exciting end for end contest with both teams executing some great shots, but it was Stephen Heise for Team Broad who had a magnificent game with several end-changing shots that kept the Gorsline team in the chase. Gorsline up by a point in the seventh and final end, Skip Broad delivered his last stone at nuclear speed in hopes of either a hit and roll to tie or a lucky double hit to win the game. As the rock crusaded down the ice at warp speed, it nicked a guard re-directing itself removing two of his stones and leaving three opponent rocks, handing Gorsline an 8-4 win.

The Boynton versus Howard game was classic curling with all the bells and whistles. Howard jumped out first for the lead, but Boynton switched gears by the third, applied some pressure and came within one. Vice Fran Bones focused well on her throws, setting up her skip Scott Boynton throughout the game while the husband and wife duo of Diane and Gary Howard continued with their matrimonial style of accurate takeouts and timely guards. Final decision would be a 5-5 tie.

The late draw was to be no different for exciting games and surprising wins.

Dave Swackhammer and his comrades hammered Team John Phillips 9-4 while over on sheet 3, Skip Bryce Clark guided his team with a solid effort win of 7-3 over Team Sidon.

Skip Dave Barber, wife Sandra as vice and Anne Jessop at lead welcomed Greg Switzer new to the team this season to play in 2nd position. Switzer, a veteran player, seems to have fit well into the Barber weave as they trounced Team Wright 10-1.

In the battle of rookie teams new to the Mixed League are skip Brad Stronach, vice Kelly Stronach and Stephan Niepage against skip Doug Brown, vice Cindy Brown, 2nd Dave Grosse and Pam McKinley at lead. Opening ends were exchanged as the evenly matched teams both collected their points. Superior draws were made while the double take-outs were executed with ease. As both squads were playing for rookie bragging rights, Team Stronach would squeak by after an in-off hit by the skipper for an 8-7 win.