

Game of 'steals' sets the tone at King Curling Club

By Shellee Morning

While the second week of the season is now in the King Curling Club's history books, some teams are already on winning streaks, with others still brushing for a win.

In the Mixed Team Entry League, draw one posted challenges with the ultimate draw for the win as teams struggled to find the perfect weight.

Team Swackhammer struggled a bit in their match against team Davis, who stole a single point in each of the first three ends. Skip Dave Swackhammer looked to be in trouble again in the fourth, but after superior sweeping by Joanne and Peter Mumford, the skipper executed an angle raise takeout for two. That timely raise seemed to be the turning point of the game for Swackhammer, as he and his squad returned the favour of steals, collecting their single points in each of the final ends to earn the 5-3 win. Vice Lou Ann Curtis commented that it was truly a game of steals and you can never give up until the last rock is thrown.

Last season's runner-up champion Team Gerrits is on a winning streak, with back-to-back wins so far with a victory against league champion Team Broad, as well as last week's close broom-for-broom win over Team Robinson. The 7-5 win showcased the precision take-outs by Al Courneya and perfect draw weight from the Skip. Team Robinson wasn't totally out done, as they too executed some high-performance take-outs and timely come-arounds, keeping the game close.

Other winning teams included Sheardown, Stronach and Brown from the early draw and Barber, Boynton and Broad with solid efforts from the late draw.

Beginner program gets underway

Friday night curling opened a new platform for beginner curlers this year that allows them to learn the basics of skill and safety of the game.

This Adult Instructional League involves eight consecutive sessions held Friday evenings alternating between the 7 and 9 p.m. draws. Each session will build from the previous one, progressing through a program designed and approved by the Ontario Curling Association (OCA).

The club's trained OCA coaches will instruct the proper way to deliver a rock, basic strategy, team play and introduce structured games beginning in the fifth session. Once the program is complete, participants will be encouraged to join the regular Friday night league as they will have graduated to being 'game ready' for the second half of the season Jan.5.

There have been 27 participants and five coaches who filled the four sheets, all displaying an excited and eager manner to learn. The new approach when working with rookie curlers emphasized stretching beforehand as a preventive measure against injury, and getting used to the gripper and slider immediately. Participant Bill Barron said that the instructors made the first time being on the ice feel safe by learning the very basics first.

'My instructor slightly moved my broom a little closer from where it was (for pushing off in the hack) and that completely changed my balance making the slide a lot easier,' Barron said. 'I really enjoyed it all.'

Bob Belcher, one of the instructors, thought the first session went really well.

'In fact, the enthusiasm from the group was so great they gave a round of applause at the end of the session,' he said.

Belcher stated that the slow start to learning balance on the ice is critical and that once a curler feels safe, the rest of the learning process is made a lot easier. Sweeping, learning which way to curl the rock and determining the weight of the throw are all components of the game that will take the next few weeks to absorb, but when the session is complete these future legends will be one of the hurry hard crew sweeping to victory.