

## King's bantam curlers exude potential and excitement

By Shellee Morning

King Curling Club

"We all have a lot of fun together as a team and really like curling together," said Kayla Emmerton of the King Lions Bantam curling team.

Emmerton, who plays vice, is joined by Ethan Mumford as the skip, Rachel Fenning as second and Cameron Sheardown as lead in their first year as a team and first year in their East 1 Division of the Youth Interclub League of Toronto Curling Association (TCA). Coach Julie Oakley said that there were so many kids signed up this year, TCA had to divide the West and East Divisions into two groups to accommodate the increased interest of youth curlers. Each division has 12 teams that play a round-robin format within their roster to determine division title winners. The winners from Division 1 will play against Division 2 for the overall championship trophy.

Teams from Aurora, Oshawa, Unionville, Richmond Hill, Toronto, Leaside, East York and Newmarket make up the East 1 Division rotating the youth games between each club. The format allows youth curling to experience games on different ice surfaces as well and the chance to meet other curlers among their age group. The age range for bantam is 13 to 15 and King's team is well represented with four resilient, energetic and fun kids that really do gel with each other. The smiles they generate on the ice while playing is contagious and one can't help but cheer them on. King Lions hold a 2-4 record so far this season with more games to go. They will use this year as a learning year, being the rookies of the field. But make no mistake. With their competitive attitude and the high willingness to learn, these kids will no doubt be seeing their names at the top of the list.

After a tough loss this past weekend against Division leaders Donalda Dragons, Mumford and his squad never gave up and did so with smiles on their faces. Even with the score out of reach, and the Donalda Skip ready to shake hands, they were inspired to carry on and play the seventh end.

Coach Oakley commented on her team, saying "that they are such a great group of kids to work with and always come to the rink with a great attitude."

When working with a team that is keen and passionate about their sport, and encourages each other like these kids do, Oakley said "it's exciting to imagine where these kids will go with the potential they have. The more experience they get, the better they get, and they will be contenders."

King Lions next game is Feb. 4 against the host team of the Leaside Lancers (0-5-1).

With the sport of curling growing across the nation as well as our local clubs, it is so refreshing to watch our youth enjoy what they do for fun without the pressures of having to be the best or the not-needed tension between kids, coaches and parents. Curling is a non-contact sport that has a unique approach to its competition, whether it be on a recreational or competitive level. There are no referees, and the players themselves conclude on the deciding scores or measures. Players shake hands and wish their opponent good curling before the game. Players will also congratulate their opponent on a great shot, shake hands when the match is over and then join them for a social gathering after the game.

King Curling club wishes their bantams continued success and good curling for the remainder of the year.



King Lions Bantam curling team is led by Skip Ethan Mumford, with Kayla Emmerton as vice, Rachel Fenning second, and Cameron Sheardown as lead. Photo by Shellee Morning