

The Hack & Back



Official newsletter of the Fergus Curling Club, the oldest continuous curling club in Ontario since 1834

February

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Newsletter

Bill Longshaw

More on this year's Scotties and Brier

News that Curling Canada has officially announced it is looking at 18-team fields for the Tim Hortons Brier and Scotties Tournament of Hearts this year was met with applause by teams that were worried about being left on the outside, looking in, at the Calgary bubble. "It does appear to be great news," Winnipeg skip Mike McEwen said Wednesday. "We'll just have to wait a little longer for the official invite in black and white. We're amazed at the extent Curling Canada and its partners have gone to identify the need for a small expansion."

In recent years, the Brier and Scotties have been played with 16-team fields, which include representation from 14 member associations, the returning champion (Team Canada) and one wild-card team, which is determined by a wild-card game on the night before the event begins. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the curling season in Canada has been completely disrupted, but Curling Canada has announced plans to play major championships in a bubble environment in Calgary, starting on Feb. 20.

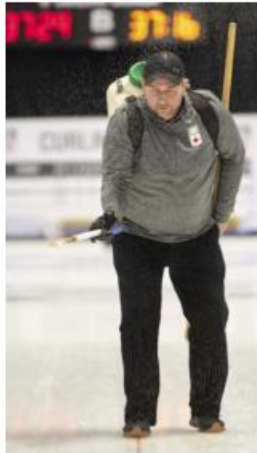
Different thinking was needed to fill out the fields for those events because many provinces and territories have cancelled their provincial championships and are naming last year's winners as representatives. Curling Canada is now saying that all 14 provinces and territories will be represented — there was a concern that some wouldn't be able to send teams — and each event's Team Canada (skipped by Newfoundland and Labrador's Brad Gushue, and Gimli, Man.'s Kerri Einarson) are ready to participate as well.

So now, the plan is to add three "wild card" teams, which will be picked using the 2019-20 Canadian Team Ranking System standings.

"We're very excited to hear about the expansion to 18 teams," said Selena Njegovan, who plays third for Manitoba's Tracy Fleury. "In a year full of uncertainty, we are excited to have something to look forward to."

More on page 3 & 6

If you look 5 paragraphs down you will see a notation about Audra Lindsey who is the daughter of Neil and Starr Lindsey. The Lindsey's were avid curlers in our club and Neil was our ice maker for a number of years. We found it pretty interesting. Some facts about championships



Several Manitobans will hope for protracted stays in the hub city of Calgary half-dozen marquee curling events begin next month. None will stay longer or put in more hours than Greg Ewasko.

The Oakbank resident is regarded as the go-to guy when it comes to creating the finest ice conditions for top-flight curling events locally and across the country.

Ewasko has done 12 Briers, one Scotties Tournament of Hearts and a pair of Olympic Trials, in addition to several Grand Slam of Curling events and international championships in Beijing and Sweden. He's also been the head ice-maker for Manitoba's provincial championships for more than a decade.

But Ewasko maintains the biggest test of his professional career begins in mid-February when six events are held in succession at Winsport Arena at Calgary Olympic Park. He'll be confined to the bubble — away from his wife, Monique, and his two sons, Owen and Sam — for 77 days. "I would definitely say it'll be the most challenging. This hub-city thing is huge," he said this week.

"Everyone wants to get out curling. I want to get out ice making. I love ice making and I'm all

game for this."

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many sports to establish competition "bubbles," most without fans, to prevent the spread of the virus. Curling Canada is hosting a condensed version of its Season of Champions, with the Scotties, Brier, Canadian mixed doubles and world men's championship, all inside an empty rink.

The Grand Slam of Curling then moves in to host two lucrative events, the Players' Championship and Champions Cup.

Ewasko leaves for Cowtown on Feb. 9 to the playing surface for the Scotties. He will then tear it out and replace it with new logos and ice for the Brier. The sheets will undergo a major makeover no fewer than four over about nine weeks by a talented contingent of ice technicians. The crew will also include Audra Lindsey of St. Albert, Alta., set to become the first female ice tech to work at a major Canadian championship.

Events at the club level, provincially and across the country have been scrapped owing to the pandemic. Ewasko said he hasn't even been inside a curling club since October, focusing on his business, Down Under Directional Drilling, but is pumped about returning to Calgary.

"It's a totally different surface all the way through. It's going to be a challenge but we've got excellent people coming in to work," Ewasko said. "(Curling Canada) flew me out in the middle of October to check out Winsport and get my two cents on things. I'd been there before for a Grand Slam event and it's a fantastic venue."



The turnaround times are incredibly tight, down to the precise hour. The crew has six days to install the ice for the Scotties (Feb. 18-28) and then 68 hours to modify the site for the Brier (March 5-15). Once the Canadian men's championship is over, the crew has 70 hours to revise the ice for the national mixed doubles (March 18-25).

Ewasko and company will then have a chance to catch their breath, with six days before new ice is required for the men's worlds (April 2-11). The back-to-back Grand Slams begin the middle of April.

"We will have some of the same competitors from the Scotties and Brier playing in the mixed doubles, so, my goal is to have really good ice all the way. That's what you hope for — good, consistent, swingy ice," Ewasko said. "At the Scotties, the women are going to have four-and-a-half to five feet of curl, 25-second ice (hog line to stop), the men (at the Brier) will have four-and-a-half to five feet of curl, 25-second ice (hog line to stop).

"Everything has to be consistent. That's what I'm aiming for and, hopefully, it happens."

"It's his incredible dedication and love of making a perfect sheet of ice," said Danny Lamoureux Curling Canada's director of club development and event operations, "Greg is tireless, the volunteers love working with him, he's always happy and he pays incredible attention to detail to make sure the ice is absolutely perfect. When I know Greg's going into the building, I don't lose any sleep over what's going to happen in the ice area. I know it's going to be done perfectly.



Krazy urling ostums



Continued from page 1

Fleury's team finished second in the CTRS rankings last season, played in the 2019 wild card game (losing to Jennifer Jones) and would have been a lock to play in the 2020 wild card game again, based on the same standings.

Fleury's team will be one of the three women's squads added to the expanded field, but after that it's a little more tricky. Edmonton's Kelsey Rocque would be next in the standings, but has two new team members this year, which muddies the waters.

Winnipeg's Mackenzie Zacharias, who won the world junior championship gold medal in 2020, would be next on the list after that.

On the men's side, things are a little more clear.

McEwen, 2019 Canadian champ Kevin Koe of Calgary and former world champion Glenn Howard of Ontario, would be in line to earn the spots based on CTRS rankings.

"Our sport has found a way to support worthy teams in unfortunate situations," McEwen said. "It seems to me this is an inclusionary, compassionate and Canadiana way of doing things."



HURRY HOG!!!

PORK PROUD

Try This...

Submitted by Myrna Bianco, a Faithful Our Town Reader

How smart is your right foot?

This is hysterical. You have to try this.

It is absolutely true. I guess there are some things that the brain cannot handle.



1. While sitting in a chair, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles.

2 Now, while doing this, draw the number '6' in the air with your right hand. Your foot will change direction.

I told you so! And there is absolutely nothing you can do about it! You and I both know how stupid it is, but before the day is done you are going to try it again, if you've not already done so.

Stiff Penalties at Scotties and Brier Outside of Bubble

Curling Canada will impose harsh penalties should anyone step outside its proposed competition bubble in Calgary, CBC Sports has learned.

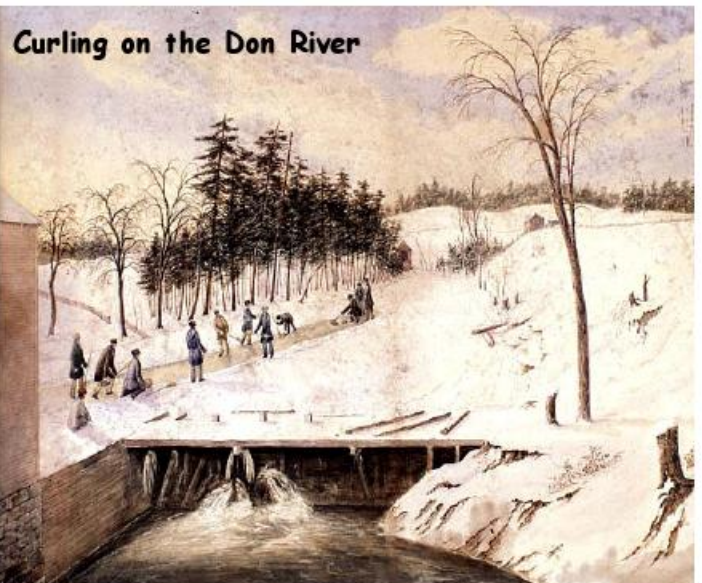
The national sport federation announced it will hold both the men's and women's national championships, as well as mixed doubles national, the men's world championships over a number of weeks starting February stretching into April.

Two Grand Slam of Curling events will take place at the Markin McPhail Arena at Canada Olympic Park. Any player or coach who leaves the Calgary curling bubble without clearance for any reason during the Scotties or Brier, or invites a non-participant into the bubble, will not only be disqualified from competition immediately, but that individual or individuals will also be suspended from competitive play until July 2022. That means no Olympics in Beijing in 2022.

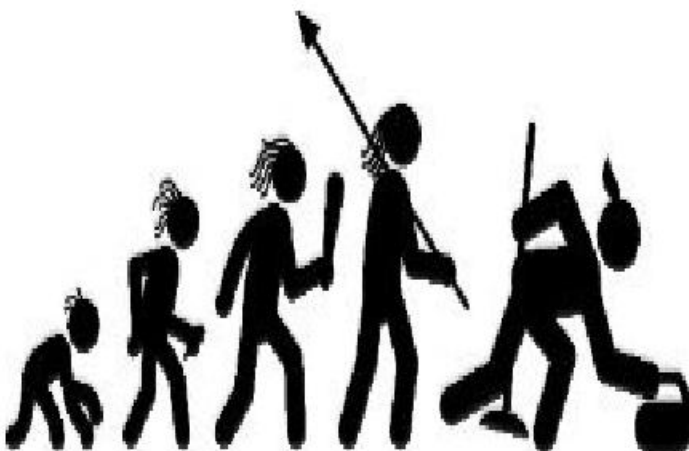


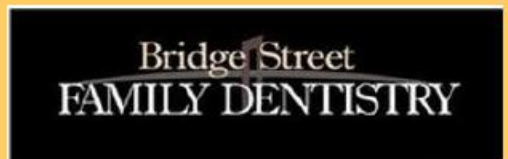
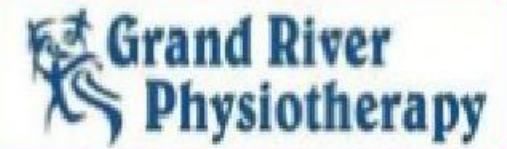
Ever since Covid-19 shut us down for the season we have been wondering if we will still hold on to the designation of being "The oldest continuous curling club in Ontario".

Well it looks like we can! In a statement from our President Calum McGeachie who said "We are still a club whether we curl or not. We have not disbanded or closed. We still have directors and a membership and we will have an AGM. So whether we curl or not is a non factor". He went on to say "that this has been verified by many people and lawyers".




Curling on the Don River





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TSN TV CURLING SCHEDULE 2021

2021 SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS (CALGARY, AB)

DATE	TIME (ET)	MATCHUP
Friday, February 19, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Saturday, February 20, 2021	10:30am	Pool Play
Saturday, February 20, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Saturday, February 20, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Sunday, February 21, 2021	10am	Pool Play
Sunday, February 21, 2021	3pm	Pool Play
Sunday, February 21, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Monday, February 22, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Monday, February 22, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Tuesday, February 23, 2021	10:30am	Pool Play
Tuesday, February 23, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Tuesday, February 23, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Wednesday, February 24, 2021	10:30am	Pool Play
Wednesday, February 24, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Wednesday, February 24, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Thursday, February 25, 2021	10:30am	Pool Play
Thursday, February 25, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Thursday, February 25, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Friday, February 26, 2021	10am	Tiebreaker (If Necessary)
Friday, February 26, 2021	2:30pm	Championship Round
Friday, February 26, 2021	8:30pm	Championship Round
Saturday, February 27, 2021	2:30pm	Championship Round
Saturday, February 27, 2021	8:30pm	Championship Round
Sunday, February 28, 2021	10am	Tiebreaker (If Necessary)
Sunday, February 28, 2021	2:30pm	Semifinal
Sunday, February 28, 2021	8:30pm	Final

2021 TIM HORTONS BRIER (CALGARY, AB)

DATE	TIME (ET)	MATCHUP
Friday, March 5, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Saturday, March 6, 2021	10:30am	Pool Play
Saturday, March 6, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Saturday, March 6, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Sunday, March 7, 2021	10:30am	Pool Play
Sunday, March 7, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Sunday, March 7, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Monday, March 8, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Monday, March 8, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Tuesday, March 9, 2021	10:30am	Pool Play
Tuesday, March 9, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Tuesday, March 9, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Wednesday, March 10, 2021	10:30am	Pool Play
Wednesday, March 10, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Wednesday, March 10, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Thursday, March 11, 2021	3:30pm	Pool Play
Thursday, March 11, 2021	8:30pm	Pool Play
Friday, March 12, 2021	10am	Tiebreaker (If Necessary)
Friday, March 12, 2021	2:30pm	Championship Round
Friday, March 12, 2021	8:30pm	Championship Round
Saturday, March 13, 2021	2:30pm	Championship Round
Saturday, March 13, 2021	8:30pm	Championship Round
Sunday, March 14, 2021	10am	Tiebreaker (If Necessary)
Sunday, March 14, 2021	2:30pm	Semifinal
Sunday, March 14, 2021	8:30pm	Final

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