

ROCKtalk

The newsletter of the
London Curling Club

January 2020



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Club members generously support holiday toy drive

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Team Nichols wins skins bonspiel in a shoot out

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Ukulele group serenades WDS Christmas luncheon

Former London Curling Club junior now curling on Spain's national men's team

Nicholas Shaw, son of London Curling Club member Gary Shaw, was recently home for the Christmas holidays, and gave us some details about his experiences playing in Spain.

How did you end up playing in Spain with the men's national team?

It wasn't planned! I grew up curling bantam, high school, and juniors and later mens at London Curling Club, Ilderton Curling Club and in Hamilton at the Brant Curling Club before moving to Europe some years ago. I didn't believe there was curling in Spain, so the first couple of years, I didn't play. One summer, I saw a learn-to-curl ad for a rink in Barcelona and met some curlers there and we formed a team. Then in 2017-2018, I was coaching the Spanish junior men's and women's teams with Sergio Vez, skip of the Spanish men's and mixed teams. We got to know each other and during this time I was skipping a team from Barcelona. We played Sergio often in the Spanish championships and had some close battles. This summer, one of his team members decided to take a break from competitive playing and I was asked to join the team. Currently, Spain's mens association is ranked 25th in the world association, and our team is ranked 142nd in the world.

What is the curling environment in Spain?

There are no dedicated curling rinks. There are some hockey rinks that are converted temporarily for events. One small skating rink in Jaca, Huesca is converted to arena curling ßice for about three to five months of the



Sarah Hobday photo

year for the Spanish championships. We're lucky to have a great ice maker and the Spanish Curling Federation invested in new rocks, so the event has excellent ice and playing conditions and for Spain a reasonable level of competition. I think there are about 150 active players in the country and there is a lot of curiosity about the sport. People are always asking how and where they can try it out. Some clubs have organized learn-to-curl activities and we see new players at the social events each year. Most Spanish curlers don't get a lot of ice time, but they are really intense and play as much as possible when they can get on the ice.

How much travel is involved?

This year, we traveled every weekend in preparation for the European Curling Championships (ECC). Our main club (and coach) is in Adelboden, Switzerland, but we also played in Baden and Schaffhausen.

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Our players come from Bilbao, Barcelona, Madrid and Edinburgh (he's from Leon, Spain but lives in Scotland). We have support from the Spanish Ice Sports Federation for international events (European and World Curling Championships) and the training leading up to them. For other events and for the club we have incredible support from the Basque region with support from Gipuzkoa Oran, Euskadi, and San Sebastian.

What are the opportunities of playing with a men's national team?

Just being able to play the ECC and amazing events like Basel Masters is a huge opportunity. We've worked with coaches from Switzerland and Denmark.


Being able to train, improve, learn about the game, and be around other teams is a massive perk. I feel like each event we attend we learn something about how we can improve, and how to play better together. It's always fun to play the elite teams, like Edin, Mouat and Rios you see where and how you can improve, and that's motivating. More than playing as Team Spain, I'm very grateful to play with Sergio, Mikel, Edu and Angel and the others in our club CH Txuri-Berri. They have lots of international experience (Sergio and Mikel were part of the 2018 World Mixed Curling silver medalist team) and are just an awesome group of guys to spend sometimes very long weekends training and competing with. I think one key to a successful team is a great atmosphere around and within the team.



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Members give generously to Toy Angels Toy Drive

Thank you to everyone who shared the magic of Christmas by donating a new unwrapped toy to the Toy Angels Toy Drive in support of the Salvation Army. As illustrated below, your generosity helped make Christmas a little more special for lots of local children.



The friendliest club in town

A message from Kevin MacDonald, president, London Curling Club



When I took up curling several years ago, I intended to survey area clubs to see what they had to offer. It was a short survey.

Upon entering the London Curling Club, I was warmly met by Doug Petch, club manager at the time. While we toured the building, he quickly assessed my needs and where I'd fit in within the league structure. Then he introduced me to some of the Daytime Men's League guys. I'll never forget their welcome and instant camaraderie. Search ended. It wasn't the facility, its proximity to home, or the membership rate that sold me. It was the members I met.

From that first day, it's been the people that make the London Curling Club such an enjoyable place to curl. Our employees work very hard to provide the best service to the members that they can. They're approachable and helpful. Their dedication and service is greatly appreciated. As important, is the selfless time given by many volunteers in our club whose service is invaluable. If we had to employ people to be league conveners, committee members, draw masters, board members, etc., the price of membership would be unreasonable to most.

Our membership is composed of interesting people from every stage and walk in life, from youth to our oldest curlers. Each is an ambassador for the club. Each person brings refreshing ideas and perspectives that make the personal connections so rewarding.

Thank you for making the London Curling Club "the friendliest club in town."

Team Nichols wins skins bonspiel in shootout

The 2019 edition of Thames Valley Skins Bonspiel was held on Dec. 7 with 12 teams playing three six-end games.

Unlike traditional curling scoring, in skins, each end in the game is worth a predetermined amount of points. Teams with the hammer must score at least two points to win the end and teams without the hammer must steal at least one point to win the end. The point values increase in each end and the team with most points wins the game.

Prizes were awarded to teams every time they won a game. After three games, two rinks were unbeaten; Team Mann (Dave Mann, Marcus MacRae, Ben Walmsley and Dave Cummins) and Team Nichols (Blake Nichols, Zach Nichols, Tyler Childs and Mike Cuddy). To determine the winner a turkey shoot was held using an alternating team draw to the button.

Team Nichols won the shoot out and pocketed a \$100 bonus, while Team Mann won a \$60 bonus for going unbeaten throughout the draw. Team Nichols won \$280 for their wins. Over \$1,100 in prize money was awarded at the bonspiel.

A hot shot skills competition was also help during the event with the team of Brian Parsons, Blair Willert, Derek Shadlock and Jack McLaren winning the event and pocketing \$100.

Thanks to Mike Ernewein, Randy McNaught and Mike Ramsay for hosting another successful event.




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Learn-to-curl program at capacity for 2020

Convenors Dan and Melissa Neeb have provided an update on the learn-to-curl program at our club.

A few changes were made this year, including eliminating free “come try it” sessions only offering sign up for October or January start.

Thirty-eight participants registered before the end of October. Word of mouth from club members continues to be a main reason people sign up. Additionally, participants find out about the program through the internet and social media.

Attendance varies week-to-week, but is holding steady between 25 and 30 attendees. Over the first six weeks, coaches broke down aspects of the curling delivery. Rules, etiquette and gameplay basics were covered in the remaining five weeks. Other topics covered included stretching and fitness and ice cleanliness. A fun “alternative” curling game was enjoyed during the last session before the break.

Successful events included a board of directors meet and greet, pizza night and a mid-season party with food. Participants are learning the importance of enjoying a beverage after each session and getting to know each other.

Participants are looking forward to more focus on gameplay and strategy in the second half of the program. Time will also be set aside to reinforce delivery skills with drills.

With 15 additional program spots already filled for January 2020, the program is now at capacity for the year, and at a record number of participants for the past five years. Thanks to the superb coaches who volunteer their time and passion.

WDS Christmas luncheon features ukulele group

On Dec. 11, there was much joy and laughter as 51 members of the Women’s Daytime Section (WDS) enjoyed a catered lunch in the upper lounge. Barb Colbourn was a special invited guest.

A six-end game was played by 36 curlers before lunch. Thanks to Lynda Reesor and Mardi McLachlan for being in charge of the draw.

After a lunch of turkey pot pie, salads and trifle, we were entertained by seven members from S.O.U.P. (Southwestern Ontario Ukulele Players). They were enthusiastic and had a variety of songs to enjoy and sing along with.

WDS members generously donated toiletries, clothes, gift cards and cash to My Sisters’ Place.

Special thanks to convenors Linda Peeling and Marj Dudley, and to Dianne Mckenna and Joyce Hetherington for their help selling tickets and setting up early in the morning before the curlers arrived.





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