

# ROCK TALK



Newsletter of the London Curling Club

February 2016

## Olympics creating new markets for curling stone firm

Curling's inclusion in the Olympics is shaping up as a big end for the Canada Curling Stone Co. at Lobo, whose only competitor is in Scotland. "Many countries starting out in curling buy new stones, largely due to Olympic funding," says Kim Tuck, the company's sales and marketing manager. China is buying 160 rocks, enough for 10 sheets of ice. The price for new rocks is \$11,200 for 16 stones.

Kim, whose father, Fred Veale, launched the company in 1992, also sees a growing market in Canada. "Our stones are at the age where they need to be replaced," she says. The average lifetime of a rock is 50 years.

"A lot of clubs don't realize their stones are 50-to-70 years old," she adds. They are also lighter after being machined down in maintenance work. "In most cases we take a pound off stones in poor condition, but usually half a pound. At what point do you spend money to fix these stones, or replace them."

Canada Curling Stone Co. can repair them or build new stones. Kim prefers to do whatever works in the best interest of curling clubs. "Most people think the bottom of the stone is the be-all and end-all. It's not. The strike band is," she says. It is the strike bands that take the pounding and eventually they will chip. The resulting sharp surface can damage other stones. This can lead to a flattening of the strike bands, which may alter the path of the stone. **(See photograph on Page 4.)**

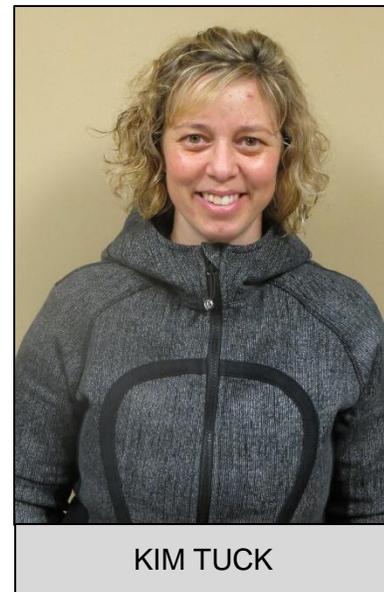
They can be fixed if the stone has not been left too long. "Once it (the strike band) gets too flat or a sharp edge, if you put two (damaged) stones together the contact area that will show how flat it is," says Kim. "Once they chip it becomes a pot hole. If we catch it soon enough we can fill it. When the hole is too big the stone will have to be replaced."

The running surface of the stone is much less vulnerable. "You can push them across concrete and we can fix them." It is usually serviced by "texturing," which involves sanding the running surface of the stone. There are two reasons for texturing. One is to clean off the debris. "It also causes scratching, which makes the running surface more aggressive. It grips the ice (enhancing the curl). A lot of clubs worry it will wear the stone out. It will be 100 years before that happens."

If a club decides to replace its stones the marketability of their old stones will depend on their condition. Some can be refurbished and sold. Those beyond repair can be sold as decorative stones. But others will choose to buy new stones. "When you see lively stones, they are likely new stones," says Kim. "New stones are heavier and in nice shape. They don't have flat spots on the strike bands. Strike bands do affect the house."

Summer is the busy season for the company because clubs bring in their stones for maintenance in the off-season. But this winter is busy, too. Five years ago, Canada Curling Stone Co. moved from Hyde Park to its current building in Lobo, which is about four times larger. Already it is too small. Who said curling is dying?

Burt Dowsett



KIM TUCK

## *Trefor and Blue-Hone curling stones a tale of two granites*

Canada Curling Stone Co. works with a quarry in Wales that will create an oversized rough form of the curling stone. With a finished stone weighing more than 40 pounds, this process saves extra weight, which in turn reduces shipping costs. When the oversized rough-form stones arrive at the Lobo plant, the technicians machine them down to the proper size.

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## Great curling witnessed at Canadian junior nationals starts at local clubs

I was watching some of the Canadian junior playoffs in Stratford and was impressed with how well they curl, know the game and play as teams. Curling in Canada is in great shape and will be for some time, judging by the teams I saw in Stratford. It all starts in local curling clubs, just like the London Curling Club. Well, perhaps not just like the LCC. We do some things that others do not do. I will summarize what we do that sets us apart and shows what a great attitude our club has towards youth in our sport.

Most clubs have in-house leagues for kids between the ages of nine and 18, including our club. Little Rocks allows youngsters ages nine to 12 to curl. The rocks are half the size and weight of regular curling stones and are used until the children are ready to use full-size rocks. LCC has a state-of-the-art set of little rocks. The Little Rockers are supported by adult instructors on Sunday morning at 11:30. The emphasis is on fun. Come watch the Little Rock bonspiel Feb. 27. Our bantam and junior league is an instructional league open to boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 18. There is an emphasis on both on-ice and off-ice training by competent coaches. There are opportunities to participate in home (Dec. 5) and away bonspiels. Time is 1 p.m. on Sundays.

We recently returned the London high school league to our club. These kids fill all six sheets Monday and Thursday afternoons between 3:30 and 5:30. I was delighted that our club so eagerly adjusted their adult leagues to allow these students to come to our club. This league complements our bantam/junior leagues. A great LCC innovation is allotting 10 Wednesday mornings for invited elementary school classes (grades seven and/or eight) to come to our club for learn to curl. We provide ice time, instruction and hot chocolate. This has been successful for us and for the elementary schools.

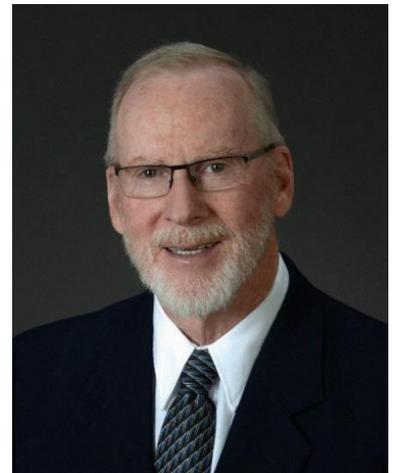
We have little ice time for other events. But we have once a year bumped our league play so we can play host to a bonspiel for bantam and/or junior curlers. We were the host to a Thames Valley junior spiel in November, where 32 teams entered and 14 teams received prize money. We had teams from all over Southern Ontario and one from Scotland. Play was distributed over three clubs (Ilderton, St. Thomas and LCC), with all finals held at our club.

For a third consecutive year, we will be the host of the OCA bantam and junior mixed provincial finals in April. It requires OCA officiating, volunteer timers and house keepers, catered banquets, 50/50 draws and extra ice maintenance.

We have more certified club coaches than any other club in Ontario. These volunteers help with clinics, learn-to-curl leagues, family day, elementary schools and ice rentals. We can use more. The club will pay for your certification. Contact our Skills Development if you're interested.

Some initiatives bring money into the club but most of all they attract new members to our club. Hopefully, wherever these kids go they will join a club and keep our sport alive. Many thanks are owed to our convenors, ice makers, club manager, coaches and volunteers for supporting youth-oriented events. Another measure of our success is the number of junior/bantam LCC teams appearing in zone, regional and provincial playdowns. We had two junior teams do well at provincials, while three bantam boys teams and two bantam girls teams enter zone competition from our regular Sunday curling group. That group has reformed itself into three bantam mixed teams for competition. We will also have two junior teams in the mixed doubles provincials at the Annandale G&CC in mid February. We are gaining visibility. Well done LCC.

*Paul Pergau, LCC President*



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## Prostate cancer bonspiel raises an estimated \$27,000

This year's fundraising bonspiel for prostate cancer research and awareness has raised about \$27,000, early indications show. "I think that may be a little bit conservative. We don't have all the donations tallied yet," said Ken Walmsley, who has been the driving force behind the charity event. Donations go through the London Health Sciences Foundation and it takes a little time to record them all.

That total far surpasses the \$18,500 raised in its inaugural event last year. There were a couple of major factors in the big increase. The silent auction raised about \$14,500 this year, up from \$9,500 in 2015. Also, more curlers participated this year, which could be attributed to the inclusion of a Saturday spiel for curlers who usually play in night leagues. That was in addition to the regular mid-week event composed of two flights. This year entry fees from curlers raised about \$6,000, compared to \$3,500 last year.

A third factor cited by Walmsley was the fact that about 12 women participated this year. The 2015 bonspiel only featured men. "That is helping. The women are interested in being more involved." Another boost came from the participation of other clubs. Five out-of-club teams entered this year. Three Ilderton rinks played on Saturday, while one team from each of Paris and London Highland curled on Wednesday.

As with any event, getting established takes time but is important. Contributing to that goal was newspaper and television coverage this year. "This is getting traction as people know more about who we are," said Walmsley.

In the mid-week bonspiel, Ron McLennan's rink of Bob Kerwin, Murray Turner and Bob Wakefield won the A flight with 34 points. Finishing a close second was the Dave Ross rink with 33½. Grant Wilson's team was third with 31¼ points. The A flight turkey shoot to the button was won by the Ross team with 20 points, followed by the rinks of Don Lowry and Ed Galloway, with 12 and 11 points respectively.

The B flight champion was Peter Jackson's rink of John Crosby, Cathy Townsend and Guiti Massoumi, with 34½ points. LCC President Paul Pergau's team finished second with 33½ points. Ted Walker's rink was third with 30 points. Gary Thompson's team won the B flight turkey shoot with 22 points, followed closely by Larry Round's team with 21 points.

These two flights were intended mainly for daytime curlers. They followed, by four days, a related Saturday prostate bonspiel. Chuck Townsend's rink of Ken Walmsley, Jim Russell and Barry Montgomery won that one, with 29¾ points. Joe Wilson's Ilderton rink was second with 29 points, while the LCC rinks of Bob Freel and Dan Yurkewich tied for third, each with 27 points. The turkey shoot was won by Bob Freel's rink with 19 points.



In the Saturday bonspiel, Chuck Townsend's rink of Ken Walmsley, Jim Russell and Barry Montgomery was the winner.



Skip Ron McLennan, far right, and his rink of Bob Wakefield, Murray Turner and Bob Kerwin won the A-flight in the mid-week spiel.



B-flight champions in the mid-week bonspiel are, from left to right, John Crosby, Cathy Townsend, Guiti Massoumi and skip Peter Jackson.

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The CNC machine shapes the new stones as water cools both the tooling and the granite during the process.



A pocket is machined into one side of a Trefor granite stone, into which a Blue-Hone granite insert is placed and secured with epoxy. Both sides can be used as running surfaces.

# TWO GRANITES

This is accomplished on a CNC machine with a computer program that enables the operator to achieve the exact dimensions required. The new stones are 136.5 millimetres high, 278.2 millimetres in diameter and 18.6 kilograms in weight, which is 41 pounds.

The stones are made from blue Trefor and red Trefor granite. One side of the stone contains a Blue-Hone granite insert running surface, while the second side has a running surface made of the parent material, which is Trefor granite. "Our stones are playable on both sides," says sales and marketing manager Kim Tuck, adding that some clubs will use the insert side for their everyday in-club play, while saving the Trefor side for their more competitive events such as playdowns or big cashspiels. Blue-Hone is ideal for the running surface due to its fine grain make up, but not for the strike bands as it will chip more readily than other types of granite.

In order to install the Blue Hone insert, a 3/4-inch deep pocket is machined into the parent Trefor granite stone on the side of the stone that will be the insert side. A disk of Blue Hone material is then epoxied into the pocket of the stone. Once that is complete the new stone will move to the CNC machine to have the running surfaces on both the Blue Hone insert and Trefor sides machined into the stone.

The company does more than 95 per cent of the finished work on the stones, which enables it to be considered a Canadian-made product.

Canada Curling Stone Co. also sells ice equipment such as pebbling gear, scraper blades and Nippers, all designed and built in-house, thanks to company founder Fred Veale's machinist talents. About the only things they don't sell to clubs are paint and refrigeration equipment.

*Burt Dowsett*



In this illustration, the strike bands of two damaged stones have a much wider point of contact than two new stones. (Source: Canada Curling Stone Co. website <http://www.canadacurlingstone.on.ca/strikeband.php>)

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## Tucks set sights on qualifying for mixed doubles at Olympics

The husband-and-wife team of Wayne and Kim Tuck not only works in the business of making curling stones, they throw them, too. Long-time competitive curlers, they are now setting their sights on qualifying as Canada's representative in the new category of mixed doubles at the 2018 Olympics.

Curling Canada's plan for qualification is not ready yet. Kim thinks it may be based on a point system earned in mixed-doubles events leading to Olympic trials, similar to how men's and women's teams qualify.

"This season we started training and as we get closer to the Olympics we will play more mixed double events in Canada," said Kim. There are a lot of mixed doubles competitions overseas and the couple would like to enter them if they can get enough sponsors.

The recent Continental Cup in Las Vegas provided exposure to the relatively new mixed doubles competition. Each team has six rocks but they only throw five. One of each team's rocks is placed on the ice surface before the end starts, leaving five to be thrown. One player throws the team's first and fifth rocks, while his or her teammate throws the second, third and fourth stones.

*Burt Dowsett*



Kim and Wayne Tuck are pictured at the 2014 World Mixed Doubles Curling Championships in Dumfries, Scotland. They finished 10<sup>th</sup> out of 35 teams.

## Family connection to curling a strong support for junior stars

Two curlers with London connections on the junior team that represented Ontario in the nationals in Stratford had a similar introduction to curling. Both were encouraged by family members.

Curtis Easter's grandfather, the late Arnie Easter, was a well-known London curler who passed on his passion for the sport to Curtis and his older brother, David. Their mother, Teresa Easter, not only drove her young sons to the London Curling Club for six years, but was their teammate in the President's league.

Ontario skip Doug Kee, who moved to London from Sarnia with his parents and sister in August of 2014, remembers the role his father played in his development as a curler. "It was my dad. My dad was a competitive junior player and he had stopped curling for family and work. When I and my sister were old enough he started curling again. We are third-generation curlers. My dad's mother also played.

"Dad was my coach for two seasons," said Kee. "He pretty much coached my sister through her bantam years. Then he coached me again. Until my second year of junior he was coaching me." That's about when Doug went to Carleton University in Ottawa to study engineering.

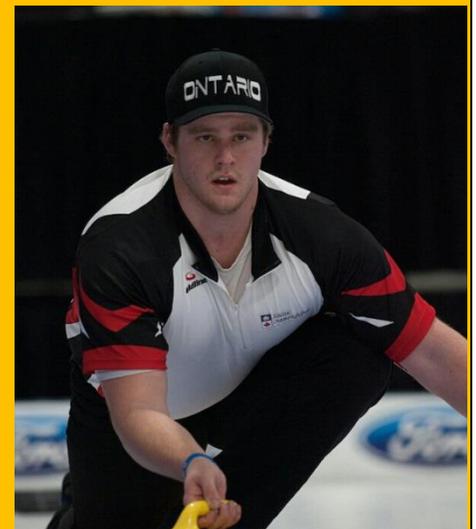
Easter, the second-team, all-star lead at Stratford, was philosophical about Ontario's 5-5 record in the Canadian junior championship. "It was a tough week. We expected more but at the end of the day it was a good experience."

Kee said a positive for him at the nationals was "being there, competing against the top juniors and meeting lots of people. I thought the team played well enough to represent Ontario well." The other two teammates on the Kee rink are third Jason Camm and second Matt Hall.

One thing no one was disputing was the dominance of skip Matt Dunstone's Manitoba rink, which beat Northern Ontario 11-4 in the championship final. The Bison team struck early and often, but probably the most demoralizing shot was Dunstone's long runback to take away an end.

"The Manitoba team was really good. They will have a real good shot at winning the world's," said Kee. Twice in one bonspiel the Dunstone rink had beaten skip Mike McEwen's Winnipeg rink that usually leads the money-winning battle in the top men's events. Easter thinks Dunstone would have been a strong contender to win Manitoba and go on to the Brier if he wasn't going to the world junior championship instead.

See **LOCAL JUNIORS** Page 8



Curtis Easter delivers a rock during the recent Canadian junior championships in Stratford. (Photo source: Curling Canada website)

## Barb Gordon's rink wins Goldline event

The rink of skip Barb Gordon, Jan Murray, Wanda Mara and Marnie Sherritt won the Goldline event, winning six of seven games. The fun social event, sponsored by the curling equipment company, concluded on Feb. 2. Forty-eight curlers participated during the seven-week period. Finishing second was the team of Linda Bailey, Lise Tranmer, Sue Lundy and Marilyn Brown, winning five games. Third place was awarded to the team of Cindy Thom, Rose Kuchynski, Liz Oehm and Connie Harris, with four wins and two ties.

The curlers were treated to an assortment of desserts and coffee after the final game. Gift certificates for the Goldline store located at 561 Southdale Road East were awarded to the top three teams. Many thanks to our sponsor, Goldline. Special thanks to convenor Sherry Chambers, co-convenor Linda Bailey and Fay Weiler, who organized the presentation of food and prizes.

*Pam Harrison, WDS chair*



The Goldline event winners, from left to right, are skip Barb Gordon, third Jan Murray, second Wanda Mara and lead Marnie Sherritt.

## Women's two-day bonspiel begins Feb. 29

Upcoming events in the months of February and March include the Nash Jewelers six-week event, convened by Lise Tranmer and Connie Harris. A one-day open event on Feb. 10 was convened by Jinx Findlay. Curlers who normally play skip and third played lead and second. Those who normally play lead and second were the skip and third. The seven-week event sponsored by Subway is convened by Pat Boothe and Katie Ungar. The women's two-day bonspiel, convened by Sharon Sivak, will be held on Feb. 29 and March 1. The closing general meeting and luncheon is on Wednesday, March 30.

*Pam Harrison, WDS chair*

## Marshall's Pasta Mill event won by McKenna rink

The seven-week Marshall's Pasta Mill event and trophy was won by the rink of Dianne McKenna, Lise Tranmer, Joan Crosby and Gwen Steffler. In second place was the team of Linda Bailey, Cathy Townsend, Mary Lucas and Mary Blasl. Third-place winners were Penny Brown, Sherry Chambers, Donna Millar and Kim Samela. The winners were each presented with a gift certificate from Marshall's Pasta Mill.

The event was convened by Jean Cameron and Mary Lucas. Forty-eight curlers enjoyed a delicious pasta lunch on the final day. Blake Marshall has sponsored this event for many years and the WDS is grateful for his generous sponsorship. Thanks also to both Jean and Mary.

*Pam Harrison, WDS chair*



The Marshall's Pasta Mill event was won by (left to right) lead Gwen Steffler, second Joan Crosby, third Lise Tranmer. Skip, Dianne McKenna, absent from the photo.



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## Scottish immigrants, others seeking winter fun led curling push

Pre-Confederation Scottish immigrants, along with others who wanted a sport to make the cold winter months more enjoyable, are credited with bringing curling to Canada. This is reported on the Curling Canada website, which cites sources such as Library and Archives Canada and Canada Curlys: An Illustrated History of Curling in Canada written by Doug Maxwell and published by Whitecap Books in 2002.

In the early days the game was played outdoors. In a forerunner of today's bonspiels or the Highland Friendly that matches our club against Highland, the pioneers of the sport in Canada were already beginning a tradition. Friendly games between nearby towns were becoming more common.

Artificial ice was a big innovation but so were the railway and better roads, which opened the door to regional, provincial and national competitions. Similarly, air travel facilitated world and Olympic competitions. Curlers' innovations did not stop there. In 1807 the Montreal Curling Club became North America's first organized sporting club.

The Montreal club used iron "stones" that were shaped like tea kettles. Considering that the men's stones weighed 60 to 80 pounds, while women's were 40 to 48 pounds, the curling term "heavy" must have had a double meaning.

In the early years stones varied in shapes, dimensions and weight, a fact that curlers learned to exploit. Small stones could go through a narrow port and large, heavy ones were great guards because it was next to impossible to move them once they came to a rest.

A big break for curlers and others who participated in other sports was the introduction of the five-day work week in 1910. Suddenly, it was game on.

## Sliding into the New Year

Elementary Learn to Curl has seven sessions to go. The format is evolving and we feel that the kids are getting more on-ice time. Jinx Findlay and Steve O'Neil have worked hard to fine tune the program. We have a group of energetic coaches who work in this program and we are seeing some of our novices joining the Little Rocks or bantam group.

The Jan. 2 clinic went well. There were 50 curlers and nine coaches. We charged \$5 for the evening and most thought it was a fabulous deal. Participants seemed to have a lot of fun and all were playing a game after an hour of instruction. We have had a couple of these people out to the Tuesday night Learn to Curl. It's always good to see new people on the ice.

Learn to Curl continues to be a strong program. There were more than 40 out for the first session in January. Dan Neeb is doing a great job leading this group.

Family Day on Feb. 15 will be our final clinic. It is generally a big one so all hands will be on deck. If you are interested in joining us for the morning please sign up.

We have more than 25 people in the club who are club coaches and they do an amazing job at introducing the sport to new curlers. Thanks for all your hard work.

*Pat Boothe, Skills and Development*

LCC members encouraged to 'support our advertisers'

## Summer curling camps across Ontario and beyond hone skills

Curling doesn't stop for summer. There are several clinics across Ontario. Here are a couple of them: OCA High Performance Team Camp, Guelph Curling Club and the Trillium Junior Summer Curling Camp, Waterloo, Ontario. No dates are available yet. For both events the contact is Jim Waite at

[waitej@execulink.com](mailto:waitej@execulink.com)

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## LOCAL JUNIORS

Easter had nothing but praise for the Stratford hosts. "It was a great week. All 200 volunteers were excellent. It was well run. The arena had two curling surfaces and both surfaces were excellent."

He attributes his development as a curler to being the youngest member on a team for most of his career. "It has pushed me to play at the level of the older teammates."

Easter thinks the game itself has improved from advancements in sweeping "The new sweeping technique has changed the game forever. Directional fabric is not needed if you have the proper technique. Directional brushing with a hair broom, Norway head or EQ is as effective as can be."

This is the last season in junior for both Easter and Kee as they have reached the age limit. Easter wants to finish his education at Fanshawe College and get a job. But he hopes someday to catch on with a team in the men's competition that leads to the Brier. In the meantime he is playing in two leagues at Highland.

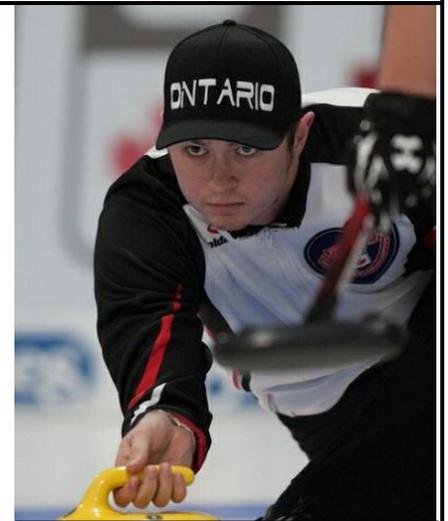
To that end, exposure is always helpful. "When you play there's always someone watching," said Easter. Going to nationals and winning all-star will help. That will be a boost. It's more precise in the men's game. There's a transition."

"Some juniors would like to continue skipping in the next level but very few have the ability to do it because it is a huge learning curve," added Kee. "If I am to play next year I need to find a team I can learn from and hopefully become a high level men's skip." But it's a jump that would be difficult financially while he's in university unless sponsors are available. He said to just play bonspiels around Ontario a team's expenses would be at least \$10,000. To do that he needs to be part of a team that can win. "If you are not winning you are losing money quickly."

Recruiting top teammates anywhere they live and curl has long been the norm for the best men's teams. It's also being entrenched with junior curlers. In the case of this rink, Kee lives in Ottawa during the curling season, Camm is in Ottawa/Rockland, Hall is from Kitchener-Waterloo and Easter lives in London.

"I would say this happens in higher tier juniors because they know each other and want to play with the best available players, which might not be in your zone or region, said Kee. "It is becoming more and more common."

*Burt Dowsett*



Doug Kee's father, a former competitive junior curler himself, has coached both Doug and his sister. (Photo source: Curling Canada website)

## Tim Lindsay's rink advances to Ontario intermediate finals

The rink of skip Tim Lindsay, Dave Ross, Bob McKinley and Bob Bourdeau went 3-1 at the Maitland Country Club in Goderich Jan. 23-24 and will advance to the men's Ontario Intermediate championship. It will be held in Acton March 2-5. Congratulations guys.

On the same weekend in Mount Forest, the team of Jayden King, Nolan Bryant, Evan Prior, Patrick Meyer and coach Daniel Yurkewich competed in the bantam regional playdowns but were unable to advance. Congratulations on getting this far.

*Bruce Thom, Leagues and OCA*

## Sam (Garnet) Richardson dead at 82

Sam (Garnet) Richardson, who won four Briers and world championships (1959, '60, '62 and '63) with his brother Ernie at skip, and cousins Arnie at third and Wes at lead, has died at 82 after a lengthy illness.

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