

ROCKtalk

The newsletter of the
London Curling Club

February 2018



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Russ Howard and the Academy of Curling coming to London Curling Club next fall

The London Curling Club is excited to announce that the Academy of Curling will kick off the 2018-2019 season by offering professional instruction and skills development to our members and the curling community.

Our club will host two half-day and two full-day clinics in October. What makes the Academy of Curling so exciting are the instructors!

- Russ Howard, two-time world champion, Olympic gold medalist and TSN curling commentator who has made 14 appearances at the Brier
- Mary Anne Arsenault, five-time Canadian champion and two-time World Champion who has made 13 appearances at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, including 2018
- Grant Odishaw, Canadian mixed champion who has made 16 national appearances including eight Briers

Each clinic will be open to curlers of all ages and skill level, but each will also target a specific group of curlers as shown below. Instruction will be held both on and off ice. Topics to be covered at each session include:

- Delivery, release and weight control
- Sweeping and judging weight
- Strategy



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A simulated mini game will be included. Each session will wrap up with a question and answer period, allowing you to get up close and personal with the coaches.

These sessions have been designed by the Academy of curling coaches specifically for London Curling Club and our members.

- Friday, Oct. 19, noon to 4 p.m. Aimed at senior/ daytime curling. Both standard and stick delivery will be covered. Cost \$75 plus HST.
- Friday, Oct. 19, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. Focused on the recreational and/or novice curler. Cost \$75 plus HST.
- Saturday, Oct. 20, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Broad spectrum of topics aimed at club curlers of all skill levels. Lunch included. Cost \$155 plus HST.
- Sunday, Oct. 21, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Topics will include mixed curling and team dynamics. Lunch included. Cost \$155 plus HST.

Each session is limited to 48 participants, so sign up early to avoid disappointment. Funds raised through this event will be directed to our new building fund.



Registration for London Curling Club members and their friends will open soon. Watch for an email from the club. Invitations will also be sent to nearby curling clubs in March. Please note that some event details could change prior to the start of registration.

The Nemeth Group



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WANTED: APPRENTICE ICE TECHNICIAN

Looking for a new career? A position where you'll learn new skills and be able to interact with the wonderful members of the London Curling Club? Would you enjoy having time off in the summer?

We're looking for an individual who knows curling and is interested in a career as an Ice Technician. Previous ice maintenance experience would be nice, but isn't necessary.

The ideal candidate:

- Is physically fit
- Is an Independent worker
- Has a mechanical aptitude
- Understands the sport of curling
- Has strong organization and leadership skills
- Is familiar with refrigeration systems, or willing to learn
- Is a strong communicator
- Is willing to listen, understand and be receptive to learning new ideas and techniques
- is a team leader
- Is practical
- Is sociable

This role would entail a two to four year apprenticeship, eventually leading to the position of Head Ice Technician. In that role, you'd be responsible for all aspects of ice installation, maintenance and removal while providing leadership to a team of part-time ice staff. If you're interested in this exciting opportunity, please forward your resume by email to londoncurlingclub@gmail.com

No stick yet for this 90-year-old club member

Bill McFarlane took up curling when he was 45-years-old and lived in Blenheim. He joined the London Curling Club in 1988 at age 60. He recently turned 90 and shows no sign of slowing down.

When Bill arrived to curl on his birthday, Jan. 16, he was presented with gifts from his curling friends. First, his name had been engraved on the handle of a rock. Next they gave him a miniature granite curling stone to commemorate this special occasion.



Bill (shown above) skips a team in the Winexpert League on Mondays and curls with the daytime men most other days. He has no intention of using a stick anytime soon, saying, “Maybe I will when I get old!”

Congratulations and happy birthday Bill from everyone at London Curling Club!

Townsend team wins Winexpert round robin

Congratulations to the team of Chuck Townsend, Ken Walmsley, Jim Russell and Barry Montgomery for winning the initial 13-team round robin of the Monday afternoon Winexpert men’s league.

The league now splits into two groups: group A with seven teams and group B with six teams. Group A will play a round robin with four teams advancing to the final round to determine which team will challenge other league winners for the men’s club championship.

Final skills clinic of the season on Family Day

On Saturday, Jan. 6, another 30 people enjoyed another “Introduction to Curling” clinic. It was a fun evening with nine coaches volunteering their time to show beginners the basics.

We will hold one more clinic on Family Day for members and the public. Sign-up sheets are in the lounge.

We’re always looking for people who are interested in helping with coaching, either as a mentor or a certified recreational coach. There will be workshops in the fall for new coaches, as well as a clinic for the members to brush up on their delivery.



Ilderton, Tillsonburg teams top Grandmothers bonspiel

On Wednesday, Jan. 3, the 63rd annual Grandmothers and Over 50 Bonspiel, sponsored by Heather Greenfield, CFP with HollisWealth, was held at London Curling Club.

The theme this year was “Groovin’ Grannies and Nifty over 50s”, and was convened by Marnie Dickout, and co-convenor Jeanette Walker. Curlers enjoyed a lunch catered by Linda Arthur of Village Catering, and a fun game led by volunteer Rose Kuchynski. The upper lounge was decorated with colourful flowers, “peace” signs, and hearts, and some curlers wore their “groovy” and “nifty” attire.

Fifteen teams from Aylmer, Chatham, Guelph, Highland, Ilderton, Ingersoll, St. Thomas and Tillsonburg Curling Clubs, as well as nine teams from London Curling Club completed. There were two full draws, both curling one eight-end and one six-end game.

Many thanks to drawmasters Fay Weiler and Lynda Reesor, and volunteers Brenda Rouse, Pam Harrison, Stacey Farley, Darlene ten Haaf, Rose Kuchynski, Karen Jacobsen and Katie Unger.

Special thanks to Heather Greenfield for her continued sponsorship and support for this event. This year, Heather curled in our bonspiel, and pitched in where needed before and after her games.

Winners of the trophy and first draw shown below were, left to right, Fran Corby (vice), Judy Oryniak (skip), Becky Ostrom (second) and Louise McVittie (lead) from Ilderton Curling Club.



Cynthia Nettleton’s Highland team of Cheryl Krobisch, Sandy Ryckman-Stevens and Joan Young finished in second place and Ferne Taggart’s Aylmer team of Linda Allard, Bernita Jordan and Genie Phillips came in third.

Winners of the second draw, shown below, left to right, were Shirley Ireland (skip), Marian Muth (vice), Diane Burgess (second) and Tracy Beattie (lead) from Tillsonburg.



Second place went to Dawn Butler’s Ilderton team of Barb Morrissey, Janet Mathers and Carol Parnell, and in third place was Donna Buchan’s Guelph team of Katie Neil, Linda Tartt and Debbie Stroud.

The curling times they are a changin'

A message from Paul Pergau, president, London Curling Club

Look around. Things are really changing these days.

Facility-wise, things are rapidly falling apart. Just ask club manager Greg and head ice technician Mark. Not a day goes by when one thing or another in the club has a problem needing their



attention, e.g., standing water on sheet six! We're so looking forward to building our new facility!

Two game changes are underway now and for next year. I joined the open doubles clinic mid-January and thoroughly enjoyed it. It's a shorter, faster game with lots of action for everyone, i.e., no standing around waiting and getting cold. And no, we don't want you jumping up and chasing your own thrown rock to sweep...when necessary, that is the role of your team mate. We played six ends in about an hour. How exciting is that! We're in the process of getting a league going, so sign up and give it a try....I think you'll like it. Another change coming our way is an expansion of the free rock zone from four to five rocks. Lots more rocks in play.

Our more popular leagues recently are those we're calling open where any combination of women and men can form a team. Our learn to curl league is very popular as is our senior and mixed/open leagues. All good things. Our youth curling leagues are busy and pulling curlers from London and surrounding centres. We need more curlers between youth and senior categories. We also need to find a way to attract New Canadians to our sport. Perhaps ample TV, live streaming and YouTube coverage of the 2018 Olympics curling will entice people to give our game a try. We have more than 20 active coaches that help with clinics, learn to curl, elementary school programs and youth curlers. I'd love to see local competitive teams like Fanshawe, Western, secondary school and our club teams choosing London Curling Club for their training needs.

At last count, we have more than 90 volunteers keeping our club ticking. We've increased the skill level of our ice technicians who are now able to both scrape and pebble under the supervision of Mark.

And have you noticed that curling clothing is getting trendier? Did you see the Ulsrud team's pants at the Continental Cup? Polyester is everywhere, and comfort is in vogue. Jackets are colourful as are brooms and broom heads. Brooms are getting lighter and lighter. For the good of our ice and the effectiveness of your sweeping, make sure you replace your gripper and broom head at least annually. Better sliders are allowing us to slide more easily. Helmets are gaining in popularity thereby reducing potential serious accidents. Visit our pro shop for your curling equipment needs.

So, as our club changes, come change with us. We're an exciting club looking to move into even more exciting times.

Got a story for Rock Talk?

Please send any story ideas or club happenings for the next issue to Brian Arnold (barnold439@gmail.com). Deadline for the March issue is Feb. 27.

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Curling event success helps future London bids

After hosting the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, Brier and Continental Cup, London has established itself as a top-flight city for major curling events.

“I think they were very happy with the venue and attendance,” said Ted Smith, director of scoring, statistics and timers at the event, and original chair of the bid committee. “I said to Gord McNabb, (director of events for Curling Canada), ‘I hope to see you again’ and Gord said ‘you will.’” Ted said Curling Canada is looking for a site that has proven attendance and experienced volunteers. “They want to know what they’re getting.”

Another advantage London may have in landing another major curling event is that the NHL rinks are no longer as popular for curling as they were in western Canada for awhile. London’s Budweiser Gardens seats about half as many people as an NHL rink and it served the Hearts and Brier well.

Financial totals from the Continental Cup have not been determined but there were very few empty seats in the arena at Western Fair, which seats about 1,500.

By Burt Dowsett

Members share their Continental Cup stories

Gord Brown, transportation

Norwegian skip Tomas Ulsrud makes friends easily. Says Gord, “I told Tomas how I curled in four leagues, including one night with my wife. I told him there are two things you can say to your wife when curling. One is ‘good shot’ and the other is ‘good try.’ His response was ‘I don’t think I could curl with my wife.’ He’s an easy, pleasant, very nice man, just as nice as his persona on the ice.

Gord also drove Canadian and world champion Ottawa skip Rachel Homan. She asked him to stop at a Tim Hortons on way to the arena. When we pulled in there she asked if I’d like a coffee and a doughnut.

Browne said the most enjoyable person he drove was David Murdoch, a Scot who was the coach of Team World. He was outgoing, funny enjoyable and a wonderful person. I told him stories about trips to Scotland (Gord was born there) and he was laughing his head off.

Paul Pergau, statistician

My volunteer role for the Continental Cup was as a statistician. Never done that before but for sure I’ll do it again as it is both fun and challenging! One situation that arose was particularly off the wall and not expected at that level of curling. For every shot we recorded the turn used, in or out and that depends on whether the shooter is a lefty or a righty, and the shot called. Then at completion of the shot we rated the shot on a scale of zero to four where zero is a complete miss and four is perfect as called or close enough. In this particular instance the shot called was through a port for a take-out. The actual shot was wide, ticked a guard, bounced off an opponent’s rock in the house removing it and proceeded to take out the target shot rock. Nothing like what was called but an excellent result. Is that a four, a zero or what? I ended up giving it a three. In club play, we would call that a s**t shot.



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More Continental Cup stories

Dave Rush, transportation

- Monday, Jan. 8, was a wild day for transportation having to pick up 18 snow buried vehicles at Highbury Ford. Three wouldn't start and four got stuck.
- On Wednesday, Jan. 11, transportation dispatcher Sean Burns won \$1,346 in the evening 50/50 draw. The ticket was drawn in the front half of our dispatch/security room. As it was being pulled Sean pulled out his ticket and ran up to the official and said, "Here's the winning ticket" and to everyone's amazement it was.
- On Monday, Jan. 15 at 5 a.m., I drove Kevin Koe, Ben Herbert and Mark Kennedy to the airport and they had very positive things to say about their experience in London, saying winning the Continental Cup was the best. Kevin was very gracious to thank all the transportation team for their driving.



Dave Rush meets Al "the Iceman" Hackner

Melissa Neeb, hospitality

During a Continental Cup junior clinic, an official from Curling Canada introduced the junior curlers to one of the pros helping with the clinic saying, "This is Kevin Koe, the best curler in the world". Without hesitation, one of the juniors replied, "What about Mark Kennedy?" This response was greeted with peals of laughter and caused the commentators and others to refer to Mark as "the best curler in the world", for the remainder of the event.

Continental Cup host committee says thanks

London rocked it again!

The 2018 WFG Continental Cup, presented by Service Experts showcased our city. We had top notch volunteers, capacity crowds, great entertainment in the Patch, outstanding curling and a nail-biter finish with a draw to the button to determine Team North America as the overall winner.

The host committee extends a huge thank you to all members of Highland Curling Club, Ilderton Curling Club, London Curling Club and St. Thomas Curling Club and to their families and friends who supported the event by volunteering, buying tickets and often, both. We are sincere when we say the event couldn't have run without you. You were simply amazing!

- Teresa Easter, Vice Chair Special Events
- Donna Krotz, Vice Chair Hosting
- Ken Schofield, Vice Chair Facilities



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Outdoor bonspieling in Switzerland in 1988

by Mary Lois Cooper, London Curling Club member

I taught as an exchange teacher in Neuchâtel, Switzerland in 1988-89. We joined the local curling club, curled mixed once a week and did some bonspieling. One thing I loved about the club was that it was trilingual – French, Swiss German and English.

I recently came across a letter I wrote to my brothers and their families, most of whom were keen curlers at the time. The letter describes a bonspiel we were in, in October. The weather was nice, so we stayed in our tent that weekend, camped with a gorgeous view of mountains. It's the only bonspiel we've ever been in where camping was also involved. Switzerland is producing some very fine curlers now, so obviously much has changed in the ensuing 30 years.

Oct. 16, 1988

I wanted to tell you about the curling bonspiel we were in last weekend. I don't know whether to start at the beginning or the end.

We now know to beware of the term "patinoire" or skating rink. That means that the local club is small (three sheets) or non-existent, and tournaments get moved to the skating rink.

The patinoire had walls on three sides and about half the roof was skylights. Hence if the sun came out, watch out, because the ice changes fast!

They made the ice with a Zamboni, if that gives any clue to the quality, and during the six games played on Saturday, it was not swept or pebbled once. There were a fair number of non-curlers on the ice in street shoes, including the organizers. The ice was disgusting to look at.

We had a choice of five dressing rooms, all unisex. It took a bit of getting used to, seeing women in bras and men in their underwear and various stages of undress. I think some actually used the showers. That we didn't see.

Games were scheduled for 1.75 hours and believe-it-or-not, we actually finished eight ends all four times. It's possible!

There was a keg of wine at the side of the ice for two days. Help yourself.

There were seven sheets set up on the patinoire. Problem was, the markings were so faint, you couldn't see them! Can you imagine sitting in the hack with no idea where the house is? It was just as bad coming back to the throwing end. You had to be careful not to stray into someone else's line of fire.

I had a lot of trouble with the hack. It was a wooden block with four pins in the bottom to correspond to four holes in the ice. Left-handers picked it up and put it in the other four holes opposite.

Shortening the story, I didn't make a shot! Twice this happened: at lead, I threw the same draw twice. First it fell off the left side of the rink, and then off the right side! We finished 23rd out of 24 teams, but still won two bottles of wine and 20 bottles of beer.

Entry fee was \$54 for the two of us. That paid for the ice and prizes (mostly donated I think). It included no meals.

The winning team buys all the drinks after a game. (that part was cheap — we lost all four games). A team can be any combination of men and women. We were one female and three men.

The mind-boggling part is that the Swiss defend this as a legitimate form of curling. Our club here in Neuchatel has three sheets and 90 members. Many clubs have 25 to 30 members who drive to the next town to curl, or curl on the local patinoire after the Monday night hockey game. It seems to me a return to the origins of the game in Scotland, and our north, on outdoor ice.

The Swiss claim the same teams always turn up as winners, so success can't be attributed solely to luck. One team of 70-year-olds we talked to had beaten the Swiss champion. I know precision isn't involved and technique doesn't matter much.

It was an experience, and after much reflection, I have decided once was enough for me. Bruce isn't so sure. And almost all bonspiels here will be on the local patinoire.

Membership at our club is \$800/couple. Bruce estimates we'll be paying at least \$40/game this year. I look on it as a subsidy for Swiss curling, not as a total mistake.

Bonne pierre! = (good curling)