Scotties Wild Card is the ACE OF HEARTS!

All three Manitoba teams in the Scotties Tournament of Hearts have made the Championship Pool, but none have been more impressive than the Wild Card team skipped by Kerri Einarson.

Einarson major force at Scotties
Alberta skip Casey Scheidegger has her eyes set on a place in the Page Playoffs on the weekend.

It’s been a Wild ride

Einarson making most out of her Wild Card win

The surprise of the Scotties has been the performance of Team Nova Scotia, skipped by Mary-Anne Arsenault.
Fans at the 2018 Scotties Tournament of Hearts are having a good time, or are they just laughing at their silly hats?

Team Ontario’s Karen Sagle was relieved after winning Thursday’s tiebreaker.

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Sunny days ahead for B.C. curling

Van Osch part of new wave of talent

By GRANT GRANGER
HeartChart Writer

Kelley Law was the 2000 world champion and 2002 Olympic bronze medalist. Kelly Scott, from just up Highway 97 in Kelowna, won a world championship in 2007, and two Canadian crowns in her eight appearances at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts between 2005 and 2013.

British Columbia had a combined round-robin record of 4-29 at the last three Scotties. Ouch. This year’s B.C. representative, skipped by Kesa Van Osch, had as many victories in the first five days here at the 2018 Scotties.

“I think we were spoiled when we had the Kellys for so long, and when they both retired it did leave a bit of a void,” said Curl BC executive director Scott Braley. “I think (B.C.’s relegation) was just an unfortunate circumstance. We knew, at that time, prior to that happening with Kelly (Scott) retiring, there was going to be a bit of a catch up.

“That was just unfortunate (the relegation process) happened to occur when that was in place. That was a bit of a one-off.”

Braley pointed out B.C.’s future is bright, and that includes Van Osch’s team. She’s 26, her sister Marika, who plays third, is 21, and other sister, second Kalia Van Osch, is 24. They’re still a ways away from hitting prime curling years.

Corryn Brown, 22, of Kamloops won the 2013 Canadian junior women’s curling championship. Then there’s Sarah Daniels, silver medallist at the 2016 Canadian juniors.

“The challenge for any B.C. team is finding the time and money to get to the big events to improve. That’s especially true for Van Osch’s team from the Nanaimo Curling Club because it costs $300 just to get off Vancouver Island.

“Unless we start winning events it’s pretty hard to get out,” said Van Osch. “It’s a big learning curve we have to take over the next couple of years, but it’s a really good opportunity for B.C. to grow as a women’s sport.”

Van Osch has been helped by the tutelage of Bill Tschirhart, a former Curling Canada national training centre coach and author of a curling coach manual called A Pane in the Glass.

“It’s hard being on the left coast, so to speak, to really get into the kind of competition you need to really grow,” said Tschirhart. “This team, for example, they have a lot of talent, work hard but they’re going to school, starting careers.”

Tschirhart said sponsorship, or more correctly lack of sponsorship, is a big factor for the B.C. competitive curlers.

“A lot of the teams that are able to go to these events have, in some cases six figure sponsorships. Well, how do you land something like that?” he said. “Really do well at the nationals and that will attract that kind of sponsorship. And, of course, you need that kind of sponsorship to be competitive at the nationals, so it’s the old Catch-22.”

In addition to sponsorship dollars being hard to come by most of the institutional money is directed at juniors.

Tschirhart said there’s no real blame to be dished out.

“When your province is struggling just to keep your head above water you tend to think, ‘Well, are we doing something wrong?’ There’s no errors of commission, and there’s really no errors of omission,” said Tschirhart. “It’s the travel. It’s not an excuse, it’s just hard.”

Kesa Van Osch has played well.
Spotlight on: Nova Scotia
DARTMOUTH CURLING CLUB, DARTMOUTH

Q&A
Got a phobia you want to share? Spiders.
Last book you couldn’t put down? The Glass Castle.
What’s your biggest pet peeve? Bad drivers
What’s your favourite vacation destination? Jamaica maan!
What is your favourite day of the week? Saturday.
What's your favourite breakfast meal? Eggs done any way.

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What is your favourite day of the week? Saturday.
What's your favourite breakfast meal? Eggs done any way.

Mary-Anne Arsenault

Essentials
AGE: 38
BIRTHDATE: January 23/1980
BORN: Antigonish, NS
LIVES: Antigonish, NS
MARITAL STATUS: Partner, Jeff Farquhar
STARTED CURLING AT: 13
OCCUPATION: Regional Sales Manager, Great West Life

Christina Black

Essentials
AGE: 30
BIRTHDATE: Oct. 21, 1987
BORN: Sydney, NS
LIVES: Sydney, NS
MARITAL STATUS: Single
STARTED CURLING AT: 8
OCCUPATION: Manager Customer Service, TC Canada Trust

Jennifer Baxter

Essentials
AGE: 30
BIRTHDATE: April 4, 1987
BORN: Halifax
LIVES: Halifax
MARITAL STATUS: Single
STARTED CURLING AT: 5
OCCUPATION: Teacher, Halifax Regional School Board

Jennifer Crouse

Essentials
AGE: 57
BIRTHDATE: May 18, 1960
BORN: Halifax
LIVES: Dartmouth, NS
FAMILY: Husband, Stuart; Children: Carleigh, Kerry
STARTED CURLING AT: 12
OCCUPATION: Retired, Dental Hygienist

Carole Maclean

Essentials
AGE: 49
BIRTHPLACE: Scarborough, ON
RESIDENCE: Halifax
MARITAL STATUS: Single
CHILDREN: Lauren, 20
OCCUPATION: Registered Massage Therapist and Partner at Academy of Curling
STARTED CURLING AT: 13

Peter Corkum

COACH:

Mary-Anne Arsenault

FACTS
NOVA SCOTIA AT THE SCOTTIES
Last five years:
2017: Mary Miatatul (2-9)
2016: Jill Brothers (6-5)
2015: Mary-Anne Arsenault (5-6)
2014: Heather Smith (4-7)
2013: Mary-Anne Arsenault (5-6)
Last championship — Colleen Jones (2001)
Canadian titles — 4
Other prominent curlers from Nova Scotia — Heather Rankin, Sue Anne Bartlett.

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What’s your favourite vacation destination? Jamaica maan!
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Widening gap
Elite curlers have a huge edge

By JOHN KOROBANIK
HeartChart Writer

This year’s edition of the Scotties Tournament of Hearts is into its final stages of determining a champion and as the top teams emerge, as expected, the question arises: in what direction is women’s curling headed in Canada?

It is becoming obvious, the curlers themselves agree, that there is a widening gap developing between a handful of elite teams -- those who compete on a regular basis on the Tour -- and the majority of other teams competing here.

“For sure,” veteran skip Mary-Anne Arsenault of Nova Scotia says of the growing gap. “Amongst the top teams, they have all the funding, they get to play on this great ice all the time and you only get better when you’re able to play with these beautiful conditions all the time and you have funding.”

Michelle Englot, 54-year-old skip of Team Canada and an eight-time Saskatchewan champion, has seen a lot of changes in the game during her career and while most of them have been good, she says it has become tougher for women to keep pace with the elite teams unless they’re willing to make significant sacrifices.

For starters, they need a job with an understanding boss who allows them to take off much of the winter months.

I think curling needs to develop all over, not just at the top so it’s important to keep the youth interested and get them going.

— Robyn MacPhee

T

Team Manitoba’s Jill Officer.

See ELITE
Opposite page

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“That’s she part that’s separating the Tier 1 curlers from the Tier 2 curlers, so that’s one aspect I think we really need to look at,” Englot said recently. “How many full-time curlers are playing at the top level right now? You need to make that commitment in order to compete against the Rachel Homans and the Jennifer Joneses and it’s tough for people who do have small children and who do have full-time jobs, to be able to compete.”

The number of elite women’s teams is decreasing she suggests and that is “the only aspect of the sport that I don’t know if it’s best for the sport. The goal is to get to the Scotties and Brier and everybody can achieve that because it’s open access if you can make the commitment, but the commitment you need now it’s become a bit of a stretch. That gap is bigger and I’m not sure that’s good for the sport long-term.”

It’s not just on the women’s side where teams skipped by Englot, Jennifer Jones and Kerry Elxunon were considered shoo-ins to get the final four before this year’s Scotties even began. On the men’s side the field for major events often splits early with teams skipped by the likes of Kevin Koe, Brad Gushue and Brad Jacobs separating themselves.

Robyn McPhee, 34-year-old skip of the Prince Edward Island team, agrees there’s definitely a noticeable split among the women.

“There’s probably the top 10 teams that are slam teams and some of them are funded, so they have more access to everything. The rest of us, this is what we play for all year.

“I don’t think (it’s a good thing long term). I think curling needs to develop all over, not just at the top so it’s important to keep the youth interested and get them going,”

Jill Officer, a five-time Scotties champion second on the Jones team, says the gap is widening “across the board in curling.

“The top teams are putting more time in and not working full-time and getting more sponsorship. We have a lot more TV time with the Slams so that bodes well for selling sponsorship.”

Officer thinks part of the reason for the separation is it’s getting harder to be able to work full-time and compete at the elite level.

“That’s something teams like Ontario are finding out. Scotties rookie Hollie Duncan is skip of that team that managed to win a tiebreaker Thursday morning to stay alive.

“More and more teams are taking it as a full-time job now,” she notes. “We don’t, we all have jobs and we didn’t play a ton of spils this year, but we felt so far we have been able to keep up. I mean, this isn’t the slam, you don’t have all the top teams in Canada here so it’s a little bit different.

“But I notice a difference and I think you can see it in the draws, there’s a lot of blowouts.”

“Plus, the rest of the world has caught up to us,” adds Officer. “They maybe don’t have the depth we have in Canada, but the teams they do have are fully funded and they’re able to curl on a full-time basis, which allows them to be better. In order for us to keep up we have to do certain things and that means a bigger gap here in Canada.”

So what does the future hold for curling, particularly major events like the Scotties?

“I’m not sure,” said Arsenault, a five-time Scotties champion and two-time world champion curling with Colleen Jones. “I think eventually there will probably be a separation where the Scotties is an amateur event and the Slams are professional events, it could happen.”

Duncan said she can see it headed that way as well and doesn’t think it’s a good thing.

“To me it’s a bit of a shame because then there might not be as bright of a spotlight on it and it is such a special thing to come here and experience it. So I see it happening but I think it will be a shame.”

— Michelle Englot
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Honourary coin

Jim Madill of Merritt, B.C., proudly shows off the Sandra Schmirler commemorative coin presented to him recently for his outstanding service as a volunteer driver the past 15 years at various Season of Champions events. The coin was presented to him by Jan Betker and Marcie Gudereit, two members of Schmirler’s 1998 Olympic gold-medal team. Both were in Penticton for the Sandra Schmirler Telethon on Sunday. The Telethon raises money for intensive care life-saving equipment for babies in crisis. Schmirler passed away from cancer 18 years ago. JoAnne Viau, co-ordinator, financial services for Curling Canada, recommended Madill be honoured for his dedication.

Explore the exciting flavours

Penticton has over 145 restaurants for you to indulge in between draws. Some are within walking distance from the curling action; others are a short ride. With the curling crowds, be sure to call ahead to reserve your table.
Four up and four down. Nice numbers if you’re a major league pitcher. Not so nice for a curling team working to reach the Championship Pool of the 2018 Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

Newfoundland/Labrador, skipped by Stacie Curtis, burst out of the gate with four wins in the preliminary round of the revised 16-team Scotties format. Playing in the Championship Pool seemed inevitable. Unfortunately for Curtis, third Erin Porter, second Julie Devereaux, lead Erica Trickett and coach Eugene Trickett it was far from inevitable.

They turned as cold as the ice they curled on losing their final three round-robin games. Their 4-3 record tied them for third place in Pool B with British Columbia and Ontario. Since B.C. beat both, Kesa Van Osch’s squad got the nod directly into the Championship Pool. The other two had to play a tiebreaker Thursday morning which Ontario won 11-8, leaving Newfoundland/Labrador out in the cold.

“Certainly a roller-coaster week,” admitted Curtis, who was supported by third Erin Porter, second Julie Devereaux (Curtis’s sister), lead Erica Trickett and coach Eugene Trickett. “But you know we’re going to come out and play in our seeding position (game against Pool A fifth-place finisher New Brunswick skipped by Sylvie Robichaud of Moncton) and try and win that one and end on a good note.”

Sheet B was a bit of a rock garden with stones all over the place. The lead changed hands seven times before Ontario, skipped by Hollie Duncan, scored five in the last two ends to outlast Curtis 11-8.

“Obviously disappointed,” said Curtis as she fought to keep her emotions in check minutes after the game ended. “That said, we didn’t play well enough to get in and that’s the end of it.”

Her third, Porter struggled to explain the squad’s precipitous fall.

“We had a really, really good start and there were moments when we were strong in those three losses, but at the end of the day we just didn’t put our best game forward. It’s very disappointing. We really liked our start and we like our play but it just kind of fell apart on us,” said Porter, who hoped to take advantage of the unwanted free time Thursday.

“We love the area and would love to see more of it, so I would say we’ll enjoy our time here. We’ll come cheer on our friends, we have lots of friends in the game so lots of supporting to be done.”

After her first loss Monday night, Curtis declared she’d take being 4-1 heading into the final two round-robin games. Even though she’s out, she still would.

“We just couldn’t finish it. We’ll pull it back and see what we have to do to get back here next year and prepare then,” said Curtis. “I think there were some good points (to the week) and there were some bad points. For me personally I struggled the last four games to close it and get us to that Championship Pool. So we’ll, see. We’ll take it back (to Newfoundland) and go work hard.”

This was Curtis et al’s fifth trip to the Scotties. They improved their position every time since their first visit in 2011 culminating in a 5-6 record in St. Catharines, Ont., last year. So far they’ve stuck together through the good and the bad.

“We haven’t had that conversation,” said Curtis about whether or not they’ll be back together next season. “We’ll see what happens.”
Spotlight on: N. Ontario
IDYLWYLDE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, SUDBURY

What is the one thing you wish you could do if given the chance? Win a Canadian championship.
Which sitcom character do you relate to? Rory Gilmore.
What’s your weirdest habit? I often get lost as I do not have a good sense of direction.
What’s your biggest pet peeve? Aggressive drivers!
What’s your fast-food guilty pleasure? DQ! Blizzards…yummm.
What’s your favourite vacation destination? St. Lucia.
Are you a cat/dog person? Cat person! We have a cat named Button.
What is your favourite breakfast meal? Crepes. I love Cora’s.
What is your favourite TV show? I have two. How I Met Your Mother and Seinfeld.
If we’re buying, you’re having…? A spiced rum and coke please.
What is the one thing you own you wish you didn’t? A curling kilt.
What superstition do you believe/practice? Our team always sits in the same seats in vehicles.
Favourite musician(s)/bands you’ve seen in concert? The Weekend
What was your favourite toy as a kid? Doodle Bear, Lite Brite, Easy Bake…can’t decide!
Strength training or cardio? Both. Really enjoy Goodlife fitness classes.
What's your biggest pet peeve? Aggressive drivers!
What's your weirdest habit? I often get lost as I do not have a good sense of direction.
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What was your favourite toy as a kid? Doodle Bear, Lite Brite, Easy Bake…can’t decide!
Strength training or cardio? Both. Really enjoy Goodlife fitness classes.
Who was your first crush? Doogie Howser.
What was the happiest moment in your life? Wedding day. Love you Brent.
Favourite board game? Scrabble.
Thanks to our Friends!

Three-time Olympian and four-time Tim Hortons Brier champion Kevin Martin of Edmonton will be inducted into the World Curling Hall of Fame, it was announced Thursday by the World Curling Federation.

Martin, who won gold for Canada at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver and silver in 2002 at Salt Lake City, is one of three new members of the Hall; the others are Elmer Freytag, a founding member of the International Curling Federation — now the World Curling Federation — and Korea's Young C. Kim, who founded the Korean Curling Federation.

Martin also represented Canada at the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, France, where curling was a demonstration sport.

He won Brier titles in 1991, 1997, 2008 and 2009 — the latter two with perfect 13-0 records, joined by teammates third John Morris, second Marc Kennedy, lead Ben Hebert and coach Jules Owchar. That team would then win gold at the Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings in 2009 in Edmonton to earn the right to represent Canada at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

There, Martin would skip Canada to another perfect record, rattling off nine straight round-robin victories and then following up with back-to-back wins in the playoffs, nailing down the gold medal with a 6-3 win over Norway's Thomas Ulsrud in the gold-medal game.

Martin's career also included an unprecedented 18 victories in Grand Slam events.

Saying he was “definitely excited” to get the phone call, Martin, who's off to the South Korea Olympics today to work on the NBC telecast, said it's "neat after these years to be recognized. It's quite an honour.”

Martin’s formal induction ceremony will take place later this season.

By JOHN KOROBANIK

HeartChart Writer

Olympic champions return to form

Just in case anyone had any doubts about whether Jennifer Jones and her Manitoba team would bounce back from their two-loss day Wednesday, the veteran foursome put those to doubt in about 30 minutes Thursday afternoon.

After being humbled 9-5 by Tracy Flery of Northern Ontario (the first loss of the week for the Jones team) and 9-4 by Kerri Einarson and her Team Wild Card, Jones, third Shannon Birchard, second Jill Officer and lead Dawn McEwen came out firing in the first game of the Championship Pool at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

They scored two in the first end and three more in the third against Kesa Van Osch of British Columbia. And they didn’t stop there, scoring another trey in the sixth and a deuce in eight that encouraged the Nanaimo foursome to shake hands and end the game 10-3.

“We've been doing this for a while. I know my girls, I know they'll be there, they're always ready," Jones, a five-time Scotties champion, replied when asked if she had any doubts about her team bouncing back.

“If you look at the schedule, it's always a challenge to come back and play another game right away," McEwen added. “It was just a matter of what your reaction will be. We went out and did some good stuff and it opened the doors."

The four had a combined shooting percentage of 93 in the game. McEwen was at 95 per cent, Officer at 88, Birchard at 91 and, perhaps just to make a point, Jones had a draw-high 97 percent, tying the high mark for skips for the entire tournament.

A day earlier they had team percentages of 83 and 77 with Jones shooting a shocking 50 percent against Einarson.

The key now, Jones said was to keep winning.

They did that in the evening draw, scoring four in the first end en route to an 11-3 win over Hollie Duncan of Ontario.

“It's just important to win every game you can, it doesn't matter when you get the wins you have to get enough to get yourself into the final four. Near the end of the round robin it's always feeling like it's sudden death so we're going to turn it up a bit, make some more shots and try to get ourselves into the weekend play.”
**STANDINGS**

**CHAMPIONSHIP POOL**

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**SCHEDULE**

**TODAY**

9 a.m. Draw

B — Seeding draw

2 p.m. Draw

A — AB vs. MB; B — CA vs. WC; C — NO vs. ON; D — BC vs. NS

7 p.m. Draw

A — BC vs. NO; B — NS vs. ON; C — CA vs. MB; D — AB vs. WC

* — Last rock

**LINESCORES**

**Draw 15**

9 a.m.

Tiebreaker

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**Draw 16**

2 p.m.

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7 p.m.

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**SCOTTIES SCOREBOARD**

Northern Ontario’s Tracy Fleury is still in the hunt.
Scotties fans can have best of both worlds on Super Bowl Sunday

It’s yet another of the multitudinous quirks in the quadrennial schedule caused by the monolith known as the Winter Olympics that causes a quandary for fans of both granite throwing and pigskin hurling.

Well, the Scotties has a solution for those caught in consternation over their sporting conundrum.

Traditionally the Scotties Tournament of Hearts is held in mid-February. But so are the Olympics every four years. So with curlers and curling officials otherwise occupied, the Scotties has to be moved up the calendar with the final on the first Sunday in February.

Well, that just happens to clash with the biggest sporting and television event in North America. That would be the Super Bowl. It’s scheduled to start at 3:30 p.m. PT and likely take about four hours to complete. The Scotties final goes at 4 p.m.

So this year, Scotties organizers decided to invite devotees of both sports to simultaneously watch the Super Bowl and the Scotties gold-medal game at the HeartStop Lounge on the Penticton Convention Centre’s Jumbotron-sized screens. They’re huge, and we mean huge, so there’s no problem keeping track of both games.

“When it’s an Olympic year, we’re always up against the Super Bowl, so instead of being against it we said why don’t we join forces,” said Curling Canada’s Neil Houston, event manager for the 2018 Scotties. “We’ve got the technology and the facility and we’ve got the biggest screens in town. So why not open the doors and let people in to watch both games. Those people who want to watch the Super Bowl and watch the gold medal game at the same time, they’ll be able to do it.”

And the best part? No ticket required.

Houston might take a peek or two himself. While he can’t play favourites when it comes to the teams on the ice, he might have one when it comes to the big battle between the five-time Super Bowl champion New England Patriots and the upstart Philadelphia Eagles.

“I do have a Patriots toque. I do not have anything with Eagles on it. It’s going to be a really interesting game,” said Houston, a resident of Port Moody, B.C., who played second for Ed Lukowich’s 1986 world championship team.
BCLC is proud to support the 2018 Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

When you play with BCLC, you #PlayItForwardBC

British Columbia is proud to welcome athletes, families and curling fans to the 2018 Scotties Tournament of Hearts!