

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEASON OF CHAMPIONS

EXTRA END

2023 - 2024



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MOMENTUM**

National Wheelchair Curling Program sets sights on podium gold in advance of 2026 Paralympic Winter Games



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www.postalcurling.ca

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www.hamiltoncurling.com

Ontario Blind Curlers Association
Tel: 613-722-8084

Ontario Curling Council
www.curl-on.ca

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optimistjuniorcurling.ca

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BKT TIRES COMMITTED TO CURLING!

The leading company in the production of Off-Highway tires has secured the next three editions of the World Championship.

BKT Tires is renewing its commitment to the world of sport and is securing its fifth title sponsorship. Starting from 2024, in fact, the next three editions of the World Championship that are to take place in Canada will bear the name of the leading company in the production of Off-Highway tires.

This is a major success, enabling the Indian company to leave its mark on what is considered one of the most popular winter sports in Canada and, above all, in the women's competition most followed in that country.

The agreement also covers all the collateral Curling Canada events during the entire "**Season of Champions**", starting with the **PointsBet Invitational** tournament that will commence on September 27 in Oakville, in Ontario.

The fans' passion, the players' resolve and the attention devoted to the communities and the territory are just some of the values shared by both BKT Tires and Curling Canada. Furthermore, the possibility of having a place such as Canada as the setting has been decisive for the Brand, which is reaffirming its desire to cover all sports and support the diversity of the passions of their fans.

After the **Serie BKT** and the **Ligue 2 BKT** in soccer, the **BKT EuroCup** in basketball and the **BKT United Rugby Championship**, therefore, we now see the arrival of the **2024 BKT World Women's Curling Championship**, which will come into play from next year and is now added to numerous other important partnerships such as the **Rugby World Cup France 2023**, **LaLiga EA Sports** in Spain, the **KFC Big Bash League** in Australia and the **Turkish Airlines EuroLeague**.

"In the world of curling, where precision and performance meet on the ice, BKT is proud to be a driving force behind a championship that unites fans worldwide," said **Rajiv Poddar**, Joint Managing Director at BKT Tires. "Our commitment to curling matches our belief in the power of sport to foster positive values and connections within society. We look forward to many more exciting moments on the ice and a bright future together with curling's passionate community."

"When thinking of Canada, the first things that come to my mind are its vast landscapes, friendly people and, of course, world-class curling," added **Lucia Salmaso**, Managing Director at BKT Europe. "BKT's relationship with Curling Canada is not new, and today I am really excited to say that our partnership is not only going strong, but it is getting even stronger."





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CURLING CANADA 2023-24 BOARD OF GOVERNORS

TWO GOVERNORS WERE RE-ELECTED AND ONE new governor was elected to the Curling Canada Board of Governors, it was confirmed during the organization's Annual General Meeting. Later, another new face to the Board was appointed.

The governing body for the sport of curling in Canada conducted its virtual AGM, bringing together Canada's 14 Member Associations along with invited guests to talk about the past season, as well as elect new members to the Board of Governors.

There were three available spots after Roselle Gonsalves of Edmonton and Scott Hindle of Ottawa completed their terms, and Amy Nixon of Calgary departed the Board in July after voluntarily returning to the Board earlier in the season to help with on-boarding four new Governors.

Both Gonsalves and Hindle ran for re-election and won four-year terms.

Jeremy Woo of Winnipeg was elected to a two-year term while Laura Walker of Edmonton was later

appointed. Walker is a member of Curling Canada's Athletes Council. She will be the first full-status Curling Canada athlete governor.

Those four join fellow Governors Ray Baker of Dauphin, Man., Jennifer Howard of Courtice, Ont., Kathy O'Rourke of Cumberland, P.E.I., Darren Oryniak of Winnipeg, Teri Palynchuk of Nanaimo, B.C., Calvin Seaman of Calgary, and Michael Szajewski of Kenora, Ont.

Szajewski was re-elected as Chair of the Board of Governors.

"We continue to take significant strides forward as a sport and as an organization, and I know our Board is ready to contribute in any way we can, as we have a shared vision and ambition alongside our Member Associations to make our sport better and more welcoming for everyone," said Szajewski.

"We're in good hands for the rest of this year with Danny Lamoureux serving as our interim Chief Executive Officer," added Szajewski. "The process for determining a new full-time CEO is well underway."



MICHAEL SZAJEWSKI
Chair



RAY BAKER



ROSELLE GONSALVES



SCOTT HINDLE



JENNIFER HOWARD



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KATHY O'ROURKE



TERI PALYNCHUK



CALVIN SEAMAN



LAURA WALKER



JEREMY WOO

"We continue to take significant strides forward as a sport and as an organization, and I know our Board is ready to contribute in any way we can, as we have a shared vision and ambition alongside our Member Associations to make our sport better and more welcoming for everyone."

SEASON OF CHAMPIONS CONTACT INFORMATION



POINTS BET INVITATIONAL

SEPTEMBER 27 to OCTOBER 1, 2023

Sixteen Mile Sports Complex
Oakville, Ontario

Event manager: Amanda MacKenzie

Tel: (403) 359-3721

Email: amanda.mackenzie@curling.ca



SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS

FEBRUARY 16 to 25, 2024

WinSport Event Centre
Calgary, Alberta

Event manager: Marcy Hrechkosy

Tel: (204) 612-6285

Email: m.hrechkosy@curling.ca



MONTANA'S BRIER

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Brandt Centre
Regina, Saskatchewan

Event managers: Amanda MacKenzie/Laurence Lavallée

Tel: (403) 359-3721 / (782) 641-3189

Email: amanda.mackenzie@curling.ca /laurence.lavallee@curling.ca



BKT TIRES WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

MARCH 16 to 24, 2024

Centre 200, Sydney, Nova Scotia

Event manager: Maddie Kelly

Tel: (902) 217-5721

Email: maddie.kelly@curling.ca



NEW HOLLAND CANADIAN U-21 CHAMPIONSHIPS

MARCH 24 to 31, 2024

Suncor Community Leisure Centre
Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo, Alberta

Event manager: Robyn Mattie

Tel: (613) 834-2076 x158

Email: robyn.mattie@curling.ca



NEW LOOK, SAME VISION

BY LISA WEAGLE

National Wheelchair Curling Program focused on growth and collaboration on the road to the 2026 Paralympic Winter Games

After three-plus years of highly interrupted training due to COVID-19, the National Wheelchair Curling Program returned to a full training schedule for the 2022-23 season. With the vision of being the leading nation in high-performance wheelchair curling, the program made significant progress on the road to the Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Winter Games.

“Building off of momentum from the end of the last quadrennial, it was refreshing to get back to regular ice times and training as a group,” said head coach Mick Lizmore. “We plan to use our two 2023 world championship podium finishes as

motivation and benchmarks for where we want to go with the program as we move deeper into this Paralympic cycle.”

This past season marked just the second time that two World Wheelchair Curling Championships were contested, due to the recent addition of mixed doubles wheelchair curling to the championship calendar. This year, the World Wheelchair Curling Championship and World Wheelchair Mixed Doubles Curling Championship were hosted as parallel events in Richmond, B.C.

Canada won its first-ever medal in wheelchair mixed doubles. After an undefeated round robin,

Canadian teams found success on home soil thanks to a national program that used a rigorous process to guide selection and put together lineups to optimize team performance.

in addition to home coaches from across the country who work with national program athletes in their daily training environments.

For the 2023 world championship teams, the national program used a rigorous process to guide selection and put together lineups designed to optimize team performance and contribute to Team Canada's overall success. With two world competitions running at the same time, the athletes showed flexibility and adaptability by training and competing throughout the season in different positions and lineups until the final world roster was set.

The mixed team saw Mark Ideson at lead and calling the game, Gilbert Dash making his world championship debut at second, Ina Forrest at vice-skip, Jon Thurston throwing last stones, and Marie Wright at fifth. In Richmond, the team posted a 9-2 record after the round robin and went on to win a silver medal in a close final against China.

Canada's results among a deep field of wheelchair curling nations are encouraging on the road to 2026.

"Podium success is truly the result of a team effort that includes the hard work of the athletes with the support of their home coaches, support staff, and family and friends" said Lizmore. "It's rewarding to see that the investment that each of the players and their supporters had in the process

Canada won its first-ever medal in wheelchair mixed doubles as Collinda Joseph and Dennis Thiessen captured the bronze.



PHOTO: ANGELA BURGER/CANADIAN PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE

Collinda Joseph and Dennis Thiessen captured the bronze medal. Paired with silver in the mixed four-player discipline, Canada was the only country to win medals in both world championships.

"We couldn't be prouder," said Joseph. "To have two teams medal at an event on home soil in two different disciplines demonstrates the current strength of our program and wheelchair curling in Canada."

For the teams, finding success on home soil was part of a detailed plan, carefully executed by an experienced group of athletes, coaches, and support staff. The program operates with the strategic direction of National Program Director Kyle Paquette, Lizmore, mixed doubles and NextGen coach Dana Ferguson, and program advisor Wendy Morgan. The athletes are further supported by a group of dedicated program staff in

PHOTO: CHEYENNE BOONE/WCF





PHOTO: CHEYENNE BOONE/WCF



PHOTO: ANGELA BURGER/CANADIAN PARALYMPIC COMMITTEE



Top left: Gilbert Dash says that being named to Team Canada and having the opportunity to represent his country at the world championships represents a long-held achievement.

Bottom left: Dennis Thiessen and Ina Forrest are part of a team effort to put Canada over the top in wheelchair curling.

Right: Head coach Mick Lizmore plans to use Canada's two medal performances at the World Wheelchair Championships as motivation in the coming years.

has yielded positive results.”

Innovation is a hallmark of the program, and whether it comes to equipment, training environments, analytics, strategy, or communication, the athletes and staff are always seeking to improve.

“Innovation is really driven by the athletes, who are constantly seeking ways to find incremental improvements in all that they do,” said Lizmore. “The coaching and support staff are also always trying to find better ways to facilitate this process. In addition, we are constantly seeking to improve how we can deliver support to, and communicate with, the broader wheelchair curling community in Canada.”

With communication as an increased focus this season, a new logo and brand identity were created with input from athletes and staff. The program's social media presence continues to grow, and the team is seeking new ways to reach the wheelchair curling community and to educate and entertain the broader public about the sport. An increased number of games had some degree of live streaming this season, with securing mainstream broadcast coverage as a goal to increase visibility and viewership of the sport.

Many of the current athletes in the program are long-time national program veterans. Their championship pedigree is a strength for Canada, but also comes with the recognition that opportunities for a next generation of champions must be cultivated. Creating more depth in the program was a focus for the team, and it was part of a season-long process.

“We prioritized reconnecting and reengaging with prospective and current wheelchair curlers, supporters, and community leaders across Canada,” said Paquette. “It’s crucial to continue our tradition of excellence on the world stage while planning for the future.”

Actions taken to revitalize wheelchair curling included developing more opportunities for the broader community to compete and connect in Canada. For the national program, that meant playing only domestic tournaments and supporting the creation of a 12-team mixed doubles event in December in Leduc, Alta.

“Wheelchair mixed doubles curling is a very new discipline, and the Leduc event was an opportunity for us to collect information and insights relating to mixed doubles while also connecting with more individuals from the Canadian wheelchair curling community,” said Ferguson, mixed doubles head coach. “Just a few months later, this information helped us win a bronze medal at the world championship. The event also helped us to identify emerging talent in the sport and to recruit interested athletes to the national program.”

In April, Curling Canada held a NextGen Women’s Camp, which brought together 10 female wheelchair curlers from across Canada who had been identified as having interest and potential in wheelchair curling. The camp was a key opportunity to support women in sport, in addition to identifying athletes with national team potential for future quadrennials to ensure the strength of the Canadian program.

A pilot NextGen Mentorship Program was developed as a summer initiative with the goal of

helping athletes interested in high performance to be prepared when the time comes to hit the ice in the fall.

“Often when people enter into this sport it is through connecting with athletes who are already involved in wheelchair curling,” said Lizmore. “Honouring and supporting that experience was the motivation behind this mentorship program.”

New athlete mentees were paired with a mentor athlete from the national team program. For example, longtime national team athlete Ina Forrest was paired with two mentees, one in British Columbia and one in Ontario. The pairs met monthly, and during those meetings the mentors provided advice and assisted the mentees in creating training plans. In addition to connecting on a regular basis, all participants attended monthly webinars that covered different areas of training.

“I believe that athletes helping athletes is a great thing,” said Forrest. “We have a lot of knowledge and lived experience to pass on, but sometimes it’s not so clear how to share it. The mentorship program gave us an opening to connect with other curlers in our wheelchair curling community and create new avenues for information sharing.”

Later in the spring, athletes across Canada were invited to submit an application to the 2023-24 national program. This led to 12 new athletes being welcomed into the program.

The newly expanded program includes four tiers of programming designed to support the current and next generation of athletes who have potential to make a significant contribution to Canada on the international stage in future quadrennials.

The redesigned program includes Senior A, Senior B, NextGen, and NextGen Prospects categories of support.

With a renewed focus and vision, the National Wheelchair Curling Program has made significant strides toward the 2026 Paralympic Winter Games, especially in the face of challenges posed in recent years. As the program continues to expand and evolve, it remains grounded in its focus of nurturing talent, embracing innovation, and striving for the highest levels of performance, all while enjoying the process and the relationships formed through the bonds of sport.

Lisa Weagle is National Wheelchair Curling Program Communications and Media Manager



PHOTOS: CHEYENNE BOONE/WCF

Below: Jon Thurston threw fourth stones as Canada grabbed the silver medal in wheelchair four-player mixed curling in Richmond, B.C.

Bottom: Canada’s silver medallists (from left): Mark Ideson, Jon Thurston, Ina Forrest, Gilbert Dash and Marie Wright. Far right is head coach Mick Lizmore.





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It's been an amazing run of success for skip Kerri Einarson who has a chance to win a record fifth straight Canadian women's curling title this season at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Calgary.



BY TAYLOR ALLEN

FIRESTORM ON ICE!

Team Einarson setting a scorching hot record of success in Canada as it seeks an unprecedented fifth straight national women's curling title

You couldn't have written a better script for a Scotties Tournament of Hearts final.

There was Team Manitoba's Jennifer Jones — arguably the greatest women's curler of all time — with a chance to make history and become the first player to win a seventh Canadian women's crown.

Sharing that same sheet of ice on the final day of competition at the Sandman Centre in Kamloops, B.C., was another team from the Keystone Province looking to leave a mark in the record books — Camp Morton's Kerri Einarson. With a victory over Jones, Einarson, third Val Sweeting, second Shannon Birchard, and lead Briane Harris would be the first team since Nova Scotia's Colleen Jones (2001-04) to win a fourth consecutive national women's curling championship.

Einarson and the three former skips had high expectations when they joined forces back in 2018, but capturing four straight Scotties is something none of them ever envisioned.

Whether they saw it coming or not, it's exactly what happened as Einarson and Co., playing with the Maple Leaf on their backs as Team Canada, outlasted Jones 10-4 to earn the right to represent their country at the World Women's Curling Championship in Sandviken, Sweden, the following month.

Einarson's squad also features head coach Reid Carruthers and fifth Krysten Karwacki.

"I find myself wondering every year, like 'Oh my God, are we going to win another one?' Like it just seems unreal and surreal, and kind of like a dream, because it's such an accomplishment and we're so fortunate to win that many Scotties and be Team Canada so many times in a row," said Harris.

"Going into that game, we were just hoping we could be defending champs again and keep the streak going. We know it can't go on forever, but we hope every year that it will be one year longer."

Jones, who reached the final with the help of an impressive group of 20-somethings in third Karlee Burgess, second Mackenzie Zacharias and the platoon of Lauren Lenentine and Emily Zacharias at lead, had an incredible event but ran out of steam in the big game.

Back in 2018, Jones teamed up with Birchard (who was filling in for Kaitlyn Lawes), second Jill Officer, and lead Dawn McEwen to beat Einarson's Wild Card foursome, featuring Selena Njegovan, Liz Fyfe and Kristin MacCuish to win the Scotties title in Penticton, B.C.

"It was amazing to win four in a row and to accomplish something that only Colleen Jones was able to do in the past," said Birchard. "She was someone I looked up to a lot when I was a young curler just getting into the game and to have achieved the same as her is pretty unbelievable."

The job wasn't done yet as the team was eager to bring home the gold from Sweden's Göransson Arena. They had won bronze at the 2022 worlds in Prince George, B.C., but were looking to upgrade this time around. It was their first time competing on the world stage overseas as their previous two trips were hosted in Canadian cities. The 2020

edition was cancelled owing to the pandemic.

They had an up-and-down round robin where they finished with a 7-5 record before losing 8-5 to Norway in the semifinal. Disappointed but not deterred, Einarson closed things out with an 8-5 victory over Sweden's Anna Hasselborg — who they beat in the 2022 third-place game — to add a second bronze medal to their collection.

Switzerland's Silvana Tirinzoni beat Norway's Marianne Rørvik 6-3 in the final to win her fourth straight world championship.

"I know everyone always wants to bring home gold and I know I want to someday, but bringing home two bronze medals is pretty special and it's better than bringing home nothing," said Einarson.

"I know my girls and my family cherish it and so do I. Now I got two bronze medals for my twins (10-year-olds Kamryn and Khloe) to wear. At least they're the same."

One of the biggest positives from the experience was the play of Harris who was pregnant with her first child and just over a month away from her due date. She didn't miss a single game and ended up having the third-best shooting percentage of all leads at the 13-team tournament.

Clockwise from top left: A big part of Kerri Einarson's success has been the work of coach Reid Carruthers who has brought out the best in the team.

Briane Harris (left) was pregnant with her first child at the world championship, but didn't miss a game and had the third-best shooting percentage of all leads.

Twin daughters Khloe (left) and Kamryn now have identical bronze medals that their mother Kerri Einarson won at the world championships to show off.





Kerri Einarson and the three former skips who play with her — Val Sweeting, Briane Harris and Shannon Birchard — had high expectations when they joined forces in 2018, but capturing four straight Canadian women's curling titles is something none of them envisioned.

“I was really lucky that I could still play. Obviously, there were those games where I was a little more tired than what I was used to, or not feeling the greatest, but I just powered through,” said Harris, who gave birth to a baby boy named Hayes on May 31.

“I wanted to be there for my teammates and wanted to keep the consistency there for them. Looking back, it was crazy to play that pregnant. I know I’m really stubborn so I’ll always play if I can. I even wanted to play in the Champions Cup at the end of the year (Dawn McEwen filled in for Harris. Einarson ended up losing the final to Rachel Homan in what was the final Grand Slam of the season) and I had to make that decision not to. But it’s probably a good thing I didn’t because I’m pretty sure I had my son just over two weeks after they got back.”

Now heading into the 2023-24 season, Einarson has a chance to do something that’s never been done before: win a fifth straight Scotties.

The 2024 Scotties take place in Calgary (Feb. 16-25) and the winners will punch their tickets to the worlds in Sydney, N.S., (March 16-24).

“A lot of people just dream about winning once and that was my dream. But now we have some goals we want to set and some goals we want to break so we’re definitely striving for that,” said Einarson.

“We don’t want to get complacent. We want to keep striving to get better and better each year. We know there are things we need to work on as a team and individually.”

If they pull it off, Birchard, who turned 29 in May and still has a lot of curling ahead of her, will be tied with Jennifer Jones, Colleen Jones, and Jill Officer for most Scotties championships with six.

“Every once in a while I think about it and just realize how grateful I am to be in the position I’m in and with the team that I have,” said Birchard.

“It’s not something I’ve been able to do alone.”

Before they get there, they’re focused on starting the season on the right foot.

The Manitobans on the team — Einarson, Birchard and Harris — started training together in mid-August. Sweeting lives in Lottie Lake, Alta., which is near Edmonton, and that’s where they made their 2023-24 campaign debut at the Saville Shootout (Sept. 8-11), losing in the quarterfinals. A few weeks later, they competed at the second annual PointsBet Invitational, Sept. 27-Oct. 1, in Oakville, Ont.

“We’ll be in our sixth season together which is pretty crazy to think about. It doesn’t feel like it’s been that long either, so I think that’s a good sign,” said Harris.

“We’re all still getting along, playing well together and having a lot of success together. It’s not easy to find a good match and a good fit for four people for that long and we’re just really lucky to have that. We still feel good and know we haven’t reached our full potential yet which is really exciting.”

Taylor Allen is a sports writer with the Winnipeg Free Press

Below: Jennifer Jones, perhaps the greatest curler ever, was denied her seventh Canadian Scotties title.

Bottom: Kerri Einarson is still reaching for the stars in curling, and a world women’s gold medal is high among her goals.



BY RYAN
HORNE

Is there a Canadian sports photograph more iconic than Brad Gushue taking the Brier Tankard Trophy in his arms? He's done it five times already.

NO STONE LEFT UNTURNUED



It was only fitting that Team Canada would pull out the Canadian flag after its Brier win in London, Ont. The champs (clockwise, from upper left): Brad Gushue, Mark Nichols, Geoff Walker and E.J. Harnden.

Gushue's curling triumphs have made him a sports superstar in Canada, but for all his success on the ice, the search for more glory continues and the drive for greatness still burns hot

The days of Brad Gushue casually strolling around his hometown of St. John's without anyone stopping him for a chat are long gone. This is what happens when you have a curling resume as extensive as his. "It's much more of a challenge now for me to run errands than it was earlier in my life," Gushue says regarding his trips out and about on The Rock. "I think the amount of exposure we've received, certainly over the last couple of years, and the success we've had has led to a lot more people knowing who I am and recognizing my face. My kids don't like to go shopping with me anymore."

Gushue has been one of the most recognizable faces in the sport and an absolute superstar in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador for some time after guiding his team to five national titles in the past seven years in addition to an Olympic gold medal in 2006 and a World Men's Curling Championship in 2017.

Gushue, who has played a record 246 career games at the Canadian Men's Curling Championship, is the only skip in history to capture five Brier

PHOTOS: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Tankards, passing greats in Ernie Richardson, Randy Ferbey, Kevin Martin and Kevin Koe, with his most recent victory last season in London, Ont.

So, what is the toughest thing about beating Team Gushue?

“I think we’re kind of annoying and pesky and all kinds of different words that you can use to play against because it’s not too often we get blown out,” explained the skip. “Now obviously that happened in the world final [against Scotland’s Bruce Mouat], but over the last number of years you can count on one hand the amount of games where we lost where we didn’t have a chance to win.

“I think anybody that goes into a game against us knows that we’re beatable, but it’s going to take a really good game and it’s probably going to come down to last rock and you’re going to have to earn it.”

Gushue still feels pressure to play up to his expectations on the pebbled ice, but the burden of winning doesn’t weigh him down the same way it did early in his career.

“If I walked away from the game at this point I’d be pretty satisfied with what I’ve accomplished,” says Gushue. “I don’t feel like I have anything to prove when I go out there.”

Despite all the success, the veteran curler says the drive for greatness still burns hot.

“I still love to play and love to compete. I still want to be the best in the world. I still want to win Briers and world championships and the Olympics,” says Gushue. “Is there one thing that’s keeping me going? No, I can’t nail it down to one thing. There’s multiple things. I’d love to win another one [world championship] on home soil. One hundred per cent. I’d love to win one on international soil. So, there’s a lot of things to keep you going.”

In April, Gushue and his team of third Mark Nichols, second E.J. Harnden and lead Geoff Walker were one win away from winning the men’s worlds title in front of a boisterous home crowd in Ottawa, but fell to Team Mouat in the final, 9-3.

The event was highlighted by the tremendous support Team Gushue received from curling fans inside TD Place Arena, akin to what Gushue and company experienced in St. John’s during their first Brier title run back in 2017.

Gushue was emotional during his post-game interview with TSN following the gold-medal loss, an experience that’s becoming more valuable for the skip who turned 43 in June.

Below: It took a few years for him to get involved in mixed doubles curling, but Brad Gushue has had success with Kerri Einarson. Developing chemistry on the fly plus brilliant shots propelled the pair to their first Canadian mixed doubles championship in 2021.

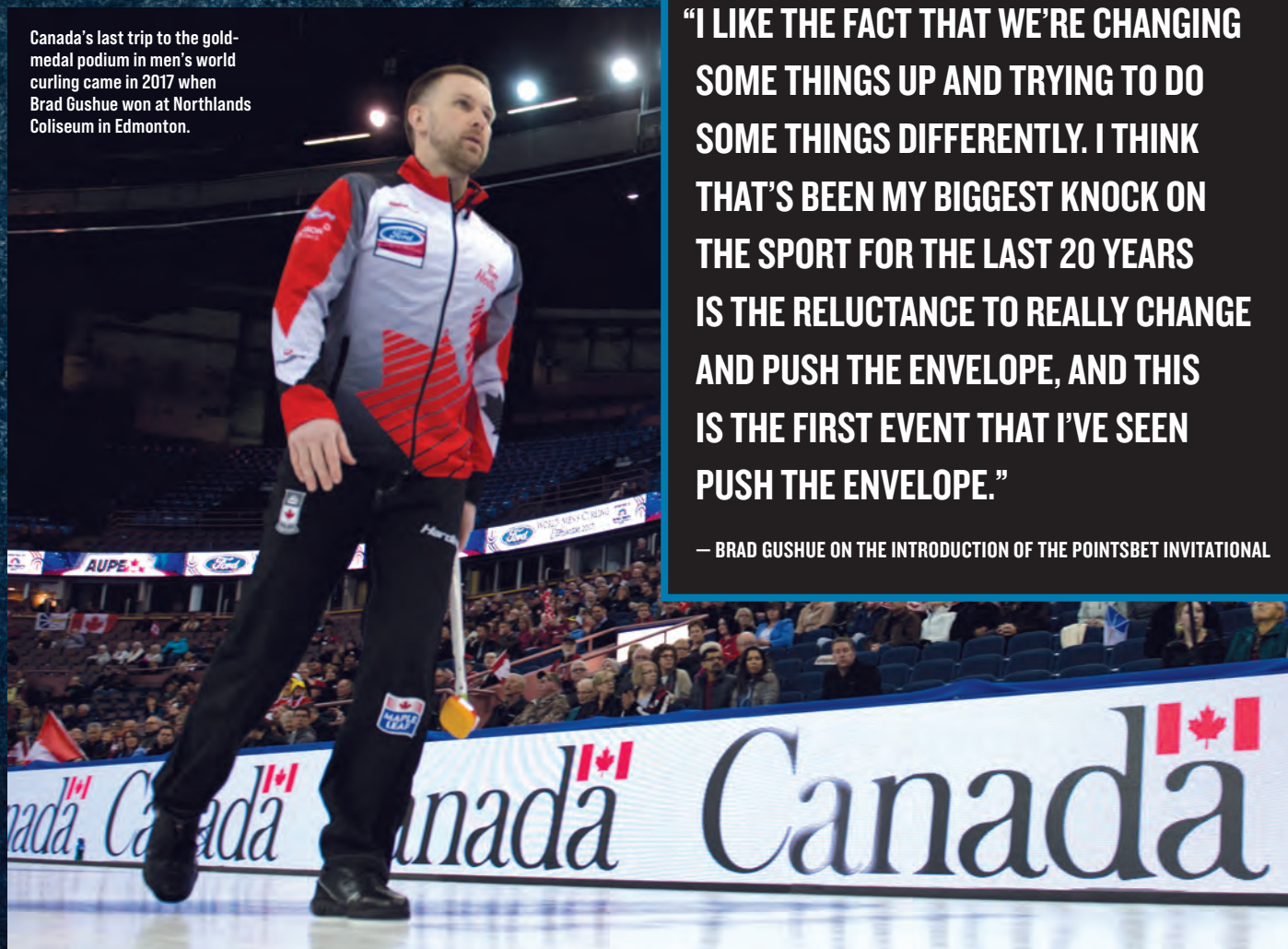
Bottom: Two of the greatest curlers in the world: Jennifer Jones and Brad Gushue, who represented Canada at the 2022 Olympics.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BRAD GUSHUE

People recognize Brad Gushue wherever he goes throughout Canada. On a summertime trip to Toronto, the Blue Jays invited him and his family to be their guests, including a trip to the batting cage.

Canada's last trip to the gold-medal podium in men's world curling came in 2017 when Brad Gushue won at Northlands Coliseum in Edmonton.



“I LIKE THE FACT THAT WE’RE CHANGING SOME THINGS UP AND TRYING TO DO SOME THINGS DIFFERENTLY. I THINK THAT’S BEEN MY BIGGEST KNOCK ON THE SPORT FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS IS THE RELUCTANCE TO REALLY CHANGE AND PUSH THE ENVELOPE, AND THIS IS THE FIRST EVENT THAT I’VE SEEN PUSH THE ENVELOPE.”

— BRAD GUSHUE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE POINTSBET INVITATIONAL



Kids are immediately drawn to Brad Gushue. And it's no surprise they will miss school just to get a chance to see him curl and hopefully get an autograph.



Above: It was an emotional moment when Brad Gushue went to embrace his wife Krista after winning the 2017 Brier in his hometown of St. John's.



Inset: E.J. Harnden joined Brad Gushue's team in the off-season, and made an immediate impact on its way to a Brier victory.

“At this stage of my career, it’s not always about winning and losing. It’s about those life experiences and for that week in Ottawa, that was a pretty incredible life experience to have that many people behind you. Not just behind you, but the way they were behind you,” explained Gushue, who has 20 Brier appearances dating back to 2003.

With the 2022-23 campaign now in the rear-view mirror, Team Gushue will look to take another step forward in 2023-24, a season that will focus more on “team building,” according to the skip.

Harnden, formerly a member of Sault Ste. Marie’s Team Brad Jacobs, replaced Brett Gallant on the squad last season as the Gushue foursome spent considerable time homing in on technical aspects of his game in order to mesh with their playing style.

The power sweeper says continuing to build on the newness of Team Gushue will be a priority next season.

“It’s [about] bringing both of those different experiences and insights and creating something new so that it feels new for all of us and it’s creating this together so it becomes a new team identity that we can carry forward over these next three years,” says the 2014 Olympic champ.

One of the first things Harnden told his new teammates was how desperate he was to reach the top of the Brier podium at least one more time in his career.

With that goal already crossed off, Harnden believes this could be the start of something special for the new-look Team Gushue.

“Seeing what we did in the Brier was just a taste of the potential that this team has and knowing we can do that consistently moving forward really bodes well for what this team has in store,” remarked the 40-year-old, who won his first Brier in 2013.

Expect to see more of the Gushue team on Tour this season as 2023-24 is the first year teams can nab spots to the Canadian Curling Trials, slated to take place Nov. 22-30, 2025. The winners of the 2024 Scotties Tournament of Hearts and Montana’s Brier will earn automatic entries as well as the teams who lead the Canadian Team Ranking System at the end of the season.

“You want to get that spot solidified and know you’re going and then you can start working towards it,” says Gushue, who claimed bronze at the 2022 Olympics in Beijing.

The 2025 Trials will have a slightly new look to them, highlighted by a best-of-three final.

“I think best two-out-of-three final probably leads to the best team coming out more times than not. We don’t have the luxury that we had as the



Above: Brad Gushue has come a long way from the fresh-faced kid who appeared in his first Brier in 2003.

Inset: Being a champion curler has its perks. A young Brad Gushue got to rub shoulders with Boston Bruins great Bobby Orr and Canadian women’s hockey legend Cassie Campbell-Pascall.

country 10, 15, 20 years ago of sending our third, fourth and fifth best teams,” he says.

The first event of the season for many teams, including Gushue’s squad, was the second annual PointsBet Invitational, running from Sept. 26-Oct. 1 at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex in Oakville.

The event featured 16 men’s and 16 women’s teams from across Canada competing in a March Madness-style, single elimination tournament for a cash prize purse of \$350,000.

“I like the fact that we’re changing some things up and trying to do some things differently,” says Gushue. “I think that’s been my biggest knock on the sport for the last 20 years is the reluctance to really change and push the envelope, and this is the first event that I’ve seen push the envelope.

“I’d love to see it go even further, but I like the fact we are trying some new things.”

Ryan Horne is a writer and web producer for TSN based in Toronto

POINTSBET INVITATIONAL

Willie O'Ree Place › Fredericton, N.B. › September 21 to 25, 2022

WHO SAID YOU CAN'T WIN WITH A brand new team?

That certainly wasn't the case at the inaugural PointsBet Invitational single-knockout curling event in Fredericton, N.B., as both Jennifer Jones and Reid Carruthers skipped their teams to championships and fat cheques.

Jones in the women's winner's circle is certainly nothing new, but this trip was mildly surprising since the 48-year-old Winnipeg-born skipper was there with a new team made up of players aged 23 or younger, and came into the event as the fifth seed.

But there she was anyway, joined by third Karlee Burgess and front-enders Mackenzie Zacharias, Lauren Lenentine and Emily Zacharias who all shared in the windfall of \$50,000 after defeating Team Casey Scheidegger (with Kristie Moore skipping) 7-4 in the final at Willie O'Ree Place.

Carruthers also raised a few eyebrows after defeating Matt Dunstone's team from Winnipeg 8-4 in the final. Carruthers was back skipping after playing four seasons at third for Mike McEwen, but proved he still knew his way around the T-head despite oddsmakers listing his team, which included third Jason Gunnlaugson, second Derek Samagalski and lead Connor Njegovan, as the fifth seed.

They also pocketed a hefty cheque of \$50,000.

Jones was elated to start the new season with a major win, especially with a new lineup after years of tremendous success with her former teammates, including third Kaitlyn Lawes and second Dawn McEwen.

"It's just September but it's a really nice way to start the season for us," said Jones who has won six Canadian women's championships, two world women's titles, and an Olympic gold medal. "I thought we played well throughout. It was a great event and all the work we put in, in the summer,



It was a huge payday for Team Jones at the inaugural PointsBet Invitational. The team rolled through the competition undefeated, including a 7-4 win over Team Scheidegger in the final. Members of the team (from left): Karlee Burgess, Mackenzie Zacharias, Emily Zacharias, Jennifer Jones and Lauren Lenentine.

seems to be paying off right now, which is great."

Jones, who now lives in Horseshoe Bay, Ont., was just coming off a fifth-place showing at the Olympics with Lawes, Jocelyn Peterman, McEwen and Lisa Weagle.

The team split after that with Jones joining up with Team Zacharias, one of the country's top up-and-coming teams. Team Zacharias, the 2020 Canadian and world junior champions, were already a force in women's curling with two trips to the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, once representing Manitoba and once as a wild card.

"You never know what it's going to be like when you start something new and how it's all going to work but the chemistry has been phenomenal," said Jones.

"We're all having so much fun and really trying to bring out the best in each other. That part has been really easy so I



Kristie Moore skipped Team Scheidegger to the final.

couldn't ask for anything more."

After blanking the first end, Jones scored two in the second and added deuces in the fourth and eighth ends, while holding Moore to single points with hammer.

"They made a lot of great shots and



To the victors go the spoils. Men's champs (from left): skip Reid Carruthers, third Jason Gunnlaugson, second Derek Samagalski and lead Connor Njegovan.

I just didn't finish in a couple of ends, most definitely," Moore said.

Team Jones opened the 16-team single-knockout women's event with a 9-5 win over Andrea Kelly, beat Selena Sturmay 11-9, topped three-time reigning Canadian women's champion Kerri Einarson 9-5 and bounced Team Scheidegger in the final.



Skip Matt Dunstone made it all the way to the final before tasting defeat in Fredericton.

It was the second event win of the season for the new squad.

Carruthers was stoked after winning the men's event, featuring 16 of the top teams in the country.

"What an unbelievable feeling. It's unreal," he said. "New (Olympic) quad, new team and we win our third 'spiel, and to beat some of the best teams, and our provincial rival, a great team in Dunstone, oh yeah, that's a confidence booster."

Carruthers took control of the men's final by scoring two in the fourth and sixth ends and stealing a point in the seventh for a 6-2 lead.

Dunstone scored his first deuce in the eighth, but Carruthers countered with two in the ninth.

Carruthers defeated Braden Calvert 11-2 to open the tournament, topped former world champion Kevin Koe 8-6 in the Elite 8 and then took down defending Brier champ Brad Gushue 5-4 in semifinal.

WOMEN'S FINAL

Jennifer Jones*	020 201 020 x - 7
Team Scheidegger	001 010 101 x - 4

* - Last-rock advantage

KNOCKOUT BRACKET

Round of 16

- Kerri Einarson 12, Tracey Larocque 3
- Kelsey Rocque 8, Christina Black 6
- Jennifer Jones 9, Andrea Kelly 5
- Selena Sturmay 10, Chelsea Carey 6
- Team Scheidegger 8, Kerry Galusha 7
- Tracy Fleury 8, Suzanne Birt 4
- Penny Barker 10, Holly Duncan 9
- Kaitlyn Lawes 10, Emily Deschenes 8

QUARTERFINALS

- Kerri Einarson 10, Kelsey Rocque 5
- Jennifer Jones 11, Selena Sturmay 9
- Team Scheidegger 7, Tracy Fleury 6
- Kaitlyn Lawes 9, Penny Barker 4

SEMIFINALS

- Jennifer Jones 9, Kerri Einarson 5
- Team Scheidegger 8, Kaitlyn Lawes 7

MEN'S FINAL

Reid Carruthers*	100 202 102 x - 8
Matt Dunstone	001 010 020 x - 4

* - Last-rock advantage

KNOCKOUT BRACKET

Round of 16

- Brad Gushue 8, Nick Deagle 4
- John Epping 7, Mike McEwen 4
- Reid Carruthers 11, Braden Calvert 2
- Kevin Koe 13, Jack Smeltzer 4
- Glenn Howard 11, Félix Asselin 2
- Matt Dunstone 15, Greg Smith 2
- Colton Flasch 6, Karsten Sturmay 5
- Brendan Bottcher 11, Landan Rooney 3

QUARTERFINALS

- Brad Gushue 8, John Epping 4
- Reid Carruthers 8, Kevin Koe 6
- Matt Dunstone 8, Glenn Howard 7
- Brendan Bottcher 10, Colton Flasch 3

SEMIFINALS

- Reid Carruthers 5, Brad Gushue 4
- Matt Dunstone 9, Brendan Bottcher 5

SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS

Sandman Centre › Kamloops, B.C. › February 17 to 28, 2023



PHOTOS: ANDREW KLAVER © KRUGER PRODUCTS

Winning never gets old and it certainly didn't for Kerri Einarson and her team from Gimli, Man., after winning a fourth consecutive Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Kamloops, B.C., defeating Manitoba's Jennifer Jones in the gold-medal final. The joyous champs (left to right): skip Einarson, third Val Sweeting, second Shannon Birchard and lead Briane Harris.

TEAM CANADA SKIP KERRI EINARSON plays best when her back is up against the wall and proved it once again by clinching her fourth consecutive Canadian Women's Curling Championship in Kamloops, B.C.

She did it the hard way, taking the long route through the Page playoffs, always one loss away from elimination, then running the table with three straight wins, culminating with an exacting 10-4 win over Team Manitoba's Jennifer Jones (Winnipeg/Altona) in the 2023 Scotties Tournament of Hearts final at the Sandman Centre.

It was the same story as last season when the Canadian champs suffered an early loss in the Page playoffs, then roared back to win.

"Oh, my God, it (four straight) means so much," said Einarson, who advanced to the

final after winning the semifinal 7-5 earlier in the day against Team Northern Ontario skipped by Krista McCarville. "I think this one was better than our first."

Team Jones earned its berth in the final with an 8-5 win over McCarville in the Page 1-2 game.

Einarson, supported by third Val Sweeting, second Shannon Birchard, lead Briane Harris, alternate Krysten Karwacki and coach Reid Carruthers, had to overcome the determined opposition of Team Manitoba, led by Jones, who was after her record-breaking seventh Scotties title.

But as her team has done over the past three years, Einarson found a way to the winner's circle.

"This team never gives up and that makes us who we are," said Einarson. "So much great determination. We just go out



Veteran skip Jennifer Jones of Manitoba took a new, younger team into the 2023 Scotties Tournament of Hearts and did well to finish with a silver medal after losing the final. Jones was looking to win her unprecedented seventh national women's title.

there and enjoy every single minute and have fun.”

The fourth national title lifts Einarson and her team into elite company, along with Team Nova Scotia’s Colleen Jones who won four in a row during her brilliant career.

It was also the fifth Scotties win for Birchard. She previously won the 2018 Scotties with Jones when she filled in for Kaitlyn Lawes who was off to the PyeongChang Olympics.

Team Canada, the best shooting team during the Scotties, did what it did best all week. It limited its opposition to a few bare peeks at the scoreboard, and capitalized when the opportunities came along.

The turning point may have come in the fifth end when Jones, needing a draw to the eight-foot facing two Team Einarson stones, wrecked on the front. Instead of going 3-2 up, she was suddenly, and inexplicably,

down 4-2.

“It was a draw against two and we liked the weight but the speed came off,” said Jones. “If I could throw one again, that would be it.”

The problems mounted in the sixth when Jones again came up short in a draw for two, but it was much more difficult, needing to get to the button area.

Einarson also played her ‘get-out-of-jail’ cards when she made crucial draws in ends three and seven facing three enemy stones.

It was a heartbreaking loss for Jones who was attempting, at age 48, to win a record seventh national title. She remains tied with Colleen Jones and Jill Officer for most Scotties wins at six. But she did set a record for appearing in 10 Scotties finals, one more than former teammate Officer.

But the title was not to be.

The silver medal was validation of Jones’ decision to join forces with the two-time



Northern Ontario skip Krista McCarville had another great week at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, but once again fell just short of victory, losing in the semifinal game. Last year the Thunder Bay teacher guided her team to a silver-medal finish.

FINAL

Manitoba (Jennifer Jones)*	101 001 010 x — 4
Team Canada (Kerri Einarson)	010 120 105 x — 10

* — Last-rock advantage

PERCENTAGES

Manitoba	PCT.	Team Canada	PCT.
Jennifer Jones	69	Kerri Einarson	89
Karlee Burgess	79	Val Sweeting	86
Mackenzie Zacharias	88	Shannon Birchard	89
Lauren Lenentine	97	Briane Harris	97
Team totals	83	Team totals	90

SEMIFINAL

Northern Ontario (Krista McCarville)*	110 100 101 0 — 5
Team Canada (Kerri Einarson)	003 001 020 1 — 7

* — Last-rock advantage

ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS

Pool A	W	L
Team Canada (Kerri Einarson)+	8	0
Nova Scotia (Christina Black)+#	5	3
British Columbia (Clancy Grandy)+#	5	3
Quebec (Laurie St-Georges)	5	3
Wild Card #1 (Kaitlyn Lawes)	5	3
Alberta (Kayla Skrlík)	4	4
P.E.I. (Suzanne Birt)	2	6
Saskatchewan (Robyn Silvernagle)	2	6
Nunavut (Brigitte MacPhail)	0	8

Pool B

	W	L
Northern Ontario (Krista McCarville)+	7	1
Manitoba (Jennifer Jones)+	7	1
Ontario (Rachel Homan)+	6	2
Northwest Territories (Kerry Galusha)	4	4
Wild Card #3 (Meghan Walter)	3	5
Wild Card #2 (Casey Scheidegger)	3	5
New Brunswick (Andrea Kelly)	3	5
Newfoundland/Labrador (Stacie Curtis)	2	6
Yukon (Hailey Birnie)	1	7

+ — Top three teams in each pool advanced to championship pool. # Teams Nova Scotia and B.C. won tiebreakers and advanced to championship pool.

Championship Pool

Semifinals	
Manitoba (Jennifer Jones)*	110 102 022 x — 9
B.C. (Clancy Grandy)	001 020 100 x — 4
Nova Scotia (Christina Black)	010 010 110 21 — 7
Ontario (Rachel Homan)*	200 101 002 00 — 6

Finals

Northern Ontario (Krista McCarville)*	021 010 000 2 — 6
Nova Scotia (Christina Black)	000 102 000 0 — 3
Team Canada (Kerri Einarson)*	002 002 011 0 — 6
Manitoba (Jennifer Jones)	040 020 100 1 — 8

Page playoffs

1 v. 2	
Northern Ontario (Krista McCarville)	111 001 001 0 — 5
Manitoba (Jennifer Jones)*	000 210 110 3 — 8
3 v. 4	
Team Canada (Kerri Einarson)*	102 020 202 x — 9
Nova Scotia (Christina Black)	010 101 010 x — 4

world junior champions from Altona, including third Karlee Burgess and front-end players Mackenzie Zacharias, Emily Zacharias and Lauren Leninitine.

“I’m proud of them,” said Jones, who had Ontario’s Glenn Howard coaching. “It didn’t go our way today, but that’s why you keep grinding. We just didn’t make quite enough shots. But I’m sure happy about our week and proud to be in the final. It was fun to be out here. A great experience for all of us.”

The Scotties was replete with new faces as three teams were skipped by event rookies — Clancy Grandy of British Columbia, Alberta’s Kayla Skrlík, and Meghan Walter’s Wild Card #3 from Manitoba. Skrlík third Brittany Tran was the only player in the group with any Scotties experience, having played in the 2019 Scotties with the Northwest Territories and in 2021 with Wild Card #3.

Team Einarson went on to represent Canada at the 2023 World Women’s Curling Championship in Sandviken, Sweden, where it won a bronze medal.

ALL-STAR TEAMS

First team all-stars

- Skip** Kerri Einarson, Team Canada
- Third** Val Sweeting, Team Canada
- Second** Shannon Birchard, Team Canada
- Lead** Sarah Potts, Northern Ontario

Second team all-stars

- Skip** Rachel Homan, Ontario
- Third** Laura Walker, Wild Card #1
- Second** Emma Miskew, Ontario
- Lead** Briane Harris, Team Canada



This is becoming to be a habit. Skip Kerri Einarson won her fourth consecutive Sandra Schmirler Award at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts.



It was almost a clean sweep of first team all-star awards for Team Canada, with (left to right) skip Kerri Einarson, vice-skip Val Sweeting, and second Shannon Birchard making the grade. Lead position was Sarah Potts of Northern Ontario.

MARJ MITCHELL AWARD

Kerry Galusha, skip for the Northwest Territories, won the Marj Mitchell Award for best embodying the spirit of curling at the 2023 Scotties Tournament of Hearts. The award is named in memory of Marj Mitchell who skipped Canada to its first world title in 1980. In 1983, shortly after the second Hearts, Mitchell died of cancer at the age of 35. The winner is selected each year in a vote by all players at the tournament.



Kerry Galusha was a popular winner of the Marj Mitchell Award. Teri Palynchuk of Curling Canada’s Board of Governors made the presentation.

JOAN MEAD BUILDER AWARD

The 2023 Builder Award was awarded to Dianne Barker, a longtime curling umpire from Kamloops, B.C., who has been a fixture at countless major Canadian championships, many World Curling Federation championships and three Olympic Winter Games. Barker has also been on the board of directors for both Curl BC and Curling Canada, and is a lifetime member of the Kamloops Curling Club. The award recognizes a builder in the sport and is named in honour of the late CBC curling producer Joan Mead.



Dianne Barker accepts her Builder Award from Teri Palynchuk of Curling Canada’s Board of Governors.

SANDRA SCHMIRLER AWARD

Presented in the name of the late Sandra Schmirler, the MVP award was presented to Team Canada skip Kerri Einarson after she was chosen the most outstanding player in the 2023 Scotties Tournament of Hearts playoffs in Kamloops, B.C. It was the fourth year in a row that Einarson was named MVP.

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TIM HORTONS BRIER PRESENTED BY AGI

Budweiser Gardens › London, Ontario › March 3 to 12, 2023



PHOTOS: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

There were a lot of fingers in the air indicating the number of Tim Hortons Brier titles accumulated individually by the winners in Ottawa. The joyous champs, representing Team Canada but based in St. John's, N.L., (from left): skip Brad Gushue, third Mark Nichols, second E.J. Harden, lead Geoff Walker and coach Caleb Flaxey.

SKIP BRAD GUSHUE AVOIDED

talking about a possible record-breaking fifth Canadian Men's Curling Championship all week in London, Ont., as he worked his way through the 2023 Tim Hortons Brier, presented by AGI.

But when it was all over he could no longer hold his tongue.

Gushue set the high-water mark for skips at the Tim Hortons Brier by defeating Team Manitoba, skipped by Matt Dunstone, 7-5 in the final at Budweiser Gardens before a full and curling-savvy crowd, and a Canada-wide audience on TSN.

There may be more titles to come, but for the 43-year-old skip from St. John's, N.L., who has battled through a nagging hip issue, this will be one to savour.

Gushue earned his fifth Tankard title as a skip, breaking him out of a logjam of legends — Ernie Richardson, Kevin Koe, Randy Ferbey and Kevin Martin — and up into a galaxy all his own.

Vice-skip Mark Nichols and lead Geoff Walker also earned their fifth national titles,

while second E.J. Harnden won his second Tim Hortons Brier championship after joining the team in the off-season. Canada is rounded out by coach Caleb Flaxey.

"It never gets old winning," said Gushue, who had to draw the four-foot facing two to win.

Gushue said the fifth win as a skip was "cool" but was most happy for his team and newcomer Harnden.

"To be honest, when E.J. came on to the team he wanted to get this [win] in," said Gushue. "He's had so many runs when he played with (former skip) Brad Jacobs. But this was a team win."

The win propelled Gushue and Co. to the 2023 BKT Tires & OK Tire World Men's Curling Championship in Ottawa where they won the silver medal.

Gushue stole a single in the 10th end the night before in the Page 1v2 playoff against Team Manitoba, and knew his team would be in for another dogfight.

It was a battle of the two best teams and two best skips during the week. Teams

Gushue and Dunstone won their respective pools and were deserving of being the last teams standing.

It was more of the same in the final as Team Canada dictated the action, putting pressure on the Manitobans. After a blanked first end, the teams exchanged singles to make it 3-3 after seven ends.

The crack in the porcelain didn't come until the eighth when Gushue put together a wonderfully constructed end, resulting in three points to take a 6-3 lead.

Dunstone, playing in his fifth Tim Hortons Brier but first for Manitoba, gave it the old college try, scoring two in the ninth, and had two counters in the rings in the 10th, but Gushue had the hammer and used it to draw the four-foot.



Manitoba's Matt Dunstone (front) won a huge semifinal match against Wild Card #1 Brendan Bottcher to vault into his first Tim Hortons Brier final.

“I trusted it, I made it,” said Gushue, who was voted the Hec Gervais Most Valuable Playoff Award for his performance in the playoffs. “I was overthrowing them a little bit in that game and I was trying not to overthrow it, even with the adrenaline. So I threw it a little soft. It was just like ‘don’t pick, don’t pick’ and it stopped at the back of the button.”

Gushue gave credit to Dunstone and his teammates.

“It felt like any blink was going to lose that game,” he said. “We got them in the eighth end and just hung on. They played so strong. They’re an incredible team and they’re going to win this very soon.”

The loss was a huge disappointment for Dunstone and Team Manitoba (vice-skip B.J. Neufeld, second Colton Lott, lead Ryan



With the crowd inside Budweiser Gardens firmly on their side, locals Jake Higgs and Brady St. Louis helped lead Team Nunavut to a historic first win at the Tim Hortons Brier, defeating Nathan Young’s Newfoundland and Labrador 7-4.

FINAL

Team Canada (Brad Gushue)*	010 101 030 1 –7
Manitoba (Matt Dunstone)	001 010 102 0 –5

* – Last-rock advantage

PERCENTAGES

Team Canada	PCT.	Manitoba	PCT.
Brad Gushue	91	Matt Dunstone	88
Mark Nichols	85	B.J. Neufeld	79
E.J. Harnden	86	Colton Lott	75
Geoff Walker	85	Ryan Harnden	91
Team Totals	87	Team Totals	83

Round-robin

Pool A	W	L
Manitoba (Matt Dunstone)**	8	0
Alberta (Kevin Koe)**	7	1
Northern Ontario (Darren Moulding)**	6	2
Saskatchewan (Kelly Knapp)	4	4
Wild Card #2 (Reid Carruthers)	4	4
Nova Scotia (Matthew Manuel)	3	5
Newfoundland/Labrador (Nathan Young)	2	6
Northwest Territories (Jamie Koe)	1	7
Nunavut (Jake Higgs)	1	7

Pool B	W	L
Team Canada (Brad Gushue)**	7	1
Wild Card #1 (Brendan Bottcher)**	7	1
Ontario (Mike McEwen)**	6	2
Québec (Félix Asselin)	5	3
British Columbia (Jacques Gauthier)	3	5
Wild Card #3 (Karsten Sturmay)	3	5
Yukon (Thomas Scoffin)	2	6
P.E.I. (Tyler Smith)	2	6
New Brunswick (Scott Jones)	1	7

** – Top three teams in each group advanced to playoffs

Championship round

Semifinals

Alberta (Kevin Koe)*	003 020 201 0 –8
Ontario (Mike McEwen)	000 302 020 2 –9
Wild Card #1 (Brendan Bottcher)*	103 110 100 1 –8
Northern Ontario (Darren Moulding)	020 001 011 0 –5

Finals

Manitoba (Matt Dunstone)*	001 000 100 3 –5
Wild Card #1 (Brendan Bottcher)	010 100 001 0 –3
Ontario (Mike McEwen)	020 000 10x x –3
Team Canada (Brad Gushue)*	003 320 01x x –9

Page playoffs

1 v. 2

Manitoba (Matt Dunstone)*	102 010 000 0 –4
Team Canada (Brad Gushue)	010 201 000 1 –5

3 v. 4

Wild Card #1 (Brendan Bottcher)*	101 002 011 x –6
Ontario (Mike McEwen)	010 100 100 x –3

Semifinal

Manitoba (Matt Dunstone)*	020 020 100 2 –7
Wild Card #1 (Brendan Bottcher)	002 102 000 0 –5

* – Last-rock advantage

FINAL STANDINGS

Playoffs	W	L
Team Canada (Brad Gushue)	3	0
Manitoba (Matt Dunstone)	2	2
Wild Card #1 (Brendan Bottcher)	2	2
Ontario (Mike McEwen)	1	2
Alberta (Kevin Koe)	0	1
Northern Ontario (Darren Moulding)	0	1

Harnden and coach Adam Kingsbury) representing the Fort Rouge Curling Club in Winnipeg who had played so brilliantly throughout the week. It was a chance to bring Manitoba back into the winner's circle at the Tim Hortons Brier for the first time since 2011 when Jeff Stoughton turned the trick, also in London.

"Really proud of my team. We were down and out after the eighth end and made them throw a tough shot to win the Brier," said Dunstone who advanced to the final earlier in the day by stealing a 7-5 semifinal victory over Team Wild Card #1, skipped by Brendan Bottcher, from The Glencoe Club in Calgary.

Other teams making the playoffs were skipped by Ontario's Mike McEwen,

Darren Moulding of Northern Ontario, and Alberta's Koe.

The event was also the breakout appearance of two up-and-coming teams skipped by Matthew Manuel of Nova Scotia and British Columbia's Jacques Gauthier.

Stealing the spotlight, at least for one day, was Jake Higgs and his team from Nunavut. Higgs guided his team to a 7-4 victory over Newfoundland and Labrador's Nathan Young in Draw 2 for the territory's first-ever win at the Canadian Men's Curling Championship.

"I have been a competitive curler for a long time," Higgs said. "I got to go to the Olympics as a coach but this [win] in front of this crowd today, it was the best moment of my curling life."

ALL-STAR TEAMS

First-team all-stars

- Skip** Matt Dunstone, Manitoba
- Third** B.J. Neufeld, Manitoba
- Second** Brett Gallant, Wild Card #1
- Lead** Ben Hebert, Wild Card #1

Second-team all-stars

- Skip** Brad Gushue, Team Canada
- Third** Tyler Tardi, Alberta
- Second** Brent Laing, Ontario
- Lead** Geoff Walker, Team Canada



Sharp shooting helped these players make the first all-star team, including (from left): Matt Dunstone, B.J. Neufeld, Brett Gallant and Ben Hebert.



ROSS HARSTONE AWARD

Team Saskatchewan skip Kelly Knapp was the winner of the 2023 Ross Harstone Award whose recipient is selected by the players. The award is presented to the curler who best combines playing ability and sportsmanship. Making the presentation was Gerry Peckham, former High Performance Director of Curling Canada.



CURLING CANADA VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

For four decades, Jeff Northey has been a member of the Forestburg Curling Club, a three-hour drive northeast of Calgary.

And when it comes to giving back to the sport of curling, and his home club in particular, Northey has earned the respect and admiration of his fellow members for his volunteer efforts on and off the ice.

His latest projects took place during the 2021-22 season. Among the projects he oversaw and contributed to were installing a new cement ice floor for the three-sheet rink, rebuilding walkways and installing insulation, a vapour barrier, pipes and rebar for the cement floor.

And on top of that he was the project manager for the installation of a new ice plant when the old plant failed in January 2022.

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LGT WORLD WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

Göransson Arena | Sandviken, Sweden | March 18 to 26, 2023

IT WAS MORE OF THE SAME AT THE

2023 LGT World Women's Curling Championship in Sandviken, Sweden: gold for Switzerland and bronze for Canada.

Team Switzerland's Silvana Tirinzoni extended the most dominant run in world curling championship history, skipping her women's team to a fourth consecutive title and pushing her unbeaten streak to 36 consecutive games.

Tirinzoni, along with Alina Pätz (who throws the last stones), Carole Howald and Briar Schwaller-Hürlimann, beat Team Norway's Marianne Røervik 6-3 in the gold-medal final. The team is coached by Canadian Pierre Charette.

Team Canada, skipped by Kerri Einarson, settled for its second consecutive bronze medal after defeating Team Sweden's Anna Hasselborg 8-5. It was the second time in a row the teams clashed for third place at a women's world championship.

The story of the week, though, was the up-and-down excellence of the Swiss. They went 14-0 during the event, matching the 14-0 run produced by Tirinzoni in winning the 2022 world title. Tirinzoni's last defeat in world championship play came during round-robin play in 2021 at the hands of Hasselborg.

Tirinzoni is the only female skip to win three or more consecutive world titles.

"I don't know to describe it," said Tirinzoni, who stole two in the extra end to win gold. "I felt like (Norway) outplayed us today, actually. It was such a close game, we could go on either side. It didn't look very good in the ninth end and also in the 10th.

"Just out here, being a world champion again, is just unbelievable."

Swiss teams have won eight of the last 12 world women's titles.

Ask any member of Team Canada – skip Einarson, vice-skip Val Sweeting, second Shannon Birchard, lead Briane Harris,



The dynamic duo of Silvana Tirinzoni and Alina Pätz of Switzerland didn't let the breakup of their old team get in the way of success. They simply picked up two new front-enders and swept to another LGT World Women's Curling Championship title, this time in Sweden. The champs (from left): lead Briar Schwaller-Hürlimann, second Carole Howald, coach Pierre Charette, fourth rock-thrower Pätz, and skip Tirinzoni. It was the fourth straight world women's title for Tirinzoni and Pätz.

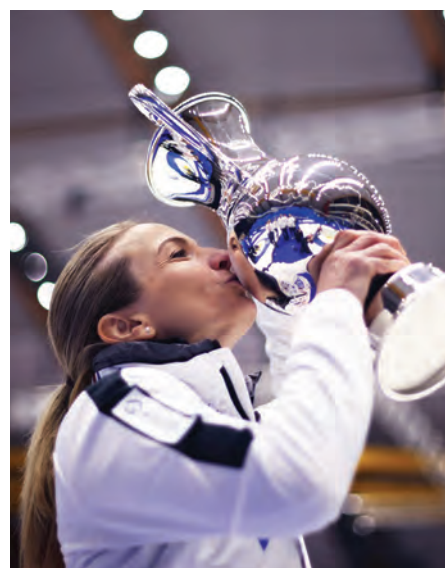
alternate Krysten Karwacki, coach Reid Carruthers and national coach Renée Sonnenberg – to describe the week and they'll say it was an up-and-down event. Canada built momentum early in the week but couldn't string together wins in the latter part.

But they fought their way through it and qualified as third seed in the playoffs with a 7-5 round-robin record. Their spot in the playoffs wasn't secure until Team United States, skipped by Tabitha Peterson, lost its final game to drop to 6-6.

That gave the playoff positions to Switzerland, Norway, Canada, Italy, Sweden, and Japan.

But a few mistakes by the Canadians cost them their shot at gold after suffering an 8-5 loss to the Norwegians in the semifinal game. Team Switzerland defeated Team Sweden 8-4 in the other semifinal.

"I feel pretty excited to come here and medal. I know it's not gold like we wanted,



Winning never gets old for Swiss skip Silvana Tirinzoni who is a four-time world champ.

but at least it's a medal. To win bronze two years in a row is pretty special," Einarson said.

The bronze-medal win adds another piece of hardware to Team Einarson’s mantel. The team believes this will be another building block in long-term success.

“The fact that we were able to still get the bronze with not our strongest performance this week is big for our team,” Birchard said. “It’s lit a fire under us. We want to come back and we want to challenge for the gold. Obviously, we had hoped to do that this week but it wasn’t in the cards.”

The top two teams in the standings after the preliminary round advanced directly into the semifinals. The teams ranked third to sixth played qualification games to see who would move on to the semis. Team Canada beat skip Satsuki Fujisawa’s Team Japan 6-4 and Team Sweden beat Team Italy, skipped by Stefania Constantini, 4-3.



For the second year in a row, Canadian skip Kerri Einarson had to be content with a bronze-medal finish. Einarson was supported at the 2023 LGT World Women’s Championship in Sweden by vice-skip Val Sweeting, second Shannon Birchard, lead Briane Harris, alternate Krysten Karwacki and coach Reid Carrthers, from the Gimli Curling Club in Manitoba.

FRANCES BRODIE AWARD

New Zealand’s Bridget Becker, who throws second stones, was awarded the Frances Brodie Award at the 2023 LGT World Women’s Curling Championship. The award winner is selected annually by competitors in the World Women’s Curling Championship as the player who best combines playing ability with sportsmanship. The award was named in honour of Scotland’s Frances Brodie, one of curling’s pioneering women. Brodie helped establish the women’s world championship and chaired the first such event in Perth, Scotland, in 1979. The award was presented for the first time in 1989.



New Zealand second Bridget Becker took home the Frances Brodie Award.

FINAL

Switzerland (Silvana Tirinzoni)*	010 100 101 2 — 6
Norway (Marianne Rørvik)	000 020 010 0 — 3

* — Last-rock advantage

PERCENTAGES

Switzerland	PCT.	Norway	PCT.
Alina Pätz	84	Kristin Skaslien	79
Silvana Tirinzoni	76	Marianne Rørvik	75
Carole Howald	79	M. Haslev Nordbye	84
B. Schwaller-Hürlimann	80	Martine Rønning	89
Team totals	80	Team totals	82

BRONZE-MEDAL GAME

Sweden (Anna Hasselborg)	001 002 011 x — 5
Canada (Kerri Einarson)*	210 210 200 x — 8

* — Last-rock advantage

Round robin

	W	L
Switzerland (Silvana Tirinzoni)+	12	0
Norway (Marianne Rørvik)+	8	4
Canada (Kerri Einarson)+	7	5
Italy (Stefania Constantini)+	7	5
Sweden (Anna Hasselborg)+	7	5
Japan (Satsuki Fujisawa)+	7	5
U.S.A. (Tabitha Peterson)	6	6
Turkey (Dilşat Yıldız)	6	6
South Korea (Ha Seung-youn)	5	7
Germany (Daniela Jentsch)	5	7
Denmark (Madeleine Dupont)	5	7
Scotland (Rebecca Morrison)	3	9
New Zealand (Jessica Smith)	0	12

+ — Top six teams in round-robin qualified for the playoffs

PLAYOFFS

Qualification

Italy (Stefania Constantini)*	000 002 001 0 — 3
Sweden (Anna Hasselborg)	011 000 010 1 — 4
Canada (Kerri Einarson)*	100 011 010 02 — 6
Japan (Satsuki Fujisawa)	010 100 100 10 — 4

Semifinals

Switzerland (Silvana Tirinzoni)*	200 200 202 x — 8
Sweden (Anna Hasselborg)	002 001 010 x — 4
Norway (Marianne Rørvik)*	100 300 103 x — 8
Canada (Kerri Einarson)	002 011 010 x — 6

* — Last-rock advantage

FINAL STANDINGS

Playoffs	W	L
Switzerland (Silvana Tirinzoni)	2	0
Canada (Kerri Einarson)#	2	1
Norway (Marianne Rørvik)	1	1
Sweden (Anna Hasselborg)	1	2
Italy (Stefania Constantini)	0	1
Japan (Satsuki Fujisawa)	0	1

— Won bronze-medal game against Sweden 8-5

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CANADIAN MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Gerry McCrory Countryside Sports Complex › Sudbury, Ontario › March 21 to 26, 2023



PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA

Jennifer Jones and Brent Laing added to their impressive resumes by winning the 2023 Canadian Mixed Doubles Curling Championship in Sudbury, Ont. The married couple, two absolute giants of the sport, dominated the 32-team event, going undefeated.

WHEN IT CAME TO NATIONAL AND international experience, you'd be hard-pressed to find a matchup anywhere on the planet in the 2022-23 season (or any season, for that matter) that would equal that of the gold-medal game of the 2023 Canadian Mixed Doubles Curling Championship.

Playing before a jam-packed house at the Gerry McCrory Countryside Sports Complex in Sudbury, Ont., on the final Sunday in March, two wife-and-

husband pairings — Jennifer Jones and Brent Laing of Horseshoe Bay, Ont., and Jocelyn Peterman and Brett Gallant of Chestermere, Alta. — went head-to-head to decide who would represent Canada at the 2023 World Mixed Doubles Championship.

Jones and Laing arrived in Sudbury with a combined 12 Canadian championships, seven world titles and an Olympic gold medal (all in four-player competition). The younger Peterman and

Gallant brought two previous Canadian mixed doubles titles, along with four Briers, two Canadian juniors and a Scotties title, not to mention an Olympic bronze medal.

In the end it was Jones and Laing who would break through for their first national mixed doubles championship. Tied 4-4 heading into the eighth and final end, Jones and Laing made a hack-weight tap to score five for a 9-4 triumph.

While neither is a stranger to winning championships, the experience of doing it as husband and wife was a first, and one both Jones and Laing savoured.

“We are getting towards the tail end of our careers, so it’s going to be a special memory that we’ll cherish forever, to be



Brett Gallant and Jocelyn Peterman came up short in the final, losing 9-4.

Team Canada together, to share these moments together,” said Jones, a six-time Scotties Tournament of Hearts winner to go along her two world championships, 2014 Olympic gold medal and a Canadian junior championship. “Even winning this felt great, to give Brent a hug right after the game instead of waiting those five minutes to get down to the ice through the crowd.”

The victory was worth \$40,000 to Jones and Laing, while Peterman and Gallant pocked \$20,000 for their efforts.

Both teams had been on mad tears coming into the gold-medal game, piling up nine straight victories – seven apiece in round-robin play to earn first-round byes in the single-elimination playoffs, followed by victories in the quarterfinals and semifinals.

Jones and Laing dispatched Lisa Weagle and John Epping of Ottawa and Toronto, respectively, 7-2 in the round of eight,

followed by a nail-biting 6-5 win over Rachel Homan and Tyler Tardi (Beaumont, Alta./Calgary) in the semifinal.

Peterman and Gallant, meanwhile, reached the final by beating Lynn Kreviazuk and David Mathers of Ottawa 8-1 in the quarterfinal, then needed an extra end to beat Brittany Tran of Calgary and Aaron Sluchinski of Airdrie, Alta., in the semi.

Both semifinal-losing tandems earned \$12,500.

The championship game was a close-to-the-vest affair featuring nothing but forced single points for the first four ends before the Albertans were able to steal a single in the fifth end to go up 3-2.

But in the sixth, the door opened for Jones to make an open hit with a small roll to score the game’s first (and ultimately game-changing) deuce.

“It was disappointing to give up the steal (in the fifth) because I missed my first shot that end and it got us in a bit of trouble,”



Jessica Wiseman, of Newfoundland and Labrador, showed off her brushing skills.



Lisa Weagle and John Epping lost in the quarterfinals.



Northern Ontario’s Tracy Fleury and Jake Horgan were the local favourites in Sudbury but just missed the playoff round.



It takes great teamwork to win the mixed doubles event, and Jennifer Jones and Brent Laing showed plenty of it.

said Jones. “But we said before the fifth end, whoever gets the first deuce is likely going to win, and we managed to get the first deuce. It was a really good game; the score wasn’t indicative of the amount of rocks in play, that’s for sure.”

“I know if (Jones) has a shot for two, we’re probably going to

get two,” added Laing. “It was a well-played game; Brett and Jocelyn didn’t miss for a while, and in the second half it was kind of back and forth. It was a fun game to play.”

Jones and Laing finished fourth at the 2023 World Mixed Doubles Championship in Gangneung, South Korea.

GOLD-MEDAL GAME

Jones/Laing*	101 002 05 – 9
Peterman/Gallant	010 110 10 – 4

* – Last-rock advantage

PERCENTAGES

Jones/Laing	#SH	PTS	PCT.
1 Jennifer Jones	8	22	69
1 Brent Laing	8	22	69
2 Brent Laing	16	47	73
3 Jennifer Jones	8	23	72
Team Totals	40	114	71

Peterman/Gallant	#SH	PTS	PCT.
Jocelyn Peterman	8	22	69
Brett Gallant	8	23	72
Brett Gallant	16	46	72
Jocelyn Peterman	6	22	92
Team Totals	38	113	74

FINAL STANDINGS

Playoffs	W	L
Jones/Laing	3	0
Peterman/Gallant	2	1
Tran/Sluchinski	2	1
Homan/Tardi	2	1
Weagle/Epping	1	1
Kreviazuk/Mathers	1	1
Kitz/Stewart	0	1
Walker/Muyers	0	1
Manitoba (Lott/Lott)	0	1
Hersikorn/Laycock	0	1
Nova Scotia (Everist/Everist)	0	1
St-Georges/Asselin	0	1

ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS

Pool A	W	L
Peterman/Gallant+	7	0
Homan/Tardi+	6	1
Hersikorn/Laycock+	5	2
Grandy/Morris	3	4
Desjardins/Desjardins	2	5
Alberta (Kalk/MacAlpine)	2	5
B.C. (Loken/Tanaka)	2	5
Yukon (Wallingham/Robinson)	1	6

Pool B	W	L
Kitz/Stewart+	6	1
Ontario (Kreviazuk/Mathers)+	5	2
Nova Scotia (Everist/Everist)+	5	2
Martin/Griffith	5	2
Papley/Van Amsterdam	3	4
Cheal/Cheal	2	5
Newfoundland/Labrador (Wiseman/Skanes)	1	6
Tuck/Tuck	1	6

Pool C

	W	L
Walker/Muyers+	7	0
St-Georges/Asselin+	6	1
Tran/Sluchinski+	5	2
Armstrong/Jacobs	4	3
Québec (Riley/Mullen)	3	4
P.E.I. (White/White)	1	6
New Brunswick (Thompson/Sullivan)	1	6
Bouchard/Charest	1	6

Pool D

	W	L
Jones/Laing+	7	0
Manitoba (Lott/Lott)+	5	2
Weagle/Epping+	5	2
Northern Ontario (Fleury/Horgan)	4	3
Adams/Robichaud	3	4
Northwest Territories (Flemming/Koe)	3	4
Saskatchewan (Bukurak/Bukurak)	1	6
Wasylikiw/Konings	0	7

+ – Top three teams qualify for playoffs

QUALIFICATION GAMES

Manitoba (Lott/Lott)*	103 000 2x – 6
Weagle/Epping	030 311 0x – 8
St-Georges/Asselin*	101 020 0x – 4
Tran/Sluchinski	010 402 1x – 8
Nova Scotia (Everist/Everist)	010 102 00 – 4
Ontario (Kreviazuk/Mathers)*	102 010 11 – 6
Homan/Tardi*	020 010 22 – 7
Hersikorn/Laycock	102 101 00 – 5

QUARTERFINALS

Kitz/Stewart*	100 103 00 – 5
Homan/Tardi	011 010 21 – 6
Peterman/Gallant*	031 22x xx – 8
Kreviazuk/Mathers	100 00x xx – 1
Jones/Laing*	212 110 xx – 7
Weagle/Epping	000 002 xx – 2
Walker/Muyers*	001 020 21 – 6
Tran/Sluchinski	210 103 00 – 7

SEMIFINALS

Jones/Laing*	300 101 01 – 6
Homan/Tardi	021 010 10 – 5
Peterman/Gallant*	010 103 101 – 7
Tran/Sluchinski	202 010 010 – 6

* – Last-rock advantage



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NEW HOLLAND CANADIAN UNDER-21

Aréna Jacques Laperrière and Club de Curling Rouyn-Noranda, Québec ▶ March 26 to April 2, 2023

ALBERTA SWEEP THE FIELD IN

men's and women's competitions at the 2023 New Holland Canadian Under-21 Curling Championships. One team splashed onto the scene and made history with its win. The other had been knocking at the door of a championship title for years and saw it come together during an impressive run at Aréna Jacques LaPerrière in Rouyn-Noranda, Que.

Team Myla Plett of Alberta capped off its magical season with its first Under-21 women's national championship victory. It was the cherry on top of an incredible 2022-23 season, including a silver medal at the 2023 Canada Winter Games and gold at the 2023 Canadian Under-18 championship.

It is the first time in Canadian history that a team has won the Canadian U-18 and U-21 championships in the same season.

"I didn't actually know that so that's really unbelievable," said Plett shortly after winning the New Holland Under-21 gold. "It's a big honour for us. We worked really hard for it."

Hard work paid dividends as Team Plett quickly jumped to a 7-1 lead after five ends of play in the gold-medal final against Team Mackenzie Mitchell of Newfoundland and Labrador. Plett, vice-skip Alyssa Nedohin, second Chloe Fediuk, lead Allie Iskiw and coach Blair Lenton cruised to a 10-4 win, capping off an undefeated campaign with a 10-0 record.

It is the fourth time in a row the women's team ran the table at the New Holland Canadian Under-21, with the streak dating back to 2019 (no championship was held in 2021).

An undefeated round-robin record provided Team Plett with a bye to the semifinals in the playoffs. The Airdrie and Sherwood Park Curling Club team handily won the semifinal game courtesy of an 11-3 win against Team Tori Zemmeling of Ontario.

In the bronze-medal game, Manitoba's Team Zoey Terrick defeated Ontario's Team



Myla Plett, skip of Alberta #1, made history at the 2023 New Holland Canadian Under-21 Women's Curling Championship with a gold-medal victory. The Airdrie/Sherwood Park unit is the first team to capture a Canadian Under-21 Women's Curling Championship as well as the Canadian Under-18 Girls Curling Championship in the same season. The winners (from left): lead Allie Iskiw, second Chloe Fediuk, third Alyssa Nedohin, and Plett.

Zemmeling 8-6 thanks to a three-ender in the ninth end to regain and keep the lead.

While it was a debut win for Team Plett in the women's competition, the men's gold-medal victors had come close to winning a national title last season but settled for silver. Alberta's Team Johnson Tao reached the peak of Under-21 curling in Canada following its gold-medal win in 2023.

It was a long year of contemplative reflection over the disappointing defeat last season, but that was all laid to rest as Tao and his Albertan team of vice-skip Jaedon Neuert, second Ben Morin, lead Adam Naugler and coach Skip Wilson defeated Northern Ontario's Dallas Burgess 7-4 in the gold-medal game.

"It's surreal," said Tao of the satisfying victory. "We all grew up watching the Canadian Juniors on TV every year and just to be on this stage for the last couple of years has been amazing. But to finally be able to stand on the top of the podium, especially after getting silver last year, it's just surreal. It's a dream come true."



Skip Mackenzie Mitchell (right) didn't have her best game in the final, but a silver-medal finish deserved a warm embrace.

Team Tao finished the round robin first in its pool with seven wins and one loss. The team used its semifinal head start and defeated the team it lost to in last year's gold-medal game, Ontario's Team Landan

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Skip Johnson Tao's Team Alberta #2 captured the 2023 Canadian Under-21 Junior Men's Championship in Quebec. (From left): Tao, vice-skip Jaedon Neuert, second Ben Morin, and lead Adam Naugler. Tao had some unfinished business having lost the final in 2022 to Ontario's Landon Rooney in Stratford, Ont.



Northern Ontario third Jackson Dubinsky made sure his sweepers could hear him. The team, skipped by Dallas Burgess, took home silver.

Rooney, with a 7-1 win. Team Tao scored two in the third end and stole another point in the third for a 4-0 lead it wouldn't relinquish.

The bronze-medal game featured Ontario's Team Rooney against Manitoba's Team Jordon McDonald. Team McDonald lost the bronze-medal game last season but made up for it with a bronze-medal victory in 2023, defeating Ontario 7-4.

UNDER-21 WOMEN'S GOLD-MEDAL FINAL

Newfoundland/Labrador (Mackenzie Mitchell)	010 020 10x x – 4
Alberta #1 (Myla Plett)*	301 301 02x x–10

BRONZE-MEDAL FINAL

Manitoba #1 (Zoey Terrick)	021 010 103 x – 8
Ontario (Tori Zemmeling)*	100 101 030 x – 6

QUARTERFINALS

Manitoba #1 (Zoey Terrick)*	100 230 304 x–13
Nova Scotia #1 (Sophie Blades)	005 002 020 x– 9
Ontario (Tori Zemmeling)*	100 100 300 11 – 7
Alberta #2 (Claire Booth)	010 011 021 00 – 6

SEMIFINALS

Alberta #1 (Myla Plett)*	201 102 32x x– 11
Ontario (Tori Zemmeling)	010 020 00x x– 3
Newfoundland/Labrador (Mackenzie Mitchell)*	102 010 020 1 – 7
Manitoba #1 (Zoey Terrick)	010 201 101 0 – 6

* – Last-rock advantage

FINAL STANDINGS

Playoffs	W	L
Alberta #1 (Myla Plett)	2	0
Manitoba #1 (Zoey Terrick)+	2	1
Newfoundland/Labrador (Mackenzie Mitchell)	1	1
Ontario (Tori Zemmeling)	1	2
Nova Scotia #1 (Sophie Blades)	0	1
Alberta #2 (Claire Booth)	0	1

+ – Defeated Ontario 8-6 in bronze-medal game

ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS

Pool A	W	L
Newfoundland/Labrador (Mackenzie Mitchell)**	7	1
Ontario (Tori Zemmeling)**	6	2
Nova Scotia #1 (Sophie Blades)**	6	2
Manitoba #2 (Grace Beaudry)	5	3
Prince Edward Island (Ella Lenentine)	4	4
Québec #1 (Anne-Sophie Gionest)	3	5
New Brunswick #2 (Melodie Forsythe)	3	5
New Brunswick #1 (Jenna Campbell)	2	6
Northwest Territories (Reese Wainman)	0	8

Pool B	W	L
Alberta #1 (Myla Plett)**	8	0
Manitoba #1 (Zoey Terrick)**	6	2
Alberta #2 (Claire Booth)**	5	3
Québec #2 (Elizabeth Cyr)	4	4
Northern Ontario (Bella Croisier)	4	4
British Columbia (Emily Bowles)	3	5
Nova Scotia #2 (Allyson MacNutt)	3	5
Saskatchewan (Elizabeth Kessel)	2	6
Yukon (Bayly Scoffin)	1	7

** – Top three teams from each pool advanced to the playoffs

Teams Plett and Tao will now represent Canada in international competition during the 2023-24 season. The teams will first compete at the 2023 World Junior-B Curling Championships in Lohja, Finland, from Dec. 8-19. The top three women's and men's teams will qualify for the 2024 World Junior Curling Championships, also scheduled in Lohja, from Feb. 17-24.

UNDER-21 MEN'S GOLD-MEDAL FINAL

Northern Ontario (Dallas Burgess)	010 201 000 x – 4
Alberta #2 (Johnson Tao)*	201 000 121 x – 7

BRONZE-MEDAL FINAL

Manitoba #1 (Jordon McDonald)*	010 210 020 1 – 7
Ontario #2 (Landan Rooney)	001 001 101 0 – 4

QUARTERFINALS

Nova Scotia (Calan MacIsaac)	020 010 10x x – 4
Northern Ontario (Dallas Burgess)*	104 102 01x x – 9
Manitoba #2 (Jace Freeman)*	002 020 000 0 – 4
Ontario #2 (Landan Rooney)	000 201 012 2 – 8

SEMIFINALS

Alberta #2 (Johnson Tao)*	031 011 01x x – 7
Ontario #2 (Landan Rooney)	000 000 10x x 1
Manitoba #1 (Jordon McDonald)*	001 002 021 00 – 6
Northern Ontario (Dallas Burgess)	110 110 200 01 – 7

* – Last-rock advantage

FINAL STANDINGS

Playoffs	W	L
Alberta #2 (Johnson Tao)	2	0
Northern Ontario (Dallas Burgess)	2	1
Manitoba #1 (Jordon McDonald)	1	1
Ontario #2 (Landan Rooney)	1	2
Manitoba #2 (Jace Freeman)	1	0
Nova Scotia (Calan MacIsaac)	0	1

ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS

Pool A	W	L
Manitoba #1 (Jordon McDonald)*	8	0
Manitoba #2 (Jace Freeman)*	7	1
Northern Ontario #1 (Dallas Burgess)*+	5	3
Newfoundland/Labrador #2 (Nathan Young)	5	3
Alberta #1 (James Ballance)	4	4
Ontario #1 (Jayden King)	3	5
Québec #2 (Léandre Girard)	2	6
P.E.I. (Mitchell Schut)	2	6
B.C. #2 (Thomas Reed)	0	8

Pool B	W	L
Alberta #2 (Johnson Tao)*	7	1
Nova Scotia (Calan MacIsaac)*	6	2
Ontario #2 (Landan Rooney)*+	5	3
B.C. #1 (Adam Fenton)	5	3
Saskatchewan #1 (Logan Ede)	3	5
New Brunswick (Timothy Marin)	3	5
Saskatchewan #2 (Matthew Drewitz)	3	5
Newfoundland/Labrador #1 (Simon Perry)	2	6
Québec #1 (Adam Bédard)	2	6

* – Top three teams from each pool advanced to the playoffs; + – Ontario #2 and Northern Ontario #1 advanced on tiebreaker system

BALANCE PLUS FAIR PLAY AWARDS

Men

- Skip** Landan Rooney, Ontario #2
- Third** Sam Follett, Newfoundland/Labrador #1
- Second** William Butler, Newfoundland and Labrador #1
- Lead** Miles Reed, British Columbia #2
- Coach** Patrick Bédard, Québec #1

Women

- Skip** Bayly Scoffin, Yukon
- Third** Kate Weissent, Nova Scotia #1
- Second** Amber Gargul, Québec #2
- Lead** Piper Croisier, Northern Ontario
- Coach** Shauna Lehtimaki, Northern Ontario

The Balance Plus Fair Play Award winners are selected by the junior men's and women's officials.



PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA/CHRISTIAN LEDUC

The 2023 Asham National Coaching Awards went to junior men's coach Craig Burgess of Nova Scotia, left, and junior women's coach Shauna Lehtimaki of Northern Ontario.

ASHAM NATIONAL COACHING AWARD

The 2023 Asham National Coaching Award recipients are Nova Scotia's Craig Burgess and Shauna Lehtimaki of Northern Ontario. The award winners at the New Holland Canadian Under-21 are chosen by coaches who are asked to select an opposing team coach who best exemplifies the attributes of coaching.



Ken Watson Award winners for 2023 (left to right): Adam Fenton, Matt Duizer, Kaylee Raniseth, Maddy Hollins.

KEN WATSON SPIRIT AWARD

The 2023 women's winners of the Ken Watson Award are Kaylee Raniceth, Alberta #2 (Pool A) and Maddy Hollins, Manitoba #2 (Pool B), while the men's winners were Matt Duizer, Northern Ontario. (Pool A) and Adam Fenton, British Columbia #1 (Pool B). The awards are voted on by the players in the New Holland Canadian Under-21 and presented to the curlers who best combine playing ability with sportsmanship.



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BKT TIRES & OK TIRE WORLD MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

TD Place › Ottawa, Ontario › April 1 to 9, 2023

THERE WAS NO SHORTAGE OF

emotion at TD Place in Ottawa on a warm spring Sunday afternoon in Ottawa last April.

Following the gold-medal game of the 2023 BKT Tires & OK Tire World Men's Curling Championship, one team was celebrating its long-awaited (and long-expected) first world title, while the skip of the other team was wiping away tears while listening to the roof-raising cheers of Canadian fans who'd nearly filled the arena.

In the end, it was the Scottish juggernaut skipped by Bruce Mouat that would leave the arena with gold medals draped around their necks, but the crowd favourites, Brad Gushue's record-setting team from St. John's, N.L., also departed Ottawa with their heads held high thanks to a wonderful nine days of curling.

A 9-3 victory in the championship game for Mouat, vice-skip Grant Hardie, second Bobby Lammie, lead Hammy McMillan, alternate Kyle Waddell and coach Michael Goodfellow broke a gold-medal dry-spell dating back to David Murdoch's 2009 triumph at Moncton.



PHOTO: CELINE STUCKI/WCF

Skip Brad Gushue had Team Canada just one more win away from a world title but had to settle for a silver.



PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

There was no denying Team Scotland from claiming the world men's curling title in Ottawa. The team built up a head of steam throughout the week, and finished it off in style with a resounding 9-3 win over Team Canada's Brad Gushue in the final. The joyous winners (from left): skip Bruce Mouat, third Grant Hardie, second Bobby Lammie, lead Hammy McMillan Jr., alternate Kyle Waddell, and coach Michael Goodfellow.

Mouat can put the gold next to the silver he won in 2021 and the bronze from 2018.

"We knew we needed to bring our A-plus game, and that's exactly what we did. We shot the lights out," said Mouat. "I didn't expect the final to go that way but so proud of my team. I've created three really good friends over the past five years. The guys have worked so hard and encouraged me to do my best. We are starting to reap the benefits."

Slice open the game and examine the parts, and the true nature of Canada's loss is revealed.

Team Scotland executed better, and Mouat shot an incredible 97 per cent. The Canadians seemed to be on the wrong side of everything, and Gushue wasn't sharp.

Scotland took control of the game early with a deuce on the second end thanks to Mouat's runback double takeout, and

then stole two in the third when Gushue was heavy on his last-rock draw. The Scots played air-tight defence the rest of the way.

It was an anticlimactic ending to what had been a thrilling, edge-of-your-seat nine days of curling.

Gushue, vice-skip Mark Nichols, second E.J. Harnden, lead Geoff Walker, alternate Ryan Harnden, team coach Caleb Flaxey and national coach Jeff Stoughton, arrived in Ottawa fresh off a fifth Brier victory in the past seven years, giving Gushue the record for most Brier wins as a skip.

The Canadians would post a 9-3 round-robin record, including a crucial and spine-tingling 8-5 win over Niklas Edin's four-time defending world champs from Sweden to close out the round robin and set up a rematch in the playoff qualification round.

That game wasn't nearly as close as Team Canada rolled to a 9-1 victory to end

the reign of King Niklas. The week was still a memorable one for Edin, who made what some consider to be the finest shot in curling history — a stone thrown to spin like a top that somehow made what looked to be an impossible deuce against Norway in the round robin.

“That’s insane. That’s the best shot I’ve ever seen in my life,” said TSN broadcaster Russ Howard.

The Canadians would then take down Switzerland’s Team Yannick Schwaller 7-5 in the semifinal, after the Swiss had topped the round-robin standings with a 11-1 record

Scotland, meanwhile, finished 10-2 in the round robin and were 9-8 extra-end winners over Italy’s Team Joel Retornaz in the semifinal.

Switzerland defeated Italy 11-3 to claim the bronze medal.

While it wasn’t the desired outcome, Gushue and Co. could only be proud of the way they represented the country against the world’s best.

“We’re disappointed we didn’t put on a show for the incredible people of Ottawa,” he said following the gold-medal game. “Obviously the missed draw in the third was the difference. It took the incredible fans out the the game, so sorry about that. When you’re down 4-0 to a team of Bruce’s calibre, your odds are not good. Even if we played our best, it may not have been good enough.”

Mouat, meanwhile, finally was able to rise to the expectations of Scottish fans, who’d been waiting so long for another world title.

“It’s been an absolute honour to win in this building in front of all these fans,” said Mouat. “I’m going to remember this for the rest of my life. It gives me goosebumps just thinking about it.”

Gushue, who was overcome with emotion at the end, also acknowledged the fans.

“I want to thank our family for coming, our supporters, the whole city of Ottawa,” he said.

Skip Anton Hood of Team New Zealand won the Collie Campbell Sportsmanship Award.

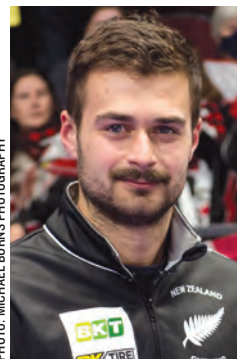


PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

COLLIE CAMPBELL MEMORIAL AWARD

New Zealand skip Anton Hood is the winner of the 2023 Collie Campbell Memorial Award. The award winner

is selected annually by competitors in the BKT Tires & OK Tire World Men’s Curling Championship as the player who best combines playing ability with sportsmanship. The award was instituted in 1979 to honour the memory of Colin A. Campbell who served as president of the International Curling Federation (now the World Curling Federation) from 1969 until his death in 1978.

FINALS

Canada (Brad Gushue)	000 102 00x x — 3
Scotland (Bruce Mouat)*	022 020 03x x — 9

* — Last-rock advantage

PERCENTAGES

Scotland	PCT.	Canada	PCT.
Bruce Mouat	97	Brad Gushue	78
Grant Hardie	98	Mark Nichols	81
Bobby Lammie	94	E.J. Harnden	92
Hammy McMillan Jr.	97	Geoff Walker	97
Team totals	96	Team totals	87

BRONZE-MEDAL GAME

Switzerland (Yannick Schwaller)*	021 230 30x x—11
Italy (Joël Retornaz)	000 002 01x x— 3

* — Last-rock advantage

SEMIFINALS

Switzerland (Yannick Schwaller)*	010 101 020 0 — 5
Canada (Brad Gushue)	101 010 200 2 — 7
Scotland (Bruce Mouat)*	101 020 202 01 — 9
Italy (Joël Retornaz)	020 201 010 20 — 8

* — Last-rock advantage

QUALIFICATION ROUND

Canada (Brad Gushue)*	200 011 32x x — 9
Sweden (Niklas Edin)	010 000 00x x — 1
Norway (Magnus Ramsfjell)*	110 000 020 x — 4
Italy (Joël Retornaz)	002 201 102 x — 8

FINAL STANDINGS

Playoffs	W	L
Scotland (Bruce Mouat)	2	0
Canada (Brad Gushue)	2	1
Switzerland (Yannick Schwaller)#	1	1
Italy (Joël Retornaz)	1	2
Sweden(Niklas Edin)	0	1
Norway (Magnus Ramsfjell)	0	1

— Won bronze-medal game against Italy 11-3.

Round-robin standings

	W	L
Switzerland (Yannick Schwaller)	11	1
Scotland (Bruce Mouat)	10	2
Norway (Magnus Ramsfjell)	10	2
Canada (Brad Gushue)	9	3
Sweden (Niklas Edin)	9	3
Italy (Joël Retornaz)	8	4
Japan (Riku Yanagisawa)	5	7
U.S.A. (John Shuster)	5	7
Germany (Sixten Totzek)	4	8
Czech Republic (Lukáš Klíma)	3	9
Turkey (Uğurcan Karagöz)	2	10
South Korea (Jeong Byeong-jin)	1	11
New Zealand (Anton Hood)	1	11



A Salute to 2023

CANADIAN WHEELCHAIR



PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA/JEAN DOYON

Winning Saskatchewan team (L-R): lead Moose Gibson, second Darwin Bender, coach Lorraine Arguin, vice-skip Marie Wright, and skip Gil Dash. It was the fourth time that Team Saskatchewan has won the national title.

CHAMPIONS

CANADIAN MASTERS



PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA

Team Alberta's men's gold-medal champions. The winners (L-R): lead George Parsons, second Danny Holowachuk, vice-skip Doug McLennan and skip Wade White.



Team British Columbia, best of the women's field (L-R): fifth Leslie Shearer, lead Janet Suter, second Shirley Wong, vice-skip Cindy Curtain, and skip Penny Shantz.

CANADIAN UNDER-18s



PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA

Team Alberta's girls gold-medal winners (L-R): skip Myla Plett, vice-skip Alyssa Nedohin, second Chloe Fediuk, lead Allie Iskiw, and coach Blair Lenton.



PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA/KATELYN MALO

Team Alberta topped the boys division (L-R): skip Zach Davies, vice-skip Benjamin Kiist, second Terren Algot, lead Lucas Sawiak, alternate Logan Thomas, and coach Byron Jagoe.

PAN-CONTINENTAL 'A' CHAMPIONSHIP

PHOTOS: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY



Team Canada opened with a loss and roared back to win (L-R): skip Brad Gushue, vice-skip Mark Nichols, second E.J. Harnden, and alternate Nathan Young. Missing is lead Geoff Walker.



Canada qualified the 2023 world championship by winning the bronze. The team (L-R): skip Kerri Einarson, vice-skip Val Sweeting, second Shannon Birchard and lead Briane Harris.

EVEREST CANADIAN SENIORS

PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA/CLIFTON SAULNIER



An unprecedented fifth straight national women's title for Team Saskatchewan (L-R): Sherry Anderson, vice-skip Patty Hersikorn, second Brenda Goertzen, and lead Anita Silvernagle.



The 2022 Canadian senior men's curling champions (from left): Ontario skip Howard Rajala, vice-skip Rich Moffatt, second Chris Fulton, lead Paul Madden, and alternate Phil Daniel.

WORLD SENIORS

PHOTO: WCF/LOGAN HANNIGAN-DOWNS



Canada's gold-medal winners in South Korea (L-R): alternate Phil Daniel, lead Paul Madden, second Chris Fulton, vice-skip Rich Moffatt, and skip Howard Rajala.



Women's gold-medal champions from Canada (L-R): lead Anita Silvernagle, second Brenda Goertzen, vice-skip Patty Hersikorn, and skip Sherry Anderson.

EVEREST CANADIAN CURLING CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

PHOTO: CURLING CANADA/JAKE BRADLEY



Team New Brunswick in 2022 won the women's title for the first time (L-R): skip Shaelyn Park, vice-skip Krista Flanagan, second Lynn LeBlanc and lead Shannon Tatlock.



Team Ontario emerged the 2022 men's gold-medal champions (L-R): skip Greg Balsdon, vice-skip Jordan Keon, second Curtis Samoy and lead Trevor Talbott.

CCAA-CURLING CANADA CHAMPIONSHIPS

PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA/DUNCAN BELL



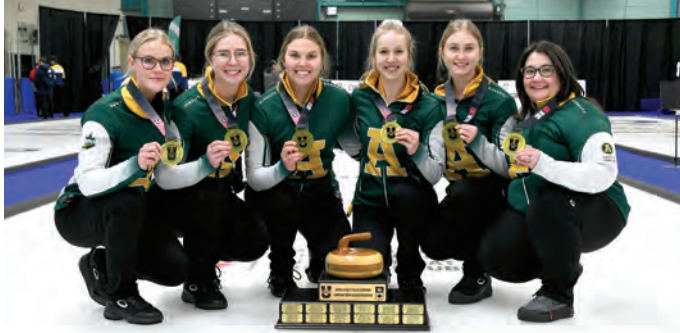
Humber College men's champs (L-R): Skip Jacob Dobson, vice-skip Auston Snyder, second Noah Garner, and alternate Kevin Genjaga. Back row: lead Matthew Abrams and coach Jack Shurtleff.



Augustana women's champions (L-R): Skip Josie Zimmerman, second Claire Bevan Stewart, vice-skip Bryn Woloshyn, alternate Hope Zimmerman, and lead Darby-Anne Swanson.

U SPORTS-CURLING CANADA UNIVERSITY CHAMPIONSHIPS

PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA



Alberta women's champs (L-R): skip Serena Gray-Withers, vice-skip Catherine Clifford, second Brianna Cullen, lead Zoe Cinnamon, alternate Gracelyn Richards, and coach Amanda St. Laurent.



Wilfrid Laurier men's winners (L-R): Skip Sam Mooibroek, vice-skip Kibo Mulima, second Wyatt Small, lead Ben Pearce, alternate Codie Harris, and coach Matt Wilkinson.

WORLD MIXED

PHOTOS: WORLD CURLING FEDERATION/ANSIS VENTINIS



The 2022 champs from Canada (L-R): lead Annie Lemay, second Ian Belleau, vice-skip Marie-France Larouche, and skip Jean-Michel Ménard. Missing is coach coach Eric Sylvain.

CANADIAN MIXED



The 2022 winning Québec team from the Glenmore Curling Club (L-R): Skip Félix Asselin, vice-skip Laurie St-Georges, second Émile Asselin, and lead Emily Riley.

PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA/MELANIE JOHNSON

WORLD JUNIOR-B WOMEN'S

PHOTO: WORLD CURLING FEDERATION/HELEN KOSKINEN



Gold medallists, Team Canada (L-R): coach Mary Mattatal, team support Taylour Stevens, lead Cate Fitzgerald, second Alison Umlah, vice-skip Lauren Ferguson, and skip Emily Deschenes.

WORLD WHEELCHAIR



PHOTOS: WCF/CHEYENNE BOONE

Silver medallist from Canada (L-R): Skip/lead Mark Ideson, fourth Jon Thurston, vice-skip Ina Forrest, second Gil Dash, alternate Marie Wright, and coach Mick Lizmore.

CANADA WINTER GAMES



PHOTOS: CANADA WINTER GAMES/RUDI TERSTEGE

Boys champions from Nova Scotia (L-R): lead Christopher McCurdy, second Owain Fisher, third Nathan Gray, skip Calan MacIsaac, and coach Craig Burgess.



PHOTOS: CANADA WINTER GAMES/RUDI TERSTEGE

Girls champions from Nova Scotia (L-R): Skip Sophie Blades, third Kate Weissent, second Stephanie Atherton and lead Alexis Cluney.

FISU WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES



Canada's bronze medallists (L-R): skip Owen Purcell, third Jeff Meagher, second Adam McEachren, alternate Caelan McPherson and lead David McCurdy.



PHOTOS: CANADA WINTER GAMES/MIKE SCHUT

Alberta's curling duo of Evan Crough and Kaylee Raniseth emerged as Canada Winter Games mixed doubles winners. It was the first time the mixed doubles event was held.

WORLD WHEELCHAIR MIXED DOUBLES



PHOTOS: WCF/CHEYENNE BOONE

Team Canada defeated Team China to win the bronze medal in Richmond, B.C. (L-R): Dennis Thiessen, coach Dana Ferguson, and Collinda Joseph.

{ IN THE NEWS }

Five new members have been added to the Canadian Curling Hall of Fame in 2023



LINO DI IORIO

Builder

Inducted posthumously was Lino Di Iorio of Aurora, Ont., an innovator who applied his inventor's mind to the sport of curling.

Di Iorio's desire to design a better curling shoe that helped curlers slide easier and with more stability led to the creation of a slider in 1995 that would be the foundation for the creation in 1996 of BalancePlus Curling Equipment, one of the world's leading curling manufacturers and retailers.

Di Iorio and BalancePlus would grow beyond sliders, and start looking at ways to improve the technical aspects of the sport related to delivery lines, deceleration and release points.

Among his innovations to help himself (and many others over the years) improve were:

- A remote-controlled video recording system that enabled him to review his line of delivery on all areas of the sheet without the assistance of others. This led to better delivery techniques.
- Use of Doppler radar equipment to measure deceleration of curling equipment. Subsequent adjustments to equipment enabled members of a team to have similar slide speeds during their delivery.
- Automatic sensors that measured delivery speeds and initial rock speeds.

Di Iorio was also heavily involved with coaching and worked in various countries in Europe.



BILL HANS

Builder

William (Bill) Hans of Calgary was formally inducted at a ceremony in his hometown, in honour of his decades-long mission to bring more

young people into the sport of curling.

"It's a great honour to receive this award

on behalf of the many many people over the past 38 years who helped get us to the point of youth curling being a priority," said Hans. "I believe that the curling community is obligated to ensure that Canadian youth have an opportunity to try the sport and learn the important life skills the sport offers."

His strategic leadership and vision for the advancement of youth development programs, initiatives and events, led to Curling Canada's world-class youth feeder system.

Hans was a co-founder of the highly successful Calgary Youth Curling Association in the early 1990s, and worked closely with fellow youth curling advocate Al Kersey to start an intra-provincial, and eventually international, championship for young curling teams. The Optimist International Championships were the forerunner of what is now Curling Canada's Canadian Under-18 Boys and Girls Curling Championships, which are crucial elements of this country's Next-Gen curling program. Hans was a guiding influence in the formation of the Curling Canada Under-18 Championships.



JACK LYNCH

Builder

Born in 1929, John Charles Lynch, better known as "Jack", was a sports enthusiast for his whole life: canoeing, kayaking, golf, football, hockey

and, of course, curling. He was very involved with the junior program and for several years he was involved in the organization of the Jeux du Quebec as well as many local tournaments.

He also was employed by the Canadian Olympic Committee as its Technical Director until his retirement following the 1988 Olympics in Calgary.

Lynch was dedicated to the goal of curling becoming a medal sport at the Winter Olympic Games. After his retirement he was recruited by the International Curling Federation to help primarily with attaining the 25-member nation requirement for Olympic medal status.

From 1988 until 1991 Lynch worked hand-in-hand with Günther Hummelt of the ICF until they managed to get the necessary 25 countries. Lynch would use his IOC contacts in the nations involved to get the ball rolling and then Hummelt would move it to the next step through his business connections.

After years of politicking and lobbying, Lynch's hard work, and the hard work of those with whom he shared the dream, culminated with the 1992 announcement in Barcelona that curling would be an Olympic medal sport.

Lynch also is being inducted into the World Curling Hall of Fame this year.



GERRY PECKHAM

Coach/Builder

Peckham joined Curling Canada in 1990 after a solid career as a competitor that saw him play in two Briers representing British Columbia. In

his time with Curling Canada, he oversaw the growth and development of one of Canada's and, indeed, the world's pre-eminent high performance programs.

As the High Performance Director, Peckham, who retired from his position upon the conclusion of the 2022-23 season, holds a world-leading record for the production of international medals for Canada including World Championships: 26 for Men (15 gold), 28 for Women (11 gold), 54 for M/W U21 (26 Gold), six Wheelchair Curling (three gold) as well as multiple medals for Mixed, Seniors, and Mixed Doubles. Additionally he oversaw the Olympic/Paralympic program that produced 12 Olympic medals and five Paralympic medals, with podium finishes in every quadrennial since he joined the program.

Peckham developed a team of experts who work with Canada's best curling athletes in our collective pursuit of Canadian podium performances. He also was a recognized leader by Curling Canada's partners at Own the Podium, Sport Canada and the World Curling

AWARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Presented annually, Curling Canada's Award of Achievement recognizes individuals who have contributed significantly to curling in one of four areas — builder, technical development (instructor, coach, official, ice technician), marketing and media.

SCOTT HIGGINS

Curling fans love their sport on television, and one of the key individuals who brings it to them is Scott Higgins, Senior Producer, Live Events, for TSN in Toronto.

Since joining TSN 34 years ago, Scott Higgins has been around the world as an integral part of the network's behind-the-scenes broadcast team. But it is his work at curling events over the past 20 years that

has continuously raised the bar of excellence and provided thousands of hours of entertainment to curling fans across Canada.

Higgins's passion for curling and its people comes through loud and clear on TSN broadcasts. He oversees all content and the presentation of TSN's curling coverage while leading the network's talented group of storytellers. His goal has always been to ensure that each broadcast embodies the right balance of analysis and entertainment for the viewer at home.

His first major Canadian championship event was the 2003 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Kitchener, and he's been at just about every Season of Champions since then.



PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY



JENNIFER KJELL and KRISTI PETRUSHCHAK

Jennifer Kjell and Kristi Petrushchak don't throw any shots (on camera) but their contributions to curling are profound, nonetheless

Kjell is the Senior Events Manager, while Petrushchak is the Event Director for the Grand Slam of Curling series, which puts the world's best men's and women's curling teams on the ice in the biggest events outside of national and world championships.

The Grand Slam series, owned and operated by Rogers Broadcasting, is a crucial training ground for curling teams from around the world, and a staple for TV viewers in Canada, and Kjell and Petrushchak have played crucial roles for more than a decade in the success of the Slams.

They are involved in all aspects of the organization of the events, including securing venues, local and national marketing, player relations, sponsorship relations, event formats, scheduling, and working with host committees.

Kjell and Petrushchak also were instrumental in making the Slam events equal for men and women. When they started working for Rogers in 2011, women played in only one Slam event. Four years later, all Slams featured men's and women's teams and equal prize money.

Kjell and Petrushchak also were deeply involved alongside Curling Canada in the execution of two safe and successful Grand Slam events that were held in the Calgary bubble in 2021.

Federation, as his intelligence, values and integrity, and in-depth knowledge of systemic excellence were widely respected.



JOHN SHEA

Executive Honour Roll

This longtime Ottawan has devoted countless volunteer hours to curling, beginning in 1990 when he was part of the ice crew

for the 1990 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in his hometown.

Shea joined the Curling Canada Board of Governors in 2016, and served as finance

chair for three years, and was elected Board Chair for the 2019-20 season, during which he also served as a member of the World Curling Federation's Finance Commission.

His company, John Shea Insurance, was a significant curling sponsor for many years in Ottawa, and he created the first comprehensive insurance program designed specifically for curling clubs. Shea also played a significant role in the creation of the Dominion Canadian Curling Club Championships in 2009; the event is now known as the Everest Canadian Curling Club Championships.

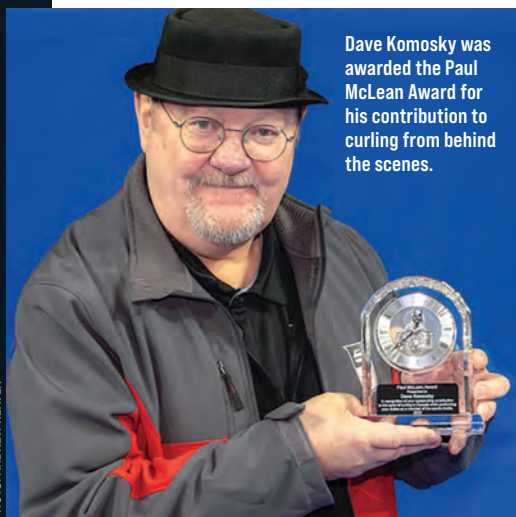
His experience with the 1990 Scotties started him down a road that would see him volunteer for just about every major provincial, national or international curling event staged in

the Ottawa Valley, including most recently being the Team Captain for Canada for the highly successful 2023 Strathcona Cup Scottish Tour of Canada. Shea also will be Canada's captain when Canadian teams tour Scotland for the 2028 Strathcona Cup.

A member of the Governor General's Curling Club, Shea also is a former Chair and Vice-Chair of the Ontario Curling Association and a member of the Ontario Curling Hall of Fame.

Even after his time with the Curling Canada Board of Governors ended, Shea continues to be active in promoting the sport. He currently is the president of the Ottawa Valley Curling Association, and is a member of the Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club.

PHOTO: ANDREW KLAVER



Dave Komosky was awarded the Paul McLean Award for his contribution to curling from behind the scenes.

PAUL McLEAN AWARD

Dave Komosky was the recipient of the Paul McLean Award at the 2023 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Kamloops, B.C. The award is presented annually to a person behind the scenes who has made a significant contribution to the sport of curling. Komosky is Editor, Event Daily Publications, for Curling Canada. TSN technical producer Phil Laplante was winner of the award in 2022. No award was presented in 2021. The award was created in 2007 by the Canadian Curling Reporters — now the Professional Curling Media Association of Canada — in conjunction with TSN, in memory of McLean, a TSN executive producer, and his dedication to the sport of curling. McLean passed away on Dec. 14, 2005, at his home in Brampton, Ont., after a two-year battle with cancer. He was 39.

RAY KINGSMITH AWARD

The Ray Kingsmith Award is named after the man who played a leading role in bringing curling to the Winter Olympic family. He was a tireless volunteer in administration and management roles in the sport of curling. The award honours individuals who best demonstrate a similar commitment and dedication to our sport that made Kingsmith the consummate sport executive.

ELAINE BRIMICOMBE

If it happens on the ice or off the ice when it comes to curling in the Ottawa Valley, chances are very good that Elaine Brimicombe is involved.

Major events such as the 2023 BKT Tires & OK Tire World Men's Curling Championship, the 2017 Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings Canadian Curling Trials, the 2016 Tim Hortons Brier and the 2007 and 2015 Canadian Wheelchair Curling Championships all had Brimicombe's touch on them, as she either chaired or vice-chaired host committees for them.

But championship events have hardly been Brimicombe's only focus. She has volunteered countless hours at the club

level in helping to organize Learn to Curl sessions for new players, particularly in the discipline of wheelchair curling. In addition to coordinating the long-running Cathy Kerr International Wheelchair Bonspiel, Brimicombe has created a plan to offer two Try It days for wheelchair curlers and one-10 week dedicated Learn to Curl for wheelchair curlers. Her current work-in-progress is a proposal to create opportunities for youth wheelchair curlers.

Brimicombe also has been active as a board member, including three years as Chair of the CurlION board.

KEN THOMPSON

Ken Thompson of Kingston, Ont., a member of the Rotary Club of Kingston since 2003, has spent countless hours working behind the scenes on successful

major curling events in Ontario, and it all started at the 1974 Brier in London, Ont., where he volunteered as a driver for visiting media.

Since then, he has chaired or vice-chaired four Canadian curling championships — the 2020 Tim Hortons Brier and the 2017 Canadian Curling Club Championships in Kingston, the 2013 Scotties Tournament of Hearts and the 1991 Brier in Hamilton.

He's also been active at the local level, serving as a board member, a former curling board chair and president at the Catarauqui Golf and Country Club in Kingston.

Thompson also showed his journalism skills as a feature writer and co-owner of the Ontario Curling Report.

"It's a great honour to be recognized by the national governing body of the sport that I have dedicated decades to. It's wonderful," Thompson said. "Ray Kingsmith was a guy who was devoted to the sport of curling. "I've chaired or co-chaired four national championships. I don't know a lot of people who have done that."



ELAINE BRIMICOMBE



KEN THOMPSON



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Curling Canada made a bold move by handing an 'outsider' from Scotland the very crucial job of Director, High Performance. But David Murdoch, a two-time world champion and Olympic silver-medal-winning skip, is up to the task.

PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Curling Canada rocks the house by going outside its borders in hiring Scotland's David Murdoch as Director, High Performance, to set a new course for long-term success on the ice internationally

BY MARIO ANNICCHIARICO

David Murdoch and family — wife Stephanie and three children under the age of seven — are settling into their new lives in Canada.

The Scottish Olympic silver medallist from 2014 and two-time world men's and world junior champion is relishing his new role as Director, High Performance, with Curling Canada. He replaces longtime director Gerry Peckham who has retired.

Murdoch, 45, already had a love affair with his new country of choice, having met Stephanie — who hails from Vancouver Island — while training for the Olympic Games in Vancouver in 2010. Now he'll attempt to transform his adopted nation's top curlers into even stronger competitors on the international stage. Murdoch retired as a player in 2017 and moved into coaching, leading Great Britain's curling program since 2018.

There, Murdoch helped produce Olympic gold medallist Eve Muirhead on the women's side and silver medallist Bruce Mouat in men's play at the most recent 2022 Games in Beijing, China.

Although Canada has churned out medals and tour successes — with No. 1 teams in the world rankings in men (Brad Gushue), women (Kerri Einarson) and mixed doubles (Jennifer Jones/Brent Laing); four men's and four women's, and six mixed doubles teams in the top 10 on the world rankings; two medals at the world wheelchair championships (fours, mixed doubles); double gold at the 2023 world seniors; and gold at world mixed fours — it so desperately wants to improve its performances at the Winter Olympics.

Curling Canada has turned to Murdoch, who recently received his MBE (Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) award, to get things headed in a long-term direction that sets the nation up for Olympic success in 2026 and 2030.

"Absolutely, I'm really excited about it," Murdoch says of the challenge. "I know we have some incredible teams and I also know there's a lot to discuss with the Next Generation, with our Juniors and Pathway (programs), too. I'm excited about the whole program, top to bottom. We've got a lot of work to do."

And the work begins now.

"We want to win. We want to win every year. We want to win Olympic gold and we want a lot of medals. That's what Canada stands for and that's what the athletes are looking to achieve as well. With that in mind, there's a lot of discussion to have and a lot of work to be done, and I know our athletes are already starting to train effectively for the lead up to the Trials," he insists. "I think there's a great future ahead."

The lack of success at the Olympics in men's and women's play — just one bronze medal by Gushue — during the past two Olympic outings shows the world has caught up and even surpassed Canada on the biggest stage. Canada did win gold with John Morris and Kaitlyn Lawes in mixed doubles in 2018.

"I think it just shows, or highlights, what sport really is," says Murdoch, who adds that sophisticated programs, thanks to the channeling of strong funding into a few teams, has helped other nations.

Left: David Murdoch was a fierce competitor when he represented Scotland at major international events, so he knows what it takes to win.

Right: Team Great Britain, skipped by Eve Muirhead, celebrated its Olympic gold medal with coach David Murdoch after winning in Beijing, China.





PHOTO: CURLING CANADA

“THE SPORT HAS BECOME MORE DIFFICULT. THE OLYMPICS HAVE CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR THE SPORT, IT’S BECOME MORE PROFESSIONAL AND THAT’S TAKEN A COUPLE OF DECADES FOR THAT TO HAPPEN. A LOT OF THE WORLD VIEWS IT THAT WAY NOW. IT’S SUCH A PRIORITY NOW FOR THESE SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS.”

— DAVID MURDOCH

“You’ve seen where I came from with the National Curling Academy and the money that’s in that building just to train teams effectively for that purpose — to achieve Olympic gold,” he said of Britain’s case. “When countries are starting to do that, we need to look at it and say, ‘What can we do to keep moving ahead and keep the bar so high, which was done in the past by Canada.’”

“The sport has become more difficult. The Olympics have changed everything for the sport, it’s become more professional and that’s taken a couple of decades for that to happen. A lot of the world

views it that way now. It’s such a priority now for these sports organizations,” he adds.

For Britain the moves paid off handsomely.

“I think it was partly having a great facility. The emphasis, however, was training. That was our utmost priority. We were lucky in that we could centralize our athletes and have them there on a daily basis. Technical excellence was my No. 1 thing as a head coach; how good we could be with our technique. No matter what shot was thrown at us, we had the same slide, the same throw, the same release, the same call.

“When you’re working with teams on a daily basis, you can start to increase your shooting percentage based on that. I think that was the main thing and having a holistic program, encompassing everything they do, whether it’s mental, physical or on-ice technical work with various coaches. When that’s brought together you can start to make a lot of gains.”

Murdoch wants to achieve those gains now with Canada.

“Those are the gains the rest of the world are all starting to achieve and I think Canadian teams are looking at that, too. If that’s what’s happening, if that’s what it takes to be the best, then we’re starting to see teams focus that way as well,” he says.

And that attitude and those techniques are easily transferable.

“There are teams doing that already. I think it’s just encouragement to try and emphasize that even more. Certainly, from our perspective, how can we facilitate that with the national program and also what do we want our future athletes to look like in terms of technique and mental performance?

“If we know what it takes to win, then what’s it going to take to get on that path to get there? If we can get that knowledge further down into the system so that when they do get up to the top, they’re already extremely good.”

Murdoch’s first steps in his new position were getting to know everyone.

“Speaking to the ATP (Advanced Training Program) teams; our staff; speaking to our stakeholders, because they fund us. What is that money there to assist us with the program? It’s giving me a chance to assess staff. Where do people train? What does it look like? What can we do to help with that?” says Murdoch of his early work.

“I’ve just been asking a lot of questions to as many people as I can and that takes time. You need to understand what’s possible and what’s not possible. What are the short-term stepping stones and what are the long-term stepping stones? Once you understand that, you’re in a better position to start to make adjustments or continue projects that are already in place.”

David Murdoch has put his Scottish days behind him and is focused on getting Canada back to winning gold medals at the Olympics. He believes there’s a great future ahead for Canadian curlers.



PHOTOS: ANDREW KLAVER © KRUGER PRODUCTS



PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Inset: Canada continues to be a curling powerhouse, and much of that success came under the direction of Gerry Peckham. The former Director, High Performance, helped Canadian teams reach the podium at many major international events.

Below: Canadian skip Brad Gushue has a world and Olympic gold medal to his credit. Curling Canada looks for those glory days to return soon under the direction of David Murdoch.



PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Above left and centre: David Murdoch will have some talented, young players to work with in the coming years, including Clancy Grandy and Matt Dunstone who both excelled on the national stage last season.

Murdoch recently took part in a technical summit in Kelowna, B.C., with Curling Canada performance staff: “so that we’re all aligned in what we want and what we’re looking to achieve and how we can help our athletes perform.”

“That’s the priority. For me, how do we make our athletes the best they can be? That’s the bottom line.

“I came from that athlete background. It’s so important that we help them facilitate that and help them achieve their goals and dreams.”

Technical training camps were set for August as Murdoch slides right into his new job.

“It sure is (a big job). It’s a job that really excites me,” he says. “Obviously, when I took the job, I may not have known everything about what it might look like, but I had a good idea, speaking to a lot of the Curling Canada staff. Now that I’ve had a few months under my belt I have a much better understanding about how everything operates, not just the High Performance.

“You now know the Member Associations, our stakeholders — it’s all-important to get a lay of the land. I’m definitely in a better position,” he adds. “It’s going to be so much easier settling into Canada. I’m looking forward to having the access to the athletes and getting involved and having hands-on and getting into the weeds with a few teams.”

Mario Annicchiarico is a freelance writer based in Victoria, B.C.

PHOTO: STEPHEN FISHER/WCF



IN FOR A PENNEY, IN FOR A POUND

In the fall of 2022, Sitaye Penney had an idea. The rising young Newfoundland and Labrador curler knew that many of her peers in school, a diverse group that included many newcomer youth, didn't know much about the sport.

That came as no surprise: as a Black teen, she was long accustomed to being one of the few people of colour out on the ice. But maybe she could use that experience, she thought, to introduce new communities to the game she loved, and the one in which she'd spent most of her life.

By then, Penney knew her own future belonged to the sheet. She'd grown up around curling, tagging along to watch her parents in league play at St. John's RE/MAX Centre. When she was just four or five years old, she remembers, her father would take her onto the ice and let her practice throwing rocks. Soon she was ready for the club's Little Rocks program, where she delighted in making friends and trying new skills under the tutelage of junior curlers.

From the start, she loved the feel of a brush in her hands. "I was always sweeping everywhere I go," Penney, now 17, says with a laugh.

After playing a few pre-teen years at vice-skip, she slid into second, and never looked back. She admired the sport's top front-end players, such as Joanne Courtney, and dreamed of someday joining them under curling's brightest lights. And when the 2017 Brier came to St. John's, N.L., Penney found herself with a front-row seat to the action, as one of the event's Future Curling Stars. When Brad Gushue led his team to an emotional hometown win, she was mesmerized.

"It was just crazy," she says, chatting from her home in St. John's this summer. "Everyone was so excited, everyone was cheering . . . and it was like, 'man, this is amazing. I want to do it like this when I get older.'"

Now, Penney is on the cusp of making waves in that national conversation. In 2023, she helped power her team, which includes skip Cailey Locke, third Katie Peddigrew, lead Kate Young and fifth Hayley Gushue, to their second consecutive Newfoundland and Labrador U-18 championship. More than that, she is also finding her voice as a leader off the ice, hoping to inspire a new, more diverse generation of young Canadian curlers.

This mission comes at a critical time. More than any other sport in Canada, curling is passed down through families: like Penney, most of the game's elite took their first slides as children, following their parents. But if that cozy, familial quality is one of curling's strengths, it is swift becoming one of its greatest challenges. Statistics Canada projects that by 2031, nearly one-half of Canadians above age 15 will either have been born abroad or have at least one parent who was, and many newcomers come from regions where curling has little presence.

Penney, who is adopted, has always noticed this difference in how people her age are exposed to the game. "I feel like, if my parents weren't white, I don't know if I'd even be in curling," she says. "My friends, their families are fully Black or Arab, and they wouldn't know what curling is. They see it on TV, but . . . a lot of those countries didn't have ice or a curling club."

Sitaye Penney helped power her team to its second consecutive Newfoundland and Labrador Under-18 championship.



PHOTO: CURLING CANADA

*Teen from The Rock
hopes to inspire a
new, more diverse
generation of young
Canadian curlers*

BY MELISSA MARTIN



Sitaye Penney, who grew up around curling in St. John's, N.L., is starting to make a name for herself as a leader both on and off the ice.

Sitaye Penney says the sky is the limit in her aspirations in curling, with the goal of representing Canada at the Olympic Games.



PHOTO: ALASTAIR BIRD/CURLING CANADA



PHOTOS: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY



Above: Newfoundland and Labrador's Brad Gushue gave his support to a special introduction-to-curling event in St. John's. It was a smashing success.

Bottom: Andrew Paris, who founded the Black Rock Initiative to help improve curling's diversity, says he is proud of Sitaye Penney's work at the grassroots level.

So connecting with new communities must be a priority if curling is to thrive into the decades ahead. This summer, the organization hired Richard Norman, a researcher who has studied the intersections of race and sport, as its new Director of Community Futures and Innovation. He is tasked with developing strategies to make curling more inclusive. Still, much of that work must begin at the grassroots level, and it will need motivated local leaders.

Count Penney among them. In the summer of 2022, she applied for, and won, one of Curling Canada's All Heart Junior Curler Awards, which offer funding for youth to develop the sport's inclusivity. With that support, she threw herself into planning a special introduction-to-curling event. She met with local newcomer groups, inviting them to spread the word to their youth aged 12 to 20, and put together a team of volunteers to help teach curling's basics.

Above all, Penney and the volunteers thought, it was most important that everyone who came to the event felt like they belonged in the curling club.

"I don't know if they don't feel welcome, but . . . maybe they don't think they do, because they see a lot of white people and they think, 'oh, I can't play this sport,'" Penney says. "When they saw me play, I feel like they felt more welcomed. I would talk to them a lot. All my volunteers came up and spoke to every single one of them. So that made them feel really welcomed."

The event was a smashing success. Participants, many of whom were learning English as a second language, delighted in learning how to slide and throw rocks; once they were ready, they got to try their hand at a full game. Brad Gushue made a guest appearance to hand out prizes, and all day the participants laughed a lot. Of the roughly 20 youth that came out, 12 signed up for a longer learn-to-curl program; in school the day after, participants came up to Penney gushing about how much fun they'd had, and asking when they could do it again.

"It was kind of overwhelming, because I didn't think I could actually do that, and make them feel that accepted into the curling family," Penney says. "I was shook, not gonna lie. I was not expecting everyone to be like that. I was just surprised I could make a change like that."

That energy is inspiring, says Andrew Paris, the Nova Scotia youth curling coach who, in 2021, founded the Black Rock Initiative to help improve the sport's diversity. Paris, who's met Penney on several occasions, says the young star has broken through what he calls "the qualifier wall," meaning that she's making noise in the sport because of her skills, and not her skin colour. So to see her also finding her voice as a leader speaks to a bright future.

"I couldn't be more proud of her," Paris says, in an email. "To see Sitaye run with that torch means so much to me . . . we know that representation matters, and it's just a matter of time before Sitaye makes it to a Scotties or an Olympic Trials. So I'm not only excited to watch Sitaye on the big stage, I'm also excited for all the young Black boys and girls who she will inspire to take up the game."

For now, Penney is focused on the next step in her rising career. This season, her team has its sights set on winning another provincial U-18 championship, and surpassing its 2023 quarterfinal finish. Team members also hope to make their U-21 junior debut. Beyond that? Time will tell — but in Penney's dreams, the sky is the limit. "My future goals are probably go to the Olympics," she says, with grin. "That's what I really want to do. That's been my plan since I was very young."

Melissa Martin is a writer with the Winnipeg Free Press, currently on leave.



ON THE ROCKS

BY AL CAMERON

CURLING — PARTICULARLY CURLING AT THE men's and women's high performance level in Canada — is a bit of an outlier in the sports world in the way coaches are used and acknowledged.

It's been often said that the tail tends to wag the dog when it comes to Canadian curling teams and their coaches.

Keep in mind that when it comes to Curling Canada's National Team Program, the teams that qualify based on their previous season's performance still operate mostly independently of Curling Canada's national coaches when it comes to their planning and operations. Yes, they must meet certain criteria as set down through High Performance Director David Murdoch, and provide periodic updates on their training schedule, among other things.

But when it comes to working with their own team coaches, it's not a stretch to say that the players have far more control and power than their coaches.

Contrast that with just about any other team sport and you'll see how curling is different. An elite hockey/basketball/soccer/baseball/football coach holds all the trump cards in deciding how players are used, how much playing time they get, what situations they'll be used in, and which players will be looked to in key situations of a game, and which players will be benched or cut.

Amongst Canada's high performance teams, however, it's typically the skip who holds that power, and it is the coach who operates at the whim of the team.

Is that fair? Well, much like so many other parts of our sport, it can be summed up neatly as "it's the way we've always done it."

But as Canadian curling evolves, so, too, does the way coaches are utilized by high performance teams, as well as the dynamic of what coaches can or can't do within a team.

One obvious difference between curling and other high-level team sports is how coaches are compensated; a coach who is receiving little or no payment from a team is, as a result, more expendable and, by extension, more susceptible to saying things the players want to hear instead of what they NEED to hear in order to hold onto a job.

So how does this change?

Clearly, funding is an issue. Canadian curling coaches are not compensated nearly enough for what they bring to a team, and whether that is more funding from Sport

Canada, Own the Podium, Curling Canada, or from the teams themselves (many of which have fairly healthy bank accounts thanks to sponsors), it's something that needs to change.

So, too, is the profile of coaches, which is something we at Curling Canada take very seriously. For the past 10 years or so, we've made it a priority in stories during our championship events to name team coaches in addition to the players. As well, team photos that are shown on event websites always include the coach.

It may seem like a minor thing, but it's intended to make the point that a coach is a crucial part of a curling team — so much more than the role that used to be assigned to curling coaches, which was mainly that of a team driver who was told to walk slowly down the ice for a timeout so the players had more time to discuss strategy.

Fortunately, attitudes are starting to change, and coaches are becoming an intrinsic part of a curling team's chemistry and high performance plan, and you can be assured that Murdoch and his national coaching staff will continue to push that envelope.

What's needed, though, is probably more buy-in from athletes.

Not, it should be pointed out, in the area of learning from their coaches, and taking their strategic input during games; instead, it needs to come in the area of making people aware of their coaches and what a valuable role they play on their teams.

If you check out social media profiles or team websites of many of Canada's elite curling teams, you will not see any reference to their coaches. That's an oversight that should be corrected.

I'm not sure that in my lifetime we'll ever get to a point where team curling coaches are making a comfortable living like their counterparts in other sports. Nor do I expect any time that a team curling coach will be able to make a decision between draws that the second needs to ride the pine for a game or two and that the skip and vice-skip will change positions.

But one can hope that Canadian curling coaches get the respect and compensation they are due for the valuable role they are playing in making curlers better. That can't come soon enough.

Al Cameron is Curling Canada's director of communication and media relations



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CURLING'S 'BLOCKBUSTER' MOMENT

Business of Curling program sets out to modernize the way clubs across the country operate in a rapidly changing world **BY DON LANDRY**



Bobby Ray has a message for curling club operators across the nation: Get in touch. As interested parties at all levels of the sport strive to ensure the Roarin' Game has a prosperous future, Curling Canada has marshalled the resources needed to assist club managers in navigating a rapidly changing world.

"Curling Canada and its provincial and territorial member associations are eager to support member clubs with their challenges," said Ray, who is now in his second year as Manager of Club Development.

It is Ray who oversees Curling Canada's "Business of Curling" program, with an aim to modernize the way curling clubs across the country operate, aiding

in increasing revenues and membership numbers in the process.

In Canada, the sport has arrived at a pivotal moment.

"The popularity of curling is growing," said Ray, who spent 10 years as general manager of the North Bay Granite Club and two years as executive director of the Northern Ontario Curling Association before taking up his current role with Curling Canada in September, 2022. "The popularity of the way we deliver curling is in decline."

"Curling is facing a 'Blockbuster moment,' I'm calling it," continued Ray, referring to the once mighty bricks-and-mortar movie rental chain.

“People weren’t watching fewer movies,” said Ray of changing viewership habits that led to the demise of Blockbuster. “It’s just that they were consuming them in a different way.”

In Ray’s comparative scenario, curling is not Blockbuster, no. Curling is the movie that a consumer wants to watch. With the popularity of the sport gaining traction on a global scale, and with exceptionally deep roots in Canada, the challenge, Ray believes, is to ensure that newcomers to the sport — those who might be intrigued when they first see it on television — are welcomed with as user-friendly an atmosphere as possible when they decide to participate in the game themselves.

“There’s younger people we’d like to play the sport,” he said. “There’s new Canadians.”

“We want to take an opportunity, post pandemic, to say ‘what does curling look like five years, ten years, twenty years down the road? And what do we start doing today, to get into position to bring in those new members?’”

“We’re challenging clubs to think about it the same way,” said Ray.

Growing membership means ensuring that the curious are offered ways to take part in curling that are different than ways that have been repeated and ingrained over decades. What once worked quite well previously isn’t necessarily going to work now.

“One trend is offering curling in a more — I call it agnostic — fashion,” said Ray, referring to a practice that more and more clubs are employing in opening up what used to be rigid schedules. Instead of insisting on pigeon-holing players into, say, Monday night men’s, or Tuesday night women’s, or Thursday morning senior leagues, members are instead encouraged to put together a team consisting of whomever they like.

“A lot of clubs are offering open leagues,” said Ray. “So long as the games are competitive and fun, that’s all that really matters. It’s just whenever it goes. When you can do that you fit more people into the schedule.”

Expanding membership can, obviously, help a curling club’s bottom line. But a swelling roster of players can bolster the financial picture beyond just increased revenues from fees. It also means club managers have evidence they can present to local government when asking for support.

“Then they’ve got a good case,” said Ray, “to go to a municipality and say ‘you need to reinvest in the sport. It’s growing. It’s good for your community.’”

While he was the general manager of the Granite Club, Ray saw how changing the way the game was offered could boost a club’s membership, and its bottom line. At The Granite, Ray had the season broken up into three, seven-week schedules. Dedicated curlers signed up for all three, naturally. But in addition, potential new players were enticed.

“It gives people an opportunity to try curling without signing a six-month contract or paying out hundreds of dollars for something they don’t know they’re going to enjoy yet,” said Ray, adding that he saw revenues rise at the Granite, with fundraisers becoming not so crucial.

“We had to bake less muffins, that kind of stuff,” he said.

As part of his goal to get the message of change — and of Curling Canada’s place in tangibly assisting in that change — out to as many curling club officials as possible, Ray led Business of Curling symposiums in six different provinces from British Columbia to Nova Scotia, earlier this year. “I was on the road for almost forty days,” he said. “We had different experts on things like financing, marketing, advocacy and so on.”

New ways seem to be gaining traction. Where Ray’s message of adaptability might previously



“THE KEY TO A CLUB’S SUCCESS IS THE KNOWLEDGE, PASSION AND ENERGY OF ITS PEOPLE. WE WANT TO INVEST IN THAT. WHEREVER SUCCESS STORIES EMERGE THERE IS ALWAYS A LOCAL CHAMPION BEHIND THE EFFORT. WE WANT TO MANUFACTURE MORE OF THOSE.” — BOBBY RAY



have been met with some wariness, club operators are now more and more welcoming opportunities to change and to grow.

“They’re saying, ‘I get it. You’ve convinced me. We’re going to do this, but who’s going to do it?’ And we want our answer to be, ‘well, you should hire one of our certified curling professionals. And this is what that relationship looks like. This is how a curling pro generates more revenue for your club so it doesn’t actually cost you money at the end of the day.’”

The Business of Curling program is designed to dramatically increase the number of certified professionals that Ray is referring to. That can help lead to a more profitable and self-sustaining existence for the nation’s clubs.

“Curling Canada is actively working on training programs for curling club operators, (board members and employees), explained Ray. “The key to a club’s success is the knowledge, passion and energy of its people. We want to invest in that. Wherever success stories emerge there is always a local champion behind the effort. We want to manufacture more of those.”

One way that interested parties can access the program is through the Business of Curling website, found at businessofcurling.ca. There, a treasure trove of resources addressing a plethora

of topics can be found, including business operations, governance, customer service, facilities and, of course, growth.

“The Business of Curling program offers access to information, programs, templates, events, and even custom-facilitated strategic planning workshops,” said Ray.

Ray’s blogs can be found on the site as well, including one titled “The Popularity Of Curling Is Not In Decline,” which features 10 ways in which the delivery of the sport of curling is changing.

“I’m really optimistic,” said Ray of the future of curling participation in Canada. “Because I’ve seen behind the curtain of successful clubs and what they’re doing differently to get there. I’m very optimistic about the future of curling and the potential for curling to be relevant and desirable to emerging generations.”

The way to success can be mapped out if recent business history is used as a guide, says Ray, swinging back to his movie rental analogy.

“How do we keep from becoming a ‘Blockbuster’ and start becoming ‘Netflix?’ We still have a relevant product, but the way it’ll be consumed, in the time to come, will be different.”

Don Landry is a freelance writer based in Cumberland County, Nova Scotia

Bobby Ray with Brodie Bazinet, Curling Canada’s Philanthropic Program manager. Ray is optimistic that curling at the club level will be relevant and desirable to emerging generations.

2023-24 TSN BROADCAST GUIDE

The broadcast times listed (EST) were correct at the time of printing. All times are subject to change

POINTS BET INVITATIONAL

September 27 to October 1, 2023 ▶ Oakville, ON

Sweep 16	Wed Sept 27	2:00 pm
Sweep 16	Wed Sept 27	7:00 pm
Sweep 16	Thurs Sept 28	2:00 pm
Sweep 16	Thurs Sept 28	7:00 pm
Elite 8	Fri Sept 29	11:30 am
Elite 8	Fri Sept 29	4:30 pm
Final 4	Sat Sept 30	12:00 pm
Final 4	Sat Sept 30	5:00 pm
Women's Final	Sun Oct 1	12:00 pm
Men's Final	Sun Oct 1	5:00 pm

SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS

February 16 to 25, 2024 ▶ Calgary, AB

Draw 1	Fri Feb 16	9:00 pm
Draw 2	Sat Feb 17	4:00 pm
Draw 3	Sat Feb 17	9:00 pm
Draw 4	Sun Feb 18	10:30 am
Draw 5	Sun Feb 18	3:30 pm
Draw 6	Sun Feb 18	8:30 pm
Draw 7	Mon Feb 19	10:30 am
Draw 8	Mon Feb 19	3:30 pm
Draw 9	Mon Feb 19	8:30 pm
Draw 10	Tues Feb 20	10:30 am
Draw 11	Tues Feb 20	3:30 pm
Draw 12	Tues Feb 20	8:30 pm
Draw 13	Wed Feb 21	10:30 am
Draw 14	Wed Feb 21	3:30 pm
Draw 15	Wed Feb 21	8:30 pm
Draw 16	Thurs Feb 22	10:30 am
Draw 17	Thurs Feb 22	3:30 pm
Draw 18	Thurs Feb 22	8:30 pm
Page 1/2 Qualifier	Fri Feb 23	2:00 pm
Page 3/4 Qualifier	Fri Feb 23	8:30 pm
Page Playoff	Sat Feb 24	2:00 pm
Page Playoff	Sat Feb 24	8:00 pm
Semifinal	Sun Feb 25	2:00 pm
Final	Sun Feb 25	8:00 pm

MONTANA'S BRIER

March 1 to 10, 2024 ▶ Regina, SK

Draw 1	Fri Mar 1	8:00 pm
Draw 2	Sat Mar 2	3:00 pm
Draw 3	Sat Mar 2	8:00 pm
Draw 4	Sun Mar 3	10:30 am
Draw 5	Sun Mar 3	3:30 pm
Draw 6	Sun Mar 3	8:30 pm
Draw 7	Mon Mar 4	10:30 am
Draw 8	Mon Mar 4	3:30 pm
Draw 9	Mon Mar 4	8:30 pm
Draw 10	Tues Mar 5	10:30 am
Draw 11	Tues Mar 5	3:30 pm
Draw 12	Tues Mar 5	8:30 pm

(Montana's Brier Continued)

Draw 13	Wed Mar 6	10:30 am
Draw 14	Wed Mar 6	3:30 pm
Draw 15	Wed Mar 6	8:30 pm
Draw 16	Thurs Mar 7	10:30 am
Draw 17	Thurs Mar 7	3:30 pm
Draw 18	Thurs Mar 7	8:30 pm
Page 1/2 Qualifier	Fri Mar 8	2:00 pm
Page 3/4 Qualifier	Fri Mar 8	8:00 pm
Page Playoff	Sat Mar 9	2:00 pm
Page Playoff	Sat Mar 9	8:00 pm
Semifinal	Sun Mar 10	12:00 pm
Final	Sun Mar 10	6:00 pm

BKT TIRES WORLD WOMEN'S CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

March 16 to 24, 2024 ▶ Sydney, NS

Canada vs TBD	Sat Mar 16	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Sun Mar 17	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Sun Mar 18	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Mon Mar 18	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Mon Mar 18	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Tue Mar 19	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Tue Mar 19	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Wed Mar 20	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Thu Mar 21	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Thu Mar 21	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Fri Mar 22	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Fri Mar 22	TBD
Qualification	Sat Mar 23	TBD
Semifinal	Sat Mar 23	TBD
Bronze	Sun Mar 24	TBD
Final	Sun Mar 24	TBD

WORLD MEN'S CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

March 30 to April 7, 2024 ▶ Schaffhausen, Switzerland

Canada vs TBD	Sat Mar 30	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Sun Mar 31	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Sun Mar 31	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Mon Apr 1	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Mon Apr 1	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Tue Apr 2	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Tue Apr 2	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Wed Apr 3	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Thu Apr 4	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Thu Apr 4	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Fri Apr 5	TBD
Canada vs TBD	Fri Apr 5	TBD
Qualification	Sat Apr 6	TBD
Semifinal	Sat Apr 6	TBD
Bronze	Sun Apr 7	TBD
Final	Sun Apr 7	TBD

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