

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEASON OF CHAMPIONS

# EXTRA END

2024 - 2025



*What a season it was for Team Homan, winning the Scotties and world women's curling titles in electrifying fashion*





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# EXTRA END



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEASON OF CHAMPIONS

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It was a season to remember for skip Rachel Homan and her team

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# CURLING CANADA 2024-25 BOARD OF GOVERNORS

## THREE NEW MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ELECTED

to Curling Canada Board of Governors, it was confirmed during the organization's Annual General Meeting.

Jody Fisher Meli of Lethbridge, Alta., Rémy St-Pierre of Québec City, and Kerry Tarasoff of Saskatoon were elected to four-year terms. They replace outgoing Governors Michael Szajewski of Kenora, Ont., Darren Oryniak of Winnipeg, and Kathy O'Rourke of Cumberland, P.E.I., whose terms were up and chose not to run for re-election.

Fisher Meli, St-Pierre and Tarasoff join fellow Board members Ray Baker of Dauphin, Man., Roselle Gonsalves of Porters Lake, N.S., Scott Hindle of Ottawa, Jennifer Howard of Courtice, Ont., Teri Palynchuk of Nanaimo, B.C., Calvin Seaman of Calgary, and Jeremy Woo of Winnipeg.

Palynchuk was elected as Chair of the Board of Governors, replacing the outgoing Szajewski.

"I'm looking forward to what we can accomplish together as a Board and as a national organization in collaboration with our Member Associations," said Palynchuk. "Our goal is to continue building on the positive momentum in our sport and continue to lower the barriers that prevent progress. I feel like there is so much untapped potential for our sport and I know that with all of us pulling in the same direction we can accomplish great things together."

The Curling Canada Athlete Advisory Council (AAC), meanwhile, will continue to have an ongoing and important



TERI PALYNCHUK  
*Chair*

consultative role with Curling Canada's Events and High Performance departments, and will also keep its voice at the Board level as observers.

The AAC will have a representative at Board of Governors meetings and will be able to speak at meetings.

Laura Walker will serve a two-year term as Chair of the AAC, with Brett Gallant serving as Vice-Chair. Other members of the AAC are Shannon Birchard, Karlee Burgess, Chelsea Carey, Matt Dunstone, Jacques Gauthier, E.J. Harnden, Chrissy Molnar,

Jocelyn Peterman, Jon Thurston, and Sarah Wilkes.

The AAC comprises representatives from men's and women's four-player curling, mixed doubles curling and wheelchair curling, and are elected by their peers — all of whom must be members of Curling Canada's National Team Program.

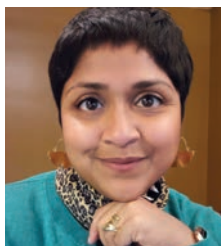
"I was grateful for the opportunity to serve a year on the Board of Governors, and learned a great deal about what goes on in the area of governance in our sport that I think it's safe to say we as athletes didn't truly understand or appreciate," said Walker. "We're also appreciative that we will have a role to play with the Board of Governors to offer our perspectives to their discussions. As an Athlete Advisory Council, we also know we can contribute our insights and opinions best in the areas that affect us most in consultation and communication with Curling Canada's High Performance and Events operations staff, and we look forward to continuing to build positively on this relationship."



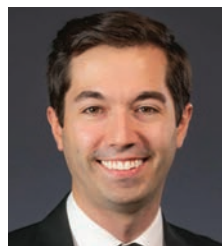
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**Event manager:** Laurence Lavallée

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**Email:** [laurence.lavallee@curling.ca](mailto:laurence.lavallee@curling.ca)



## SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS

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Fort William Gardens

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**Event manager:** Marcy Hrechkosy

**Tel:** (204) 612-6285

**Email:** [marcy.hrechkosy@curling.ca](mailto:marcy.hrechkosy@curling.ca)



## MONTANA'S BRIER

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**Event managers:**

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**Email:** [amanda.mackenzie@curling.ca](mailto:amanda.mackenzie@curling.ca) /  
[laurence.lavallee@curling.ca](mailto:laurence.lavallee@curling.ca)



## BKT TIRES WORLD MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

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**Tel:** (902) 217-5721

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# ‘WOW THAT WAS PRETTY COOL’



The feelings of joy were spread out on the faces of Team Canada members (L-R) Emma Miskew, Rachel Homan, Tracy Fleury and Sarah Wilkes after their world title win.

*Team Homan members savour a magical curling season to remember ... but they won't be resting on their laurels* | BY MELISSA MARTIN



PHOTOS: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Skip Rachel Homan was magnificent in leading her Ottawa-based team to the 2024 world women's curling title in Sydney, N.S.

In retrospect, there was never really one moment where the members of Team Homan realized they were having a historic season. They knew they were working hard; they knew that, in their second campaign with sharpshooter Tracy Fleury on board, everything was clicking just a little bit better. It felt easier, somehow, and just a little more natural.

And they knew, of course, that throughout the 2023-24 season, the wins just kept on coming. There were those two Grand Slam triumphs — making 15 total for skip Rachel Homan — and that ascendant Scotties Tournament of Hearts, where they soared undefeated to the Maple Leaf. They were just the fourth team in the history of Scotties playoff era to complete the feat.

Then there was that magical world women's championship in Sydney, N.S., where Homan, third Fleury, second Emma Miskew, lead Sarah Wilkes, alternate Rachel Brown and coach Don Bartlett steamrolled 11-1 to gold, their only loss being what was, to them, a meaningless round-robin closer. In fact, by the time they'd thrown their last rock of the season, they'd out-curled the competition to a stunning 67-7 record.

It could be the best season that Homan and Miskew have ever had in their 23 years playing together. More than that, it was one of the most dominant



seasons by any curling team ever, and a statement by one of the sport's most decorated formations. Yet, in the moment, laser-focused on the challenges in front of them, the team wasn't thinking about it that way.

"When you're in it, you don't really notice, and then you debrief or you look back at the whole season and think, 'wow, that was pretty cool,'" Miskew says, chatting over a phone call from her home in Ontario this summer. "It's just one of those times where everything just aligned."

In the months after the end of last season, they had time to reflect on all that had happened. It's hard to pinpoint why it worked as well as it did. Certainly, part of it is that the teammates were settling into their new roles, after second Joanne Courtney's 2022 departure opened a spot for Fleury to join up, and Miskew to slide from vice-skip to the front end.

But there is, perhaps even more critically, the matter of perspective. Ever since Homan burst onto the scene fresh out of junior, her teams have been renowned for its steely competitive fire. That made Team Homan one of the most feared opponents on the circuit, and powered the skip to four Canadian championships, two world titles, and two Olympic appearances.



*"AS I GOT OLDER, IT BECAME MORE OF TRYING TO ACTUALLY ENJOY THE MOMENT, BECAUSE TIME GOES BY SO FAST. IT WOULD BE REALLY SAD IF, LOOKING BACK, I ONLY VIEWED EVENTS AS BEING ENJOYABLE OR NOT ENJOYABLE BASED OFF THE RESULTS OF THOSE EVENTS." — EMMA MISKEW*

Yet she and Miskew are different people now, and not just different players. They've mellowed, a little. For all the highs of their career, they've had also some heartbreaking public lows. That experience, and time, brings some wisdom. It also has a way of teaching you not to worry so much about where the rollercoaster is going that you forget to enjoy the ride.

"When I was younger, it was a little bit more riding on our results whether I viewed the event as being enjoyable or not," Miskew says. "As I got older, it became more of trying to actually enjoy the moment, because time goes by so fast. It would be really sad if, looking back, I only viewed events as being enjoyable or not enjoyable based off the results of those events."

For example, she points to their dazzling outing at the 2024 world championship. Ten years ago, they'd played another home-turf worlds in New



Front-end brushers Sarah Wilkes and Emma Miskew get to work on a stone delivered by skip Rachel Homan at the Women's World Curling Championship in Sydney, N.S. Homan and her team enjoyed a superb season on the ice that included a Canadian and World title.

PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY





Rachelle Homan



Ottawa mayor Mark Sutcliffe was proud to extend keys to the city to members of Team Canada who won the 2024 LGT Tires World Women's Curling Championship in Sydney, N.S. The Ottawa Curling Club team, comprised of skip Rachel Homan, vice-skip Tracy Fleury, second Emma Miskew and lead Sarah Wilkes, will likely never forget their 2023-24 season but will have the keys to remind them.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CITY OF OTTAWA



Brunswick, where they'd earned silver; the crowds there were amazing too, just as they were this year in Sydney. Yet Miskew can't quite remember the team having as much fun as they did this time around.

"I don't remember embracing it as much as I did in Sydney, because I only was thinking about results," she says. "I wasn't thinking about those amazing moments where you're looking up in the crowd and all those people are cheering you on, and are behind you and hoping for your success. So yeah, now I would say that's something that is really important to me."

There was also the fact that, this time around, Homan's three young children were cheering in the stands. In a way, it was as if they got to see the event through pure excitement of the kids' eyes: Homan's eldest, five-year-old Ryatt, has lately taken to calling his mom's teammates by their full names, like he hears on TV, and delights them by making their names into rhymes.

"With Rachel, she's always had that fire," Miskew says. "I think that the biggest change since the last time we won (worlds in 2017) is that she's got three little kiddos who are watching her, completely inspired and enthralled by this game that she's playing at the highest level. It's really inspirational to see them watch her. It's just so sweet. They're gonna grow up like . . . their normal is that their mom is a world champion."

Now, the trick will be to keep the momentum of the 2023-24 season going. Miskew knows that every great season builds higher fan expectations for the next; but the team, she says, doesn't feel that pressure too heavy.

"Having a season like that is pretty special," she says. "It's gonna be hard to duplicate, but we're gonna try... it's something that we don't want to just look back on as a memory, we want to just keep doing all the right things."

And with today's ultra-competitive curling scene, doing all the right things means never just resting on one's laurels, but always trying to find a new edge to the game. On that end, Team Homan sent the curling world abuzz in the off-season, when it announced that Brendan Bottcher would join as coach, and serve as Homan's mixed-doubles partner.

At the time, Bottcher was debating what to do after his former team made a sudden switch to play with Brad Jacobs. When Team Homan found out that the 2021 Canadian men's curling champion might be available to coach, they quickly arranged a meeting; having known him for years on the tour



PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

circuit, they knew his energy and approach would be a good fit for what they needed.

"We were like, 'absolutely, we're gonna hop on that,'" Miskew says. "He's such a smart player. He knows the game so well. He's very analytical, very organized. He's a very nice person, and he's going to be a very calm coaching influence for us."

Now, as they look ahead to what comes next, Miskew will predict nothing more than a "very fun season." They have Bottcher in their corner, and some renewed confidence. But anything can happen in curling, they know. What matters most, Miskew suggests, is that they keep doing the small things, as individual athletes and as a team, that made that performance possible.

"Last season, it's like we found our recipe," Miskew says. "That recipe could change at any point, because you never know what's gonna be thrown back at us. But at least we know how to create a recipe, and hopefully we can keep that going. And if we lose a few more games next year, that's okay. We'll figure out maybe an additional ingredient that will help us."

---

*Melissa Martin is a writer on leave with the Winnipeg Free Press. All quotes were obtained firsthand unless cited otherwise.*

Team Canada was cheered on by exuberant Canadian crowds for every game they played in Sydney, N.S.

Brad Gushue knows he is no spring chicken, but is hoping that he can S-T-R-E-T-C-H his fabulous career a few more years to include another shot at glory at the Olympic Games.



# FIVE-RING OBSESSION

*Curling superstar Brad Gushue has put together a glittering record of achievement on the ice, but the pride of Newfoundland & Labrador has no plans to ride off into the sunset any time soon and is still driven to return to the Olympics*

**BY SCOTT CRUICKSHANK**

**D**uring an early-summer vacation to Paris, Brad Gushue got a sneak peek at the setup for the opening ceremony of the 2024 Olympic Games open. An avid sports fan, he even checked out some of the venues.

All very cool . . . and all of which must have served as a friendly reminder of his five-ring aspirations.

The Canadian curling superstar laughs at that notion. Because, seriously, no nudges are ever required.

For the 2026 Winter Games in Italy, where Gushue would dearly love to make his third Olympic appearance? Those stakes resonate on a daily basis.

“Throughout the course of the quadrennial,” he says, “it really doesn’t leave your mind, to be quite honest.”

Gushue’s team secured bronze at the 2022 Beijing Games. On the flight home from China, the next Olympics was already the topic of discussion. “No joke,” he says. “Our focus shifted very quickly. It literally starts right away. It happens very, very quick.”

Mark Nichols freely acknowledges the all-consuming — and year-round — devotion to the Winter Games.

“There’s not a time when I’m not thinking about, ‘Is what I’m doing preparing me for the Olympics?’” says Nichols, vice-skip on the team from St. John’s, Newfoundland & Labrador. “I’m always thinking about it, in terms of my training and preparation. All of it is a process to get back to the Olympics.

“My offseason training, as much as it’s for the upcoming season, I’m still thinking about the trials leading into the Olympics.”



For the Olympic qualifier — November, 2025, in Halifax — Team Gushue, which also includes lead Geoff Walker and second E.J. Harnden, is already booked, thanks to its 2024 Montana's Brier title. "That pressure's off," says Gushue. "So for us now? It's, 'How do we be as ready as we can for that?'"

The answer seems straightforward enough.

Simply maintain. Because Team Gushue is operating at an enviable pace. Ask anyone.

"They keep delivering, don't they?" says David Murdoch, Curling Canada's Director of High Performance. "They've had so much success over a variety of events and championships. And they're still keeping the foot on the gas."

"It's inspiring with these guys. They've had long careers, but they still want to be better. And that's fantastic."

Last winter in Regina, the team captured the Brier — marking its third straight national men's championship, the fourth in the past five years, the sixth in the past eight.

Gushue & Co. have also wrested silver medals from three consecutive world championships.

For good measure in 2023-24, they laid claim to the Princess Auto Players' Championship.

"There's only a couple teams that can come close to competing with a season like that," says Gushue. "I'd be dishonest and sound like a complete jackass

if I said I was disappointed with that season. It was a very good season."

By any measure, it had been a fantastic stretch. But you don't reach Gushue's elite level by being satisfied. He makes no apologies for being a hard marker. Even if he selected his finest campaign, "I'm sure I could pick out a few weeks within that season that I'd want to do over."

Forever in the pursuit of something better, always eager to raise the bar, the team insists that the brilliant 2023-24 season was hardly hiccup-free — especially in the early stages.

"Two ends of the spectrum," says Gushue. "The first two-thirds of the season, maybe even three-quarters, I would've said was pretty disappointing. Our results weren't quite where we wanted them to be. It seems like there were more tough losses than big wins."

The uncharacteristic malaise, as everyone knows, didn't hold. And the subsequent about-face, which started at the Brier, was wicked — even to the principals themselves. "We were pretty crappy," says Gushue, "and, all of a sudden, we were really good."



PHOTOS: MARK BLINCH/COC



Left: Besides a gold medal at the 2006 Olympics, Brad Gushue guided Team Canada to a bronze medal at the 2022 Games in Beijing, China.

Inset: Brad Gushue is always in pursuit of something better, always eager to raise the bar.



Top: It was an historic day in Canadians curling when (L-R) Mark Nichols, Russ Howard, Brad Gushue and Jamie Korab won Canada's first Olympic men's gold medal in Pinerolo, Italy in 2006.

Right: Brad Gushue waves to the crowd after winning the Olympic gold medal in 2006.



PHOTOS: MIKE RIDEWOOD

***"IT SHOWED WHAT THIS TEAM IS MADE OF, WHAT WE CAN DO WHEN THE PRESSURE'S ON. IT'S THE WAY WE PULLED TOGETHER — AFTER A VERY AVERAGE FALL — TO PLAY AS WELL AS WE DID. THERE WAS PROBABLY A MINDSET SHIFT, MORE OF AN ATTITUDE OF, 'LET'S JUST GO OUT THERE AND MAKE SHOTS.'"*** — MARK NICHOLS

That sharp reversal of fortune is further evidence of a world-class outfit.

"It showed what this team is made of, what we can do when the pressure's on," says Nichols. "It's the way we pulled together — after a very average fall — to play as well as we did. There was probably a mindset shift, more of an attitude of, 'Let's just go out there and make shots.'"

That's the approach Team Gushue brings into the blank slate of 2024-25 — its next chance to write history.

Highlighted on this winter's docket is the Montana's Brier, Feb. 28 to March 9, at Prospera Place in Kelowna, B.C. The victorious team there advances as the Canadian representatives to the BKT Tires World Men's Championship in Moose Jaw, Sask., March 29 to April 6, which provides a wonderful opportunity.

Chasing global supremacy on home soil.

Nichols calls that scenario the "coolest." He would know.

Gushue and Nichols describe the 2023 world showcase in Ottawa — even if Canada ultimately fell to Scotland at TD Place — as an unforgettable whirlwind.

"Probably one of the best experiences of my life," says Gushue. "It was an emotional week for me and a lot of positive emotions. I really enjoyed it and appreciated how that crowd embraced us."

Adds Nichols: "That's what motivates you to keep playing and keep doing well. Those moments when the building was packed and they were cheering us on — so loud. I want to feel that again. We don't have many more of those moments left."



The two men, both 44 years old, are not shy about mentioning the backstretches of their careers. But the vibe has nothing to do with sliding quietly into the sunset.

Age, if anything, has stoked their desire, not tempered it.

“Their hunger to be the best is still as strong as I could ever imagine,” says Murdoch. “Brad’s that type of analytical guy who says, ‘We can be better.’ They’re still capable of winning every gold medal out there.”

That’s Team Gushue’s hope.

The Canadian men’s team, with Gushue throwing last stones and Russ Howard skipping, turned the Olympic trick at the 2006 Winter Games in Pinerolo, Italy, earning a spot atop the podium in Turin.

Twenty years after that competition, Gushue would give anything to return to Italy for another crack at Olympic glory.

“Everyone’s big picture is that four-year cycle, right?” says Murdoch. “Talking to the team, for sure they have those trials earmarked. That’s the same as everyone. Every team is looking at, ‘How do you

peak for it? How do you find the form to be consistent enough to be able to shoot the numbers you need?’ There’s that whole building process.”

No one needs to convince the players of the standard.

The Canadian Olympic Trials are November, 2025. The Olympic Winter Games are February, 2026. Those are priorities. On the calendar, they are circled. Everything possible is being done to prepare.

“Even though it’s years away, you have to think like that,” says Nichols. “Because if you didn’t think about it now and go through your offseason like, ‘Oh, it’s no big deal. It’s so far away,’ then you’re going to get left behind. Teams all over the world now are formed with the goal of going to the Olympics. Everyone is trying to get there.

“The Olympics is obviously the great carrot at the end of the stick that keeps you motivated.”

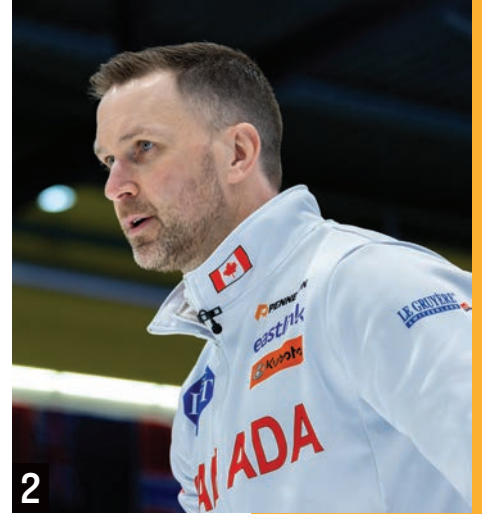
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*Scott Cruickshank is a freelance writer based in Calgary. All quotes were obtained firsthand unless cited otherwise.*

1. Mark Nichols and E.J. Harnden are hungry for more success on the ice. Nichols freely acknowledges the all-consuming – and year-round – devotion to getting back to the Olympics.

2. After a slow start to the season, Brad Gushue and his team pulled it all together to make another appearance at the men’s world championship where they won a silver medal.

3. Team Canada shows off its silver medals at the world championship (L-R): coach Caleb Flaxey, alternate Kyle Doering, lead Geoff Walker, second E.J. Harnden, vice-skip Mark Nichols and skip Brad Gushue



PHOTOS: WORLD CURLING/ STEVE SEBETIRO

# POINTSBET INVITATIONAL

Sixteen Mile Sports Complex › Oakville, Ont. › September 27 to October 1, 2023

## SHE DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME

but the start to Team Rachel Homan's 2023-24 season was a portent of what was to come later.

The first two events produced 12 straight victories, with the last one of those fabulous dozen coming at the Sixteen Mile Sports Complex in Oakville, Ont., in the women's final of the 2023 PointsBet Invitational.

Homan, backed up by vice-skip Tracy Fleury, second Emma Miskew, lead Sarah Wilkes and coach Don Bartlett, rebounded from a miserable start to the final to beat four-time defending Scotties Tournament of Hearts champs Team Kerri Einarson 9-7.

The win put \$50,000 into the Team Homan bank account, and provided an early season jolt of confidence that carried the Ottawa team forward and on to win both Canadian and world titles.

It was also a hot start to the season for Reid Carruthers. For the second straight year the veteran skip and his Winnipeg-based team claimed the \$50,000 top prize by winning the men's title.

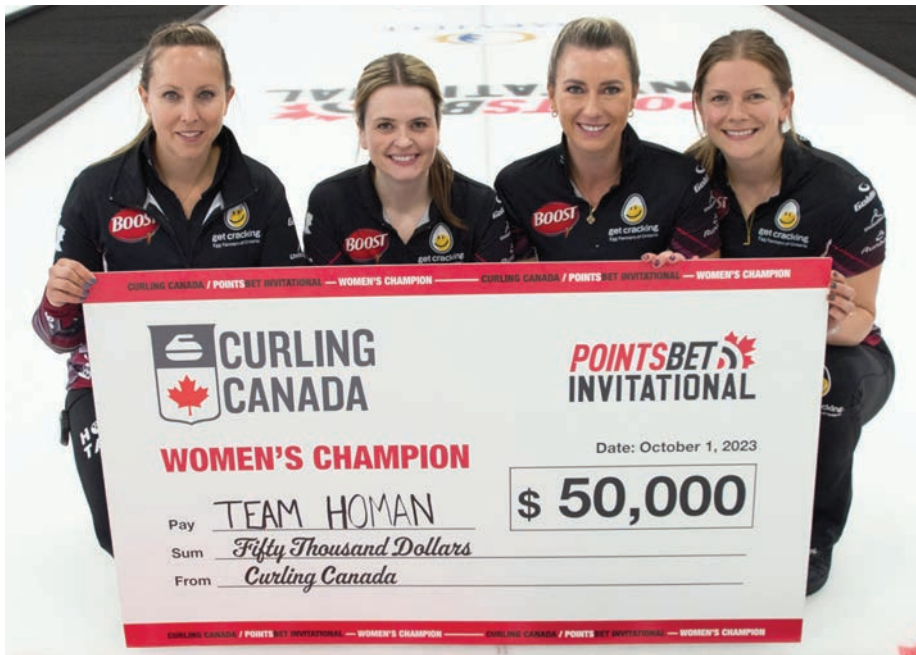
And for the second straight year he did it against another Winnipeg team, skipped by Matt Dunstone.

Homan actually didn't play in the season-opening victory, at the Saviile Shootout in Edmonton, where Heather Nedohin spared at skip as Homan and husband Shawn Germain spent time with their newborn.

"I guess my team can win with any skip," joked Homan. "Heather was an awesome super-spare for us, and we just continued that on."

"Rachel is amazing — I'm continually in awe of her," added Miskew. "And the team played great; it was nice to have all of us back."

Ironically, the game couldn't have started any worse for Team Homan. After a blanked first end, Homan was looking to play a tap to score, facing three Team Einarson counters. But her last rock



It was a huge payday for Team Homan at the 2023 PointsBet Invitational in Oakville, Ont. The team rolled through the competition undefeated, including a 9-7 win over Team Einarson in the final. Members of the team (L-R): skip Rachel Homan, vice-skip Tracy Fleury, second Emma Miskew, and lead Sarah Wilkes.

overcurled and wrecked on a guard, gift-wrapping three points to Team Einarson.

But Team Homan would respond with an important deuce in the third, followed by forcing Team Einarson to a single in the fourth.

The second end steal was a wake-up call, said Homan.

"It's 10 ends; we were still learning the ice and kind of got caught in a couple spots that were different from (Saturday)," she said. "It's tough to learn by giving up three, but we moved on, kept playing our game. You definitely can't give up another steal; we've done that before, but it's better getting two, learning the ice more and making those big shots in the end."

And an end later, that slow start was effectively neutralized thanks to a pair of Einarson misses that resulted in Homan drawing for a go-ahead three in the fifth, and then a stolen single in the seventh for Team Homan that stretched the lead to two.



Skip Kerri Einarson took her team to the women's final of the PointsBet Invitational, but had to settle for second.

Team Einarson rallied to tie it with an eighth-end deuce but Team Homan effectively put the win away with a three in the ninth.

Carruthers enjoyed a fairly stress-free 8-4 win in last year's final at Fredericton, N.B.





For the second year in a row, Reid Carruthers skipped his team to the men's championship (L-R): Carruthers, vice-skip Brad Jacobs, second Derek Samagalski, and lead Connor Njegovan.

It was anything but stress-free for Carruthers, vice-skip Brad Jacobs, second Derek Samagalski, lead Connor Njegovan and coach Rob Meakin at the Sixteen Mile Sports Complex in Oakville, Ont.

They walked a tight rope all night against Team Dunstone and, trailing by



Skip Matt Dunstone let the win slip through his fingers.

three, made a gutsy decision to blank the ninth end and attempt to score a minimum three points in the 10th to force a sudden-death draw to the button for the 9-8 win.

The plan worked to perfection as Carruthers made an open hit in the 10th to score that required three after Dunstone's last-rock freeze attempt bumped into the open, and then Carruthers outdrew Dunstone on a tricky patch of ice in the draw-off for the win, with neither scaring the button.

Carruthers, drawing first, just snuck into the four-foot with his outturn after a good scrub from Samagalski and Njegovan.

For the record, that's eight straight wins at the PointsBet Invitational for Team Carruthers, and \$100,000 in the bank account.

"Unbelievable," he marvelled.

"I'm rattled right now. Super happy, the guys played great. And yeah, I love this event."

**WOMEN'S FINAL**

Team Einarson	030 100 020 1 — 7
Team Homan*	002 030 103 0 — 9

\* — Last-rock advantage

**SWEEP 16**

- Team Einarson 15, Team Zimmerman 3
- Team Skrlík 7, Team Inglis 6
- Team Grandy 6, Team Duncan 5
- Team Lawes 11, Team Marks 5
- Team Black 8, Team Martin 7
- Team Jones 10, Team Plett 6
- Team Ladouceur 8, Team Gray-Withers 6
- Team Homan 11, Team Park 1

**ELITE 8**

- Team Einarson 10, Team Skrlík 6
- Team Lawes 8, Team Grandy 3
- Team Black 8, Team Jones 6
- Team Homan 10, Team Ladouceur 6

**FINAL 4**

- Team Einarson 8, Team Lawes 3
- Team Homan 10, Team Black 5

**MEN'S FINAL**

Team Carruthers*	100 020 200 31 — 9
Team Dunstone	021 102 020 00 — 8

\* — Last-rock advantage

**SWEEP 16**

- Team Gushue 9, Team Balsdon 4
- Team Wiebe 8, Team Epping 5
- Team Carruthers 10, Team Tao 3
- Team Kleiter 10, Team Koe 6
- Team Sturmey 8, Team Howard 4
- Team Dunstone 10, Team Mooibroek 5
- Team McEwen 11, Team Sluchinski 5
- Team Bottcher 7, Team Dobson 1

**ELITE 8**

- Team Gushue 8, Team Wiebe 4
- Team Carruthers 9, Team Kleiter 8
- Team Dunstone 8, Team Sturmey 5
- Team McEwen 9 Team Bottcher 5

**FINAL 4**

- Team Carruthers 6, Team Gushue 5
- Team Dunstone 6, Team McEwen 5

# SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS

WinSport Event Centre › Calgary, Alta. › February 16 to 25, 2024



PHOTOS: ANDREW KLAVER © KRUGER PRODUCTS

Ontario's Rachel Homan captured a fourth career Scotties Tournament of Hearts title in Calgary after defeating Manitoba's Jennifer Jones 5-4 in a tension-filled final. The Ottawa-based team of (L-R): Homan, vice-skip Tracy Fleury, second Emma Miskew, and lead Sarah Wilkes went on to win the world championship in Sydney, N.S.

**RACHEL HOMAN RETURNED TO THE** top of Canadian women's curling after a six-year absence by winning the championship event that also served as a retrospective to the end of an era.

The former Canadian champion reclaimed her crown at the WinSport Event Centre in Calgary after skipping Team Ontario-Homan (Ottawa Curling Club) to a photo finish 5-4 victory over Team Manitoba-Jones (Winnipeg/Altona), skipped by Jennifer Jones, in the gold-medal final of the 2024 Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

Homan, 34, backed by vice-skip Tracy Fleury, second Emma Miskew, lead Sarah Wilkes, alternate Rachel Brown and coached by Don Bartlett, reached the top of the mountain for the first time since 2017 when she won in St. Catharines, Ont.

Team Homan went on to represent Canada at the 2024 BKT Tires World Women's Curling Championship at Centre 200 in Sydney, N.S., where it won the gold medal in dramatic style.

"I can't describe the feeling of coming so close so many times and losing," said Homan, who lost Scotties finals in 2019 and 2020. "I don't know, it feels like seven finals and it's just an amazing feeling."

The joy was profound among the Team Ontario-Homan members, but at the same time the narrative in the WinSport Event Centre changed from jubilation for a new winner to celebration of a past champion with the touching tribute by players and fans to Jones at the end.

Jones had announced earlier that this would be her final Scotties after a brilliant career that included six Canadian



Veteran skip Jennifer Jones waved to the crowd after the gold-medal final. Jones had announced earlier that this would be her final Scotties after a brilliant career that included six Canadian titles, two world championships, and an Olympic gold medal.



championships, two world titles and an Olympic gold medal. In that time, Jones became a symbol of toughness and dedication and an unquestioned icon of the sport over her brilliant career. There was no way the sellout crowd of 3,195 was going to let her ride off into the sunset without a fitting roar of approval.

Tears flowed. Hugs abounded. “I’m going to miss everybody,” said Jones. “I love the game, I love being out here, I love what it’s done for my daughters, they believe that anything is possible because of curling. At this moment it’s really hard to say goodbye.”

Homan made sure there would be no great storybook ending to Jones’ outstanding career. She used the cudgel of the straightway runback to put away the Manitobans several times over the game, and when it was brandished, it was effective.

She made a straightway runback in the fifth that forced Jones to draw for a single, but it came in hot, leading to a steal of one and a 3-1 lead.

Homan made another one in the next end putting an end to a possible two-ender for Jones.

The game, though, came down to the 10th end, tied 4-4, and after Homan made a gentle tap back on her own shot to sit shot near the button, Jones tried to follow but rubbed and rolled away.

“You don’t want to end on a miss but honestly I couldn’t have asked for a better championship,” said Jones who will continue on in the sport playing mixed doubles with her husband Brent Laing. “The crowds were fantastic. I felt we played a really great game today. It could have gone either way but unfortunately it didn’t go our way.

Team Homan’s win put an exclamation



Manitoba skip Kate Cameron had a great week at the Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Calgary. She squeaked into the playoffs by tiebreaker and made it all the way to the semifinal game before finally bowing out.

**GOLD-MEDAL FINAL**

Ontario-Homan (Rachel Homan)*	010 110 010 1 — 5
Manitoba-Jones (Jennifer Jones)	001 000 102 0 —4

\* Last-rock advantage

**PERCENTAGES**

Manitoba-Jones	PCT.	Ontario-Homan	PCT.
Jennifer Jones	72	Rachel Homan	88
Karlee Burgess	76	Tracy Fleury	85
Emily Zacharias	78	Emma Miskew	83
Lauren Lenentine	85	Sarah Wilkes	91
<b>Team totals</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>Team totals</b>	<b>87</b>

**SEMIFINAL**

Manitoba-Jones (Jennifer Jones)*	502 020 201 x — 12
Manitoba-Cameron (Kate Cameron)	020 201 020 x — 7

\*— Last-rock advantage

**ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS**

Pool A	W	L
Alberta (Selena Sturmay)+	7	1
Team Canada (Kerri Einarson)+	7	1
Manitoba-Lawes (Kaitlyn Lawes)+#	4	4
Northern Ontario (Krista McCarville)	4	4
British Columbia-Brown (Corryn Brown)	4	4
Saskatchewan (Skylar Ackerman)	4	4
Quebec (Laurie St-Georges)	4	4
Newfoundland/Labrador (Stacie Curtis)	2	6
P.E.I. (Jane DiCarlo)	0	8

**Pool B**

	W	L
Ontario-Homan (Rachel Homan)+	8	0
Manitoba-Jones (Jennifer Jones)+	6	2
Manitoba-Cameron (Kate Cameron)+#	5	3
British Columbia-Grandy (Clancy Grandy)	5	3
Northwest Territories (Kerry Galusha)	3	5
Nova Scotia (Heather Smith)	3	5
Ontario-Inglis (Danielle Inglis)	3	5
New Brunswick (Melissa Adams)	2	6
Yukon (Bayly Scoffin)	1	7

+ — Top three teams in each pool advanced to championship pool.

# — Teams Manitoba Kate Cameron and Kaitlyn Lawes advanced to championship round via tiebreakers — Lawes on Last Shot Draw and Cameron on head-to-head.

**CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND**

**Page 1-2 Qualifiers**

Alberta (Selena Sturmay)*	020 101 000 x — 4
Manitoba-Jones (Jennifer Jones)	103 000 112 x — 8
Ontario-Homan (Rachel Homan)*	010 200 310 1 — 8
Team Canada (Kerri Einarson)	002 001 001 0 — 4

**Page 3-4 Qualifiers**

Alberta (Selena Sturmay)*	201 210 200 x — 8
Manitoba-Lawes (Kaitlyn Lawes)	010 002 011 x — 5
Team Canada (Kerri Einarson)*	020 200 000 0 — 4
Manitoba-Cameron (Kate Cameron)	002 001 121 2 — 9

**PAGE PLAYOFFS**

**1 v. 2**

Ontario-Homan (Rachel Homan)*	100 200 000 12 — 6
Manitoba-Jones (Jennifer Jones)	001 011 010 00 — 4

**3 v. 4**

Alberta (Selena Sturmay)*	100 010 101 x — 4
Manitoba-Cameron (Kate Cameron)	003 101 010 x — 6

point on her dominance during the week. Her team rolled through the competition unscathed, beating Jones in the Page 1-2 qualification game and again in the final.

The win was worth \$100,000 first-place prize money for Team-Ontario Homan and \$60,000 for Team-Manitoba Jones.

The event was notable in many ways. For one, there were people in the stands, a marked difference than in 2021 when it was held without spectators in the same facility during COVID restrictions.

The Scotties attracted an overall attendance of 63,971.

The event also included another big change. Curling Canada changed the qualification format where the top two teams from the previous year's Canadian Team Ranking System (CTRS) standings – Homan and Jones – received an automatic pre-qualification berth, plus the top team in ranking points – Winnipeg's Kate Cameron – following provincial and territorial playdowns.

Nunavut declined to attend the event so a fourth CTRS spot was given to British Columbia's Corryn Brown of Kamloops.



**RACHEL HOMAN:** First all-star skip and 2024 Scotties Most Valuable Player award winner.

**ROBIN WILSON FIRST ALL-STAR TEAM**

**Skip** – Rachel Homan, Ontario-Homan  
**Vice-skip** – Tracy Fleury, Ontario-Homan  
**Second**– Emma Miskew, Ontario-Homan  
**Lead** – Krysten Karwacki, Team Canada

**SECOND ALL-STAR TEAM**

**Skip** – Kerri Einarson, Team Canada  
**Vice-Skip**– Karlee Burgess, Manitoba-Jones  
**Second** – Shannon Birchard, Team Canada  
**Lead** – Sarah Wilkes, Ontario-Homan

*Curling Canada honoured Robin Wilson whose work behind the scenes from Day One was integral in making the Scotties Tournament of Hearts a success. Beginning with the 2024 Scotties, the first all-star team will continue to be called the Robin Wilson First All-Star Team in her honour.*

The event, split into two round-robin pools, also had a decidedly Manitoba flavour. Four of the six playoff teams were skipped by women from the Keystone Province. Defending champion Kerri Einarson of Gimli, looking for her fifth consecutive title, made the grade, along with Jones, the Kaitlyn Lawes-skipped Team Manitoba, and Team Manitoba-Cameron.

Edmonton's Selena Sturmey, skipping Team Alberta-Sturmey, thrilled the home province audience by also making the playoffs, along with Homan.

Einarson, who came from behind so many times in the past to win the Canadian title, came up empty when the championship playoffs rolled around, losing twice in a row to be sent to the sidelines.

"Yeah . . . it sucks," said Einarson after being eliminated. "But I guess it just had to come to an end at some point."

Team Homan advanced straight to the gold-medal final, defeating Team Manitoba-Jones 6-4 in an extra end in the Page 1-2 final. Jones, however, lifted her game to defeat Team Manitoba-Cameron 12-7 in the semifinal to get another crack Homan in the gold-medal game.

**MARJ MITCHELL AWARD**

Ontario skip Danielle Inglis of Ottawa won the Marj Mitchell Award for best embodying the spirit of curling at the 2024 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.



Ottawa's Danielle Inglis was a popular winner of the Marj Mitchell Sportsmanship Award. Teri Palynchuk of Curling Canada's Board of Governors made the presentation.

**JOAN MEAD BUILDER AWARD**

The 2024 Builder Award was awarded to Brenda Rogers, the Chief Umpire for the 2024 Scotties Tournament of Hearts. Rogers is a longtime and passionate curling volunteer who has offered her time and skills at curling events around the world. She spent 20 years as the Head Official for various Alberta curling organizations, including Curling Alberta and the Southern Alberta Curling Association. The award recognizes a builder in the sport and is named in honour of the late CBC curling producer Joan Mead.



Brenda Rogers accepts her award from Calvin Seaman of Curling Canada's Board of Governors.

**SANDRA SCHMIRLER AWARD**

Presented in the name of the late Sandra Schmirler, the MVP award was given to Ontario skip Rachel Homan after she was chosen the most outstanding player in the 2024 Scotties Tournament of Hearts playoffs in Calgary.



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# MONTANA'S BRIER PRESENTED BY AGI

Brandt Centre › Regina, Sask. › March 1 to 10, 2024



PHOTOS: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Another year, another Canadian men's curling championship for skip Brad Gushue who defended his national title with a 9-5 win over Saskatchewan's Mike McEwen in the Montana's Brier final. Gushue is the only man to skip teams to six Brier victories. The joyous champs, representing Team Canada but based in St. John's, N.L., (L-R): Gushue, vice-skip Mark Nichols, second E.J. Harnden, and lead Geoff Walker.

## IT NEVER GETS OLD FOR SKIP

Brad Gushue — the thrill of victory, the addiction to winning, the joy and exhilaration of celebrating with teammates.

And so it was again on a Sunday night in Regina as Gushue hugged his Team Canada buddies and waved to the large audience in the Brandt Centre after winning the 2024 Montana's Brier, presented by AGI.

Yes, he may have broken thousands of the hearts across the province by defeating the provincial favourites, Team Saskatchewan, skipped by Mike McEwen, in the gold-medal final, but that's all part of who Brad Gushue is: the ultimate winner.

"This moment is awesome, this is what it's all about. This is why I play the game and I love this moment," said 43-year-old Gushue shortly after his 9-5, nine-end victory over Team Saskatchewan for the team's record-tying third title in a row and his sixth Canadian curling championship in eight years. Only Team Randy Ferbey of Edmonton has won three in a row, from 2001 through 2003.

"It isn't about how many," added Gushue, "it's about this moment right here."

It was an impressive victory for Gushue and his superb team from the RE/MAX Centre and St. John's Curling Club in St. John's, N.L., playing in the first Brier sponsored by Montana's. Gushue, backed by vice-skip Mark Nichols, second E.J. Harnden, lead Geoff Walker, and coached by Caleb Flaxey, made a statement in the very first end that said it would take something special to beat them. Team Saskatchewan did nothing particularly wrong in the end, but two superb draws to a piece of the button by Gushue got the defending champs off and running.

Two ends later Gushue chipped a front stone into the rings and rolled his shooter into the house for three more points and a 5-1 lead.

Team Saskatchewan, representing the Nutana Club in Saskatoon, had everything going for it in the leadup to the gold-medal final. It was just coming off an emotional and dominating 7-3 semifinal victory over

Team Alberta-Bottcher earlier in the day, were full of confidence and had a house-full of fans cheering on their every shot.

But none of it was enough to dull the knife of Gushue and Co.

"It hurts that we didn't have our best game," said McEwen, supported by third Colton Flasch, front-end brothers Kevin and Daniel Marsh, alternate Pat Simmons and coached by Brent Laing. "You could tell both teams were struggling with the ice but Brad was stellar the first four ends.

"But I'm proud of what we've done in six months ... and we're not done yet. Despite the result today this was a hell of an accomplishment."

McEwen became the first man to skip three different provinces at the Canadian Men's Curling Championship. He previously skipped reps from Manitoba and Ontario. He was also looking to win the first Brier for the province since Saskatoon's Rick Folk 1980.

Trailing Gushue by four is the dictionary definition of trouble, but Team Saskatchewan didn't roll over after the early deficit. It had Team Canada in serious trouble in the sixth end when McEwen, without last rock, had three stones bunched around the button behind cover. The best Gushue could do was bump one



Brad Gushue, who shot a sparkling 97 per cent in the final, won the Hec Gervais Award as the Most Valuable Player of the Montana's Brier playoffs.



far enough to concede only two points, and see his lead shrink to one.

Gushue, however, regained control, making a double in the seventh, aided by the terrific brushing of Harnden, for two.

Gushue, who shot a sparkling 97 per cent in the game and won the Hec Gervais Award as the Most Valuable Player of the Montana's Brier playoffs, was particularly proud of winning his sixth title.

"Longevity is a big thing," he said. "Once you win a couple in a row it's easy for the motivation to drop off and I don't think it has for me, or E.J. or Mark or Geoff. We're still driven, we still want to win."

The 2024 event, with 18 teams in play, was not without its upsets. Perhaps the biggest was Team Northwest Territories, skipped by Jamie Koe, defeating Team Canada.

Team Alberta-Koe, skipped by Kevin Koe, a two-time world champion and four-time Canadian champion, was also the victim of several upsets. So many so that his team from the Glencoe Club in Calgary stumbled out of the gate with a 1-5 record and never made the playoffs.



Team Manitoba-Dunstone skip Matt Dunstone was his usual big-shot maker, but he couldn't lead his team further than the Page 3-4 game before bowing out.

**FINAL**

Team Canada (Brad Gushue)*	020 300 202 x — 9
Saskatchewan (Mike McEwen)	001 012 010 x — 5

\* — Last-rock advantage

**PERCENTAGES**

Team Canada		Saskatchewan	
Brad Gushue	97	Mike McEwen	89
Mark Nichols	94	Colton Flasch	82
E.J. Harnden	83	Kevin Marsh	89
Geoff Walker	89	Dan Marsh	89
<b>Team Totals</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>Team Totals</b>	<b>90</b>

**Round-robin**

Pool A	W	L
Manitoba-Carruthers (Brad Jacobs)**	7	1
Alberta-Bottcher (Brendan Bottcher)**	6	2
Manitoba-Dunstone (Matt Dunstone)**	6	2
Northern Ontario (Trevor Bonot)	5	3
British Columbia (Catlin Schneider)	4	4
Ontario (Scott Howard)	3	5
Newfoundland/Labrador (Andrew Symonds)	2	6
Yukon (Thomas Scoffin)	2	6
New Brunswick (James Grattan)	1	7

Pool B	W	L
Saskatchewan (Mike McEwen)**	7	1
Team Canada (Brad Gushue)**	6	2
Northwest Territories (Jamie Koe)**	5	3
P.E.I. (Tyler Smith)	5	3
Nova Scotia (Matthew Manuel)	4	4
Alberta-Sluchinski (Aaron Sluchinski)	3	5
Québec (Julien Tremblay)	2	6
Alberta-Koe (Kevin Koe)	2	6
Nunavut (Shane Latimer)	1	7

\*\* — Top three teams in each group advance to playoffs

**CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND**

**Page 1-2 Qualifiers**

Manitoba-Carruthers (Jacobs)*	000 302 011 0 — 7
Team Canada (Gushue)	101 030 300 1 — 9
Saskatchewan (McEwen)*	102 020 002 x — 7
Alberta-Bottcher (Bottcher)	020 202 020 x — 8

**Page 3-4 Qualifiers**

Manitoba-Carruthers (Jacobs)*	000 000 200 x — 2
Manitoba-Dunstone (Dunstone)	000 210 012 x — 6
Saskatchewan (McEwen)*	111 110 11x x — 7
Northwest Territories (J. Koe)	000 000 000 x — 0

**Page Playoffs**

**1 vs. 2**

Alberta-Bottcher (Bottcher)	020 001 000 x — 3
Team Canada (Gushue)*	200 200 111 x — 7

**3 vs. 4**

Saskatchewan (McEwen)*	200 111 000 1 — 6
Manitoba-Dunstone (Dunstone)	010 000 211 0 — 5

**Semifinal**

Alberta-Bottcher (Bottcher)	000 110 010 x — 3
Saskatchewan (McEwen)*	003 000 301 x — 7

\* — Last-rock advantage

**FINAL STANDINGS**

Playoffs	W	L
Team Canada (Brad Gushue)	3	0
Saskatchewan (Mike McEwen)	3	2
Manitoba-Dunstone (Matt Dunstone)	1	1
Alberta-Bottcher (Brendan Bottcher)	1	2
Northwest Territories (Jamie Koe)	0	1
Manitoba-Carruthers (Brad Jacobs)	0	2



It was a heck of a week for teams from the North at the Montana's Brier. Jamie Koe (left) guided his team from Yellowknife into the six-team playoffs, while Nunavut's Shane Latimer's team from Iqaluit defeated Nova Scotia for the territory's second win in Brier history.

Team Alberta-Koe was one of three CTRS teams in the field after Curling Canada changed the qualification process. Team Alberta-Bottcher, skipped by Calgary's Brendan Bottcher, and Team Manitoba-Dunstone, skipped by Matt Dunstone, automatically pre-qualified based on 2022-23 CTRS (Canadian Team Ranking System) points. Team Alberta-Koe joined the field as the top non-qualified team in the 2023-24 CTRS standings following provincial and territorial playdowns.

Six teams made the playoffs, and perhaps the only surprise was Jamie Koe's team from Yellowknife which snuck in with a 5-3 record. But the Polars were out in one game, and joining them on the sidelines quickly was Team Manitoba-Carruthers, skipped by Brad Jacobs, a former Canadian and Olympic champion.

The Page playoffs boiled down to

Team Canada, Team Manitoba-Dunstone, McEwen's Team Saskatchewan and Team Alberta-Bottcher.

Team Canada advanced to the final with a 7-3 win over Team Alberta-Bottcher in the 1-2 game, while Team Saskatchewan dropped Team Manitoba-Dunstone 6-5 in the 3-4 game.

Team Saskatchewan then beat Team Alberta-Bottcher in the semifinal to face Team Canada in the final.

Team Gushue went on to represent Canada at the LGT World Men's Curling Championship in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, where it won the silver medal.

The team also earned a spot in the Canadian Curling Trials at the Scotiabank Centre in Halifax in 2025.

The Brier win was worth \$100,000 for first-place prize money for Team Gushue and \$60,000 for Team McEwen.

**ALL-STAR TEAMS**

**First-team all-stars**

- Skip** — Mike McEwen, Saskatchewan
- Vice-skip** — Marc Kennedy, Alberta-Bottcher
- Second** — Brett Gallant, Alberta-Bottcher
- Lead** — Ben Hebert, Alberta-Bottcher

**Second-team all-stars**

- Skip** — Brad Gushue, Team Canada
- Vice-skip** — Mark Nichols, Team Canada
- Second** — E.J. Harnden, Team Canada
- Lead** — Geoff Walker, Team Canada



Sharp shooting helped these players make the first all-star team, including (L-R): Mike McEwen, Marc Kennedy, Brett Gallant and Ben Hebert.



**ROSS HARSTONE AWARD**

Nova Scotia vice-skip Luke Saunders was the winner of the 2024 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 Nolan Thiessen, CEO of Curling Canada.



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# LGT WORLD MEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

KSS Sports Arena › Schaffhausen, Switzerland › March 30 to April 7, 2024

## THEY HAVE BATTLED, HAMMER AND

tong, for years, rarely a point or two to separate them at the end of the game.

And so it was no surprise that Team Sweden, skipped by the incomparable Niklas Edin, and Brad Gushue, the exceptional skip of Team Canada, squared off again for all the marbles at the 2024 LGT World Men's Curling Championship at Schaffhausen, Switzerland.

It was a coin-flip, as usual, and this time it came up heads — Sweden — in a 6-5 victory for the gold medal.

No shame in that for Gushue. The victory marked Edin's seventh world championship. Last year in Ottawa, Edin finished out of the medals which broke a string of four consecutive titles won since Las Vegas in 2018. The 2020 world championship was cancelled because of the pandemic.

For Gushue, it marked his fourth consecutive silver medal at the worlds since he scored gold at his first appearance in 2017. Edin has won three of those championship matchups against the Canadian.

"Undescribable, it feels so good after this week" said Edin. "We felt that we played so well the whole week ... (not like) the struggles from last year, not playing as a whole team, losing out in the (2023) quarters.

"Now, we just played maybe the best game we've ever played to win. Super proud of the team."

The game came down to the wire, as expected. The teams were knotted at 5-5 after nine ends, but Edin had the hammer.

Canada was sitting three in the house and forced Edin to a wide, frost-accumulated draw path. Sweden needed to hit the side of the four-foot to score, and thanks to a perfect throw, line call, and sweep, the shot settled in the back four for a single point and the Swedish victory.

"We fought, made a lot of shots and we forced them to play a very, very difficult shot," said Gushue, who was supported



PHOTOS: WORLD CURLING/STEVE SEIXERO

Sweden, skipped by Niklas Edin (left), was back on top the gold-medal podium after its victory over Canada at the 2024 LGT World Men's Curling Championship in Switzerland. It was Edin's seventh world title — a record for a skip. The Swedes went 11-1 in the round-robin before winning both their playoff matches.

by vice-skip Mark Nichols, second E.J. Harnden, lead Geoff Walker, alternate Kyle Doering, coach Caleb Flaxey, and national coach Jeff Stoughton.

"I think that's a shot you probably miss more than you make, to be honest. Credit to him, he made a great shot and no better way for him to win a world championship, but it kind of sucks for us," he added.

The game didn't always look like it would go the distance. Sweden had a great start out of the gates, earning a deuce in the second end thanks to a cross-house hit-and-roll behind cover earlier.

A key moment for the Canadians was in the third end when Sweden stole a point for a 3-0 lead. Team Gushue had a hit-and-roll out to blank the end, but the shot was redirected off a corner guard.

Besides the one flaw, Team Gushue played exceptionally to get back into the



Skip Brad Gushue was looking for his second world men's title, but came up just short after losing the final to Team Sweden.



game and shot 87 per cent efficiency as a unit. Sweden was just as good, reaching 95 per cent efficiency as a team. However, Canada took advantage of the rare Swedish errors to get back into the game.

In the fourth, Team Gushue had about as great of a response as possible. Sweden made an error during third stones which left a Canadian counter in the house. That allowed Canada an opportunity to split the house and eventually make a hit for two to trail by one. However, Sweden blanked the fifth and prevented Canada from setting up aggressive ends by making a few runbacks and peels to clean the guard zone.

Sweden and Canada exchanged singles in the sixth, seventh and eighth ends.

With the hammer in the ninth, Canada put together a second of two on a tapback around a guard to tie the game.

Then came the back-breaking 10th for Canada.

“It’s just disappointing. That’s four [losses] in a row for me and I’m sure at some point down the road I’ll appreciate

it more than I do now, but right now it’s tough to take,” Gushue said.

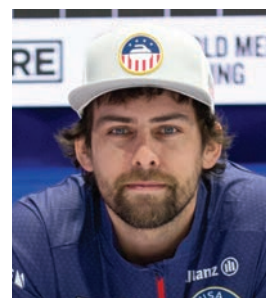
Edin, Eriksson, Rasmus Wranå and Christoffer Sundgren have now won five world titles as a foursome, plus Olympic silver in 2018 and gold in 2022.

The Canadians were convincing 9-4 winners in eight ends over defending champions Scotland skipped by Bruce Mouat in the semifinals.

Sweden advanced with a 5-1 win over Joel Retornaz and his Italian team in the other semifinal.

The Italians came from behind to defeat Scotland 7-6 in an extra end to win the bronze medal. Italy had to score three in the 10th end to tie the game and steal a single for the win.

Two Canadians were selected to the all-star team. The back-end combination of Gushue at skip and Nichols at vice-skip earned the honour. Gushue led all fourth-rock throwers with 88.4 per cent accuracy, and Nichols led all vice-skips with 91 per cent accuracy.



### COLLIE CAMPBELL MEMORIAL AWARD

Chris Plys of the United States was the winner of the 2024 Collie Campbell Memorial Award. The award winner is selected annually by competitors in the 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 World Curling) from 1969 until his death in 1978.

#### GOLD-MEDAL FINAL

Sweden (Niklas Edin)*	021 001 010 1 — 6
Canada (Brad Gushue)	000 200 102 0 — 5

\* — Last-rock advantage

#### PERCENTAGES

Sweden	PCT.	Canada	PCT.
Niklas Edin	95	Brad Gushue	89
Oskar Eriksson	93	Mark Nichols	89
Rasmus Wranå	95	E.J. Harnden	75
Christoffer Sundgren	98	Geoff Walker	94
<b>Team totals</b>	<b>95</b>		<b>87</b>

#### BRONZE-MEDAL FINAL

Italy (Joël Retornaz)	010 100 100 31 — 7
Scotland (Bruce Mouat)*	101 020 002 00 — 6

\* — Last-rock advantage

#### SEMIFINALS

Sweden (Niklas Edin)*	002 000 300 x — 5
Italy (Joël Retornaz)	000 100 011 x — 7

Canada (Brad Gushue)*	200 013 03x x — 9
Scotland (Bruce Mouat)	020 100 10x x — 4

\* — Last-rock advantage

#### QUALIFICATION ROUND

Scotland (Bruce Mouat)*	200 030 003 x — 8
U.S.A. (John Shuster)	000 202 000 x — 4

Germany (Marc Muskatewitz)*	100 000 110 x — 3
Italy (Joël Retornaz)	002 111 003 x — 8

#### FINAL STANDINGS

Playoffs	W	L
Sweden (Niklas Edin)	2	0
Canada (Brad Gushue)	1	1
Italy (Joël Retornaz)**	2	1
Scotland (Bruce Mouat)	1	2
U.S.A. (John Shuster)	0	1
Germany (Marc Muskatewitz)	0	1

\*\* — Won bronze-medal game against Scotland 7-6.

Round-robin standings	W	L
Sweden (Niklas Edin)+	11	1
Canada (Brad Gushue)+	10	2
Scotland (Bruce Mouat)+	10	2
Germany (Marc Muskatewitz)+	8	4
Italy (Joël Retornaz)+	8	4
U.S.A. (John Shuster)+	7	5
Switzerland (Yannick Schwaller)	6	6
Netherlands (Wouter Gösgens)	5	7
Czech Republic (Lukáš Klíma)	4	8
Norway (Magnus Ramsfjell)	4	8
Japan (Shinya Abe)	3	9
South Korea (Park Jong-duk)	2	10
New Zealand (Anton Hood)	0	12

+ — Qualified for playoffs



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# CANADIAN MIXED DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Aitken University Centre and Capital Winter Club » Fredericton, N.B. » March 17 to 22, 2024



PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA

Manitoba's Kadriana and Colton Lott defeated Laura Walker and Kirk Muyres 7-5 to claim the national Mixed Doubles title for the first time, but it took a measurement to decide it. The win came with a \$35,000 payday and a trip to the world championship in Östersund, Sweden.

### IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MUCH CLOSER.

When two undefeated teams meet in a championship final, and that game is decided by a measurement following the last shot in the eighth end – and even that measurement was close enough to do twice – it's obvious that there wasn't much separating gold from silver.

Such was the case at the 2024 Canadian Mixed Doubles Championship at Fredericton, N.B., where the husband and wife team of Kadriana and Colton Lott of Winnipeg Beach, Man., defeated Edmonton's Laura Walker and Kirk

Muyres 7-5 to claim the national title for the first time.

After previously settling for silver medals on two occasions (2018 and 2021), the Lotts finally cleared the last hurdle.

But it was tight.

After Walker's last shot, an attempt at a triple takeout that just missed the mark, the remaining stones were measured twice, giving the Lotts the win, if only by a millimetre.

"Before he put the stick to it, I was pretty confident," said Colton Lott. "But then he put the stick to it, and it was

really close. I thought it was us, but just barely... by less than a tick. I looked at Kadriana and gave her the 'I think it's us' look – and then he went around again."

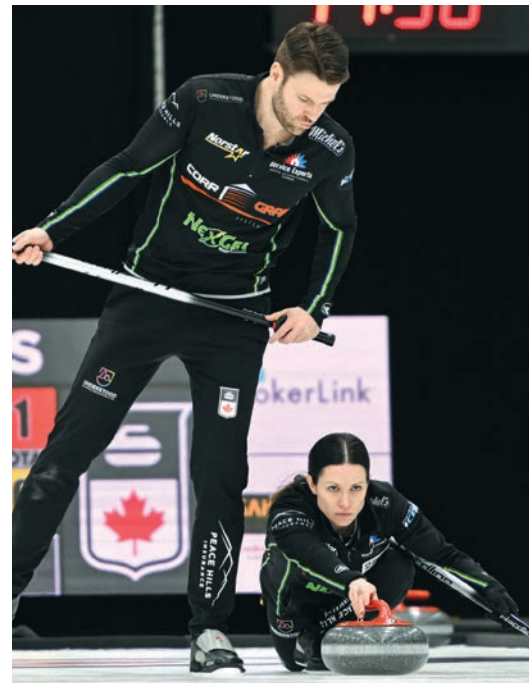
"I couldn't even look," said Kadriana. "I was standing back trying to keep myself busy. I didn't even want to look at his expression. You're either playing another end, or you're winning."

As it turned out, they were winning.

Walker and Muyres opened the game with two steals, jumping to a 3-0 lead. The Manitoba champs came back with a three-point end in the third, and then put together a great chance to steal in the fourth.

"Being down three is okay in mixed doubles," said Kadriana. "It's mixed doubles, anything can happen. You're always still in it."

After looking at what could have been a steal of two in the fourth end, Walker made an incredible runback double



Kirk Muyres and Laura Walker were a formidable pair but came up a bit short in the gold-medal final.

takeout to score a single. After trading singles in the fifth and sixth, Team Manitoba put the power play to good use in the seventh end and scored two, giving them a 6-5 lead.

After Walker's last triple attempt just missed in the eighth end, the measurement confirmed the victory for the Lotts.

"This is an unbelievable feeling," said Colton "To do it with Kadriana is just really special. Having falling short a couple times in the finals... It's just special."

The win came with a \$35,000 payday and the opportunity to represent Canada at the world championship in Östersund, Sweden where they finished fifth.

Walker and Muyres, who beat the Lotts in the final of the 2018 championship, took home \$20,000 for their silver-medal finish.

Alberta's Jocelyn Peterman and Brett Gallant won the bronze

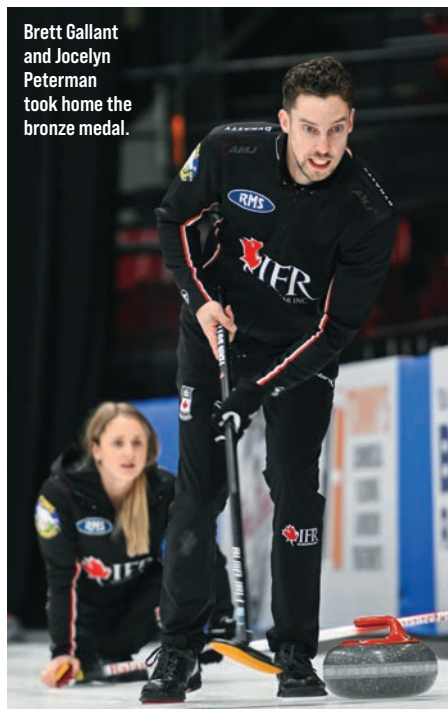
medal after defeating Saskatchewan's Madison Kleiter and Rylan Kleiter 6-3. The three medal winners all earned berths into the 2025 Canadian Mixed Doubles Curling Trials to represent Canada at the 2026 Winter Olympics.

The field of 32 teams split into four pools competed in the event, each playing a seven-game round-robin with 12 teams advancing to the single knockout playoffs.

The Lotts went 7-0 in the round-robin and were seeded first for the playoffs, meaning they got a bye to the quarter-finals.

They beat Nancy Martin/Steve Laycock 11-3 in the quarter-final, took down Peterman/Gallant 8-4 in the semifinal and then topped Walker and Muyres, a team that focuses exclusively on mixed doubles curling.

Defending champions Jennifer Jones and Brent Laing failed to make the playoffs.



Brett Gallant and Jocelyn Peterman took home the bronze medal.



The Northern Ontario team of Trevor Bonot and Jackie McCormick had a great time at the Mixed Doubles championship.



Madison and Rylan Kleiter had a good event, going 5-2 in the round-robin and making it as far as the semifinals.



A second consecutive Canadian Mixed Doubles title wasn't in the cards for Jennifer Jones and Brent Laing.



Laurie St-Georges and Félix Asselin were hoping for a better result than a 4-3 record in the round-robin.



**GOLD-MEDAL FINAL**

Manitoba (Lott/Lott)*	003 010 21— 7
Walker/Muyres	120 101 00— 5

\* — Last-rock advantage

**PERCENTAGES**

Walker/Muyres	#SH	PTS	PCT.
1 Laura Walker	8	26	81
1 Kirk Muyres	8	26	81
2 Kirk Muyres	16	40	63
3 Laura Walker	8	26	81
<b>Team Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>74</b>

Lott/Lott	#SH	PTS	PCT.
1 Kadriana Lott	8	29	91
1 Colton Lott	16	27	84
2 Colton Lott	16	55	86
3 Kadriana Lott	8	24	75
<b>Team Totals</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>84</b>

**FINAL STANDINGS**

Playoffs	W	L
Manitoba (Lott/Lott)	3	0
Peterman/Gallant#	3	1
Walker/Muyres	2	1
Kleiter/Kleiter	2	2
Alberta (Sluchinski/Sluchinski)	1	1
Martin/Laycock	1	1
British Columbia (Reese-Hansen/Chester)	0	1
Papley/Van Amsterdam	0	1
Weagle/Epping	0	1
Sandham/Craig	0	1
Kelly/Tardi	0	1
Cotter/Cotter	0	1
# — Won bronze medal	0	1

**ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS**

Pool A	W	L
Walker/Muyres+	7	0
Kleiter/Kleiter+	5	2
Kelly/Tardi+	5	2
Kitz/Stewart	4	3
St-Georges/Asselin	4	3
New Brunswick (Adams/Robichaud)	2	5
Yukon (Siciliano/Williams)	1	6
Laplante/Gibeau	0	7

Pool B	W	L
Papley/Van Amsterdam+	5	2
Martin/Laycock+	5	2
Cotter/Cotter+	4	3
Alberta (Sluchinski/Sluchinski)+	4	3
Nova Scotia (Powers/Saunders)	4	3
Cheal/Cheal	2	5
Québec (Tremblay/Lanoué)	2	5
Northern Ontario (McCormick/Bonot)	2	5

**Pool C**

	W	L
British Columbia (Reese-Hansen/Chester)+	6	1
Weagle/Epping+	4	3
Sandham/Craig+	4	3
Wasylikiw/Konings	4	3
Jones/Laing	3	4
Saskatchewan (Gamble/Kalthoff)	3	4
Newfoundland/Labrador (Wiseman/Smith)	3	4
Gagné/Morissette	1	6

**Pool D**

	W	L
Manitoba (Lott/Lott)+	7	0
Peterman/Gallant+	5	2
Zheng/Pietrangelo	4	3
Bouchard/Charest	3	4
Gionest/Desjardins	3	4
Ontario (Kreviazuk/Mathers)	3	4
Armstrong/Giffith	3	4
P.E.I. (White/White)	0	7

+ — Qualify for playoffs

**QUALIFICATION GAMES**

Martin/Laycock*	200 021 03	8
Weagle/Epping	021 100 20	6
Kleiter/Kleiter*	010 411 0x	7
Cotter/Cotter	101 000 1x	3
Kelly/Tardi*	000 021 01	4
Alberta (Sluchinski/Sluchinski)	112 100 10	6
Peterman/Gallant*	211 100 101	7
Sandham/Craig	000 031 020	6

**QUARTERFINALS**

Papley/Van Amsterdam*	001 001 03	—5
Peterman/Gallant	210 210 10	—7

Walker/Muyres*	103 011 01	—7
Alberta (Sluchinski/Sluchinski)	020 300 10	—6

B.C. (Reese-Hansen/Chester)*	100 102 01	—5
Kleiter/Kleiter	012 010 30	—7

Manitoba (Lott/Lott)*	104 033 xx	—11
Martin/Laycock	020 100 xx	—3

**SEMIFINALS**

Manitoba (Lott/Lott)*	300 002 12	—8
Peterman/Gallant	011 110 00	—4

Walker/Muyres*	021 202 01	—8
Kleiter/Kleiter	100 020 30	—6



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# NEW HOLLAND CANADIAN UNDER-21

Suncor Community Leisure Centre & Oilsands Curling Club ▸ Fort McMurray, Alta. ▸ March 24 to 31, 2024

## EXPERIENCE IS EVERYTHING AND

if you don't believe that, just ask Ally MacNutt.

MacNutt credits experience gained in recent seasons for her success in winning the women's championship at the 2024 New Holland Canadian Under-21 Curling Championships, hosted at the Suncor Community Leisure Centre at MacDonald Island Park at Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo, Alta.

MacNutt, skipping Team Nova Scotia #1, and backed by vice-skip Maria Fitzgerald, second Alison Umlah, lead Grace McCusker and coach Theresa Breen, capped off an undefeated 10-0 run with a 9-5 win over Team Ontario #1's Julia Markle in the gold-medal final.

"I remember for my first nationals I was so much more nervous," said MacNutt, who skipped in last year's New Holland U-21 Championship. "Playing in front of a crowd, and with the noise and everything ... it's such a different environment from playing in a club.

MacNutt also gained valuable experience competing at the Nova Scotia provincial Scotties playdowns.

"Having some experience with that, I'm so much more relaxed and confident," she said.

And it showed in her play all week.

"Really incredible," said MacNutt after securing the women's title. "I'm so in shock right now. I don't even know what to think."

Team Nova Scotia #1 held an 8-5 lead into the 10th end leaving Markle a difficult angle-raise takeout onto a stone in the four-foot to tie the game. Markle's offering was just off, handing the Bluenosers the win.

"I think it was just all the little things that we did that made the difference," said MacNutt, who is from Truro, N.S. "We just focused on the process and really just took it one shot at a time."

MacNutt skipped the Dalhousie University women's curling team to



Team Nova Scotia #1 ran the table with a perfect 10-0 record to win the women's crown at the 2024 New Holland Canadian Under-21 Curling Championships. The team, from the Halifax Curling Club and composed of, from left, skip Ally MacNutt, vice-skip Maria Fitzgerald, second Alison Umlah, and lead Grace McCusker, capped off its perfect week by downing Team Ontario #1's Julia Markle 9-5 to win the gold medal.

a U Sports bronze medal earlier in the season.

The MacNutt foursome earned the right to represent Canada at the World Junior Championships in Cortina, Italy, later this season which will be a test event for the 2026 Winter Olympics.

In men's play, skip Kenan Wipf and his Alberta team of vice-skip Ky Macaulay, second Michael Keenan, lead Max Cinnamon and coach Derek Bowyer, who play out of the Glencoe Club in Calgary, defeated Team Nova Scotia #1's Calan MacIsaac 7-6 in the gold-medal final.

"It's an amazing feeling," said Wipf. "Nothing compares to it. It's a dream come true in every way."

Team Alberta #1 posted a near-perfect 9-1 record on route to the gold-medal victory. Wipf said being the host province representative at the New Holland U-21 championship had some advantages.

"It's definitely nice from a time-zone perspective," he said. "But the crowd has been fantastic this week and having our



Team Nova Scotia #2 sweepers Stephanie Atherton and Anna McNutt put their backs into it. The team, skipped by Cassidy Blades, lost the bronze-medal final to Team Alberta #2.

parents and our coaches here. The support staff is amazing."

The men's final was a thriller. Team Alberta #1, tied 6-6 going into the 10th end but with hammer, needed a draw to

# U-15 FestiPierre

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PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA/MICHAEL BURNS

Team Alberta #1 posted a near-perfect 9-1 record on route to the gold-medal victory at the 2024 New Holland Under-21 championship (from left): skip Kenan Wipf, vice-skip Ky Macaulay, second Michael Keenan, and lead Max Cinnamon. Wipf said being the host province representative with parents in the crowd provided some advantages.



PHOTO: CURLING CANADA/BRODIE EVANS

Nova Scotia #1 skip Calan MacIsaac lost a heartbreaker in the gold-medal final, giving up one in an extra end to settle for the silver medal.

the four-foot to win the title with the final stone of the game.

Wipf made no mistake, stopping at the back of the four-foot.

“I’ve always loved drawing,” said Wipf. “So, if there’s a shot I could choose to win it, that’s the way I would do it.”

In the men’s bronze game, Team Manitoba #2’s Jace Freeman needed an extra end to defeat Team Saskatchewan

**UNDER-21 WOMEN'S GOLD-MEDAL FINAL**

Ontario #1 (Julia Markle)*	000 202 010 0 – 5
Nova Scotia #1 (Ally MacNutt)	031 020 101 1 – 9

\* – Last-rock advantage

**BRONZE-MEDAL FINAL**

Alberta #2 (Grace Beaudry)	021 001 111 x – 7
Nova Scotia #2 (Cassidy Blades)*	000 210 000 x – 3

**SEMIFINALS**

Nova Scotia #2 (Cassidy Blades)*	010 030 000 x – 4
Ontario #1 (Julia Markle)	001 101 103 x – 7

Alberta #2 (Grace Beaudry)	000 200 00x x – 2
Nova Scotia #1 (Ally MacNutt)*	020 041 11x x – 9

**QUARTERFINALS**

Québec (Jolianne Fortin)*	310 000 201 0 – 7
Nova Scotia *2 (Cassidy Blades)	001 210 030 1 – 8

Alberta #2 (Grace Booth)*	010 041 03x x – 9
Manitoba #1 (Shaela Hayward)	001 000 20x x – 3

**FINAL STANDINGS**

Playoffs	W	L
Nova Scotia #1 (Ally MacNutt)	2	0
Alberta #2 (Grace Beaudry)+	2	1
Ontario #1 (Julia Markle)	1	1
Nova Scotia #2 (Sophie Blades)	1	2
Manitoba #1 (Shaela Hayward)	0	1
Québec (Jolianne Fortin)	0	1

+ – Defeated Nova Scotia 7-3 in the bronze-medal game

**ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS**

Pool A	W	L
Nova Scotia #1 (Ally MacNutt)**	8	0
Québec (Jolianne Fortin)**	6	2
Manitoba #1 (Shaela Hayward)**	5	3
Ontario #2 (Ava Acres)	5	3
British Columbia (Emily Bowles)	4	4
Prince Edward Island (Ella Lenentine)	3	5
Manitoba #2 (Zoey Terrick)	2	6
Northern Ontario #1 (Claire Dubinsky)	2	6
Saskatchewan (Jenna Pomedli)	1	7

Pool B	W	L
Ontario #1 (Julia Markle)**	6	2
Alberta #2 (Grace Beaudry)**	6	2
Nova Scotia #2 (Cassidy Blades)**	6	2
Alberta #1 (Emma DeSchiffart)	5	3
New Brunswick (Mélodie Forsythe)	5	3
Nfld/Labrador #1 (Cailey Locke)	3	5
Northwest Territories (Kali Skauge)	2	6
Northern Ontario #2 (Mia Toner)	2	6
Nfld/Labrador #2 (Sarah McDonah)	1	7

\*\* – Top three teams from each pool advanced to the playoffs. Manitoba #1 advanced on tiebreaker system

#2's Dylan Derksen 7-5, while in women's bronze medal action, Team Alberta #2's Grace Beaudry downed Team Nova Scotia #2's Cassidy Blades 7-3.

The Alberta foursome will now represent Canada at the 2025 World Junior Championships in Italy.

**UNDER-21 MEN'S GOLD-MEDAL FINAL**

Nova Scotia #1 (Calan MacIsaac)	030 010 002 0 – 6
Alberta #1 (Kenan Wipf)*	100 202 010 1 – 7

**BRONZE-MEDAL FINAL**

Saskatchewan #2 (Dylan Derksen)*	000 000 130 10 – 5
Manitoba #2 (Jace Freeman)	010 012 001 02 – 7

\* – Last-rock advantage

**SEMIFINALS**

Alberta #1 (Kenan Wipf)*	202 000 021 0 – 7
Manitoba #2 (Jace Freeman)	030 000 100 1 5

Saskatchewan #2 (Dylan Derksen)	002 010 101 x – 5
Nova Scotia #1 (Calan MacIsaac)*	110 301 010 x – 7

**QUARTERFINALS**

Nova Scotia #1 (Calan MacIsaac)	030 020 201 x – 8
Nfld/Labrador (Parker Tipple)*	102 001 000 x – 4

Manitoba #1 (Jordon McDonald)	020 000 003 0 – 5
Manitoba #2 (Jace Freeman)*	100 030 100 1 – 6

**FINAL STANDINGS**

Playoffs	W	L
Alberta #1 (Kenan Wipf)	2	0
Nova Scotia #1 (Calan MacIsaac)	2	1
Manitoba #2 (Jace Freeman)+	2	1
Manitoba #1 (Jordon McDonald)	0	1
Newfoundland/Labrador (Parker Tipple)	0	1
Saskatchewan #2 (Dylan Derksen)	0	2

+ – Defeated Saskatchewan #2 7-5 in the bronze-medal game

**ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS**

Pool A	W	L
Saskatchewan #2 (Dylan Derksen)*	8	0
Manitoba #1 (Jordon McDonald)*	7	1
Newfoundland/Labrador (Parker Tipple)*	5	3
Nova Scotia #2 (Nick Mosher)	4	4
British Columbia #1 (Adam Fenton)	4	4
Saskatchewan #1 (Matthew Drewitz)	4	4
Ontario #2 (Tyler MacTavish)	2	6
New Brunswick (Jamie Stewart)	2	6
Québec (Adam Bédard)	0	8

Pool B	W	L
Alberta #1 (Kenan Wipf)*	7	1
Nova Scotia #1 (Calan MacIsaac)*	6	2
Manitoba #2 (Jace Freeman)*	6	2
Ontario #1 (Kibo Mulima)	4	4
Alberta #2 (Timothy Marin)	4	4
Northern Ontario #1 (Jackson Dubinsky)	3	5
Northern Ontario #2 (Ian Deschene)	3	5
British Columbia #2 (Alex Duncan-Wu)	3	5
Prince Edward Island (Jack MacFadyen)	0	8

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

**BALANCE PLUS FAIR PLAY AWARDS**

**Under-21 Men**

- Skip** – Jack MacFadyen, P.E.I.
- Vice-skip** – Spencer Tipple, Nfld/Labrador
- Second** – Tyler Derksen, Saskatchewan #2
- Lead** – Miles Reed, British Columbia
- Coach** – Brad Kennedy, Saskatchewan #2

**Under-21 Women**

- Fourth** – Claire Booth, Alberta #2
- Vice-skip** – Keelie Duncan, Alberta #2
- Second** – Reid Hart, P.E.I.
- Lead** – Mahra Harris, B.C.
- Coach** – Logan Miron, B.C.

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

PHOTOS: CURLING CANADA/MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY



The 2024 Asham National Coaching Awards went to junior men's coach Brad Kennedy of Saskatchewan #2 and junior women's coach Theresa Breen of Nova Scotia #1.

**ASHAM NATIONAL COACHING AWARD**

The 2024 Asham National Coaching Award recipients are Saskatchewan #2's Brad Kennedy and Theresa Breen of Nova Scotia #1. 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 2024 (left to right): Ally MacNutt, Cailey Locke, Adam Fenton, Alex Duncan-Wu.

**KEN WATSON SPIRIT AWARD**

The 2024 women's winners of the Ken Watson Award are Ally MacNutt, Nova Scotia #1 (Pool A) and Cailey Locke, Newfoundland/Labrador #1 (Pool B), while the men's winners were Adam Fenton, British Columbia #1 (Pool A) and Alex Duncan-Wu, British Columbia #2 (Pool B). The awards are voted on by the players and presented to the curlers who best combine playing ability with sportsmanship.



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# BKT TIRES WORLD WOMEN'S

Centre 200 › Sydney, N.S. › March 16 to 24, 2024

## TEAM CANADA PUT AN EXCLAMATION

point on its dominating season with a gold-medal victory at the 2024 BKT Tires World Women's Curling Championship, and the feelings of joy and relief could be felt across Canada's curling community when it was over.

Skip Rachel Homan and her team from the Ottawa Curling Club claimed gold with a nerve-shredding 7-5 victory over four-time defending champions Team Switzerland in the championship final in Sydney, N.S., ending a six-year absence for Canadian teams at the top of the women's podium.

The victory touched off a wild celebration for Homan and Co. — vice-skip Tracy Fleury, second Emma Miskew, lead Sarah Wilkes, alternate Rachel Brown and coached by Don Bartlett and national coach Viktor Kjell — who worked so hard all season, and in Sydney, to make it happen.

"Unbelievable, I can't describe the feeling," said Homan, who was urged on by 4,373 fans in Centre 200 who helped push her team to victory, and helped celebrate at the finish. "The work we put in and the success we had to finish up the season (like this) means everything to us."

It was the climax all Canadian curling fans were waiting for. Team Homan jacked up their hopes by ripping through the 13-team round robin in first place with an 11-1 record and then defeating Team South Korea in the semifinal.

That Team Switzerland—mighty Team Switzerland—stood in their way for the gold made the victory even sweeter. Skip Silvana Tirinzoni and fourth Alina Paetz were gunning for an astounding fifth consecutive victory, and front enders Selina Witschonke and Carole Howald were along for the ride and contributing to the team's legendary success.

Once again, it was too much Homan,



PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Team Canada put an exclamation point on its dominating week at the 2024 BKT Tires World Women's Curling Championship with a gold-medal victory over defending champions Team Switzerland in the final in Sydney, N.S. Skip Rachel Homan and her team from the Ottawa Curling Club (L-R), Homan, vice-skip Tracy Fleury, second Emma Miskew, and lead Sarah Wilkes, defeated Silvana Tirinzoni 7-5 in the final.

who was the all-star skip at the event. She kept her team in it over the first four ends with a couple of pressure draws, then let loose with a couple of 'Homan Specials' after that.

In the fifth, she took advantage of a rare miss by Paetz, who failed to freeze to a Canadian shot rock on the button and then delivered a double for two to tie the game 4-4.

She saved her best in the ninth end when she decided to play a split on her front stone for three, and made it perfectly. Team Canada, with a 7-5 lead, was on its way and ran the Swiss out of rocks in the 10th.

"It was a line we hadn't seen yet," said Homan. "Unbelievable sweep on that split for three, that was the game right there. I'm just so proud of my team. Just a phenomenal team shot."

The Swiss were saluted for their four-year run.



Alina Paetz, who threw last stones for Switzerland, made sure her brushers could hear her loud and clear.

"They were phenomenal," said Homan. "It's amazing to be able to beat them. They've had an amazing run and will be here for a long time."

It was Homan and Miskew's second world titles, winning the first at the 2017



championship in Beijing, China. It was the first world win for Fleury and Wilkes.

South Korea, skipped by Gim Eun-ji, won the bronze medal, defeating skip Stefania Constantini's Team Italy 6-3.

It was a notable event for Team New Zealand, skipped by Jessica Smith. The Kiwis won their first ever game at the world event, beating Scotland 8-6.

The event saw the end of a couple of major streaks. In Draw 11, Team Canada ended Switzerland's 42-game winning streak at the world championship. Switzerland had not lost a game since the 2021 Worlds. Homan's team had its 21-game winning streak snapped on the final round-robin draw, losing to South Korea's Gim Eun-ji.



Team South Korea didn't let the disappointment of losing a heartbreaking semifinal the night before deter them from their commitment to winning a medal at the 2024 BKT Tires World Women's Curling Championship. The joyous winners (L-R), Minji Kim, Suji Kim, Eunji Gim (skip), Yeeun Seol and Yeji Seol, defeated Italy 6-3 in the bronze-medal final. South Korea finished 10-2 in the round-robin.

### FRANCES BRODIE AWARD

Italy's Angela Romei was awarded the Frances Brodie Award at the 2024 BKT Tires World Women's Curling Championship Sydney, N.S. The award winner is selected annually by competitors



Italy's Angela Romei (left) accepts her award from head official Dianne Barker.

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.

### GOLD-MEDAL FINAL

<b>Canada (Rachel Homan)*</b>	<b>101 020 003 x - 7</b>
Switzerland (Silvana Tirinzoni)	020 200 010 x - 5
* - Last-rock advantage	

### PERCENTAGES

Canada		Switzerland	
Rachel Homan	88	Alina Pätz	88
Tracy Fleury	84	Silvana Tirinzoni	80
Emma Miskew	78	Selina Witschonke	88
Sarah Wilkes	95	Carole Howald	94
<b>Team totals</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>Team totals</b>	<b>87</b>

### BRONZE-MEDAL FINAL

South Korea (Gim Eun-ji)	000 102 000 3 - 6
Italy (Stefania Constantini)*	010 010 010 0 - 3
* - Last-rock advantage	

### SEMIFINALS

<b>Canada (Homan)*</b>	<b>020 101 020 3 - 9</b>
South Korea (Gim)	003 010 102 0 - 4
Switzerland (Tirinzoni)*	010 100 200 2 - 6
Italy (Constantini)	001 010 001 0 - 3
* - Last-rock advantage	

### QUALIFICATION ROUND

South Korea (Gim)*	020 000 102 1 - 6
Sweden (Hasselborg)	100 100 010 0 - 3
Italy (Constantini)*	010 201 210 x - 7
Denmark (Dupont)	001 020 001 x - 4

### FINAL STANDINGS

Playoffs	W	L
<b>Canada (Rachel Homan)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
Switzerland (Silvana Tirinzoni)	1	1
South Korea (Gim Eun-ji)#	2	1
Italy (Stefania Constantini)	1	2
Sweden (Anna Hasselborg)	0	1
Denmark (Madeleine Dupont)	0	1

# - Won bronze-medal game against Italy 6-3

### ROUND-ROBIN STANDINGS

	W	L
<b>Canada (Rachel Homan)+</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>
Switzerland (Silvana Tirinzoni)+	10	2
Italy (Stefania Constantini)+	10	2
South Korea (Gim Eun-ji)+	10	2
Sweden (Anna Hasselborg)+	7	5
Denmark (Madeleine Dupont)+	6	6
U.S.A. (Tabitha Peterson)	6	6
Scotland (Rebecca Morrison)	5	7
Norway (Marianne Rørvik)	4	8
Turkey (Dilşat Yıldız)	3	9
Japan (Miyu Ueno)	3	9
Estonia (Lisa Turmann)	2	10
New Zealand (Jessica Smith)	1	11

+ - Top six teams in round-robin make the playoffs

## PAN CONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

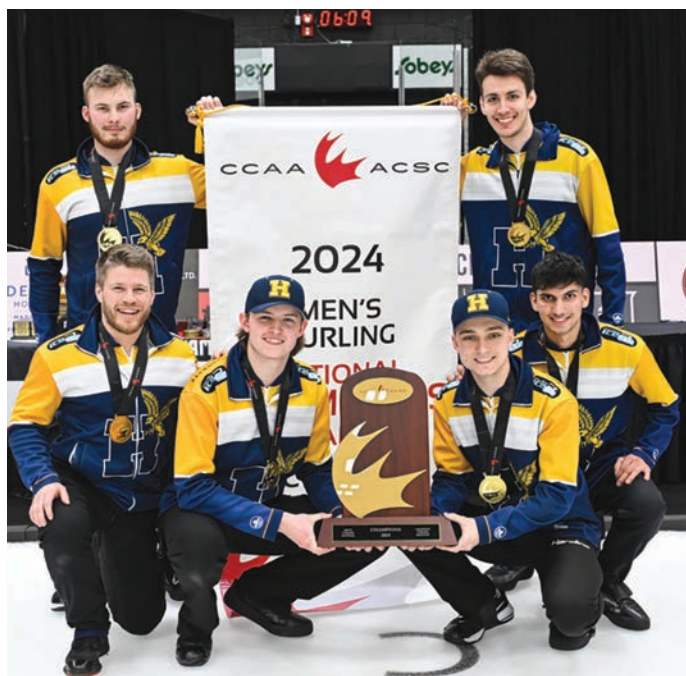


Canada's Team Gushue earned a second straight gold medal at the event. The champs, from left: coach Caleb Flaxey, alternate Jim Cotter, lead Geoff Walker, second E.J. Harnden, vice-skip Mark Nichols and skip Brad Gushue.

# A Salute to 2024

# CHAMPIONS

## CCAA-CURLING CANADA COLLEGE CHAMPIONSHIPS



Back-to-back wins for Humber College in the men's competition. Front row, from left: coach Zack Shurtleff, second Noah Garner, lead Matthew Abrams, alternate Matthew Moretto. Back row, from left: skip Jacob Dobson and vice-skip Kevin Genjaga.



Concordia University of Edmonton won its first women's national title. Front row, from left: skip Gabby Wood, second Brenna Bilassy and lead Rachel Jost. Back row, from left: vice-skip Payton Sonnenberg and coach Taina Smiley.



## U SPORTS-CURLING CANADA UNIVERSITY CHAMPIONSHIPS



The University of Regina reigned supreme with the gold-medal victory. Front row, from left: second Carter Williamson, skip Josh Bryden, vice-skip Adam Bukurak and lead Ryan Grabarczyk. Back row, from left: coach Jamie Schneider and alternate Ayden Whittmire.



It was the third national title in a row for the University of Alberta in the women's competition. From left: coach Amanda Dawn St. Laurent, lead Zoe Cinnamon, second Brianna Cullen, vice-skip Catherine Clifford and skip Serena Gray-Withers.

## WORLD MIXED CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP



Team Canada proudly displayed its bronze-medal hardware. From left: skip Félix Asselin, vice-skip Laurie St-Georges, second Émile Asselin, lead Emily Riley and coach Michel St-Georges.

## CANADIAN MIXED CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP



Winning gold in front of a hometown crowd was a dream come true for this Swift Current team. The proud champs, from left: skip Shaun Meachem, vice-skip Kelly Schafer, second Chris Haichert and lead Teejay Haichert.

## WORLD WHEELCHAIR CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP



Canada won back-to-back silver medals at the event after reaching the final in 2024. Front row, from left: alternate Chrissy Molnar, second Gil Dash, fourth Jon Thurston, vice-skip Ina Forrest and skip Mark Ideson. Back row, from left: team physician Dr. Gordon Ngo, physiotherapist Sari Shatil, head coach Mick Lizmore and team leader Kyle Paquette.

## CANADIAN WHEELCHAIR CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP



That's three wins in a row for Saskatchewan at this event. Front row, from left: lead Sheryl Pederson, second Moose Gibson, vice-skip Marie Wright and skip Gil Dash. Back row, coach Lorraine Arguin.



## EVEREST CANADIAN CURLING CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS



A women's team from New Brunswick won the event for the second year in a row. From left: skip Abby Burgess, vice-skip Brooke Tracy, second Samantha Crook and lead Hannah Williams.



Alberta's three-man team topped the field in the men's division. From left: skip Dan Sherrard, vice-skip Brandon Klassen and lead Kyle Reynolds.

## EVEREST CANADIAN SENIOR CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

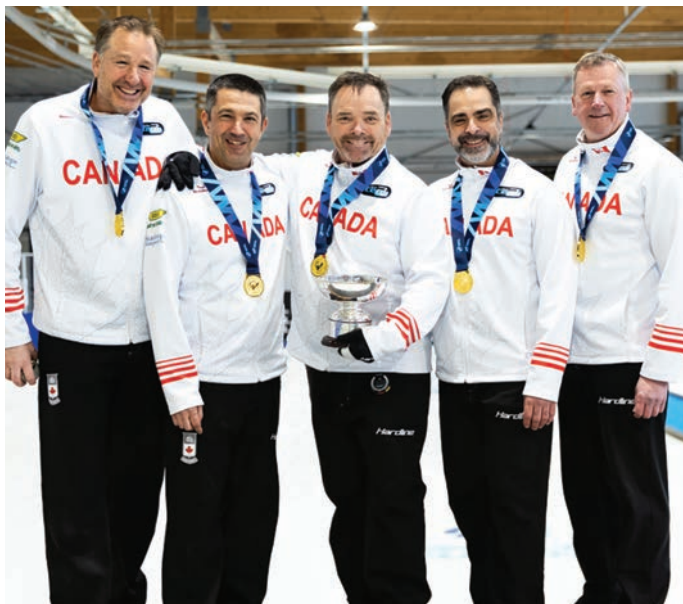


The 2023 Everest Canadian Senior Women's Champions from Ontario. From left: skip Susan Froud, vice-skip Kerry Lackie, second Kristin Turcotte, lead Julie McMullin and coach Al Corbeil.



In the men's event, Nova Scotia was at the top of the podium. From left: skip Paul Flemming, vice-skip Peter Burgess, second Martin Gavin and lead Kris Granchelli.

## WORLD SENIOR CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS



The Canadian senior men's team capped off the season with a gold medal. From left: skip Paul Flemming, vice-skip Peter Burgess, second Martin Gavin, lead Kris Granchelli and alternate Kevin Ouellette.



Canada had a double-gold performance with the women's team also reaching the top of the podium. From left: skip Susan Froud, vice-skip Kerry Lackie, second Kristin Turcotte, lead Julie McMullin, alternate Jo-Ann Rizzo and coach Al Corbeil.



## WORLD JUNIOR B CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS



The Canadian men's team picked up a gold medal and qualified for the World A event. From left: coach Skip Wilson, lead Adam Naugler, second Zach Davies, vice-skip Jaedon Neuert and skip Johnson Tao.

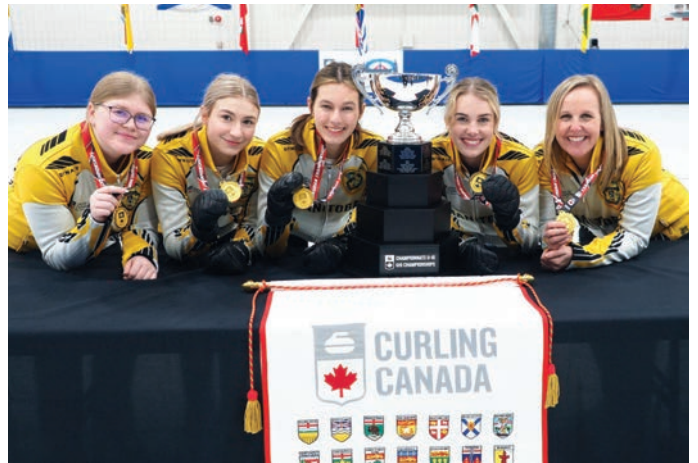


Canada's silver-medal win in the women's event elevated Team Plett to the World A championship. From left: coach Blair Lenton, lead Allie Iskiw, second Chloe Fediuk, vice-skip Alyssa Nedohin and skip Myla Plett.

## CANADIAN UNDER-18 CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS



The future of curling looks bright in Newfoundland & Labrador after a win in the male competition. From left: lead Carter Holden, second Brayden Snow, coach Glenn Goss, vice-skip Nick Codner and skip Simon Perry.



Mission accomplished for the Manitobans in the female competition. From left: lead Rylie Cox, second India Young, vice-skip Keira Krahn, skip Shaela Hayward and coach Diane Hayward.

## CANADIAN MASTERS CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS



The Ontario Masters men's champions. From left: skip Howard Rajala, vice-skip Phil Daniel, second Chris Fulton and lead Paul Madden.



British Columbia's women's team has won this event three times in a row. From left: skip Penny Shantz, vice-skip Cindy Curtain, second Danielle Shaughnessy and lead Donna Mychaluk.





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# { IN THE NEWS }

Five new members were added to the Canadian Curling Hall of Fame in 2024



PHOTO: CURLING CANADA/ MICHAEL BURNS

Curling Canada board members Teri Palynchuk (left) and Jennifer Howard bookend Hall of Fame members, Sherry Anderson, Patty Hersikorn, Brenda Goertzen and Anita Silvernagle.

## TEAM SHERRY ANDERSON

**Sherry Anderson, Patty Hersikorn, Brenda Goertzen, Anita Silvernagle**  
*Curlers*

Anderson's team from Saskatoon has set a record that may never be broken by winning five consecutive Canadian senior women's championships, and it could have been six were it not for the pandemic.

Team Anderson started that amazing streak by winning its first national championship in 2017 at Fredericton, N.B., and then followed up with victories in 2018 at Stratford, Ont., 2019 at Chilliwack, B.C., 2021 at Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., and 2022 at Yarmouth, N.S.

In addition to their Canadian championship victories, Team Anderson also shone on the world stage, winning three gold medals at the World Senior Curling Championships — in 2018 at Östersund, Sweden, in 2019 at Stavanger, Norway, and last year at Gangneung, South Korea.

## AMY NIXON

*Executive Honour Roll/Curler*

Nixon's impact on the sport of curling has been profound, both on and off the ice.

Most recently, she served five years on the Curling Canada Board of Governors, and also was elected Chair of the Board of Governors in June 2021, and stayed in that role until the fall of 2022 — the completion of her four-year term. She also agreed to rejoin the Board for the 2022-23 season to help with the orientation process for new governors who had joined the Board.

During her time as Chair of the Curling Canada Board, Curling Canada held its highly successful Bubble events in Nixon's hometown of Calgary, and she volunteered often as a scorekeeper during those three months of Bubble events, all the while contributing to the Board's oversight of the events and risk evaluations.

As a player, Nixon, was the vice-skip for Shannon Kleibrink's Canadian team that won bronze at the 2006 Winter Olympics, and a silver medal at the 2008 Scotties Tournament of Hearts. She

played the same position for Chelsea Carey's 2016 Scotties Tournament of Hearts championship team, and was the alternate for Heather Nedohin's 2012 Scotties champs.



AMY NIXON



Donna Spencer was awarded the Paul McLean Award for her contribution to curling from behind the scenes. She accepted her award from TSN sportscaster Bryan Mudryk at the 2024 Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

Donna Spencer of The Canadian Press has been awarded the Paul McLean Award as a person who has made a significant contribution to curling behind the scenes.

Spencer received the award at WinSport Arena during the 2024 Scotties Tournament of Hearts in Calgary.

A sports reporter at The Canadian Press since 1999, Spencer has covered curling for the national news service since her first year.

Spencer has witnessed some of the sport's greatest moments covering 16 Tournament of Hearts, 13 world championships, nine Briers and five Winter Olympic Games.

Spencer reported on Canada's Brad Gushue winning an Olympic gold medal in 2006, Brad Jacobs doing

the same in 2014 and Kaitlyn Lawes and John Morris winning the first Olympic gold medal in curling mixed doubles in 2018.

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 highly-respected TSN executive producer, for his dedication to CFL football, world junior hockey and, of course, curling. McLean passed away on Dec. 14, 2005, at his home in Brampton, Ont., after a two-year battle with cancer. He was 39.

There were no nominations, thus no Volunteer of the Year or Ray Kingsmith Award winners named this past season.

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*The work behind the scenes building systems is key to Canada's future success winning wheelchair curling medals, but there are no guarantees against tough international competition* **BY LISA WEAGLE**



Canada is so large that wheelchair athletes have to come together from far and wide to train and compete. It means athletes have to train in their own environment before joining forces. Chrissy Molnar (Trent Lakes, Ont.), Mark Ideson (London, Ont.) and Ina Forrest (Armstrong, B.C.) know all about it.

In the high-stakes world of high performance sport, even the smallest of details can mean the difference between winning a gold medal and being left off the podium. For wheelchair curling, the field globally continues to deepen and toughen, meaning a podium performance is never guaranteed.

“I used to hear Gerry Peckham (former Curling Canada High Performance Director) talk about how he’d wake up in the middle of the night thinking about curling,” said Kyle Paquette, Curling Canada’s Paralympic Program Director. “Now, I find myself thinking about ways to increase our win probability on a Sunday afternoon when I’m mowing the lawn.

When fans see Canadian athletes competing at the world level, they might not know the level of detailed planning



that goes on behind the scenes. For Canada's National Wheelchair Curling Program, that support, guided by Paquette, is led by head coach Mick Lizmore and mixed doubles head coach Dana Ferguson.

In March, Canada's Mixed Wheelchair Curling Team of Jon Thurston, Ina Forrest, Gil Dash, Mark Ideson, and Chrissy Molnar had a strong week, winning the silver-medal game at the 2024 World Wheelchair Curling Championship in Gangneung, South Korea.

"Almost all of the work takes place leading into an event," explained Lizmore. "You prepare a plan of how you're going to navigate the week. You put into place systems and methods of communication that allow you to learn as the event progresses, and then the hope is that it sets you up to feel prepared and confident heading into those 'bigger games' at the end of the week. But at the same time, you know without winning the previous ones, you're not going to get there."

In the same venue where Ideson and Forrest captured a bronze medal at the 2018 PyeongChang Paralympic Winter Games, the team lost the final 6-2 to Norway, earning a silver medal for Canada.

"We put ourselves in a good position and had a strong game against Norway in the round-robin, winning 8-0. We didn't go into the final complacent, but

it was not our best game and Norway showed up for the final. We plan our weeks to make the playoffs and we checked that box and won a tough one against Sweden in the semi and gave ourselves an opportunity to win another world championship. Norway got the better of us, but we're building, learning and growing and putting ourselves in a good place to win in the future."

In three of the past four years, Canada won silver at the world championships, losing the final to three different countries: Russia, China, and Norway. The last time Canada won world championship gold was 2013. At the Paralympic Games, Canada is the only nation to have medalled every quadrennial, winning gold in 2006, 2010, and 2014, and capturing bronze in 2018 and 2022.

"The depth around the world is undeniable," said Ideson. "Equipment is getting better, so is weight control, line of delivery, and ice reading, so the



An injury during the 2024 World Mixed Doubles Wheelchair Curling Championship led to a 17th-place performance for Collinda Joseph and Dennis Thiessen, so the pressure is on Canada to secure a spot at the next Paralympic Games.

playing field is levelling. We have to make sure we're improving every season so we can bring our best, because we know the other countries are doing all they can to win a world championship or Paralympic medal."

Knowing that medals matter for the survival of the program, but in sport, results are never guaranteed, program leadership and the athlete group has spent significant effort in creating a culture of excellence within the training environment to help everyone bring their best in the moments that matter most.

"There's no doubt that the program's priority is to optimize our performance to win more medals than any other country; however, a close secondary objective is to optimize the experience of everyone involved in the national program. Sustained performance is fuelled by the motivation that comes from connection, excitement, passion, and satisfaction," said Paquette.

One of the challenges to the national program is that athletes live across Canada, and their training is decentralized.

"Everybody is working hard in their own environment with their home coaches," said Lizmore. "When we get together for training sessions or virtual meetings, we truly do our best to integrate the cultural



Canadians celebrated their silver-medal finish at the world championship. Bottom row (L-R): Chrissy Molnar (alternate), Gil Dash (second), Jon Thurston (fourth), Ina Forrest (vice-skip), and Mark Ideson (skip); back row (L-R): Dr. Gordon Ngo (team physician), Sari Shatil (physiotherapist), Mick Lizmore (head coach), and Kyle Paquette (team leader).



Canada's National Wheelchair Program is capably guided by (L-R) Kyle Paquette, Dana Ferguson and Mick Lizmore.



*“EVERY YEAR PRESENTS A NEW SET OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES. IT’S NEVER A RINSE AND REPEAT SITUATION. THERE’S A NEW GROUP EVERY YEAR, EVEN IF IT’S SOME OF THE SAME ATHLETES WITH A DIFFERENT SET OF EXPERIENCES, AND THERE’S ALWAYS OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND LEARNING.”*

— MICK LIZMORE

goals we have within those sessions, camps, and training opportunities.”

The program’s culture has been carefully curated and centres around five core values: care, collaboration, competition, connection, and curiosity.

“Every decision we make for this program has to pass through the culture filter first,” emphasized Paquette, who designed and led a study about exploring and developing cultures of excellence in the Canadian sport system for Own the Podium from 2018 to 2021. “There’s no secret sauce, of course, but if there was, it would be the strong connection, care, mutual respect, collaboration and the community that’s built within this program.”

During the 2023-24 curling season, the national program expanded its support to include 21 athletes. Chrissy Molnar joined the program as a NextGen athlete and earned the opportunity to be Canada’s alternate at the 2024 World Wheelchair Curling Championships. She will be a senior athlete in the program in the upcoming season.

“Something I noticed right away was that everyone was very welcoming and eager to help,” said Molnar. “The group is like one big family. Everyone genuinely cares about each other and is there to support each other. It’s true friendship.”

The program is also taking steps to

bring the broader wheelchair community into its culture. One new initiative is the Pursuit Program, which creates programming and offers resources for athletes who want to become better in the sport. Open to any curler, coach, or supporter in Canada with high performance aspirations, it has also been put together to strengthen connections with wheelchair curling coaches across the country and creates alignment with the high performance program.

Other events, including the Leduc Mixed Doubles Wheelchair Curling Event and the Canadian Wheelchair Curling Championship, offer opportunities for meaningful competition for wheelchair curling athletes across Canada. This year, the Invictus Games Vancouver/Whistler 2025 will showcase the sport to new audiences, including veterans and service personnel.

With Canada’s wheelchair mixed team sitting atop the world rankings, a spot in the 2026 Paralympic Winter Games is all but assured. In the newer discipline of mixed doubles, however, an injury during the 2024 World Wheelchair Championship led to a 17th-place performance for Collinda Joseph and Dennis Thiessen, meaning Canada will need to place well at this season’s world championship to secure one of eight spots in the Paralympic Winter Games in Milano/Cortina, Italy.

Given the importance that Paralympic qualification plays to the program’s overall success, this season’s emphasis on mixed doubles will include more training camps, bonspiels, game tape review, and compiling past learning lessons in order to create a game plan to help Canada secure its spot in Italy.

“Every year presents a new set of opportunities and challenges,” Lizmore said. “It’s never a rinse and repeat situation. There’s a new group every year, even if it’s some of the same athletes with a different set of experiences, and there’s always opportunities for growth and learning.”

As Lizmore and national program staff and athletes prepare for the important season ahead, their sights are set on Paralympic mixed doubles qualification as well as moving up a step on the world podium in mixed wheelchair curling.

“Make no mistake, we’re chasing a gold medal,” he said. “We’ve been knocking at the door and had opportunities. We never take for granted that podium performances are hard to come by, but that gold medal is keeping us all a little bit awake at night.”

---

*Lisa Weagle is high-performance curling athlete and communications professional who has worked with the National Wheelchair Curling Program.*





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# TRAINING VS. PLAYING: A FINE BALANCING ACT

*Canada's top teams have the tough task of figuring out what the correct practice-to-games ratio should be to make them better*

BY SHERI BLOCK

David Murdoch, High Performance Director for Curling Canada, says funding and the ability to devote the necessary time to training will go a long way in a team's success on the ice.

Canada's elite curling teams are no strangers to the medal podium, whether it's at world championships or Olympic Games.

But getting there has become increasingly tougher against top international teams, in part because many of them are devoting more time to training than Canadian curlers.

Viktor Kjell knows all about it. Kjell, an Olympic bronze medallist and world champion curler from Sweden, and a former teammate of superstar skip Niklas Edin, has seen first-hand how European teams train and how it

contributes to their continued success.

One thing they like to do, he points out, is throw rocks. Plenty of them.

"On a day-to-day basis, the number of hours and the number of rocks that they throw is higher than what we're doing in Canada right now," says Kjell, who is the current national women's coach for Canada.

So, could more rock throwing and a higher training-to-playing ratio be the key to victory?

Kjell says the margin between winning and losing among top teams is so slight that any extra advantage can put a team over the top.

"We're really trying to mimic the training that we do so we feel like we get more out of it in competition," he says.

Europeans also get a leg up on Canadians in the summer, hitting the ice in July for training. Canadians traditionally start a month later. That provides European teams a valuable extra month to perfect their skills.

"That was such an important period in the season because you could really focus on your technical training," says Kjell. "If there was something you needed to perfect, you could take the time to do it."



Canada has other challenges in adapting to the European model. Curling ice often isn't installed until August, something Kjell hopes to change.

Funding is also a problem. Canada has so many great teams that could win a Scotties Tournament of Hearts or Montana's Brier and represent the country on the international stage. That depth of talent is great to have, but it means not all the teams have access to the same funding.

Teams must battle against each other to gain funding and earn points to qualify for the top events. The highest-ranked teams in the world gain access to Grand Slams, potentially a bigger prize pot, and high-profile sponsors.

"It depends on your situation from a funding perspective, whether that's a sponsorship, or your capability in life to dedicate your time to the sport," says David Murdoch, High Performance Director for Curling Canada. "If you have that backing that you can provide the time to do the necessary training, you're probably going to go a long way."

Murdoch, who joined Curling Canada in 2023 after a prominent career in Scotland that included two world championships, an Olympic silver medal and a successful run as British Curling's national and Olympic head coach, says success for Canadian curlers comes down to finding the right balance between playing and training.

"We know that some (of our) athletes are throwing every day, for sure. We know there are some who can't but want to. It just depends on their circumstance with their work, family life or maybe their locations. It's setting out a plan,"

says Murdoch. "It's making sure everybody can maximize their time, their availability, their commitment based on their circumstance."

Balanced training-to-play ratio is a necessity for Krista McCarville who skips one of Canada's top women's teams out of Thunder Bay, Ont. She knows all about maximizing time and availability.

McCarville, a full-time teacher, can't take the time off to travel to as many bonspiels or tour events as some of the other top Canadian teams. Her team, which includes local members Sarah Potts and Ashley Sippala, is also made up of two out-of-town players — Andrea Kelly from New Brunswick and Kendra Lilly from Sudbury, Ont.

They've developed a balanced training regimen that includes one or two intensive weekends a year, with all five members and coach Rick Lang in attendance. It is made up of on-and-off ice training, consisting of everything from gym workouts to video analysis and strategy discussions.

Throughout the season they have also a strict practice schedule, getting on the ice five or six days a week in their respective cities and making sure every trip to the rink counts.

"We always say we have to have purposeful practices. We don't go to a curling club just to say we threw 16 rocks up, 16 rocks back. We have a purpose for being there," says McCarville.

Inset: Viktor Kjell has seen first-hand how European teams train to get ready for international competition. He was a big part of it at one time.

Bottom: The euphoria was obvious as coach Viktor Kjell got ready to embrace Team Canada members after their world women's curling championship in Sydney, N.S.



***"WE'RE THE LEADING NATION, THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT, BUT WE WANT TO RAISE THE BAR EVEN HIGHER. WE'VE GOT GREAT TEAMS, GREAT ATHLETES, GREAT COACHES BUT I THINK WE CAN BECOME EVEN BETTER IF WE CAN JUST MAKE THOSE SMALL LITTLE TWEAKS HERE AND THERE." — VIKTOR KJELL***

Balancing training-to-play ratio is necessary for Krista McCarville (centre) who skips one of Canada's best women's teams out of Thunder Bay, Ont. She knows all about maximizing time and availability. Her team, with two out-of-town players, must get the most out of each practice together.



“We think that training is important, if not more important, than a bonspiel because you’re working on specific things, but it’s also very important to get a lot of games in and play games on the curling circuit too, so we have to have a balance there.”

She believes over the past 10 years a big part of her team’s success — they’ve been on the Scotties podium three times — is thanks in part to this balanced schedule.

“I love curling, I love my job, and I love my family,” she says. “I think we all have a really good balance of living and being able to do it year after year for the next how many years that we want to do this. We’re not burnt out. We feel really good with the cycle that we have.”

The team is continuing to try new things and work hard with the goal of getting back to the Scotties, which just happens to be in their hometown next February.

“The pressure’s on us a little bit here but it’s a good pressure and we’re going to do whatever we can to represent Northern Ontario and hopefully win those Scotties and represent Canada.”

To find the right ratio of training vs. playing, Kjell says it’s about building the season in blocks.

The first block of the season is heavy on technical training, such as perfecting a slide rather than outcome. As the season transitions, the focus would shift to shot execution.

Kjell says the top teams do six or seven training camps a year and play in eight to 10 events a season.

“We’re still competing a little bit more but we’re trying to get the volume of training up a little bit

because we feel like just having these blocks and periodization we can focus on different things throughout the season,” says Kjell.

Canadian curlers are certainly doing something right. Rachel Homan’s team took home gold at the world women’s championship this year while skip Brad Gushue’s team won silver for the men. Canada also won the silver medal at the World Wheelchair Curling Championship.

“We’re the leading nation, there’s no doubt about that, but we want to raise the bar even higher. We’ve got great teams, great athletes, great coaches but I think we can become even better if we can just make those small little tweaks here and there,” says Kjell.

With the curling trials for the 2026 Olympic Games on the horizon, Murdoch says their high-performance plan is focused on what athletes can do each day to be better. That includes everything from psychology and strength conditioning to technical work and data analyses.

“We’ve just turned up the ante on all of those — changed a bit of our framework, changed communication with athletes, getting involved with our athletes more on a day-to-day basis. Our athletes can hopefully use those resources, use some of that expertise to be the best they can be,” he says.

“We’re a partner with them to try and maximize their potential.”

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*Sheri Block is a freelance writer based in Calgary. All quotes were obtained firsthand unless cited otherwise.*



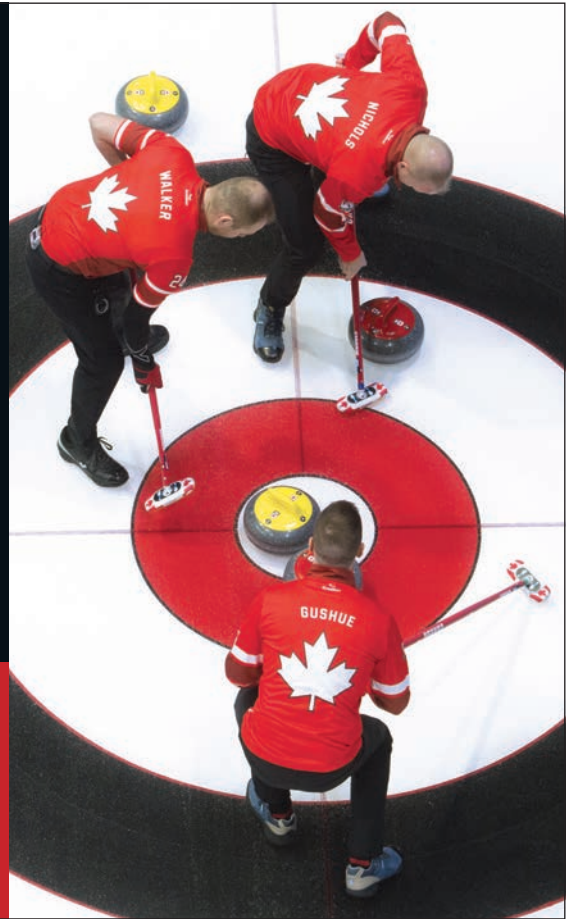
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# CURLING'S SEASON OF CHANGE

*Regional RockFests provide young Canadians the opportunity to meet their peers at an early age and stage in their development, and have fun together*

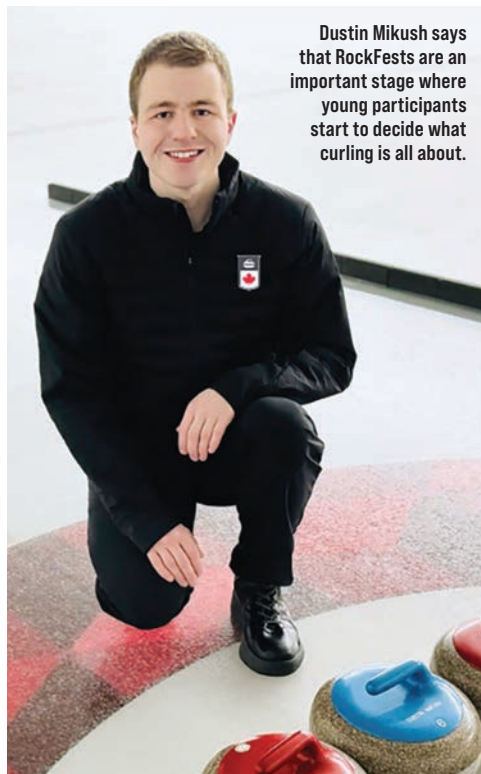
BY GRANT GRANGER



PHOTO: JASON O'DONNELL, INFINITE EYE PHOTOGRAPHY



Dustin Mikush says that RockFests are an important stage where young participants start to decide what curling is all about.



Spring is a season of change. That's especially true in curling. It's something Dustin Mikush saw bloom last spring during Curling Canada's inaugural regional RockFests for U-15 (under 15-years-old) curlers.

It was at RockFest West in Sherwood Park, Alta., that Mikush, Manager, Youth and Program Development for Curling Canada, got a kick out of seeing young curlers excitedly experience curling's season of change. He noted one of those enthusiastically exchanging phone numbers was the daughter of Marc Kennedy, a well-known Montana's Brier, world and Olympic champion.

"It's a key part for the kids to meet each other, especially at these U-15 RockFest events and even into U-18; they're forming teams themselves and the social part of that is still super key," says Mikush. "That was pretty neat to provide that opportunity where kids

could meet to start forming teams for the following season."

Curling is unlike most other sports because the players pick the teams. There's no general manager making trades. So as every curling season winds down the speculation season starts and sets the sport's social media buzzing. It's curling version of Free Agent Frenzy.

The RockFests provide a prime opportunity for the passionate, young curlers to begin to learn that process. It's also a prime opportunity to learn a lot more.

"That's an important (stage) where kids are starting to decide what their sport is," Mikush says. "I do believe it's an important age group where kids have been exposed to multiple sports potentially so it's imperative that we do provide an exciting opportunity in the sport of curling that make them say, 'Hey, I'd like to continue in this sport,



it's a fun sport, I'd like to keep developing my skills.'

"The diversity of Canada is growing and we're moving a bit more away from the 'I curl because my parents curl.' But how do we get more kids — maybe they're new to Canada — involved in the sport?"

The inaugural RockFests were full to capacity attracting 312 curlers. Some had curled for quite a few years and were eager to move on to U-18 play. Others, says Mikush, were just starting to find their pathway.

There was, of course, coaching, including the likes of: Kennedy; three-time world champion David Nedohin; Heather Nedohin, a two-time women's world bronze medallist; five-time Canadian women's champion Shannon Birchard; and 2021 Canadian men's champion Brendan Bottcher. Pretty big names!

"It's pretty cool when you get to work with a coach that you've just watched on TV at the Brier or Scotties just a couple of weeks prior. We just want to provide a great experience for the kids," says Mikush. "It was super fantastic to see the enthusiasm from the kids and their willingness to learn new skills and just watching them enjoy themselves out on the ice. It's pretty refreshing to see so many kids."

They loved the coaching so much they asked for more. It was No. 1 on their feedback wish lists.

"As a young curler growing up I also loved that kind of fine tuning of skills



PHOTO: MICHAEL BOULAY



PHOTO: MICHAEL BURNS PHOTOGRAPHY

Marc Kennedy of St. Albert, Alta. (left), is a decorated curler who has helped out coaching at RockFest events. He's not the only one. Several of Canada's top men and women curlers have volunteered their time to guide young girls and boys who want to learn from the best. And what a treat it is to learn from the stars of the game.

and the practise and training aspects of things. It's encouraging to see our next generation interested in developing their skills so we'll be providing more curler development opportunities at next season's events," says Mikush.

The RockFests also introduced the youngsters to the games of singles and triples. They were great vehicles, says Mikush, for the curlers to learn all the roles on a team. Triples is a six-end game with each player taking a turn at lead, middle and skip for two ends.

"Already at that time those curlers might have played only one or two of those positions. It was pretty great to see them able to play all the different positions and learn all the different roles of those positions," says Mikush. "It was a chance for (skips) to learn the different aspects of being a front-end player and judging weight, and then just that exact opposite if they played only lead for a few years. It's an opportunity to learn strategy."

There will again be four RockFests in 2025. The first, RockFest West, will take



PHOTO: IMAGES BY BRUNO

Rockfest events introduce young curlers to the game of singles and triples. Triples is a six-end game with each player taking a turn at lead, middle and skip for two ends. It helps each player learn the roles of the individual positions.



*“YOUTH CURLING IS ON THE RISE AS WE ARE SEEING A LOT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE TRY CURLING AND JOIN PROGRAMS IN THEIR LOCAL CURLING CENTRES. IT IS EXCITING TO SEE A GROWING GROUP OF YOUNG CURLERS GETTING INVOLVED IN LEAGUES AND ALSO HAVING INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS LIKE ROCKFEST.” – HELEN RADFORD*



Curling Canada's Helen Radford says the national organization can get a better idea of up-and-coming, on-ice talent through RockFest events across the country.

PHOTO: HOWARD LAO/WCF

place during the 2025 Montana's Brier in Kelowna, B.C., from Feb. 27 to March 1. Sixty curlers from British Columbia will be invited, 40 from Alberta, and 10 each from Yukon and Northwest Territories.

RockFest Atlantic will be at the Mayflower Curling Club in Halifax, March 13-15, with 72 curlers, including 30 Nova Scotians, 18 from New Brunswick, 14 from Newfoundland and Labrador, and 10 from Prince Edward Island.

Then it's on to North Bay, Ont., for RockFest East, from March 21 to 23, with 28 participants from Northern Ontario, 24 from Ontario, 16 from Quebec and four from Nunavut.

RockFest Prairie in Winnipeg runs April 10-12 with 60 Manitoban curlers and 36 from Saskatchewan.

“The wonderful part about our new U-15 RockFest regional events is that it gave us more insight into young curlers all across Canada. We focus on the whole curler, not just the technical aspects of the game, so the RockFest events not only give Curling Canada a better idea of on-ice

talent, but it also provides a lot of young people the opportunity to meet their peers at an earlier age and stage in their development and have fun together,” says Helen Radford, Manager, Youth Curling and NextGen for Curling Canada.

Any curlers between the ages of 11 and 14, as of June 30, 2024, seeking to participate in the RockFests can apply through their local Member Association. They have to complete a variety of shots and then input their results into a Curling Canada app available on both iOS and Android.

“Youth curling is on the rise as we are seeing a lot more young people try curling and join programs in their local curling centres. It is exciting to see a growing group of young curlers getting involved in leagues and also having individual opportunities to participate in events like RockFest,” says Radford.

In addition to RockFest, Curling Canada's RockStars is two easy-to-follow instructional programs for the local level. One is for kids ages nine-and-under while

the other, Learn to Train, is for ages 12-and-under with three to four years experience.

Curling Canada also has a popular fun program called Hit, Draw, Tap. It's for real young curlers and is modelled after football's highly successful Punt, Pass and Kick competition and golf's Drive, Chip and Putt.

Local clubs run qualifier events for kids aged six to 12. They're scored on the three shots – Hit, Draw, Tap – with the best scores moving on to a provincial or territorial shootout.

The shots are age appropriate with six- and seven-year-olds shooting from the hack to the near house, eight- and nine-year-olds shoot half a sheet, and 10-12 the full length. Last season, more than 2,000 curlers took part and this year Curling Canada is looking to grow the program by producing a commercial for upcoming TSN curling broadcasts.

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*Grant Granger is a freelance writer based in Vancouver. All quotes were obtained firsthand unless cited otherwise.*



PHOTO: JASON O'DONNELL, INFINITE EYE PHOTOGRAPHY

Youth curling is on the rise in Canada. A lot more young people are trying the sport and joining programs in their local curling centre. RockFests certainly help in their development, along with other programs such as RockStars and Hit, Draw, Tap.





# ON THE ROCKS

BY AL CAMERON

**AS CURLERS AND CURLING FANS, IT'S EASY TO** get caught up in false narratives and dwell on them.

As an easy for-instance, the issue of televised curling. As someone who grew up in the 1970s, when you were lucky to see one curling game a week (recorded games from the old CBC Curling Classic that weren't ruined by spoilers on the Internet, followed by the finals of the Macdonald Lassie, Macdonald Brier and Silver Broom), curling fans need to remember they have never — repeat, NEVER — had the ability to see more televised curling than they do today. Grand Slam events, every draw of the Scotties Tournament of Hearts and Montana's Brier, World Championship games — you can see all of it now.

Add in what's available through live-streaming to your computer or mobile device, and one wonders why anyone could conceivably complain that there's not enough curling to watch from the comfort of your home.

And yet, people do complain. Loudly. I get those emails, and they're not very nice sometimes. I mean, I get it — ultimately, it's a compliment to our sport. People want more, and how do you begrudge them that?

Somehow, though, it becomes a negative spin and people get caught up in it with their comments on social media.

That's the world we live in — too many people are saying what's wrong with (fill in the blank) instead of focusing on what's RIGHT with it.

It's certainly accurate to say that applies to our sport (it actually applies to a lot of sports, but this is a curling magazine, so we'll stick with curling).

It's been an ongoing issue that fans and media (I was a journalist for 26 years and very often fell into the same trap) are dwelling on negative issues. More often than not, someone voices a complaint about something (rightly or wrongly), and it becomes an issue that people fixate on.

That's nothing new, of course, but you also need to remember that vocal minorities don't speak for everyone.

But I think it's time that as a sport, as a fan base, as a curling community, we start changing the conversation and steering it in the direction of focusing on the good things (and there are an abundance of them) happening in our sport.

As our outgoing Chair of the Curling Canada Board of Governors Michael Szajewski put it in his final Chair's message for our 2023-24 Annual Report:

*Too often, we are asked questions about our sport's 'struggles', our 'issues', our 'challenges.'*

*To be fair, we have them — just like every other sport out there, both professional and amateur. Curling is hardly unique in this area.*

*However, it is time, I believe, to change that narrative and start telling people what is going right for our sport and our organization*

And there is plenty of evidence that backs him up. Registration numbers at Canadian curling centres now exceed the numbers prior to the pandemic (contrary to what many believed would happen).

Youth engagement also has increased significantly in the past few years (you can read an article elsewhere in this Extra End Annual that outlines the great work being done in this area).

Our national teams in various disciplines won more world championship event medals than any other country this past season and seem more dialled in than ever as we approach the 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Italy.

Curling continues to be a leader in the area of gender equity — equal pay and television exposure have been in place for many years now, while other sports and organizations are only now beginning to catch up to where our sport already was.

And, oh yeah — there's a lot of curling on television. More than ever before.

So, curlers and curling fans, keep all of this in mind when someone tries to tell you curling is “dying” or “struggling” or “in rough shape.”

Don't be shy about bragging about our sport. Wave the flag a little — curling has earned it, in so many ways.

Buck the trend and throw some positivity into the conversation, because there's plenty to be positive about. You can be a difference-maker, just with a few well-placed words and facts that have the added benefit of being true.

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

# 2024-25 TSN BROADCAST GUIDE

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

## POINTS BET INVITATIONAL

September 25 to 29, 2024 ▶ Calgary

Sweep 16	Wed. Sept. 25	3 p.m.
Sweep 16	Wed. Sept. 25	8 p.m.
Sweep 16	Thurs. Sept. 26	3 p.m.
Sweep 16	Thurs. Sept. 26	8 p.m.
Elite 8	Fri. Sept. 27	3 p.m.
Elite 8	Fri. Sept. 27	10 p.m.
Final 4	Sat. Sept. 28	3 p.m.
Final 4	Sat. Sept. 28	10 p.m.
Women's Final	Sun. Sept. 29	Noon
Men's Final	Sun. Sept. 29	5 p.m.

## SCOTTIES TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS

February 14 to 23, 2025 ▶ Thunder Bay, Ont.

Draw 1	Fri. Feb. 14	7 p.m.
Draw 2	Sat. Feb. 15	2 p.m.
Draw 3	Sat. Feb. 15	7 p.m.
Draw 4	Sun. Feb. 16	9 a.m.
Draw 5	Sun. Feb. 16	2 p.m.
Draw 6	Sun. Feb. 16	7 p.m.
Draw 7	Mon. Feb. 17	9 a.m.
Draw 8	Mon. Feb. 17	2 p.m.
Draw 9	Mon. Feb. 17	7 p.m.
Draw 10	Tues. Feb. 18	9 a.m.
Draw 11	Tues. Feb. 18	2 p.m.
Draw 12	Tues. Feb. 18	7 p.m.
Draw 13	Wed. Feb. 19	9 a.m.
Draw 14	Wed. Feb. 19	2 p.m.
Draw 15	Wed. Feb. 19	7 p.m.
Draw 16	Thurs. Feb. 20	9 a.m.
Draw 17	Thurs. Feb. 20	2 p.m.
Draw 18	Thurs. Feb. 20	7 p.m.
Page Qualifiers	Fri. Feb. 21	1 p.m.
Page Qualifiers	Fri. Feb. 21	7 p.m.
Page 3v4	Sat. Feb. 22	1 p.m.
Page 1v2	Sat. Feb. 22	7 p.m.
Semifinal	Sun. Feb. 23	1 p.m.
Final	Sun. Feb. 23	7 p.m.

## MONTANA'S BRIER

February 28 to March 9, 2025 ▶ Kelowna, B.C.

Draw 1	Fri. Feb. 28	9:30 p.m.
Draw 2	Sat. March 1	4:30 p.m.
Draw 3	Sat. March 1	9:30 p.m.
Draw 4	Sun. March 2	11:30 a.m.
Draw 5	Sun. March 2	4:30 p.m.
Draw 6	Sun. March 2	9:30 p.m.
Draw 7	Mon. March 3	11:30 a.m.
Draw 8	Mon. March 3	4:30 p.m.
Draw 9	Mon. March 3	9:30 p.m.
Draw 10	Tues. March 4	11:30 a.m.
Draw 11	Tues. March 4	4:30 p.m.
Draw 12	Tues. March 4	9:30 p.m.
Draw 13	Wed. March 5	11:30 a.m.
Draw 14	Wed. March 5	4:30 p.m.
Draw 15	Wed. March 5	9:30 p.m.
Draw 16	Thurs. March 6	11:30 a.m.
Draw 17	Thurs. March 6	4:30 p.m.
Draw 18	Thurs. March 6	9:30 p.m.
Page Qualifiers	Fri. March 7	3:30 p.m.
Page Qualifiers	Fri. March 7	9:30 p.m.
Page 3v4	Sat. March 8	3:30 p.m.
Page 1v2	Sat. March 8	9:30 p.m.
Semifinal	Sun. March 9	2 p.m.
Final	Sun. March 9	8 p.m.

## LGT WORLD WOMEN'S CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

March 15 to 23, 2025 ▶ Uijeongbu, Korea

Draws TBD

## BKT TIRES WORLD MEN'S CURLING CHAMPIONSHIP

March 29 to April 6, 2025 ▶ Moose Jaw, Sask.

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