

Armstrong Curling Club

Christmas Newsletter, December 2021

Season so Far

At the time of writing, our club has hosted three successful events! We had our annual Pumpkin Stick bonspiel in October followed by the Lady's Bonspiel at the end of November and the Senior Men's Pot of Silver on December 3rd – 5th.

Last year, we were impressed by how many people took advantage of, and enjoyed available, unused ice times. This year we have formalized and expanded the program to include Monday afternoons, Tuesday late afternoon, Thursday late afternoon and all of Friday afternoon until 6:30 pm. The signup sheet is at the bottom of the senior's board. While most folks use the ice for practice, you can play games or do whatever you like - within reason.

Friday mornings are devoted to our school program. The high school has two classes every Friday and in the New Year, Highland Park Elementary will be coming every Friday morning as well. The Junior program is alive and well with 16 enthusiastic participants invading the building on Wednesday afternoons.

If Covid and its cousin, Omicron leave us alone, we should be able to get through the rest of the season. Planning is underway for the eight scheduled weekend events in the winter season.

The Second Half

In order to minimize our member's financial exposure to the likelihood of an abruptly shortened season, we have only collected half of a season dues from every club member. If you are going to play in the second half, you have to sign up and pay for the second half of the season. Please use the signup sheets for your leagues to indicate whether you plan on playing in the new year. You will find the sign-up sheets pinned over your league schedules. These

completed signup sheets will help your league reps and the executive, schedule, and plan for the next session. Dues can be paid by cheques cash, debit, E-transfer (paymentarmstrongcurling@gmail.com).

In case Omicron causes problems over the Christmas break, we ask that you don't pay until you are actually back in the club in January!

Events



The victorious Hamilton team. L to r Karen Ranger, Kayla Gunner, Chris Harward and Bev.

The weekend of November 26th – 28th featured the Armstrong Curling Club's first 4-person team, big event bonspiel since March 2019. Twelve ladies' teams took to the ice on Friday evening and play concluded on Sunday afternoon. There was a full slate of activities for the curlers including lunches on both Saturday and Sunday as well a delicious full dinner, prepared and served by Dianne Mouncey, Nick Gunner, and crew. The Saturday evening meal was followed by an evening of entertainment by Deb McLaughlin and helpers.

Instead of a triple knockout format, the bonspiel followed a group play format which featured playoffs on Sunday afternoon, with the top 2 teams playing each other in the A final, the next two teams playing for the B finals and the 5th and 6th seeded teams playing in the C final. Winners of the "A" Final

were the Bev Hamilton team squeaking out a narrow victory over the Carol Heinrichs team. Bev was ably assisted by Kayla Gunner, Karen Ranger and Chris Harward. The B final was won by the Hunter rink from Kelowna and the C final went to Karol Hansma's Armstrong team. Playing with Karol were Ellina Nickell, Amber McNabb and Val Knudson.



Skip, Derrell Sears and the young men who helped him win the C Event in the Senior Men's Bonspiel

The Senior Men's Pot of Silver bonspiel was played using the same group play format. The Pot of Silver is possibly the most competitive event on the Armstrong bonspiel calendar. The intensity is very high from the opening round, and the intensity stays at a boil for the entire event. The finals featured 2 teams from Vernon, two teams from Salmon Arm and 2 teams from Armstrong. Rob Ewan's team from Vernon triumphed over the Scott Furevick foursome from Salmon Arm. John Danks' Salmon Arm team scored 4 points in the 5th end to put away Armstrong's Wayne Heinrichs' team and Derrell Sears from Armstrong defeated Jack Prokopetz from Vernon in the "C" final. One winner from each town – how egalitarian is that?

In Daytime Mixed League play, the Askew's Fall 2021 season is wrapped up with the team of Derrell Sears, Sheron Sears, Dave Smith, and Lawanda Henderson capturing top spot. Runners up were the quartet of John Campbell, Dave Latter, Janice Campbell, and Dan Scott. The Monday and Wednesday stick leagues wrap up just before Christmas.

The evening leagues are entering the last week of play to conclude the first half of the year. In Tuesday

Night Doubles, the Pieper brothers have an unassailable lead, Wednesday Evening Ladies has the Mouncey team in a narrow lead over the Hamilton rink. Dean Chapple is firmly on top in the Thursday night men's and Dale Bradley's team is leading the Friday Fun league

Merritt Flood Relief

Here in the Okanagan, we have been enjoying a rather calm autumn. Folks in Merritt, Princeton and the Fraser Valley have not been so lucky. We thought that our Curling Club could do a little fundraising – sort of a curlers helping curlers initiative, so the donation box has been open for business – with funds being raised by the raffle of a blanket generously donated by Faye Magill. So far, over \$500 dollars has been raised and the money will be sent to the Merritt Club. They have some club members who have lost everything, and they will distribute the money amongst those with the greatest need.

For those of you wishing to donate in a more formal way, donations can be made to the Red Cross or the United Way.

Learn to Curl Graduates

This fall we have had a small but very enthusiastic group of new curlers pass through our Learn to Curl program. The program is an 8-week intensive program that takes the student through all facets of curling including etiquette, where to stand, how to deliver a rock and keep score as well as advanced strategy and of course, the sociable aspect – how to swagger up to the bar and order drinks.

The pace of learning in this course is not for everyone but, this program is designed so that upon completion, an absolute novice with no previous curling experience can confidently join a team and play with minimal disruption and coaching. I really like the program. In my 15 years as a club manager, I have seen far too many people sign up, politely acknowledge that lessons and coaching are available without ever taking advantage of the offer and then struggle for a year and disappear without a trace.

It's simple! Folks who have positive experiences in the club, stay in the club! If you have husbands, wives, parents, or neighbors who have expressed an interest in curling but are the type of people who don't feel comfortable jumping into a new sport with both feet – tell them about the Learn to Curl Program.



The happy participants celebrate the final day of the program with pizza and a free drink!

Ice Maintenance

On the weekend of November 13th and 14th a flood was done on the ice. We try to do a flood about every 4 – 5 weeks and we do it to rejuvenate the ice and bring it back to level and clean. The process takes about 8 or 9 hours of work for 3 people spread over two days. First the rocks and the dividers get taken off the ice. The ice temperature and the air temperature are both raised, and we shave and hand-scrape the entire ice surface multiple times to remove as much grime and unevenness as we can. All the holes for the dividers and hacks are protected with copper inserts. All furnaces, fans, the ice plant, and anything that could cause air movement is turned off. We then flood the ice with 270 gallons of treated water. If we get everything right, the ice should remain covered with water for at least 1 hour without any freezing. When we reach a predetermined temperature in the ice, the ice plant is turned on. After one hour, the water should slowly start freezing in the same pattern as it was flooded. After the ice has frozen completely, generally overnight, all of the copper inserts are removed, and we start shaving with the Ice King. We shave, then we pebble and shave and pebble and shave and when we have gotten the ice level, the

rocks are placed on expanded-plastic sheets on the ice and allowed to cool for 24 hours.



We also “tuned up” our rocks. This is a process where we use a special jig and super-expensive sandpaper to rough up the running surface of the rock – just enough to make the rock curl decisively but not so rough as to slow the rocks down.

After the Christmas Break

What is happening in the next half of the season?

- Tuff Spiel on January 1st. 12 spaces left
- Doubles Bonspiel on January 15 – 16th
- BCIMCA 60+ Men's playdowns on January 21st and 22nd
- Junior Funspiel January 23rd
- Mixed Bonspiel January 28th – 30th
- Stick Spiel February 5th – 6th
- Pot of Gold Men's Bonspiel February 25 – 27th
- Senior Ladies Silver Rocks March 5th – 6th

The Executive Summary of this Newsletter!

If you are continuing to play after Christmas, please sign up! Don't pay until January 2022! Consider putting a team into one of our remaining events.

The Staff and the Board of Directors wish all of you a Merry (and safe) Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Steve

