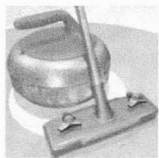


Middleton rocks during five-day combined masters

They came, they saw... they curled. For the five days of the Provincial Masters Championship, the Middleton Curling Club echoed with urgent calls on the ice to "Hurry! REALLY HURRY!" and the clubhouse was filled with the laughter and conversation of the spectators. Arm-chair curlers called the shots, and critiqued the strategy of those on the ice, and the watching crowd often broke out into spontaneous applause and cheers when seemingly impossible shots were made.



Throwing Rocks

Karen Solvett
Middleton
Curling Club

Men's Masters

The Men's Masters began play on Saturday with the 10 teams playing a triple-knockout format that eliminates a team when it has been defeated three times. The spectators in the clubhouse had lots of connections to the various teams on the ice over the five days. Middleton fielded their own men's team of Garfield Lowe, Dave Acker, Allen Morris, and Ernie Killen, but there were connections to other teams as well. As hosts, MCC is required to assist with spares in the case of injury on a visiting team, and a sprained ankle on the Haylett Clarke team on day two resulted in club member Wayne Schumann stepping into the breach and playing three games as wins kept them in the tournament until late Monday.

In addition, in the mate position of the Alan Darragh team was Reid Romkey, brother of long-time MCC member Dave Romkey. Reid's name appears in team signs on-ice as he played on championship winners from MCC in past years

and so has a long-standing connection with the club and its members. Reid's wife Karen was playing in the Women's Championship on the Barbara Fraughton team and both teams advanced to the final days of play. The curling community does not need a personal connection to enjoy watching games but it does give additional enjoyment to have the club association with team members.

Memories

On the night before the final game of the Men's Championship, eventual winner Alan Darragh and his team were remembering their own past connection with Middleton, stretching back to 1971. In a

walk down memory lane, team members looked at the photos of Past Presidents that line the bar area and recalled games played with and against the men smiling down from the wall. Anecdotes of great shots on the ice and high-jinks off the ice recalled the club's past history on the provincial curling scene and its connection to those curling in this year's event. MCC presently has fewer teams competing but many of its teams have progressed to the Nationals in years past.

The event began slowly, in fact, as Saturday had only four draws scheduled with two sheets in each draw. Even so, the clubhouse was full with standing room only for the spectators, and Sunday was even busier once the women's games were added and there were five full draws. Teams from Halifax complimented the town and the club on its generosity in turning out and cheering for "away"



The Alan Darragh team won the Men's Masters last Wednesday morning in a best two-out-of-three final against the Michael Gorveatt team. Ernie Killen photo

teams, the comment being that there were more spectators in Middleton than there had been for a Tankard playdown being held in Halifax the previous day.

Official Welcome

Sunday night there was a reception for the curlers and spectators with an official welcome to the town by Deputy Mayor Vera Eddington; to the club by President Jim Leaman; and to the event by Regional Representative Edie Lloyd. Event co-chairs Jim and Karen Solvett were able to thank the club members who had contributed to making the event run smoothly. In a small club, everyone multi-tasks and this was no exception. Ernie Killen, who played on the men's team representing Middleton, was in charge of the ice and the ice-makers. Allen Morris, who also played on the team, was present for every end of every game the entire five days, because as Webmaster he was putting in the end-by-end scores in Livecurling, which gives real-time scoring online for those unable to attend. Both men literally worked up until the moment they were required to curl. Others on the organizing committee also put their lives on hold and spent most of the five days at the club. Without the volunteers who care deeply for the club, this and other events just would not happen.

Eliminations

By Monday, teams were beginning to be eliminated from the Men's Championship and eventual contenders for the finals were emerging. By the end of Tuesday's first draw the teams of Alan Darragh and Michael Gorveatt had been beaten only by each other and they were to play against each other in a best-of-three final beginning Tuesday night. At the same time the women's teams were finishing their round-robin and went into the Page playoff with both Judy Burgess and Frankie Amos leading the teams with a four-win and one-loss score. At the end of the Page playoff which began on Tuesday evening, these two teams met in the final on Wednesday afternoon.

In the Men's Championship the final best-of-three began Tuesday night with Alan Darragh's team winning the first game. The second game on Wednesday morning turned out to also be the final game, as Darragh's team won this match-up giving them the best two out of three, and thereby making the third game unnecessary. Under normal circumstances, the team would have waited for the outcome of the women's final and the awards would have been made together. However Reid Romkey of the Darragh team is also the coach for the Mary Mattatal team out of Mayflower who were beginning competition in the Scotties Tournament of Hearts on that same day in Halifax. By leaving right way Reid was able to join the team part-way through their first game of the tournament, which they won.

Women's Championship

The Women's Championship, played early Wednesday afternoon by the teams of Frankie Amos and Judy Burgess was a "nail-biter", according to spectators. These are always wonderful games to watch, the teams evenly matched and the outcome in contention right until the last rock. After the sixth end the score was tied at three and the teams blanked the seventh end to enter the eighth still tied. It was not until the very last rock of the game that Frankie Amos won the end, the game, and the Women's Masters Championship for 2012.

All four finalists from the Men's and Women's Championships are eligible to curl in the Maritime Masters being hosted by the Bluenose Curling Club in February. In addition the winners will participate in the Nationals being held in Montreal later in the spring. Despite the fact the teams are not from Middleton, their connection with "our" event and the time spent at MCC has given club members a proprietary interest in their progress and the outcomes will be watched with interest. For end-by-end scores of games played, a link to Livecurling is available at www.middletoncurlingclub.com



The Frankie Amos team won the Women's Masters last Wednesday at the Middleton Curling Club. The Amos foursome defeated the Judy Burgess rink in the final. Presenting the trophy is event co-chair Jim Solvett. Lawrence Powell photo