

The Dominion Curling Club Championship

The event began on November 24, 2009 with registration at St. Charles Country Club in Toronto. Upon our arrival to the club, we were provided our Provincial jackets and team shirts. We were given a club account that we could use at our discretion. The afternoon had us on the ice for our 45 minute practice session. The ice was fantastic from start to finish.

The opening banquet was held on November 24, 2009. We were fortunate to have Glen Howard as our guest speaker. He provided us with his words of wisdom and to go out there have fun. He went on to further explain that this event is the first national event in Canada to have all the provinces and territories competing on the same stage.

We opened up play on November 25, 2009 and it ran until November 29, 2009. We were set up in a pool format with 7 teams in each pool. The competition was good from every team. We knew going down here that there was no guaranteed win so we needed to bring our "A" game each and every time. We played well all week with an opportunity to make it to a tie breaker on our last game but we fell a few inches short. We finished the week with a 3-3 record so we were very pleased with our first opportunity at a national title.

The end result handed both Ontario teams with the title of national champion. The victories were well deserved as both teams played very well all week. The finals were followed by the closing ceremonies. We were treated to a wonderful meal and the honour of listening to Sherri Middaugh as our guest speaker. Again, we listened to her curling experiences what it takes to be a great curler.

The inaugural Dominion Curling Club Championship provided us with some fantastic memories. This event gave the club curler a feeling like you actually were attending the Brier. We were all treated with respect and wonderful hospitality. The bar has been set so Prince Edward Island has their hands full to match the experience of the 2009 Dominion Curling Club Championship. I think it is a great opportunity for the club curler and we look forward to representing Northern Ontario at a future event.

Dave Stasiuk
Lead-Northern Ontario

The Dominion Club Curling Championship National Event at the St. George's Golf and Country Club in Etobicoke was amazing. "The Dominion" wanted the event to be as much like a Brier or a Scotties as possible, and I really feel that they met and exceeded that goal. Our team, and most other men's and ladies teams, felt like they were treated like royalty all week. People were saying that it was one of the best times they have had in their life! Most teams want to try to playdown again to get back.

The event included representatives from all provinces and territories across Canada ... a first for any curling national. This made 14 teams for both men and women, so the teams had to be split up into two groups. Each group had to play a round robin with the top two in each group making the playoffs. This made the number of games (8-ends only) reasonable for we "club teams". The down side, of course, is that we didn't get to play all the provincials/territories, so we just had to get to know them off the ice.

The aspects most important to curlers are the rocks and ice conditions and the hospitality. I am happy to say that the ice was great all week - consistent across the sheet and from sheet to sheet, quick and really good sweeping ice. The rocks, well, we didn't find any bad ones....not that my team could figure that out....being a true club team, we didn't match rocks, time rocks as a team etc. And it was really neat to play with the rocks that "light up" after release...hopefully green.

The hospitality was fantastic!! Continental breakfast was complimentary each morning at the hotel, and a buffet lunch was complementary every day at the St. George's restaurant. We had an opening banquet, at which the MC was Mike Harris, and the guest speaker was Glen Howard, so the group really appreciated the two of them. The ladies had a free food and wine tasting night and the men had a free food and beer tasting night. On the Saturday of the final weekend, we had country entertainment by Pat Ryan (yes the curler) and his daughter. This was the only night that we and any club member were allowed to wear jeans!!! Then, of course there was a closing banquet to cap things off, with each player getting a gift of a Dominion sweatshirt. Sherry Middaugh spoke at this banquet. During the week, the teams were encouraged to sit with each other after the game, with tables assigned for us. This was great and unique from the Brier or the Scotties. Each player was given a \$50.00 chit at the bar, compliments of "The Dominion". How spoiled were we!!!! Although some of us ran up a much larger bar tab. So, this is where the "Bonspieling" got started. It continued at the hotel in the bar downstairs or in the various hotel rooms of each province and territory representative. Most teams did a great job of combining on and off-ice bonspieling.

Each team got assigned a team driver and Ford Flex all week to be picked up and dropped off as required. We were even taken out shopping on one of our free afternoons. The drivers were much appreciated and had to put up with some of our frustrations, at times, and lousy singing of Christmas carols after a late night!! I am sure each driver has some interesting and unique little story about their teams.

The officiating was great and minimal... almost like they weren't there. Another aspect appreciated by the curlers.

My lead Tina Bedard won the Sportsmanship Award for women. It was voted upon by the other players, the officials and ice crew. The men's was won by Eric MacKenzie from Nova Scotia.

All in all, the event was great. I would encourage all clubs to determine a representative to play down at the regional level and then go from there. This year the provincials are in Thunder Bay April 8 to 11th and the nationals is in PEI next November.

Patti McKnight
NOCA Dominion Curling Club Women's Provincial Team Skip