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Penetanguishene Curling Club News

"The Russ Howard Rink"

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Howards teach curling in Orient

by David Gravelle

Russ Howard and his wife Wendy are back on tour. No, they haven't started a rock band; they are teaching curling in the Orient. This is the last leg on an extensive

month long trip which has taken, Russ, Wendy and the team through Scotland, Germany and Switzerland.

The trip to Japan will see Russ give prospective curlers a few tips

on the game, show them how to slide, sweep, and stand up on the slippery surface.

Then Russ will play with members of the Canadian consulate in Japan in an exhibition

game against some Japanese curlers who have learned the game abroad.

The Howard's expect to be home next Monday night, but won't be answering any calls until they catch up with their sleep. Lately, they've been crossing time zones left and right. There are 365 days in a year, right? Well, Russ and Wendy have gained two more along the way.

The European tour began October 11, when the entire World Championship team departed for Scotland and the high stakes "Skins Game." The top six teams from last year's Worlds in Vancouver were there, (Howard, Schmidt, Ramsjfell, Vukich, Roxin etc.) as well as two top teams from Scotland. The field was tough but not too tough for the Penetanguishene Curling Club team who finished in third place after the round robin, defeated the undefeated Eigel Ramsjfell in a semi-final game, and then scored a huge victory (money-wise) over Goran Roxin of Sweden to win the Skins Game and return home with over \$11,000 Canadian.

Playing in a Skins Game is foreign to many curlers because the style of play was only brought to light last year on The Sports Network. The concept is simple. Put big money up for grabs and streamline the rules to make the game more aggressive, thus making the match more entertaining for the fans.

In Scotland, an interesting feature was a timer which kept track of the time it took each team to play a game. Each rink was allotted 70 minutes, 35 for each five ends. After the opponent had

thrown his rock and seen it stop, your timer would begin. If you ran out of time at the end of the 5 ends or the game you lost the end.

The Howard rink had never played against a clock before, they always found the opposition tough enough to deal with. So, the guys decided to improvise. They would clean each others stones, and literally run to the other end of the ice to throw their rocks. Wendy Howard, on the sidelines commented she was getting tired watching these guys running around, go nowhere fast.

By the end of the spiel, once they learned how long it takes to play a match, they were easing up a bit. Although they agreed their concentration level was down worrying about the big hand and the little hand.

Following the Glasgow event, the team jumped on a mini-bus to tour Scotland and Germany. They played games in Fussen and Lahr, one against their rival Roger Schmidt of West Germany. Unfortunately they lost.

In Switzerland, the rink played on ice that was blazingly fast, running about 29-30 seconds. At the Penetanguishene Curling Club, a rock going that fast would end up in the bay.

Behind so rapid, the ice was very straight and made opportunities for a finesse style game next to impossible. The Howard rink finished in seventh place.

Back in Scotland, the three regular members of the team departed while fresh recruits in the form of Larry Snow (from John Base's rink) Bob Storey, and Larry Merkley arrived on the scene. At

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Drawing it in

Just a little further guys! Skip Russ Howard watches closely as his front end and Vice Glenn sweep a rock into the house. Check out the crowds gathered around the rail watching the World Champions in Berne Swetzerland.

Strange costumes rock club

by Ed Pearson

The Friday night mixed was a trifle more mixed than usual on October 30, Halloween Eve, at the Penetanguishene Curling Club. The entertainment committee had prevailed on most of the curlers to attend in fancy dress. Everybody entered into the spirit of things and even took to the ice wearing their strange apparel. This called for a certain amount of dedication because some of the costumes were very sketchy.

A dance was held in the lounge after the games and judging of the fancy dress took place.

First prize for team was taken by the Bob Laurin rink of his wife

Genny, Debby and Jim Szarka. The foursome had chosen ancient central Mediterranean garb. With flowing white robes and laurel wreaths, the girls looked like Greek Goddesses; Bob and Jim looked like God-forsaken Greeks.

Best prize for couples went to Doreen and Pat Vaillancourt. Doreen was cute as Raggedy Ann, Pat was magnificent as Captain Hook. Pat was complete with hook, which might have explained why Ann was so raggedy.

Best individual lady was Brenda Robillard with an ingenious scarecrow outfit.

Dave Yeoman did some switch-hitting with his clever costume,

which was half woman, half man. He wore a combination dress and suit ensemble divided down the middle. Dave had even shaved off half his beard. Wife Audrey was wearing the other half of the combination. I hope that they got their roles sorted out when they got home. I have heard of wife swapping but that was ridiculous.

All the curlers participated in the fun. Even El Presidenti, Ted Ross, showed up wearing a huge sombrero. He was supposed to be that lazy Mexican, Manuel Labour.

Ron Bellisle did his usual excellent M.C. number. Don and Rita Sharpen worked hard to ensure a very successful evening.



Mad curlers

I know it's hard to believe, but these people are respected members of our community. (From left to right) Betty and Ed Pearson, and Doreen and Pat Vaillancourt. The Vaillancourt's took the Best Dressed Couple prize.

Labatt's
Blue Light