

Issue 6 – Friday, December 6, 2013 • An Official Publication of the Canadian Curling Association.

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Brad Jacobs beat Kevin Martin Thursday to book a ticket to Sunday's Men's Final



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Jacobs, Jones book final tickets

JIM MORRIS
The Morning Roar

King Arthur’s knights hunted for the Holy Grail. Ponce de Leon searched for the Fountain of Youth. Finally tracking down Moby Dick didn’t work out well for Captain Ahab.

Winnipeg’s Jennifer Jones has won just about everything in curling, but playing at an Olympic Games is the one prize that has eluded her. Jones will have a chance to fulfill her quest when she plays in the women’s final Saturday evening at the 2013 Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings Canadian Curling Trials, presented my Monsanto.

Jones defeated Edmonton’s Heather Nedohin 6-5 in Thursday’s final women’s draw to secure first place in the round robin. Her 6-1 record moved her directly to the final.

“It’s pretty incredible,” said the 39-year-old legal advisor who has four Scotties Tournament of Hearts titles and a world championship on her resume.

“The trials have never really gone our way. I thought we had a really good plan coming into this. It’s paid off. We just have one more game. We’ll see how it goes. At least we are in that spot and have given ourselves a chance.”

Defending Brier champion Brad Jacobs clinched first place among the men with an emotional 5-4 win over Olympic gold medallist Kevin Martin of Edmonton. Jacobs, who improved his record to 6-0, secured himself a spot in Sunday’s final where a win will send him to the Sochi Olympics.

“We don’t know what it’s like to be an Olympian so it’s hard for me to speak to that one,” said the world champion silver medallist from Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. “We just need to come out in that last game and put on another performance.

“Hopefully we can do it.”

Jacobs pumped his fist and screamed in joy after his final shot.

“It was pretty sloppy by both teams,” he said. “We hung in there and dug deep. We’re ecstatic right now.

“I said to myself in the 10th end we’ll see what we are made of. I’m pretty proud of the guys for making the shots they made.”

Martin’s rink is 5-1 and can wrap up second place with a win over John Morris’s B.C. rink in today’s final men’s draw.

While Jones gets a chance to rest, a three-way tie for second place means plenty of work remains for some other rinks.

Defending Scotties champion Rachel Homan of Ottawa, Sherry Middaugh of Victoria Harbour, Ont., and Winnipeg’s Chelsea Carey all finished at 4-3. Homan advanced to tonight’s semifinal because of her team’s accumulative record in the pre-game draws to the button. Middaugh and Carey meet in an afternoon tiebreaker with the winner moving on to face Homan.

In other evening draw games, Morris’s B.C. rink used a 7-6 win over Toronto’s John Epping to improve to 4-2. In an all Winnipeg battle Mike McEwen (3-3) defeated Jeff Stoughton (2-4) 9-6 and Calgary’s Kevin Koe won his first game of the trials with a 7-6 defeat of Glenn Howard (2-4) of Tiny, Ont.

The final women’s draw saw Homan finish with a 6-5 win over Saskatoon’s Stefanie Lawton (2-5). The world championship bronze medallist had some up and down games during the trials but was pleased to clinch a playoff spot.

“We had a few bullets coming our way,” said the 24-year-old personal trainer. “We had a few unlucky breaks and we had some lucky breaks. They are going to come your way in a long week and a tough field like this.



John Morris: Fate in his hands

“It could have been a longer road. Either way we have a chance. That’s all we wanted.”

Homan shrugged when asked who she’d rather play.

“We’ve played them both a million times,” she said. “It’s going to be a good game either way. Hopefully we can win it in 10 ends”

Carey could have avoided the tiebreaker but lost 7-6 to Middaugh.

After taking a 3-2 lead, Carey watched Middaugh score a deuce in the fifth, then steal points in the sixth and seventh. Carey tied the game with three in the eight.

Middaugh blanked the ninth end, then on her last shot in the 10th tapped Carey’s stone back for the single point.

“It’s nice to go in on a high rather than having a loss and think we shouldn’t be in this situation,” said Middaugh. “We will pull

positives out of that game.”

Carey said her team has been following the road less travelled all year.

“We’ve been in this situation plenty of times,” said the 29-year-old. “We’ve done everything this year the hard way, the long way. It’s nothing new for us.

“We know how to deal with it. We know how to come out and play. Tell us at the start of the week (we’d be in a tiebreaker) and we’d say ‘sign me up.’”

In the other women’s game Edmonton’s Val Sweeting lost 9-8 in an extra end to Renee Sonnenberg f Grande Prairie, Alta. Nedohin and Sweeting finished at 3-4 while Sonnenberg was 2-5.

Nedohin was left contemplating her future.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Sherry Middaugh played her way into a Friday tiebreaker.

“Our team has been going hard for six years,” said the 2012 Hearts champion. “We have a strong friendship and sisterhood. There comes a point where this game takes over too much time. “We have careers and family time that needs attending too.” Nedohin plans to finish this season but after that “I really don’t know.” Jacobs has a chance to make some history in the men’s draw. With a win in his final game against Epping his rink would become the first to go undefeated in the trials. “We have one more game,” he said. “We just want to come out and play well and see what happens. We know what game really matters now. “The one thing we want to do is keep some momentum going. Being 7-0 would be great but we know what game we have to win.” Martin led Jacobs 3-1 after four ends, but Jacobs battled back with a deuce in the sixth. Martin scored a point in the seventh to make it 4-3. Martin third David Nedohin said mistakes and missed opportunities cost his team. “They made some circus shots to keep themselves in it,” he said. “It was one of those games we didn’t capitalize on the chances we had. “They hung in there long enough to be able to make one shot to win the game.”

Safety comes first at the Roar of the Rings!

We know fans will be having all kinds of fun at the Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings – whether it’s at the MTS Centre, the scene of all the curling excitement – or in the Patch at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, where everyone gathers to enjoy the food, beverages and live entertainment when the draws are done. But we want to make sure everyone gets home safe and sound at the end of all eight days of the action during Canada’s most prestigious competitive curling championship! The Host Committee for the 2013 Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings has established the Safe Ride program to make sure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime event without experiencing the consequences of drinking and driving. Safe Ride Winnipeg will be in operation Monday through Thursday between 8 p.m. and 1 a.m. and Friday and Saturday from 6 p.m. to 3 a.m. Just call 204-233-7233 for a driver to take you and your vehicle home. Operation Red Nose will also be in the Patch Friday and Saturday from 9 p.m. to midnight, with mascot “Rudy the Reindeer”, encouraging everyone to take a safe ride home.

A large bottle of Amarula Cream stands next to a glass filled with the liqueur and ice cubes. The background is a warm, golden sunset over a savanna landscape with an elephant and other animals in the distance. The Amarula logo and text "THE SPIRIT OF AFRICA" are visible at the top right of the image.

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Fifths are some big wheels at this event

It's a role that combines being a coach, support staff and disaster relief.

It requires someone that can bring experience and talent to a team, but usually only

gets to play if something has gone terribly wrong. The role of a fifth at the 2013 Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings Canadian Curling Trials is complex but essential.

"You become more that coach, that support person," said Amber Holland, the Regina skip who is fifth for Val Sweeting's Edmonton rink. "You make sure everything is going well with the team and support them as best you can and support them on the ice."

The importance teams place on a fifth is reflected in some of the players doing the job this week in Winnipeg. Holland is the 2011 Scotties Tournament of Hearts champion. Olympic gold medallist Brad Gushue of St. John's, NL, is working with Kevin Martin's Edmonton rink. Calgary's Cori Morris, the lead on Cheryl Bernard's Olympic silver medal rink, is acting as fifth for Stefanie Lawton of Saskatoon.

One of the first jobs of a fifth, especially skips like Gushue and Holland, is to park their ego at the door. Instead of sitting

A LITTLE MORE

with

Jim Morris



in the driver's seat they have been asked along for the ride, and to act as an insurance policy should the road get bumpy.

"It's different than what I am used to," admitted Gushue.

"I am here in a supporting role to try and make Kevin Martin play like Kevin Martin. If that is going to get water, matching rocks or just being there to keep the guys loose, that's what I am going to do. Make everybody as good as they can be."

Morris said one of the reasons the Bernard rink found success is they kept the game in perspective. That is a message she tries to bring to Lawton's crew.

"Don't put the weight of the world on every rock or every game," she said. "The sun is going to come up tomorrow. We all have families and people we love and great lives. Curling is just part of that."

A fifth can sometimes offer advice, but there is a fine line between being helpful and intrusive.

"We talked about what my role is with my opinion," said Holland. "I told the girls, if they wanted a fifth that was kind of quiet and bit their tongue, they might have picked the wrong one."

"We have a process in place of what my role is, what I tell them. I've also told the girls they are doing a great job. My role is to come and not rock the boat. I'm not going to sit back and not say something if I think it's going to help them perform better."

A fifth is also like a backup quarterback. They always need to be able to come in off the bench. Breanne Meakin, the alternate on Chelsea Carey's Winnipeg rink, played the opening

game of the trials when lead Kristy McDonald came down with the flu.

One reason Martin's team recruited Gushue is to act as a hedge should the defending Olympic champion suffer back problems during the trials like he did during an event in Saskatoon this October.

"The guys got a bit of a scare," said Gushue. "If he hurts his back like that again you have to have someone that can jump in."

"I can jump in that role and fill in if need be."

As a lead, Morris is comfortable taking over any of the sweeping positions. Both Holland and Gushue admit brushing would be a different experience. Adding some pressure, Sweetings' pair of Joanne Courtney and Rachelle Pidherny are among the most powerful in the women's game.

"I don't know if you noticed but their front end are kind of really good sweepers," laughed Holland. "I think I can hold my own in sweeping but I definitely wouldn't look as good as Joanne and Rachelle do."

Gushue knows filling Marc Kennedy or Ben Hebert's shoes wouldn't be easy.

"I can fill the void if need be," he smiled.

Kennedy has been impressed with the way Gushue embraced his position.

"Brad brings more than we even though he would bring," he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



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Some big name skips added for trials flavour

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“He’s done everything we’ve asked him to. He’s been very positive, very upbeat, kept all our confidence up.”

One of the most famous examples of a fifth being added value is when Gushue asked Russ Howard to be his alternate in the lead up to the 2006 Olympics. At the Games Howard played second and called the shots, helping Gushue’s rink win the Olympic title.

That kind of Cinderella story doesn’t happen often.

“As a competitor, you kind of want to play,” said Holland. “At the same time you know if you are stepping in as a fifth . . . it’s not a comfortable feeling. Things have not gone right.”

Morris said a fifth must be unselfish.

“I still have the itch to be out there on the ice playing,” she said. “At the same time, you have to buy into your position.

“You just commit to the role you are in.”

Disposition is as important as talent when selecting a fifth. An abrasive person that rubs others the wrong way can wear out the fabric of a team.

“With a group of women (it’s important) having the right personality to fit,” said Sweeting. “She (Holland) fits in really well.

“She’s very knowledgeable about what we should be doing out there.”

A fifth also needs the confidence to say what needs to be said, at the right time.


“This team can be pretty intimidating,” Gushue said about Martin’s veteran crew. “I’ve been around them and I have battled against them for years.

“I can come into this without being intimidated by them. I can come in and be comfortable in the pressure situations because I have been through them before. If they got someone with a little less experience, they may come in and be intimidated and that would feed through the team.”



Former Olympic gold medalist Brad Gushue (centre) is here this week as fifth for Team Martin.

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Draw 12													
GAME SCORES FOR DRAW 12													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	TOTAL	
A Chelsea Carey	*0	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0		6	03:22
Sherry Middaugh	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	1		7	03:47
B Heather Nedohin	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0		5	02:23
Jennifer Jones	*0	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	1		6	02:05
C Stefanie Lawton	*0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0		5	01:35
Rachel Homan	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	1		6	03:30
D Val Sweeting	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	8	01:46
Renee Sonnenberg	*2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	9	01:23
*last rock advantage													

Draw 13													
GAME SCORES FOR DRAW 13													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL		
A Glenn Howard	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	6	01:12	
Kevin Koe	*0	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	7	04:02	
B John Epping	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	6	01:44	
John Morris	*2	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	7	00:51	
C Kevin Martin	*1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	02:20	
Brad Jacobs	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	5	06:09	
D Jeff Stoughton	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	X	6	04:11	
Mike McEwen	*1	0	4	0	0	1	0	3	0	X	9	04:50	
*last rock advantage													



Local fave Mike McEwen stayed alive with a win Thursday night.

Standings

Women

- 1. Jones 6-1 (bye to final)
- 2. Homan 4-3 (bye to semi-final))
- 3. Middaugh 4-3
- 4. Carey 4-3 (Tiebreaker to semi-final)

Eliminated:

- Sweeting 3-4
- Nedohin 3-4
- Sonnenberg 2-5
- Lawton 2-5

Men

- Jacobs 6-0
- Martin 5-1
- Morris 4-2
- McEwen 3-3
- Howard 2-4
- Stoughton 2-4
- Epping 1-5
- Koe 1-5

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MEET THE TEAMS • KEVIN MARTIN • SAVILLE CENTRE • EDMONTON

SKIP: Kevin Martin
AGE: 47 (July 31, 1966, Killam, Alberta)
LIVES: Edmonton
FAMILY: Wife Shauna; son Karrick (24), daughters Kalycia (21), Mykaela (12)
YEARS CURLED: 40
OCCUPATION: Business Owner (Kevin’s Rocks-n-Racquets)
DELIVERS: Right-handed
HIGHLIGHTS: Skipped Canada in three Olympic Winter Games: in 1992 (3-2 in Albertville/Pralognan-la-Vanoise, fourth place), 2002 (9-2 in Salt Lake City/Ogden, Utah, silver medal) and 2010 (11-0 in Vancouver, gold medal, defeating Norway’s Thomas Ulsrud, 6-3 in final); skipped in 1997 (7-4 in Brandon, runner-up), 2001 (8-2 in Regina, won), 2005 (4-5 in Halifax) and 2009 (7-1 in Edmonton, won, defeating Glenn Howard, 7-3 in final) Canadian Curling Trials; skipped Alberta in 12 Briers, winning four times: in 1991 (10-3 in Hamilton, won), 1992 (8-4 in Regina, third place), 1995 (8-5 in Halifax, third place), 1996 (11-3 in Kamloops, runner-up), 1997 (12-1 in Calgary, won), 2000 (6-5 in Saskatoon), 2006 (8-4 in Regina), 2007 (8-4 in Hamilton), 2008 (13-0 in Winnipeg, won), 2009 (13-0 in Calgary, won), 2011 (9-4 in London) and 2013 (7-4 in Edmonton); skipped Canada in four World Men’s: in 1991 (10-1 in Winnipeg, silver medal), 1997 (7-4 in Berne, fourth place), 2008 (12-2 in Grand Forks, North Dakota, gold medal) and 2009 (11-3 in Moncton, silver medal); member of Team North America at 2002 (won, in Regina), 2008 (lost, in Camrose), 2011 (won, in St. Albert) and 2013 (won, in Penticton) WFG Continental Cup; skipped at 2005 (7-1 in Kamloops, won, \$37,250), 2006 (7-1, won, \$37,250), 2007 (5-2, runner-up, \$18,200), 2008 (6-4, runner-up, \$16,600), 2009 (6-2 in Yorkton, won, \$28,200), 2010 (6-1 in Medicine Hat, runner-up, \$19,000), 2011 (7-0 in Cranbrook, won, \$26,000) and 2012 (1-5 in Moose Jaw) Canada Cup; skipped Alberta at 1985 Canadian Juniors (9-4 in St. John’s, won); skipped Canada at 1986 World Juniors (10-1 in Dartmouth, silver medal); won seven Players’ Championships (1994, 1998, 2000, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2011)

THIRD: David Nedohin
AGE: 39 (December 20, 1973, Winnipeg, Manitoba)
LIVES: Sherwood Park
FAMILY: Wife Heather; daughters Halle (11), Alyssa (8)
YEARS CURLED: 32
OCCUPATION: Entrepreneur/Business Manager (Scope Technologies)
DELIVERS: Right-handed
HIGHLIGHTS: Has played in five Briers for Alberta, winning four: 2001 (won), 2002 (won), 2003 (won), 2004 (runner-up) and 2005 (won); played in 2001, 2002 (gold medal), 2003 (gold medal) and 2005 (gold medal) Ford Worlds; played in 2003 (won), 2004 (won), 2005 (runner-up), 2006, 2007 (won), 2008 and 2009 (runner-up) Canada Cup; played in 2001 (5-4 in Regina), 2005 (4-5 in Halifax) and 2009 (3-4 in Edmonton) Tim Hortons Canadian Curling Trials, all as third (fourth stones) for skip Randy Ferbey; member of Team North America at 2002 (won, in Regina), 2003 (lost, in Thunder Bay), 2004 (won, in Medicine Hat) and 2007 (won, in Medicine Hat) Continental Cup; won 2006 and 2009 Players’ Championship

SECOND: Marc Kennedy
AGE: 31 (February 5, 1982, St. Albert, Alberta)
LIVES: St. Albert
FAMILY: Wife Nicole; daughters Aubrey (5 ½), Brechan (2 ½)



YEARS CURLED: 25
OCCUPATION: RBC Olympic Ambassador (RBC)
DELIVERS: Left-handed
HIGHLIGHTS: Played second for Alberta skip Kevin Martin at 2007, 2008 (won), 2009 (won) and 2011 and 2013 Tim Hortons Brier, 2007 (runner-up), 2008 (runner-up), 2009 (won), 2010 (runner-up), 2011 (won) and 2012 Canada Cup, 2009 Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings Canadian Curling Trials (won) and 2010 Olympic Winter Games (gold medal); played second for Canada skip Kevin Martin at 2008 (gold medal) and 2009 (silver medal) Ford World Men’s; member of Team North America at 2008 (lost, in Camrose), 2011 (won, in St. Albert) and 2013 (won, in Penticton) WFG Continental Cup; played second for skip John Morris at 2004 (runner-up), 2005 and 2006 (third place) Strauss Canada Cup and 2005 Tim Hortons Canadian Curling Trials (third place); played in three Kärcher Canadian Juniors for Alberta: as second for skip Carter Rycroft in 1998 (9-4 in Calgary, runner-up); as third for skip Jeff Erickson in 1999 (8-5 in Kelowna) and 2001 (7-5 in St. Catharines); won 2003 World University Games, as alternate/third for Canada (skip Mike McEwen); won 2004, 2007, 2010 and 2011 Players’ Championships; won gold medal at 1999 Canada Winter Games in Corner Brook, NL, as Alberta skip

LEAD: Ben Hebert
AGE: 30 (March 16, 1983, Regina, Saskatchewan)
LIVES: Chestermere
FAMILY: Wife Teddi

YEARS CURLED: 18
OCCUPATION: Business Development Representative (Focus)
DELIVERS: Right-handed
HIGHLIGHTS: Played lead for Kevin Martin at 2007 (runner-up), 2008 (runner-up), 2009 (won), 2010 (runner-up), 2011 (won) and 2012 Canada Cup, 2009 Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings Canadian Curling Trials (won) and 2010 Olympic Winter Games (gold medal); played lead for Canada skip Kevin Martin at 2008 (gold medal) and 2009 (silver medal) Ford World Men’s; played in seven Tim Hortons Briers: as lead for Saskatchewan skip Pat Simmons in 2005 and 2006; as lead for Alberta skip Kevin Martin at 2007, 2008 (won), 2009 (won), 2011 and 2013; member of Team North America at 2008 (lost, in Camrose), 2011 (won, in St. Albert), 2012 (lost, in Langley – replaced Steve Gould) and 2013 (won, in Penticton) WFG Continental Cup; played for Saskatchewan skip Kyle George in 2002 Kärcher Juniors (7-5 in Summerside), as third and in 2005 Canadian Mixed (8-4 in Prince Albert, runner-up), as second; alternate for Canada (skip Steve Laycock) at 2003 World Juniors (gold medal); played in two other Strauss Canada Cups as lead: for skip Pat Simmons in 2004, for skip John Morris in 2006 (third place), replacing Paul Moffatt; won gold medal at 2005 Karuizawa Invitational as lead for Pat Simmons; won 2007, 2010 and 2011 Players’ Championships

ALTERNATE: Brad Gushue
COACH: Jules Owchar

MCA celebrating 125 years

RESBY COUTTS
Special to the Morning Roar

The Grey Cup has been an annual Canadian sports celebration for 101 years. The Stanley Cup was awarded first in 1893. Both of these Canadian Sport institutions were pre-dated by the annual Manitoba Curling Association (MCA) bonspiel and the organization which was formed to run it.

Today - December 6, 2013 - we celebrate the 125th birthday of CurlManitoba.

On this day, 125 years ago, the Manitoba Branch of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club (RCCC) was established. There had been talk for several years earlier but that was the year the 'Mother Club', the Granite, invited six other clubs to a meeting to make it happen. The clubs included one more in Winnipeg, the Thistle, and five rural community curling organizations. These were Stony Mountain, Stonewall, Morden, Portage la Prairie, and Carberry.

According to the records, a bonspiel had been held at Winnipeg for several times before but at that first meeting they resolved to hold a 'grand bonspiel'.

According to the Mott and Allardyce book (Curling Capital: Winnipeg and the Roaring Game 1876-1988) which marked the 100th anniversary, the talk at the earlier bonspiels was about the possibility of forming an association for the west, similar to what was known to already exist in the east.

Mott and Allardyce described it this way. "It would become

an affiliate of the RCCC in Scotland, just as eastern Associations had. Through that affiliation, western curlers would be able to keep in close touch with the parent club of their sport as well as with world developments in technique, equipment and strategy. More important, through an association, western curlers could hold an annual bonspiel. Such an event would allow them to assemble regularly for fun and good fellowship. It would also provide a means through which western curlers might show that they could play their game as well as anyone, and thereby prove to themselves and to the world that the sport was well entrenched in the region," they wrote.

The CurlManitoba founders who met that day 125 years ago might have dreamed that this birthday would be celebrated by an assembly of the best curlers in the nation. They could never have envisioned the evolution of our sport to the level of excellence we have enjoyed this week.

And they'd be proud to note that this week we are also achieving those other stated objectives - fun and fellowship. No doubt also at a level they would never have envisioned.

Although it may never again see the record 1280 teams of the 100th anniversary year, that annual bonspiel the founders started is still running. The MCA bonspiel has been re-branded for 2014 as the Manitoba Open Bonspiel, but it will be the 126th renewal of the world's largest and longest running bonspiel.

Formed as the Manitoba Branch of the RCCC in 1888, the organization was renamed the Manitoba Curling Association

20 years later and joined by the Manitoba Ladies Curling Association in 1925. The two amalgamated in 2000, continuing under the name Manitoba Curling Association until 2009 when the name CurlManitoba was adopted.

And as CurlManitoba looks to the future, we remain committed to today's interpretation of those original ideals.

We are proud of the competitive success of our players - past and present - and will continue to encourage it.

We enjoy a continuing strong relationship with the Canadian Curling Association and our provincial curling association partners and look forward to working with them to grow our sport.

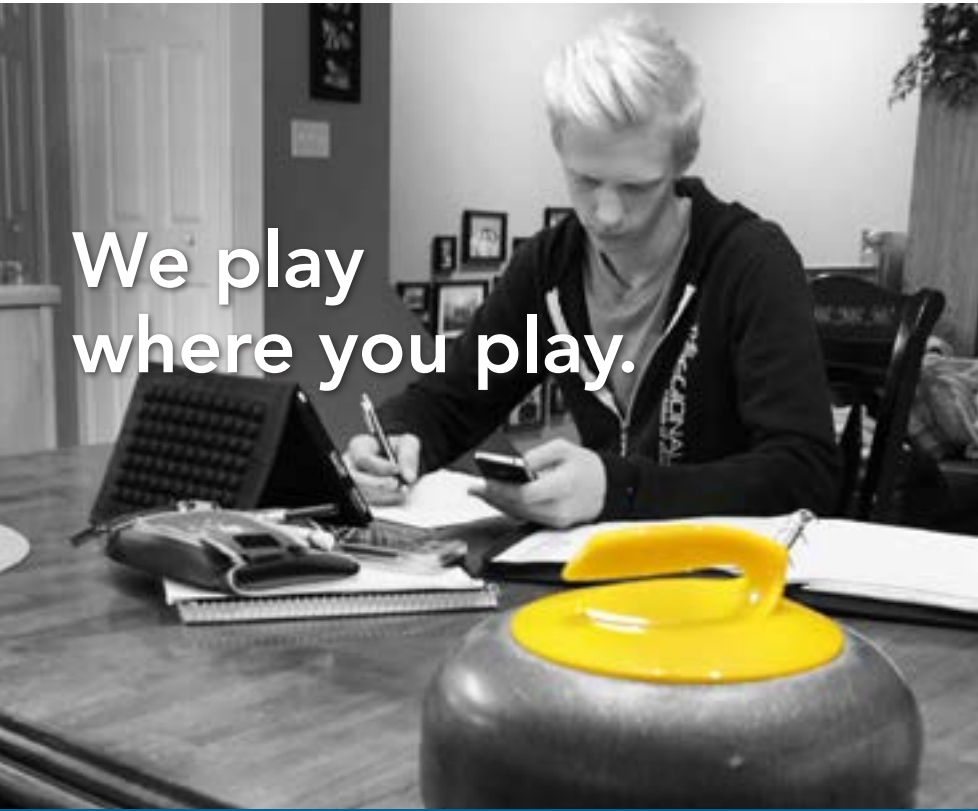
We are committed to making our game more enjoyable for newcomers and veteran players alike by helping them learn about technique and strategy and we look forward to continuing that leadership both individually and in partnership with our member clubs.

And we understand that fun and fellowship and the people who love curling, either as a game or a sport, will always be our greatest assets.

•See Picture on Page 15

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Resby Coutts is a Manitoba curling broadcaster/writer and Past President of CurlManitoba



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FANTASTIC



Artist Rachel Nickerson has been hard at work, with under-painter Jessie Johnsen, since opening day of the Tim Hortons Roar of the Rings, presented by Monsanto. They've created a series of impressive paintings featuring the biggest names in the game. The works of art will be auctioned at 5 p.m. Saturday in the Patch.

Now this is curling country!

A blast of good old Prairie winter weather didn't keep fans away from MTS Centre... or cool down the party in the Patch at the RBC Convention Centre.

But the enclosed walkway, leading from the action in the arena to all the fun in the Patch, was a welcome route for curling fans. And the crowds made the comfortable trek to pack the Patch for a pair of country music's top acts last night.

Shane Chisholm, a veteran backup singer for Gord Bamford and George Canyon, warmed up the audience for Tim Hicks – one of the up and coming stars of the Canadian country music scene.

The party carries on tonight when JukeBox Heroes set the stage for rock music legends Kenny Shields and Streetheart.



Junior Star Randine Baker poses with Team Middaugh prior to the Wednesday afternoon draw.



AUTOGRAPHS



Meet the athletes at 11:45 AM and 5:00 PM for the autograph session in the Portage Avenue Atrium at MTS Centre.



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what's happening



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Brad Jacobs, Kevin Koe & John Morris

AUTOGRAPHS

Portage Avenue Atrium at MTS Centre

11:45 AM

Teams John Epping & Glenn Howard

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MEET THE TEAMS • GLENN HOWARD • PENATANGUISHENE (ONT.) CC •

SKIP: Glenn Howard
AGE: 51 (July 17, 1962, Midland, Ontario)
LIVES: Tiny
FAMILY: Wife Judy, son Scott (23), daughter Carly (20)
YEARS CURLED: 41
OCCUPATION: Manager (The Beer Store)
DELIVERS: Right-handed
HIGHLIGHTS: Played in record 15 Briers for Ontario, winning four: as skip in 2006 (11-2 in Regina, runner-up), 2007 (12-2 in Hamilton, won), 2008 (11-3 in Winnipeg, runner-up), 2009 (9-4 in Calgary, third place), 2010 (12-1 in Halifax, runner-up), 2011 (10-4 in London, runner-up), 2012 (12-1 in Saskatoon, won) and 2013 (11-3 in Edmonton, bronze medal), as third for skip Russ Howard in 1986 (10-3 in Kitchener-Waterloo, runner-up), 1987 (10-2 in Edmonton, won), 1989 (8-4 in Saskatoon, third place), 1991 (6-5 in Hamilton), 1992 (9-4 in Regina, runner-up), 1993 (11-3 in Ottawa, won), 1994 (9-4 in Red Deer, runner-up); played in four Worlds, winning four times: in 1987 (9-2 in Vancouver, gold medal) and 1993 (9-2 in Geneva, Switzerland, gold medal), as third for Canada skip Russ Howard, as skip for Canada in 2007 (12-1 in Edmonton, gold medal) and 2012 (12-1 in Basel, Switzerland, gold medal); played in 1987 (4-4 in Calgary), 1997 (3-6 in Brandon) and 2001 (5-4 in Regina), Canadian Curling Trials, as third for skip Russ Howard; skipped at 2005 (5-4 in Halifax) and 2009 (7-2 in Edmonton, runner-up) Tim Hortons Canadian Curling Trials; skipped at 2006 (5-2, runner-up), 2008 (4-2) Strauss Canada Cup in Kamloops, 2010 Canada Cup (7-1 in Medicine Hat, won, \$29,000), 2011 (5-3 in Cranbrook, runner-up) and 2012 (5-3 in Moose Jaw, runner-up) Capital One Canada Cup, replaced Jeff Stoughton as skip for first three games of 2004 Canada Cup, going 3-0; member of Team North America at 2007 (won, in Medicine Hat), 2012 (lost, in Langley) and 2013 (won, in Penticton) WFG Continental Cup; won 1993, 1997, 2008 and 2013 Players' Championship

THIRD: Wayne Middaugh
AGE: 46 (September 20, 1967, Brampton, Ontario)
LIVES: Victoria Harbour
FAMILY: Wife Sherry; daughters Kelly (14), Emily (11)
YEARS CURLED: 34
OCCUPATION: General Manager (Port Carling Golf & Country Club)
DELIVERS: Right-handed
HIGHLIGHTS: Played in nine Briers for Ontario, winning three: as skip in 1998 (12-1 in Winnipeg, won), 2001 (9-4 in Ottawa, third place) and 2005 (6-5 in Edmonton); as second for skip Russ Howard in 1991 (6-5 in Hamilton), 1992 (9-4 in Regina, runner-up), 1993 (11-3 in Ottawa, won) and 1994 (9-4 in Red Deer, runner-up), as third for skip Glenn Howard in 2012 (won) and 2013 (bronze medal); won gold medals at 1998 Ford Worlds (10-1 in Kamloops) as skip, 2012 Worlds as third for skip Glenn Howard and 1993 Worlds (9-2 in Geneva) as second for Canada skip Russ Howard; skipped at 1997 (3-6 in Brandon), 2001 (2-7 in Regina) and 2009 (2-5 in Edmonton) Canadian Curling Trials; alternate for Glenn Howard team at 2005 Tim Hortons Canadian Curling Trials; won 2009 Pre-Trials C qualifier in Prince George; skipped Ontario at 1987 Canadian Juniors (9-5 in Prince Albert, runner-up); skipped at 2004 (3-3 in Kamloops) and 2009 (3-3 in Yorkton) Canada Cup; played third for Glenn Howard at 2010 (won), 2011 (runner-up) and 2012 (runner-up) Canada Cup; won 1993, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2002 and 2013 Players' Championships; member of Team North America at 2012 (lost, in Langley) and 2013



(won, in Penticton) WFG Continental Cup
SECOND: Brent Laing
AGE: 34 (December 10, 1978, Meaford, Ontario)
LIVES: Shanty Bay
FAMILY: Partner Jennifer Jones; daughter Isabella (1), son Wil (7)
YEARS CURLING: 25
OCCUPATION: Operations Manager, (Weed Man Collingwood/Barrie)
DELIVERS: Right-handed
HIGHLIGHTS: Played second for Glenn Howard at 2005 and 2009 (runner-up) Tim Hortons Canadian Curling Trials, 2006 (runner-up), 2007 (won), 2008 (runner-up), 2009 (third place), 2010 (runner-up), 2011 (runner-up) and 2012 (won) and 2013 (bronze medal) Tim Hortons Brier, 2007 Ford Worlds (gold medal) and 2012 Worlds (gold medal); played in 1998 (won) and 1999 (won) Kärcher Canadian Juniors, 1998 (gold medal) and 1999 (gold medal) World Juniors, 2001 Canadian Curling Trials and 2002 Nokia Brier (runner-up), all as lead for skip John Morris; played second in six Canada Cups: for skip John Morris in 2003 (runner-up), for skip Glenn Howard in 2006 (runner-up), 2008, 2010 (won), 2011 (runner-up) and 2012 (runner-up); member of Team North America at 2007 (won, in Medicine Hat), 2012 (lost, in Langley) and 2013 (won, in Penticton) WFG Continental Cup; won 2008 and 2013 Players' Championship

LEAD: Craig Savill
AGE: 35 (October 25, 1978, Lahr, Germany)
LIVES: Ottawa
FAMILY: Wife Karen Cumberland; son Aiden (3)
YEARS CURLING: 25
OCCUPATION: Real Estate Appraiser/Owner (Savill Appraisal Services)
DELIVERS: Right-handed
HIGHLIGHTS: Played lead for Glenn Howard at 2005 and 2009 (runner-up) Tim Hortons Canadian Curling Trials, 2006 (runner-up), 2007 (won), 2008 (runner-up), 2009 (third place), 2010 (runner-up), 2011 (runner-up) and 2012 (won) and 2013 (bronze medal) Tim Hortons Brier, 2007 Ford Worlds (gold medal) and 2012 Worlds (gold medal); played second for skip John Morris in 2001 Canadian Curling Trials and 2002 Nokia Brier (runner-up); played third for John Morris in 1997 (runner-up), 1998 (won) and 1999 (won) Kärcher Canadian Juniors, 1998 (gold medal) and 1999 (gold medal) World Juniors; played lead in six Canada Cups: for skip John Morris in 2003 (runner-up), for skip Glenn Howard in 2006 (runner-up), 2008, 2010 (won), 2011 (runner-up) and 2012 (runner-up); member of Team North America at 2007 (won, in Medicine Hat), 2012 (lost, in Langley) and 2013 (won, in Penticton) WFG Continental Cup; won 2008 and 2013 Players' Championship

ALTERNATE: Scott Howard
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Answers on 18

Time For Trivia

- (Note: The 1991 Labatt Brier and Scott Tournament of Hearts constituted the 1991 trials for the 1992 Canadian teams bound for the Albertville Winter Olympics).
- Two days following the Trials finals, this curler will be celebrating his 35th birthday. Name him.
 - Three competitors (excluding alternates) in the current Trials were born outside Canada. They are?
 - The birthplace of each?
 - Name the skip of the last Brier champion team missing from the current Olympic Trials, either as a competitor or alternate.
 - The year he skipped the Brier winner.
 - Name the skip of the last Scotties Tournament of Hearts winning team missing from the current Olympic Trials either as a competitor or alternate.
 - The year she skipped the Scotties champion.
 - Name the current women’s player in the Olympic Trials who boasted the best skipping record at the 2001 Trials in Regina.
 - What was her record and in which position did she finish?
 - How about the current skip in the men’s trials who boasted the best record at the 2005 Trials in Halifax?
 - What was his record and in which position did he finish?
 - Name the current female and male Trials competitors (excluding alternates) who last won world junior curling championships and the years they won the junior titles.

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DATE	TIME	DRAW	A	B	C	D		
SUNDAY	1:00pm	1	5 MIDDAUGH 3 LAWTON	2 HOMAN 10 SWEETING	10 JONES 2 CAREY	8 SONNENBERG 6 NEDOHIN		
	6:30pm	2	5 MARTIN 3 MCEWEN	8 KOE 9 EPPING	6 HOWARD 8 MORRIS	7 JACOBS 4 STOUGHTON		
MONDAY	8:30am	3	8 HOMAN 2 SONNENBERG	8 CAREY 5 NEDOHIN	8 SWEETING 6 LAWTON	9 JONES 7 MIDDAUGH		
	1:30pm	4	5 EPPING 9 HOWARD	5 MCEWEN 7 JACOBS	5 STOUGHTON 6 MARTIN	6 MORRIS 4 KOE		
	6:30pm	5	9 SWEETING 6 JONES	7 LAWTON 6 SONNENBERG	6 NEDOHIN 3 MIDDAUGH	9 CAREY 8 HOMAN		
TUESDAY	8:30am	6	4 STOUGHTON 3 EPPING	6 MARTIN 5 KOE	6 JACOBS 5 HOWARD	7 MCEWEN 5 MORRIS		
	1:30pm	7	6 NEDOHIN 5 SWEETING	6 MIDDAUGH 5 HOMAN	2 SONNENBERG 7 JONES	7 LAWTON 5 CAREY		
	6:30pm	8	4 KOE 9 JACOBS	11 MORRIS 5 STOUGHTON	7 EPPING 10 MCEWEN	7 HOWARD 9 MARTIN		
WEDNESDAY	8:30am	9	4 SONNENBERG 6 CAREY	8 JONES 3 LAWTON	5 HOMAN 3 NEDOHIN	7 MIDDAUGH 6 SWEETING		
	1:30pm	10	8 JACOBS 6 MORRIS	6 HOWARD 5 MCEWEN	6 KOE 10 STOUGHTON	9 MARTIN 5 EPPING		
	6:30pm	11	7 JONES 6 HOMAN	4 SWEETING 6 CAREY	7 MIDDAUGH 6 SONNENBERG	6 NEDOHIN 4 LAWTON		
THURSDAY	1:30pm	12	6 CAREY 7 MIDDAUGH	5 NEDOHIN 6 JONES	5 LAWTON 6 HOMAN	9 SONNENBERG 8 SWEETING		
	6:30pm	13	6 HOWARD 7 KOE	6 EPPING 7 MORRIS	4 MARTIN 5 JACOBS	6 STOUGHTON 9 MCEWEN		
	10:00pm	TB	NOT NEEDED women's tiebreaker if two (2) tiebreakers required					
FRIDAY	8:30am	14	MORRIS MARTIN	STOUGHTON HOWARD	MCEWEN KOE	EPPING JACOBS		
	1:30pm	TB	MIDDAUGH* VS. CAREY tie-breakers (if necessary)					
	6:30pm	WSF	HOMAN* VS. WINNER	WOMEN'S SEMI FINAL				
SATURDAY	8:00am	TB	men's tiebreaker if two (2) tiebreakers required					
	1:30pm	MSF	MARTIN VS. TBA	MEN'S SEMI FINAL				
	6:30pm	WFN	JONES* VS. TBA	WOMEN'S FINAL				
SUNDAY	2:00pm	MFN	JACOBS* VS. TBA	MEN'S FINAL				

OLYMPIC TRIAL FLASHBACK • 2009

Ol' Bear, Bernard book bids for Vancouver

MORNING ROAR STAFF
(Sixth of a series)

Kevin Martin, alias The Old Bear, has something in common with Olympic curling challenges.

A veteran skip who has played in five of seven Canadian Olympic trials finals (including the 1991 Brier that led to the '92 Games at Albertville) and won two of his first four, the tenacious Martin won his third Games trip in 2009 at Rexall Place in his hometown, defeating Glenn Howard of Coldwater, Ont., 7-3 in the men's final of the Tim Hortons trials.

With third John Morris, lefthanded second Marc Kennedy and lead Ben Hebert, the same lineup that won the 2008 and 2009 Tim Hortons Briers, the 2008 world championship and 2009 world runner-up status, Martin won his seven matches in eight starts.

The team's only conqueror was Pat Simmons of Davidson, Sask., during the preliminaries. Martin twice defeated Howard, repeating a domination of the year previous at the Calgary Brier.

But while the heavy favourite found success

on the men's side of the eliminations, the eventual women's winner proved a surprise.

The final boiled down to a collision of two skips from the same city whose teams had been bashing heads for close to two decades. One had represented Canada in the 2006 Olympics. One really hadn't won a major curling title of any description.

And the winner was . . . 43-year-old skip Cheryl Bernard, whose best previous success was a runner-up finish at the Canadian women's championship in 1996, and her team of third Susan O'Connor, second Carolyn Darbyshire (McRorie) and lead Cori Bartel (Morris).

Bernard required a draw to the eight-foot circle for the victory in the final end against Trials defender Shannon Kleibrink with the score deadlocked at 6-6. The draw shot appeared to be sliding heavy but ground to a halt in the back eight-foot.

The men's final was a highly frustrating exercise for Howard and Co. Following a blank first end, Martin took command for good in the second end, burying a rock behind a guard that set up a deuce.

When Howard was heavy on a last-rock draw

in the third and yielded another point, the jig essentially was up.

The Edmonton team was immaculate protecting the lead. Howard staged several valiant challenges to score multiple counts and pull his team back in the fracas, but to no avail.

In the fourth, Howard eventually had to settle for one after being unable to get his rocks perfectly placed. In the fifth, Martin picked up a routine deuce for a 5-1 lead after Howard's second double-kill missed by an inch and left a biter and a free draw proposition for his foe.

Martin ran a crisp double in the sixth to erase another threat and Howard blanked. But the Ontario team finally got two in the seventh and appeared to have things going their way in the eighth but an unfazed Martin executed a precise last rock and remained for a single.

The message of doom for Howard really smacked in the ninth when, throwing an open draw for a single with last stone, he watched it grab inside the hogline and die short of the eight-foot.

An 11-6 win by Howard over Jeff Stoughton of Winnipeg in the semi-final set up the final showdown.

Martin finished the eight-team fracas with a 7-1 record. Howard was 7-2, Stoughton 5-3 and Kevin Koe of Edmonton was 4-3. Trailing were Ferbey at 3-4, Simmons and Toronto's Wayne Middaugh each at 2-5 and Winnipeg's Jason Gunnlaugson, a raw rookie, at 0-7.

The early ends of the women's final were mundane, featuring numerous miscues. Kleibrink was playing in her third Trials final and losing her second one.

Bernard stuck on a hit attempting to blank the first end during which there never was more than one rock in play, then stole a second-end single when Kleibrink twice was unsuccessful trying to get at a hidden enemy stone in the four-foot.

In a rather strange third end, Kleibrink was up-weight on a hit to keep two counters divided on either side of the rings. Bernard then ignored a chance to partially bury her last one and apply some pressure to her enemy. Instead, she took a less-than-aggressive approach and killed Kleibrink's shooter, sitting third, leaving Kleibrink a routine draw for two. But Kleibrink tossed it into the back ring and settled for one.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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Team MacEwen working hard

Time For Trivia
Answers

- 1. Brent Laing
- 2. Collin Mitchell, Jo-Ann Rizzo, Craig Savill
- 3. Mitchell (Freeport, Bahamas), Rizzo (Zweibrucken, Germany), Savill (Lahr, Germany).
- 4. Jean-Michel Menard
- 5. 2006 Brier champ.
- 6. Kelly Scott
- 7. 2007 Scotties champ.
- 8. Sherry Anderson
- 9. Record 7-4, finished runnerup.
- 10. Jeff Stoughton
- 11. Record 8-3, finished runnerup.
- 12. Marliese Kasner (2003), Mark Nichols (2001).

A large image showing the 'WESTEEL' logo in bold grey letters on an ice surface, with two curling stones in the foreground.

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CONTINUED FROM 17

Bernard regained her two-point edge in the fourth with an open hit for a single. She wrecked with her last rock of the fifth, leaving Kleibrink a repeat of her first shot, a draw through a port to the four-foot, but Kleibrink's rock again sailed heavy and the defender settled for another single.

In the sixth, with Kleibrink counting three, Bernard hit one of them and rolled to count by an inch. But, in the seventh, with Kleibrink sitting two behind a corner guard, Bernard's last rock flopped into the open on an attempted layup and Kleibrink executed the open hit for a go-ahead three.

Bernard bounced right back in front with a deuce in the eighth when Kleibrink executed a half-rock double-raise takeout with her last but left her rock vulnerable through a port and Bernard negotiated it and remained on the takeout.

Bernard played two precise layups behind a corner guard to force Kleibrink to draw the four-foot for a tying point in the ninth end, leaving Bernard in control of the home end.

Kleibrink had the necessary cover set up there until third Amy Nixon's last-rock attempt to bury rubbed one of the guards, enabling Bernard to open up the front.

Bernard ruled the round-robin preliminary, winning six straight to clinch a berth in the final before bowing 6-5 to Saskatoon's Stefanie Lawton in the final round when Lawton hit for a 10th-end deuce.

Kleibrink (6-3) advanced to the final with a

10-5 semi-final win, engineered against Thunder Bay's Krista McCarville (6-4) on the basis of an eighth-end five-ender.

McCarville reached the semi by sweeping back-to-back tiebreakers — from Lawton 7-4 and from Amber Holland of Kronau, SK., 7-6 in an extra-end.

Lawton and Holland each were 4-4 on the tournament while Calgary's Crystal Webster and Winnipeg's Jennifer Jones each struggled to 2-5 logs and former world champ Kelly Scott of Kelowna managed but a single win in seven starts.

At the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, Bernard ruled the roost in round-robin play, winning five straight, losing a 6-5 extra-ender to Bingyu Wang of China, then closing with three more wins for an 8-1 log.

The Canadians made it 9-1 with a 6-5 conquest of Switzerland's Mirjam Ott in the semi-finals. Sweden's Anette Norberg scuttled Wang 9-4 in the other semi.

But Bernard miscued twice in the excitement-packed gold-medal match after stealing three points to assume a 6-4 advantage playing the 10th end.

With her final throw, Bernard needed only to kill a Swedish rock to prevent Norberg from tying the tilt. But instead of tossing for power, Bernard threw quietly and jammed the Swedish rock on another stone leaving Norberg a hit for the pair.

In the extra end, Bernard was faced with a double takeout to win and removed only one

of the two Swedish stones. The result was Norberg's second straight Olympic gold medal.

Both teams finished with 9-2 records. China (7-4) doubled Switzerland (6-5) 12-6 for the bronze disk while Denmark's Angelina Jensen was 4-5, Russia (Liudmila Privivkova), Germany (Andrea Schoepp), Japan (Moe Meguro) and Great Britain (Eve Muirhead) each logged in at 3-6 and the U.S.A. (Debbie McCormick) tail-ended at 2-7.

Martin and his men's team were less adventuresome. All they achieved was an 11-game blowout in which the Canadians only once were threatened after escaping with a 7-6 extra-end win over Thomas Ulsrud's Norwegians in the first round. In their sixth round tiff, against Great Britain's David Murdoch, there was some future

doubt prior to the last stone Martin required for a 10th-end deuce and a 7-6 decision.

Canada defeated Niklas Edin of Sweden 6-3 in the semis while Ulsrud stopped Ralph Stoeckli of Switzerland 7-5. Edin had qualified for the semis by disposing of Murdoch 7-6 in an extra-end tiebreaker.

Stoeckli shaded Edin 5-4 to win the bronze medal while Martin doubled up on Ulsrud 6-3 to complete the gold-medal sweep.

Behind Canada's 11-0 record, Norway was 8-3, Switzerland was 7-4, Sweden 6-6 and Great Britain 5-5.

Trailing were Germany (Andy Kapp, 4-5), France (Thomas Dufour, 3-6), China (Rui Liu, 2-7), Denmark (Johnny Frederiksen, 2-7) and the U.S.A. (John Shuster, 2-7).

Maralee Caruso Gord Leclerc

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Fuessen, Germany ready to host WCF qualifier

Fuessen, Germany - Curling's international focus turns to Fuessen in Bavaria, Germany when the BLZ Arena hosts the inaugural World Curling Federation Olympic Qualification Event, from Dec. 10-15 2013.

At the event eight men's teams and seven women's teams will compete for the last two places left in the curling competition line-up for each gender at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

For both men and women, eight nation places have already been allocated for Sochi, either through performances at the world curling championships of 2012 and 2013 or, in the case of the Russian Federation, as hosts. (See note below).

All of the nations that will be competing in Fuessen have taken part in one or other - or both - of the 2012 and 2013 championships, but did not gather enough points to qualify for Sochi directly.

The eight men's teams involved are: Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and the USA. The women's teams are: China, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia and Norway.

The Czech men will be skipped by Jiri Snitil, who led his team to their nation's first international championship medal last year and best performance so far on the international stage when they won bronze at the 2012 Le Gruyère European Championship in Karlstad, Sweden.

The Finnish team is skipped by Aku Kauste, and has only been together for a couple of years. They qualified for the 2013 Ford World Men's Curling Championship in Victoria, Canada to allow them to join the Fuessen line-up.

French skip Thomas Dufour and fourth Tony Angiboust are

among the most experienced players in the men's field for the event, with both having played at Olympic level before.

Hamburg's experienced John Jahr will lead Germany, fresh from having qualified his country for the 2014 World Men's Curling Championship in Beijing, China, by first winning the 'B' division of the Le Gruyère European Championships 2013 in Stavanger, Norway and then beating Latvia in the World Challenge series.

Yusuke Morozumi leads a team trying to become the first Japanese men to compete at an Olympic Winter Games since Japan hosted the 1998 Nagano edition, with the curling event held in Karuizawa. This team came second behind China in the 2013 Pacific-Asia Championships in Shanghai, China.

Soo-Hyuk Kim leads Korea, as the country that will host the 2018 Olympic Winter Games attempts to qualify their men's team for Sochi. The Korean women have already secured a place. Kim's team finished third in the recent Pacific-Asia Championships, while New Zealand, led by Peter de Boer, were fourth.

The US men's team was the last of the fifteen teams to be named, with John Shuster's team beating four others in last month's US Olympic Curling trials.

In the women's line-up, Bingyu Wang skips a team that won gold at the 2009 Mount Titlis World Women's Championship in Gangneung in Korea, as well as silver at the 2008 Ford World Women's Championship in Vernon, Canada, and bronze at the 2011 Capital One World Women's Championship in Esbjerg, Denmark. This squad also won bronze medals at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games and, most recently, they were

second at the 2013 Pacific-Asia Championships.

The Czech Republic women's team in Fuessen is built around skip Anna Kubeskova, who finished sixth at the 2013 Le Gruyère European Curling Championships.

Germany's women are led by the most experienced player in the whole field. Andrea Schoepp will be continuing a top-class international curling career that has stretched over 33 years and includes, among its highlights, winning curling's Olympic demonstration event in Albertville in 1992 and two world titles, the most recent of these being at the 2010 Ford World Women's Championship, held in Swift Current, Canada.

Veronica Zappone skips an Italian women's team that is among the youngest in Fuessen, and is also the least experienced in the field, having just made their senior international debut at the European Championships, where they finished tenth, at the bottom of the 'A' division.

Japan's women's skip, 34-year-old Ayumi Ogasawara, comes to Fuessen looking to qualify for what would be her third Olympic appearance. Then named Ayumi Onodera, she was in the Japanese team that finished seventh in the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Turin, Italy, and before that, eighth in Ogden at the 2002 Games of Salt Lake City, USA.

The international highlight so far for Latvia's skip Iveta Stasa-Sarsune and her team was to represent her country on home ice in last season's 2013 Titlis Glacier Mountain World Women's Championship in Riga. This team also played in the 2010 Ford World Women's Championship in Swift Current, Canada. In both world appearances so far, they have finished at the bottom of the field.

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