

# **Friars' Briar - Chapter 46 (2024)**

## **Caledonian Curling Club, Regina**

### **March 4-8, 2024**

It was already in the spring of 2023 that a committee began forming to plan for the Regina Friars' Briar in March, 2024. The committee consisted of:

Laverne Hautz - chair

Daryl Mang - treasurer

Kathy Haugen - secretary

Sid Haugen - drawmaster

Stewart Miller - banquet MC

Bob Wilson - member at large

Harold Hesje - member at large

Kurt Sawatzky - member at large

Guy Scholz - member at large

Pam Bartel - National Board advisor

Alex Harrison - webmaster

Over the course of the next several months, the committee met almost monthly and mostly on video calls. The Caledonian Curling Club was reserved for the event, a bank account was set up, hotel rooms were reserved, and other plans began to take shape. The committee searched in vain for community sponsors to help defray the cost for the curlers. In the end, only Folk's Curling Corner in Saskatoon gave a financial sponsorship - \$40 vouchers to the third place winners in each of the three events. All those things happened according to the normal course for any of the past Friars' Briar events. What wasn't normal happened on the 2 or 3 days before the Monday, March 4 opening ceremonies.

On Saturday and Sunday, Regina and southern Saskatchewan were hit with a typical early March blizzard, with snow and blowing snow - making the driving conditions difficult, even treacherous, and delaying and even canceling incoming flights to the Regina airport. (It was truly March 2018 - the sequel!!) Curlers were advised to be cautious about the conditions, but at the same time were encouraged to arrive when driving conditions or flights would allow. So, people began to trickle into Regina bit by bit, some on Sunday, some later than planned on Monday, and others only on Tuesday. Altogether 18 teams were expected, and when all was said and done, only one team had to cancel entirely. For that we were thankful!!

However, the late arrivals created a headache for the drawmaster. What once was a pretty typical and easy draw (3 pools of 6 teams each, with a 5-game round robin), now became difficult, with some teams present for all the games, and some teams missing one, two or even three games! Sid and Pam hammered out a plan that would still allow the late arriving teams to have a chance for the championship playoff pool. Each draw would literally choose opposing

teams out of a hat. At the end of the first 7 games (or however many a team would play), their winning percentage would be calculated, and that would determine the final standings and the one-game playoff match-ups with 1 vs. 2, 3 vs. 4 and 5 vs. 6 in each of the three playoff events. With only 17 teams, several teams ended up with a bye at some point during the week. For some that was sad, as they came to Regina to curl. For others, the bye was a welcome break from a fierce week of (travel and) curling.

The Friars' Briar itself began on time, with about 14 teams present. Piper Matt Bryson led the teams onto the ice. Stewart Miller held the broom for his father, Bryan, who threw the ceremonial first stone. Then the piper piped himself off, and the teams dispersed to the various sheets of ice for the first draw.

Of course, the late arrival of teams also created some logistical problems for the curling club - how many sheets to prepare, and how much food to prepare. Oh, yes, the Callie Club catering staff provided lunches from Tuesday to Friday, as well as the Monday evening meal (sausage, perogies and cabbage rolls) after the opening ceremonies and the first draw. By all accounts the food was GREAT!!

The Tuesday draws began to include the late arriving teams, and by Wednesday morning all the teams were accounted for (except the one team that pulled out due to the travel woes). Play continued with the "pick your opponent out of a hat" format, and the drawmaster kept us up to date on standings (by winning percentage).

Wednesday evening saw some 80 of us Friars' Briar curlers and spouses and friends attend the 15th draw of "the other Brier" - the newly named and sponsored Montana's Brier - at Regina's Brandt Center. That evening featured:

Nunavut vs. Saskatchewan

Quebec vs. Nova Scotia

Alberta (Sluchinsky) vs. North West Territories

Alberta (Koe) vs. Prince Edward Island

Thursday's games were the end of the modified "round robin" play. Then everyone gathered at Mount Olive Lutheran Church for the yearly banquet. Daryl Mang (one of our curlers) and his wife Colleen were the caterers of a lovely roast beef dinner. Heather Ross, a local pianist / singer provided 30 minutes of entertainment. Stewart Miller was the MC for the evening, which also featured a silent auction (raising almost \$300) and 16 door prizes. Our National Board Chairperson, Pam Bartel, led the gathered group through the agenda items for our Annual General Meeting. One of the significant decisions made by the group was to accept the invitation to hold the 2025 Friars' Briar in Prince Edward Island at the end of February (during the Scotties). That will be the first time the Briar is held east of Ontario. Another announcement was that the large and cumbersome (i.e. hard and expensive to transport) Friars' Briar Championship trophy will get a "hair-cut" - the top three-quarters will be shaved off and "retired," and only the bottom portion will be retained with all the plaques of previous winners intact.

On Friday, March 8, the one-game playoffs were held, with 1 vs. 2, 3 vs. 4, and 5 vs. 6 curling for glory in each of the three events: Championship, Don Amos, and Hugh Christmas. The medal winners were:

Championship: Team Hunter (Gold); Rock Hard Sweepers (Silver); Stone Slingers (Bronze)

Don Amos: The Fall Guys (Gold); In the Hautz (Silver); Team Dyck (Bronze)

Hugh Christmas: Kinasao Kampers (Gold); Fawkesy Friars (Silver) Team D. Martin (Bronze)

At the awards ceremony, retired RCMP Sargent Emil Knuth brought in the trophy (for the last time... see above), and was in the photos for most if not all of the medal presentations.

After a final soup and sandwich lunch, the curlers all said their "until we meet again" goodbyes, and made their way home - under much more pleasant travel conditions than when they arrived!!

The finances were wrapped up a couple of days later, and a healthy surplus of over \$1,800 (including the silent auction proceeds) was forwarded to the National Board with the intention that it be used for travel allowances to encourage especially western teams to attend the 2025 Friar's Briar in PEI.