

The Crokinole Post

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"Your Crokinole Newsletter"

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Quin Visits Ontario, A New Tournament is Born

Article from Crokinole Centre

With a world-class crokinole player from British Columbia in the region, several other crokinole fanatics from Ontario gathered to play the 2015 Quin Erzinger Crokinole Classic.

With everyone wanting to face-off against the young stud from BC, the format was composed of a full round robin of singles action, with the remainder of the afternoon left for social play.

True to his lore, Quin Erzinger thumped in a tournament-high 174 20s, which also included a "perfect-round" in the very first game of the tournament against Roy Campbell. Also sharing in some fame was Jason Beierling, who scored a perfect-round in the very last game of the tournament against Nathan Walsh.

With trophies available for the top 3 finishers, the battle for the podium was incredibly tight. Through 17 games (and a maximum of 136 points) 5 players finished within 2 points of each other. Recognition should be given to Jason Beierling, Quin Erzinger, Jake Ruggi and Roy Campbell for an incredibly solid day. Jake Ruggi turned out a great performance, despite coming into the tournament out-of-practice.

Congratulations were given to Eric Miltenburg for squeezing through the heap and earning 90 points along with the well-deserved 3rd place finish.

The battle for 1st was also quite close as Jon Conrad and Nathan Walsh both earned 104 points. The tiebreaker went the way of Walsh, with Conrad having to settle for 2nd.

After the results had been announced, players took the opportunity to get a few more games of crokinole in before heading home. Some players used the chance to practice doubles before the World Championships, while



Participants enjoy a 6 player game of crokinole after the tournament (photo credit: Crokinole Centre)

others used the advantage of numbers to play more games on the 6-player crokinole board. While the 6-player board is large, and thus more difficult to transport, it was no doubt a hit among the attendees. If you are looking for ways to make crokinole tournaments more social and entertaining, a 6-player board can be great for a few laughs in between rounds.

Nathan Walsh would like to thank everyone who helped make this event a reality. Special thank you to his parent's for helping with lunch, organizing and transportation. Thanks to Jake Ruggi and Reuben Jongsma for helping to secure the venue. Thanks also to Roy Campbell for bringing although the game-timer, and to Eric Miltenburg for the extra large crokinole board.



Nathan Walsh accepts 1st Place prize from Quin Erzinger (photo credit: Crokinole Centre)



A Change of Rules: Waterloo Doubles

Article from Crokinole Centre

It was the season opener for the Waterloo Crokinole club, and with most members busy and trying to enjoy the last remaining glimpses of the summer, we were limited to 5 members. With anywhere between 8 and 12 members most nights we typically try to get 2 full round robins of singles action in during the evening. With only 5, we quickly raced through 2 full rounds and then decided to play some doubles, rotating one player out.

Doubles is always a lot of fun. Partners talk strategy, opponents talk about the other teams strategy, even the person sitting out chimes in with their input.

Nearing the end of the first doubles game a funny quip was thrown out about letting your partner shoot in place of your own shot. In doubles there is often the scenario when the opposing team leaves a hanger, but for the person shooting next making a 20 involves a tough follow-through, while the partner (if they were allowed to shoot), would see an easy takeout and 20.

A few hypothetical comments later and we found ourselves setting the rule and deciding to experiment with a few games. **There would be no clockwise order that had to be followed, so long as the teams alternated shooting and each player shot 6 times, which partner shot next was up to the discretion of the team.**

And before I get into more detail of this first night of experimental Waterloo doubles, let me just say - it was a thrilling.

Starting the first round Alex made a 20, then so did Jon. I joked that maybe Alex should shoot again, rather than myself. I ended up shooting, and missed.

The round continued and **at first it was simple.** Follow-through 20 shots and discs that would normally require a treacherous pass through the pegs became simple hangar 20s and short takeouts. Sure we have had the option of switching, but it was only exercised when it seemed obvious too, and so the

standard clockwise rule mostly maintained itself.

To start the second round Jon and Barry discussed which one of them should shoot. Until it was decided that whoever would start the round under regular conditions would do so even in this new variation of doubles crokinole. If we were putting it down in a rule book, we already had the first hint of nuance.

Before shooting one out of turn, one really had to ask permission of his partner. A few rounds later and everyone felt more comfortable jumping up and taking charge.

“How about I take this one partner, I’m feeling good.”

Now with the option of taking the shot, rather than your partner, you really had to make sure you didn't miss.

It’s amazing how much things changed. All of the sudden angles appear off every disc. You tend to forget about your opponents’ shots and focus on your partner’s and your own. The left-handedness of Barry added another wrinkle to the game is does not usually get a chance to be explored.

It took a couple of games before some teams accidentally **went to the extreme.** Barry and Alex partnered up, and the early part of the round gave Barry so many chances at a 20 that Alex ended having to shoot the last 5 discs for his team.

So more advanced strategy kicked in. Including hiding the number of shots you had left so your opponents couldn’t see you were close to being out of discs. That led to even more thinking in keeping track of who had shot what.

It’s true that more 20’s are scored in singles than in doubles, and one of the reasons for that is the waiting in between shots. It’s much easier to score 20 after 20 and get into a rhythm when you only have to wait for one other shooter. Soon the waiting aspect of doubles went out the window too. Roy and myself exchanged 3 20s each consecutively at

the start of the round, while our partners egged us on.

Some common phrases popped up throughout the games: **“Why don’t you take this, you’re on a roll.”** or **“I don’t feel good about this one, you can have it.”**

The common question of **“How many shots do you have left?”** or statements hinting at your partner to shoot, **“You take it, I need a break.”**

It was an all around **great experiment, with a lot of laughs.** The topic of whether we should ever try it again led to a positive response. Everyone agreed it was a fun time, but as one member said, “Might need to play with a case of beer to reduce the massive headache.” If you have played crokinole for many years, changing the fundamental order of play is quite the twist.

I could even see a further variation of play where the opposition teams gets to choose which player must shoot the next shot. But that might be a **little too cut-throat as opposed to fun.**

Alex went further to ask if it could work in a competitive format. While both fun and interesting, it takes one of competitive crokinole’s biggest problems and enlarges it. That problem is of course **time.** Doubles can already be dragged out with extended talk of strategy, and perhaps it was due to a learning curve, but we found the play to take longer than normal.

So it’s probably not something that should be incorporated into the Ontario Doubles Crokinole Championship in October, but if you have a chance to play “Waterloo style doubles” at your club, it’s well worth the experiment.

All I can say is - it was wild and it was brilliant, it was crokinole in Waterloo.

A Crokinole Club Grows in Brooklyn

Article from Greg Pinel

Like in the Stanley Cup playoffs this year between Chicago and Anaheim, Canadian players at this weekend's World Crokinole Championships surely outnumber those from any other single nation. I'm one of those Canadian crokinole players. But unlike with hockey, which my parents got me playing at age 5 (and my first birthday present was a stick and a puck from my mom's dad), I wasn't introduced to crokinole until I was 40. And not by a relative or a Canadian neighbour or Canadian family friend. It wasn't by a Canadian or even in Canada for that matter. This weekend will in fact be the first time I play crokinole in Canada.

I first heard of the game when living in Brooklyn, NY, where I still reside. The person who introduced it to me is a professional heavy metal drummer, Santos Montano, of Mexican descent and a 5th generation American from Sante Fe. Santos had never been to Canada. But he had at least learned the game from Canadians - specifically the LeGrasse brothers: be-toqued and bearded board-makers from Quebec who'd moved down to Sante Fe in the 80s.

Much of the above doesn't sit right with me. And it gets increasingly unjust in my mind when I think of how I've lived in five other countries, whose dexterity/aiming games I'd started playing almost immediately upon arrival. Petanque in Paris. Baccì in Milan. Darts and archery in London. Bowls in Glasgow. And shuffleboard in Brooklyn's bars. That I left Canada at age 30, not knowing crokinole existed, still perplexes me. Mostly, I find it pretty annoying.

My vexation increases when I think of how I've made and still make part of my living by playing and organizing games - mostly contact sports like hockey and rugby but also soccer. And there's not much I like more when I'm off the clock than socializing over a relatively less aggressive dexterity/aiming game. Though if that game happens to have a proxy for body-checking, like crokinole's obligatory

smashing of your opponent's disc into the ditch, then I'm gonna get hooked. Quickly.

If crokinole were an American invention, things would be different. If Americans invent something, they remind themselves often and make sure others know it too. They take credit for other peoples' games too (like basketball). So most people in the US would probably know of crokinole. Hundreds of thousands would probably be playing it at some point this very weekend. You'd likely even find it as part of the high school curriculum in some states. Instead, there I was every dank Vancouver December in Grades 8 through 12 Phys Ed class... square dancing. Wrong.

Canadians invent some of the best games. Ice hockey. Lacrosse. Even basketball and football belong to us, originally. And of course there's crokinole. Ours. Yet so many of us - probably a large majority - don't know it exists.

We don't speak proudly and loudly enough about our sporting and other cultural creations and achievements. We're too modest, too self-effacing to broadcast our greatness. It's this cultural lack of bravado that can perhaps result in the waning of our own cultural traditions. I'm not saying we need to impress upon others our relative (superior) charms. But how about we start at least convincing more of ourselves, more loudly?

It's in schools where I think we stand the best chance of being heard and of thus growing the game amongst a requisite younger generation. For example, I've had some success in getting a few American school principals interested in crokinole. This coming fall, I'm taking my Brooklyn crokinole club (The Crokinole Project) into some Brooklyn high schools as an after-school program. One major reason for this initiative: Far too many public schools in the US are under-funded, and so these schools often have no after-school activities at all. No chess. No soccer. Nothing fun, healthy and social for kids to do under adult supervision.

I already offer after-school soccer and rugby and floor hockey to some of these schools, and so why not crokinole too? It's cheaper to run. It's safer and easier to learn. You don't have to be sporty or terribly proficient in mathematics to play well or become champion. I can probably get a wider range of kids, if not simply more kids, in Brooklyn playing crokinole than playing the above sports.

I've come to Tavistock this year in part to add some street cred to my upcoming Brooklyn schools programs. I'll be able to say I participated on the world stage against the very best. But I'd also like to be a larger part of helping the game to grow in Canada. I don't want other Canadians to lose out like me. So I want to meet others in Tavistock with a similar drive and other ideas for helping this great game grow.

In Canada, it should be possible to see crokinole offered as an after-school activity, right alongside chess and drama and A/V clubs, as well as hockey and rugby and soccer teams.

And partly because of what the great classical music conductor Sir Thomas Beecham once said — *try everything once but folk dancing and incest* (a line my father told me as I was about to set off in the snow, quite reluctantly for first period Phys Ed's square dancing) — I'd sure love to see crokinole integrated into the actual classroom. At least every December.



National Crokinole Tour: Year in Review

World Championships: Tavistock

Article from Crokinole Centre

Doubles

The morning doubles competition brought together a fierce crowd. With the recreational doubles category being a welcomed choice for 48 teams, the competitive division was limited to 28 teams of tremendous skill. It became clear that the day would not be won by skill, but rather great mental focus and steely concentration.

The short preliminary round of only 6 games is always a frantic race to grab one of the top 6 playoff spots. Edging out the field to take the top seed was Clare Kuepfer and Nathan Walsh with 38 of a possible 48, making their first appearance as a team into the top 6 playoffs. They were followed closely by the brother team of Jason and Ray Beierling, and the father-son team of David and Matt Brown, both with 37 points.

Rob Mader Jr. and Jeremy Howey grabbed the 4th seed, returning to the top 6 for the first time since their 2nd place finish in 2010. The log jam of “just barely in” and “agonizingly close” followed at 32 points. Thanks to high 20 scores of 60 and 59, the PEI team of Wilfred Smith and Lawson Lea grabbed the 5th spot, while Justin and Fred Slater grabbed the 6th spot.

That left Rex and Tom Johnston out in 7th with 32 points, but only 52 20's. And joining them in the B playoffs were Paul Brubacher and Roy Campbell (31 points), Robert and Richard Mader (31), Brian Simpson and Roger Vaillancourt (30), John Harvey and Ron Reesor (28), and Chris Gorsline and Peter Tarle (26).

The B doubles playoff was extremely tight, and ended with 4 teams at a score of 23 points. Brian Simpson and Roger Vaillancourt would take the B title, while Paul Brubacher and Roy Campbell would take second.



*Doubles Champions Justin and Fred Slater
(photo credit: Bill Gladding)*

The A playoffs were equally tight. Wilfred Smith and Lawson Lea would earn the highest finish of any non-Ontario team in World Championship history, but would finish just out of the money, with a 5th place finish. Finishing 2 points higher and grabbing their record-extending 11th top 4 finish, was Jason and Ray Beierling at 20 points. Matt and Dave Brown scored 23 points, good enough for 3rd place, and just below their best finish of 2nd in 2011. The top two spots were earned by the teams of Kuepfer/Walsh and Slater/Slater, both scoring 25 points. The head-to-head tiebreaker only further showed just how closely matched both teams were, as they tied their game 4-4. The difference would be 5 20's in the overall score, as Justin and Fred Slater would take the top spot and win their second consecutive Doubles World Championship.

Singles

The lunch break allowed the competitors to relax from the frantic doubles play and begin preparing for the preliminary round of the singles action. The biggest piece of excitement was the 20's competition, and with the WCC boards in great shape, it was expected that the 20's scores would be quite high. While 3 players scored 20's in the 90-100 range, another 3 players scored greater than 100. They included the usual suspects of Brian Cook, Ray Beierling and Justin Slater. Slater

scored 104, which was enough to win the 20's titles in both 2010 and 2011, but only good enough for 3rd in 2014. Brian Cook scored a WCC-personal best of 121, well above his scores of 79 and 86, which were enough to earn him the 20's titles in 2006 and 2007. But the 20's World Champion honours went to Ray Beierling in 2014, as he scored 131 over the 10 game preliminary round.

The preliminary round also determined the Women's World Crokinole Champion. Beverly Vaillancourt took home the Karin Jeske Memorial Award for the second straight year. Karin Jeske and her husband used to travel to the world championships from Germany every year, until her passing few years ago. In her honour, her husband created this award to reward the top female player in the tournament.



*Beverly Vaillancourt and Ray Beierling with
their awards (photo credit: Bill Gladding)*

Focussing on the qualifiers for the Sweet 16 playoffs, Beierling, Cook and Slater all grabbed the top 3 seeds. The magic number turned out to be 50 points, which 5 players scored, but unfortunately there were only 3 spots remaining. Raymond Haymes, Roger Vaillancourt and Robert Bonnett came in just under the wire, leaving a bitter feeling for Nathan Jongsma and Rex Johnston.

Pool A action saw Brian Cook at the top his game, cruising into first place with 41 points through 7 games, and giving him his record-extending 10th top 4 appearance. Roger Vaillancourt had a good showing with 29 points, but that was only enough for 4th in the group. Matt Brown grabbed the final playoff spot with 35 points, barely edging out Ray Beierling, who had 34. That one point would

give Matt Brown his first top 4 appearance, and stop Beierling from earning his 8th top 4 finish. He currently sits tied for 2nd (with Joe Fulop) at 7 top 4 finishes.

Pool B saw John Harvey earn 29 points for 4th in the group, while Nathan Walsh and Justin Slater grabbed the top 2 spots with 45 and 44 points respectively. 2-time defending world champion, Jon Conrad, saw his bid for a third straight title end in the round of 16, finishing 3rd in the group and just short of advancing.

So the final 4 was set to be Brian Cook, Matt Brown, Justin Slater and Nathan Walsh. It was only the second time in WCC history that the top 4 was entirely comprised of players who did not make the top 4 the year before. The only previous occurrence was 2003 to 2004.

As previously mentioned, it was Cook's 10th top 4 appearance, Slater's 3rd appearance, Walsh's 2nd and Matt Brown 1st. Experience proved to be a major factor as Brian Cook and Justin Slater cruised past Walsh and Brown into the final.

Nathan Walsh and Matt Brown played a tight 3rd/4th place match, with the major turning point being a 5th round tiebreaker in game one. After Walsh edged out the first game, he went on to win the match for 3rd place, while Matt Brown had to settle for 4th.

The attention then all shifted to the World Championship final. Brian Cook and Justin Slater had met in the 2010 final, where Slater became the youngest world champion in history, while also ending Cook's 3 year reign as world champion. The 2014 rematch was only the second WCC rematch in history.

Cook stole 2 points from Justin Slater's hammer in the 3rd round of the 1st game, to go up 4-2. Cook then won his hammer round to take the first game 6-2.

Even while ahead, Cook could not relax. In 2010 he had won the first game, before Slater won the last 2 to take the match. Even more so, Slater had won the St. Jacob's crokinole tournament a month before after losing the first game to Nathan Walsh. Justin Slater's chances of forcing the match to a 3rd game looked good. Tied at 2-2 he was able to outscore Cook, and go up 4-2 with a hammer round coming up. But Cook would come right

back to tie the game 4-4 and force a 5th round tiebreaker. After Justin Slater missed the opening 20 attempt, he was forced to play aggressively, but it led to a mistake and Brian Cook held on to the advantage to take the match 6-2, 6-4

The 2014 title was Cook's record-breaking 4th Singles World Championship, and his 9th top 2 finish. He has finally surpassed Joe Fulop's 3 singles titles, earned from 2001-2004.



*2014 World Champion Brian Cook
(photo credit: Bill Gladding)*

It was a great day of crokinole, and another fine display from the WCC committee and the community of Tavistock, who had once again put on the greatest crokinole tournament in the world. This year's tournament attracted players from PEI, Kentucky, Connecticut, Ohio, New York, Michigan and Brazil, and once again showed just how spectacular this seemingly simple game is.

Turtle Island: Lewiston, New York

Article from Clare Kuepfer

August 9th, 2014, a bright and sunny day saw 27 enthusiastic crokinole players gather at the Tuscarora Nation House for an exciting day of competition.

Then there were those from Ohio: 4 players plus their cheer leader who arrived Friday afternoon, as well as 13 players from Ontario.

Saturday morning the players were served a breakfast of coffee, pancakes, sausages, syrup, and the works along with great hospitality. Play started at 11AM consisting of 13 competitive players and 14 recreational players. Both divisions each played 12 games, there by playing each other once.

As a bountiful lunch was served, the scores were tallied and Pools A & B were set up for each division.

The top 4 of pool B set Demian Johnston (CT) against Brian Henry (NY), and Eric Miltenburg (ON) against Cathy Kuepfer (ON). It was Miltenburg & Johnston (after needing 3 tiebreaker rounds to surpass Henry) meeting in the final. In the end Eric was victorious 6-2 and 5-3 for the B title.

Brian Cook, Fred Slater, Jon Conrad, & Ray Beierling emerged to the semi finals of pool A. This usual crowd actually own the top spots for the MOST number of top 4 tournament finishes on the NCA Tour. With the New York results, Brian Cook had earned his 31st top 4 appearance, while Beierling reached his 29th, Conrad to 25 and Slater up to 18. But each was looking for much more. It was Brian vs. Fred, and Ray vs. Jon doing battle, with Brian & Jon playing off in the finals for the A championship. Brian was victorious 5-1 and 6-2, to become the 2014 Turtle Island Champion, earning his 18th tournament title on the NCA Tour and winning his 10th different tournament.



*2014 Turtle Island Champion Brian Cook
(photo credit: Crokinole Centre)*

In the Recreational division Pool A semi finals it would be the Ohio pairing of Jerry Ward vs. his brother-in-law, Roger Farmer, and the Ontario pairing of Roy Bretz vs. Jo-Ann Carter. Jerry & Roy met in the finals, with Jerry coming out on top to win his 2nd Turtle Island title.

Pool B semi final saw Janet Diebel (ON) vs. Erwin "Moochie" Printup (NY), & Nancy Farmer (OH) vs. Wayne Wolfgang (OH). For the finals, it was Janet vs. Wayne. At the end of 3 games it was all tied up and it took 4 sets of tie breaker rounds before 1st time tournament attendee, Wayne Wolfgang emerged the winner of pool B.

Eat'n, visit'n & Flick'n, mix it all up and what do you get?.....a great crokinole tournament! Thanks to all the organizers, volunteers, sponsors, and players for making 3rd annual Turtle Island crokinole tournament a success.

Belleville Crokinole Challenge: Belleville

Article from Crokinole Centre

While we are far away from the World Crokinole Championship, the 2014 Belleville Crokinole Challenge brought with it tournament organization of the highest calibre, and a level of nerves only seen on the world stage. And on September 20th, it was the coolest of customers, Justin Slater, walking away with his first Belleville title.

The full crowd arrived on Saturday morning with a tournament-record attendance of 32, which quickly had Belleville club members stating that next year's goal was to reach 40. The preliminary round split the field into 3 evenly ranked groups. Justin Slater, no longer being out East during the school year, jumped up to take the top spot with 67 points out of a possible 80. Nathan Walsh had the second spot and the most 20s with 107, being the only player to reach triple digits. Others to make the top group included Jon Conrad, Eric Miltenburg, Jason Beierling, Howard Martin, and local Belleville club members Louis Gauthier and Len Chard. Just missing out was Dave Brown (on 20's), Clare Kuepfer and Peter Tarle.

The field split into 3 categories for the second round as the money was on the line. Things were really tight in the C division with 2 points separating 4th from 6th place, as Gloria Walsh and Bob Leggett missed out on the final semifinal spot.

The B division was a bit more spread out with Dave Brown leading the way, followed by Roy

Campbell, Clare Kuepfer and Wayne Scott grabbing the final spot in the semifinals.

The A division also came in close. After Brian Cook took the top spot with 53 points, the log jam of players saw Justin Slater, Matt Brown and Nathan Walsh fill out the top 4, in a repeat of the Tavistock final 4, while Ray Beierling missed out by a mere 2 points.

Matt Brown, following in similar stride to Louis Gauthier's success last year, is poised to be the breakthrough crokinole player of the season. Top 4 finishes in the World Championship Doubles, World Championship Singles and the extremely tough Belleville field put him as the next player knocking on the door of the winners circle.

In the C division, Cathy Kuepfer and Terry Kruek held on to their top seeds as Kuepfer defeated Betty Waite and Kruek defeated Dale Henry in the semifinals. The final saw Kuepfer maintain her success and take the C title back to Owen Sound.

In the B division Dave Brown and Roy Campbell also held on to their top 2 seeds, defeating Scott and Kuepfer respectively in the semifinals. Dave Brown then took advantage of the Quinte Convention, winning the match in overtime after being tied through 3 games, and taking the B title over Roy Campbell.

In the A semifinals, Brian Cook and Nathan Walsh's playoff meetings extended into 3 consecutive years as the two made up the championship match in both 2012 and 2013. Walsh was able to sneak out a win in 3 games, while it was a similar story for Justin Slater over Matt Brown.

That left Justin Slater and Nathan Walsh to face off in the finals, a replay of the 2014 St. Jacobs final that Slater won in 3 games. Walsh came out strong winning the first game 6-0 and leading 4-0 in the 2nd game. But Slater then elevated his level of play, forcing the 2nd game into a tie, and then winning the 3rd game 5-1. Following the Quinte Convention rules, Slater and Walsh headed to overtime. With a chance to win the tournament on his final shot, Walsh blundered his disc off a peg, before Slater made an easy takeout to extend the match. Slater then was tremendous in

"That Old Crokinole" – Song

*His finger's bent and tired
His nail has almost healed
And she'd get herself fired
Just to change the way he feels
She knows his love's in Tavi'
And she knows he's gonna go
Well, it ain't the money, or the glory
It's that damned old crokinole
Well, it's reds and blacks
It's posts and wax
It's the awww of a silent crowd
It's the white in his knuckles
His smile and his chuckle
He'll win the next two rounds
It's shots and flicks
It's concave discs
It's boards and latigo
It's the lean and the raise
And shots that amaze
And they call the game crokinole*

*She does her best to hold him
When his love comes to call
But his need for it controls him
And her back's against the wall
And it's so long girl, I'll see you
When it's time for him to go
You know the woman wants her croker
Like he wants his crokinole*

*Well, it's reds and blacks
It's posts and wax
It's the awww of a silent crowd
It's the white in his knuckles
His smile and his chuckle
He'll win the next two rounds
It's shots and flicks
It's concave discs
It's boards and latigo
It's the lean and the raise
And the shots that amaze
And they call the game crokinole*

*It'll drive a croker crazy
It'll drive a man insane
And he'll show you everything he knows
Just to help you win the game
And a happy home and some brittle bones
Is all he'll have to show
For all the years that he spent chasin'
This dream they call crokinole*

*Well, it's reds and blacks
It's posts and wax
It's the awww of a silent crowd
It's the white in his knuckles
His smile and his chuckle
He'll win the next two rounds
It's shots and flicks
It's concave discs
It's boards and latigo
It's the lean and the raise
And the shots that amaze
And they call the game crokinole*

*It's the greens and the blacks
It's the lines and the wax
And they call the game crokinole*

scoring 20s in the following round as he took the match and the 2014 Belleville Crokinole Challenge.

Ontario Doubles Championship: Brucefield

Article from Crokinole Centre



2014 Ontario Doubles Championship Trophies
(photo credit: Crokinole Centre)

As the defending champions and tournament hosts, Jason and Ray Beierling went out to make a statement, and by the end of the day had an undefeated scorecard combined with a perfect 2-0 record in the page-playoffs to win the 2014 Ontario Doubles Crokinole Championship.

The Brucefield United Church held the location for the 5th annual tournament, and even featured a visit from Bluewater mayor Bill Dowson.

It was a packed field with 12 teams in both the competitive and recreational divisions. Highlighting the competitive field included 2-time defending world champions Justin and Fred Slater, making their first appearance as partners in the ODCC, and 2014 WCC 3rd place team of Matt and Dave Brown.

A full round robin took up all of the morning and the early afternoon as each team targeted a top 4 finish. A lot of teams formed of the usual partnerships from the same club, like Howard Martin and Roy Campbell of St. Jacobs/Waterloo, Tom and Rex Johnston of Varna, Dennis Ernest and Alex Protas of Waterloo, and Peter Carter and Robert Bonnett and the team of Clare Kuepfer and Neil Cook, both of Scone.

But a team that performed spectacularly in the preliminary round was the London/Hamilton

pair of Ron Reesor and Eric Miltenburg. Forming quick chemistry, Reesor and Miltenburg scored big wins against Fred and Justin Slater, and Tom and Rex Johnston. Those wins would propel them to a 4th place finish with 53 points. Another pair that do not get matched up with too much frequency, despite being from the same club, were Louis Gauthier and Peter Tarle, who bounced back from an early loss to the Walsh/Hartviksen team to score 55 points and grab the 3rd spot.

In typical fashion, Fred and Justin Slater were responsible for one of the best scores, in both points and 20s. They would finish just ahead of Gauthier/Tarle with 56 points and 144 20s, to earn the crucial spot as the 2nd seed for the page playoffs. On another level though was Ray and Jason Beierling, who soared to 1st place with a staggering 70 points and 160 20s.

On the recreational side the battle to reach the playoffs was even tighter. Al Carter and Jo-Ann Carter earned the most 20s at 79, but finished only 6th with 48 points. Just ahead of them were Alex Ostrem and Pete Wiley at 49 points, but still shy of the top 4. Conrad Sitter and Bill Heather were the lucky ones to squeak into the final spot with 51 points, while Rueben and Abijah Jong (56), Bob Jones and John Lichty (58) and Dave White and Murray Perdue (61) found themselves atop the heap. The recreational playoffs saw the fortunes turn, as Rueben and Abijah Jong finished 1st, followed by Sitter/Heather, Jones/Lichty and White/Perdue.

In the competitive playoffs, and 3-4 page playoff saw Reesor/Miltenburg take on Gauthier/Tarle in a do-or-die match. Reesor/Miltenburg took an early lead in the "first to 12 points" match, only to have Gauthier/Tarle come back with in striking distance, before Reesor/Miltenburg finished it off 13-9.

Meanwhile, Beierling/Beierling and Slater/Slater fought for the automatic entrance into the championship final. Continuing their unbeaten streak, Jason and Ray Beierling comfortably took the match 12-6, sending Justin and Fred Slater to play Miltenburg/Reesor in the semifinal.

With Miltenburg/Reesor coming in with confidence, and Slater/Slater fixing some of their mistakes from the earlier match, it was a

thrilling semifinal. Fred and Justin Slater were able to avenge their 7-1 loss to Miltenburg/Reesor earlier in the day, to pull off the great victory 12-10.

That set the final to be a rematch of the 1-2 page playoff, putting the defending Ontario Doubles Champions against the defending World Champions. While there are sure to be rematches in the future, the day belonged to Jason and Ray Beierling, as they dominated the final 13-3, to win their 2nd Ontario Doubles Crokinole Championship.

Scenic City: Owen Sound

Article from Crokinole Centre

Coming off an extremely strong performance at the Ontario Doubles Crokinole Championship, Ray Beierling entered Owen Sound looking for back-to-back victories. While the competition was tough, Beierling held it together when the nerves were high and title was on the line.

A field of 26 for the competitive singles and another 19 teams for the recreational doubles made for a tournament size of 64, which may stand as the largest tournament this year outside of the World Championships.

The preliminary round lined up all 13 tables for singles action of 10 games. A high level of competition raised the bar for 20's scores with 6 players recording more than 100 20's in the round. Roy Campbell was the class of the field, scoring 61 points and 122 20's, and decent distance ahead of second place with Ray Beierling at 56 points.

Closely behind were Brian Cook, Justin Slater (at a tournament high 129 20's), and defending Owen Sound Champion, Louis Gauthier. Fred Slater and Robert Bonnett also qualified, just ahead of Nathan Walsh and Howard Martin who grabbed the final spots with 47 and 46 points respectively. Rueben Jong, Jon Conrad and Roger Vaillancourt would hold the unlucky cards, all finishing less than 3 points out of the top group and head to Pool B for the afternoon.

Meanwhile a large doubles round robin was being played, featuring many of the hometown members of the Scone Crokinole Club, and others who drove the long distance

in the name of crokinole addiction. While the visitors would perform admirably with Bob Jones and John Lichty finishing second in the 19 team competition, Neil and Carol Cook would bring home the title for the local crowd with a narrow victory of a single point.



2014 Scenic City Champion Ray Beierling with tournament organizer Clare Kuepfer (photo credit: Crokinole Centre)

On the singles side the 26 players split into 3 groups for the afternoon play. In Pool C, Bev Vaillancourt led the way with 44 points, with Abijah Jong, Wayne Scott and Kyle Vaillancourt following to also qualify for the top 4 playoffs. It was Kyle Vaillancourt who would emerge from the playoff round robin as the top seed, while Bev Vaillancourt needed to win a tie-breaker to sneak past Abijah Jong. That set up a Pool C final of mother vs son, and Bev Vaillancourt would come out on top, once again needing a tie-breaker round to do so.

In Pool B, Brian Simpson started to take charge, scoring 41 points and finishing ahead of Jon Conrad at 40. Roger Vaillancourt and Eric Miltenburg would take the 3rd and 4th spots, just ahead of a dead-heat for 5th place

with Peter Tarle, Rueben Jong and Dave Brown all at 31 points. The round of 4 playoffs would see Roger Vaillancourt lead the way in 20's with 33, but that was not enough as Jon Conrad and Eric Miltenburg finished first and second with 15 points. In the final Jon Conrad was at his best, winning the best 2 out of 3 match in 2 straight games.

With the Owen Sound title on the line, Pool A saw a lot of tight play as points were extremely hard to come by. Nathan Walsh scored 39 points to earn the top spot, while Justin Slater recorded 38 points, and Ray Beierling 37. The 4th and final spot would be as close as it gets, with Roy Campbell, Fred Slater and Brian Cook at 33 points. After a little math to see the head-to-head scores, it was determined that Roy Campbell had won the final playoff spot. The playoff games were extremely competitive as 4 of the 6 games ended in a 4-4 draw, but when the dust settled Ray Beierling was set to play Nathan Walsh in a rematch of the 2014 London final from last March.

While Nathan Walsh was looking to win his first tournament after losses in his last 2 finals appearances, Ray Beierling was looking for his first singles tournament victory since the Turtle Island Championship in 2013. Continuing on a similar thread of very even

play, the first 2 games of the best of 3 would end in a 4-4 tie. Just when it looked like the 3rd game was also going to a draw, Ray Beierling snuck out a point against the hammer to make it 3-3 heading into the 4th round. With the hammer advantage, Beierling grabbed an early 20 and held the advantage to win the match 4-4, 4-4, 5-3.

Golden Horseshoe: Hamilton **Article from Crokinole Centre**

The 7th Annual Golden Horseshoe Crokinole Tournament on January 31, 2015, marked the 6th year in Hamilton's Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church (after the first edition of the tournament took place in Toronto).

With the tournament usually taking place in January, mid-Winter weather has often hindered tournament attendance. That was certainly not the case in 2015 as clear roads paved the way to a tournament-high number of 44 contenders, including a number of new faces and international competition.

The preliminary round divided the players into 4 groups of 11. That round gave the competitors a chance to mingle and mix, combining the 4 World Champions with large



A Group photo of the competitors after the 2015 Golden Horseshoe Tournament (photo credit: Eric Miltenburg)

groups from London, Owen Sound, Toronto, Waterloo, Tuscarora and the hometown Hamilton bunch. Also in the mix, and welcomed to the tournament were the newcomers from Guelph, Grimsby, Niagara and even Brazil.

The action really heated up in the second round, with players reseeded into 4 more groups with prizes and money on the line. In Pool D, John Trinka found his form earning the highest of any second round score with 63 points out of a possible 80. Arthur Giuliano challenged for the final at 46 points, but was narrowly beaten by Mark Weiler with 47 points.

In the final, John Trinka kept up his strong play, winning the final in 2-straight games, taking home the D Pool title in his first NCA tournament.

The C Pool play was very tight as Jacob Westerhof and Braden Van Andel each scored 44 points, but it was only enough to grab 4th and 5th place. Gloria Walsh also suffered the fate of close but not enough at 47 points, missing out by one point as Bill Geris and Jo Ann Carter advanced to the final with 48 and 51 points respectively. While Jo Ann Carter fought back to send the match to a deciding 3rd-game, Bill Geris eventually prevailed for the C Pool title.

John Harvey looked fantastic through the second round in the B Pool, earning 57 points and cruising to a top place finish. Harvey's 92 20s were also the highest of the group, just ahead of James Nicholson's 91 20s. Grabbing the second spot in the final was Reuben Jong at 51 points, just barely above Ron Reesor who's 49 points had to settle for 3rd place. The final was very competitive between Harvey and Jong, but Reuben Jong was able to come away the victor of the B Pool with a 5-3, 5-3 finish.

The A Pool playoffs saw the top 11 fighting for the top 4 semifinals. The A Pool was a very strong mix of some of the best crokinole players from the NCA Tour. Congratulations should be given to Andrew Whitfield for making the top group in his very first tournament appearance.

Roy Campbell looked to top his 5th-place finish in Hamilton from the previous year, and soared to first place seed with 55 points. Jon

Conrad was also in fine form to take 2nd, while Nathan Walsh took 3rd. Ray Beierling finished 4th with 49 points, no doubt helped by his tournament-high 135 20s through 10 games.

The semifinals were excruciatingly close as Ray Beierling edged out Roy Campbell 1-5, 6-4, 5-3. Meanwhile Jon Conrad and Nathan Walsh had to play overtime after being tied through 3 games. Walsh eventually prevailed in the 5th and 6th extra rounds.

That setup a Ray Beierling and Nathan Walsh final - a repeat of Owen Sound's final only a couple months earlier. Beierling won in Owen Sound and was looking for his 2nd victory in what was his 4th-straight finals appearance in Hamilton. Similar to the Owen Sound final, the match required a decisive 3rd-game to determine the winner, and Ray Beierling pulled away to take the 2015 Golden Horseshoe Crokinole Tournament title.

It was an extra bonus for Ray Beierling - not only winning his 3rd-straight NCA tournament title (including the Ontario

Doubles Crokinole Championship in Brucefield, and the Owen Sound tournament), but it was also his birthday. A fact which tournament organizer, Eric Miltenburg, brought up as he awarded Beierling the tournament trophy. It led to a rousing rendition of the "Happy Birthday".

British Columbia Crokinole Championships: Oliver, BC Article from Quin Erzinger

The sun was shining over the Okanagan valley to greet the 30 participants to this year's tournament. As always, the day was started with a visit by Oliver's mayor Ron Hovanes, who returned later in the day to watch the singles finals and present the awards. Play got started with a five game round robin of doubles play. There were six teams in the competitive side and nine teams on the recreational division. After the first five games, the top four teams played again on the competitive side to determine the finalists. After losing the first game in a best of three set, Linda Irvine and Quin Erzinger



Doubles Champions: Quin Erzinger and Linda Irvine (photo credit: Oliver Daily News)

rallied to become this year's doubles victors over Ralph Hargrave and last year's singles champion Adrian Conradi.

Following the round robin, the recreational division reduced to six teams who played again to reach the finals. BC has some very skilled youngsters playing, evidence to this was the combined age of 25 years between sisters Saje and Petal Good who prevailed over the father-son team of Gordon and Jeremy Gunn to take the recreational crown. Gordon and Susan Gunn were the lone representatives from Ontario, hailing from Owen Sound.

After a break for lunch, singles play got started. This year brought a rule change to the system. After playing the ten game round robin, the top 20 shooter was Quin Erzinger with 91. The top four scores on the competitive side (in descending order) belonged to Quin Erzinger, Jody Good, Jordan Ripley, and Ralph Hargrave. They advanced to play each other again to determine the finalists. Ralph Hargraves lost to Jordan Ripley in the bronze final. First place was a rematch from the 2013 tournament. In a thrilling final which involved extra rounds and trick shot 20s, Jody Good defeated Quin Erzinger to take his first singles championship.

In the recreational division, Wilf Paul won third place over Petal Good, with Saje Good claiming the first place title over Jeremy Gunn.

We are looking to host an even better Championship next year in Oliver on the 5th of March, and I hope to see you there!

Forest City Flickers:

London

Article from Ray Beierling

For the 7th consecutive year, the Forest City Flickers hosted the London Crokinole Tournament. 53 players travelled from near and far for a chance to claim one of the tournament crowns.

There was a near even split between recreational and competitive players (26 competitive, 27 recreational) which made tournament rotations work well. Notable top seeded players were absent for various reasons. This opened the door for a potential

new tournament winner, but the road would not be easy with 2 previous WCC Champions still in the field. 3 pools were set up, in both competitive and recreational.

The morning draw passed quickly and the results were tabulated. The top 2 seeds from each pool plus 3 wildcard spots setup the afternoon grouping.

In the Recreational group, Bob Jones, Abijah Jong and Ian Morton topped their respective pools and would lead the charge in Rec Pool A. Paul Trnka, Dave and Kathy Geris would all just miss out of the Pool A placing and settle for fighting it out in Pool B.

In the Competitive group, NCA Tour regulars, Ray Beierling and Jon Conrad, took first place in their pools and the high morning score was set by Dwayne Campbell. Dwayne has been out of action for the last couple of years, but was back in full force this day. Peter Tarle would grab the final spot in the competitive Pool A, narrowly sliding ahead of Matt Brown. At the break a fabulous chilli and soup lunch was served, complete with fresh rolls and cookies.

After the reseeding, round 2 began. The top 4 from each pool would advance to their respective playoffs and everyone was gunning for one of those spots.

Recreational Pool C saw Sharon Watson, Moochie Printup, Mary Hohmann and Caroline Baker prevail, while Fred Smith missed the cutoff by a single point. In Recreational B, Jo-Ann Carter, Dave Geris, Janet Diebel and Len Zettler advanced. Ian Morton topped Rec A with Christina Campbell, John Lichty and Bob Jones in tow.

Competitive C was led by Howard Martin and followed by Joe Richards, Bill Gerris and Brian Henry. The Comp B pool was a tight race with Matt Brown and Reuben Jong tied in points, while Fred Slater took the third position. Ron Reesor snuck through a three way tie break, winning the head to head games despite having less overall 20s, besting Chris Gorsline and Barry Kiggins. Ray Beierling ran away with Comp A, and the next three spots were claimed by Tom Johnston, Rex Johnston and Ab Leitch. Just missing the top 4 were Jon Conrad and Dwayne Campbell.

"Crokinole" – Song

*I wasn't born for diggin' deep holes
I'm not made for pavin' long roads
I ain't cut out to climb high line
poles
But I'm pretty good at crokinole*

*I'm not the type to work in a bank
I'm no good at slappin' on paint
Don't have a knack for makin'
motors crank, no
But I'm pretty good at crokinole*

*So let's play one more
That's what I'm here for
I'm built for making them all
I love the offense
I love my defense
I like 'em bank and fall*

*I ain't much for mowin' thick grass
I'm too slow for workin' too fast
I don't do windows so honey don't
ask
But I'm pretty good at crokinole*

*A go getter maybe I'm not
I'm not known for doin' a lot
But I do my best work when the
pressure's on
I'm pretty good at crokinole*

*So let's play one more
That's what I'm here for
I'm built for making 'em all
I love the offense
I love my defense
I like 'em bank and fall*

*I wasn't born for diggin' deep holes
I'm not made for pavin' long roads
I ain't cut out to climb high line
poles
But I'm pretty good at crokinole
I'm pretty good at crokinole*

[Spoken]

*O let's play one more boys...
That's what I'm here for*

With the playoff participants ready to play, the 3 game playoff round robin began. Congratulations to Christina Campbell, Jo-Ann Carter, and Caroline Baker for claiming the top spots in the Rec A, B and C pools respectively. Bill Geris came from 3rd place to win the Comp C pool and Matt Brown held on to his top seeded qualifying position to claim the Comp B title.

In Competitive A, the top 2 would play a best two out of three final, and after the dust settled, Ab Leitch and Rex Johnston had topped Ray Beierling and Tom Johnston. Ab, who made his first final appearance since the 2008 World Crokinole Championships, got off to a great start against Rex Johnston, who was competing in his first final, and never looked back. The cagey veteran executed a great get ahead and hide strategy and won the title in two straight games.



*2015 Forest City Flickers Champion: Ab Leitch
(photo credit: Crokinole Centre)*

The London Club wants to thank all the visitors for coming and making the tournament a great success. Also, a huge thank you from the players to the London Club for hosting yet another fantastic event.

Ontario Singles Championships: St. Jacobs
Article from Crokinole Centre

Justin Slater had a hot start to the 2014-2015 NCA Tour, but it was the finish that was never in doubt as Slater capped his 2nd NCA Tour title, with his 5th Ontario Singles Championship.

29 players gathered at the St. Jacobs Mennonite Church for the final stop of the 7th National Crokinole Association season. The event is often one of the most competitive as many of the best players, nearing peak form, are in attendance. Mix that with the final push for the end of the year rankings and it is a great tournament.

The preliminary round split the field into 3 groups, with advancement to afternoon pools on the line. Clare Kuepfer (40 points) and John Harvey (39) were barely edged out by Rex Johnston (41) for direct entry into Pool A, despite Harvey scoring the group-high 81 20s.

Tom Johnston went sleepless the night before due to work requirements, but managed to join Ab Leitch, Robert Bonnett and Ray Beierling as the Group B contenders qualifying for Pool A.

While Group C was highlighted by the high score of Justin Slater with 65 of a possible 72 points, there was an incredible 3-way tie between Jon Conrad, Brian Simpson and Eric Miltenburg for the final spot in Pool A. While each player tied each other in their head-to-head games, Conrad would be given the final spot due to 20s.

After a fantastic lunch, the money was on the line as the afternoon play began.

In Pool C, Barry Kiggins had the high 20 score with 58, but failed to make the final, finishing with 39 points for 3rd place. Howard Martin would take the top seed with 47 points, and Roger Vaillancourt would join him in the final

with 44. The final was very tight, with Roger Vaillancourt needing a tiebreaker to win the first game by a score of 6-4. Vaillancourt would then grab the second game of the best of 3 to take the C final.

The battle to reach the Pool B final was also very tight. Clare Kuepfer would be the unfortunate 3rd place finisher (40 points), falling behind Reuben Jongsma (42) and Brian Simpson (47). Jongsma had won their round robin meeting 6-2, but Brian Simpson would get the better of a very competitive final, winning 6-4, 5-3.



*Pool B Winner: Brian Simpson (right) with Tournament Organizer, Howard Marting
(photo credit: Crokinole Centre)*

In Pool A action, Ray Beierling had an extremely solid round robin and finished atop the standings with 46 points. Justin Slater sealed the NCA Tour title when he earned the 2nd seed with 42 points, just ahead of Tom Johnston who continued to have a great day of competition. London tournament champion, Ab Leitch, took the final playoff spot with 37 points. It was that which showed how tight the round robin was, as the 4th place score only earned one point over the 50% score of 36.

In the semifinals, Ray Beierling would get the better of his Varna teammate, Ab Leitch, by a score of 5-3, 6-2. The semifinal between Tom Johnston and Justin Slater was a see-saw affair. Tom Johnston won the first game in a tiebreaker, 6-4. The second game would also go to a tiebreaker, but Slater would fight off elimination to tie the match. In the third game, Slater took over, winning 6-0 to advance to the final.

So with the NCA standings solidified with Justin Slater 1st and Ray Beierling 2nd, the two squared off in the final. Justin Slater

dominated the first game, but Ray Beierling flipped the script in the second and the Ontario Singles final headed to a decisive third game.

The first round was played to a tense tie, but Slater would remain focussed and win the game 5-1, to claim his NCA record-setting 4th straight Ontario Singles Championship.

So the 2014-2015 NCA Tour standings were finalized. Nathan Walsh finished a career-high 3rd place, after a year in which he accumulated 4 different 2nd place finishes. Ray Beierling finished 2nd on the Tour, in what was one of his best Tour's, that included a winning streak of three consecutive tournaments. And Justin Slater won the Tour for his second time (after sharing the title with Ray Beierling in 2010), highlighted by winning the World Championship Doubles event, the Brucefield tournament and the Ontario Singles Championship, as well as a runner-up finish in the WCC Singles event.

So 7 seasons for the NCA Tour are now a part of history. The focus now clearly shifts to the 2015 World Crokinole Championships, and the start of a new NCA Tour.



2014-2015 NCA Tour Champion: Justin Slater (photo credit: Crokinole Centre)

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