

IT'S OUR HOUSE

2020 • CURLING ALBERTA ANNUAL AWARDS EDITION

CURLING ALBERTA 2020 ANNUAL AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Curling Alberta is delighted to announce the recipients of the 2020 Annual Awards.

These awards allow us to honor those extraordinary people who contribute at all levels of our sport, from community grass roots initiatives, youth leaders, ice technicians, and officials, all the way up to our high-performance athletes. We celebrate these individuals who have made a significant contribution to the sport of curling and continue to inspire the athletes of today and tomorrow. As we all know, 2020 is a year like any other and our awards process is no different. Recipients were acknowledged throughout the summer over a Zoom call attended by their nominator, friends and family. As much as we would have liked to celebrate at the annual banquet, being able to bring people together over technology was special in its own way.

It is our sincere pleasure to recognize the 2020 Curling Alberta Annual Award recipients:

TEAM OF THE YEAR:

TEAM DUPONT | LETHBRIDGE CURLING CLUB



Team Dupont is composed of Nanette Dupont (skip), Samantha Davies (third), Kendra Nakagama (second), and Avice DeKelver (lead). This team has accomplished something truly spectacular, winning three medals from the Curling Club National Championship since 2015. As the 2019 Curling Club National Champions, they put in countless hours of hard work and represent Alberta with determination and grace. This past April they were awarded

the 2019 Amateur Team Achievement Award from the Lethbridge Sports Council.

"Team Dupont has played every game with heart and determination, whether it be at a small-town bonspiel, the provincial qualifier, or at the national level. Their level of sportsmanship on and off the ice is truly inspiring."

—Travis Davis

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COACH OF THE YEAR: NICOLE BELLAMY AND BLAIR LENTON



NICOLE BELLAMY
ST. ALBERT CURLING CLUB

“A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life.”

–John Wooden

As coach of Team Molberg, Nicole wears many hats. On top of managing the St. Albert Curling Club, she has devoted countless hours and can add mentor, counsellor and driver to her skill set. This is her fourth year coaching the team through many successes and disappointments and she is always there to provide support and encouragement.

Nicole also plays a large role in the St. Albert Junior Elite Development Program and is fiercely dedicated to junior curling. Nominated by members of Team Molberg, all detailed how Nicole’s time, guidance, kindness and motivation has helped form each of them not only into strong athletes, but good people as well.

“Nominating Nicole for this award is our chance to honor her in a public way for the sacrifices and commitment that she has given to us and to thank her for the instrumental part that she has had in forming us into who we are today.”

–Nathan Molberg, Skip



BLAIR LENTON
AIRDRIE CURLING CLUB

Every great sporting team needs a good coach and Team Cinnamon found a great one in Blair. His communication with the team, pre and post game routines, fun and fitness go beyond more than you expect from a coach. His kindness extends to the families of his curlers and everyone around him. His dedication to excellence and nurturing a love of the game is unlike any other coach you will meet. His players will all tell you that they love him for the coach that he is and the friend that they all have gained.

Blair has coached for many years at the local, regional and national level. He is highly sought after for his expertise and knowledge of the game and his ability to improve the quality of his players on and off the ice. He is one of the kindest, most dedicated people you will meet. Blair also sits on the Board of Directors for the Airdrie Curling Club and the Alberta Junior Curling Tour. If it has to do with curling, Blair will do it.

“Blair is a leader in the sport, a role model to all of us in the curling community and example to so many on what it means to be a great coach. I am so thankful to have such an amazing person in my life who works so hard and wants to help me become a better curler. I hope he knows what an impact he has had on me and my curling journey. “

–Zoe Cinnamon, Skip

INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR:

CRYSTAL GRAHAM
SYLVAN LAKE CURLING CLUB

Nominated by Joyce Thrush and the Sylvan Lake Curling Club Board of Directors, Crystal Graham is 2020’s Instructor of the Year. Since 2017, Crystal has been instrumental in relaunching the junior program after the club had been closed for three years. She was also responsible for accessing funding from the Town of Sylvan Recreation, Arts and Culture Grant, which was used to purchase brooms, sliders, and other instructional tools. This ensured that the costs of participating in junior curling was not a restriction to anyone with an interest in the sport.

Crystal has an inspiring and fun way with the children that makes them want to do their best in the sport. She has spent many hours working with junior curlers to help them enjoy bonspiels, often acting as their coach. She organizes the local junior bonspiel, is the lead instructor for several curling clinics and is the Director for Junior Curling on the Sylvan Lake Curling Club Board of Directors.

“I nominate Crystal because of her mentorship, dedication, her passion for the game and most of all her countless hours put in that has made the Junior Program the most successful league in Sylvan Lake.”

–Chelsea Milan



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: FLORA GRIFFITH AND ATINA JOHNSTON



FLORA GRIFFITH CROWSNEST CURLING CLUB

Flora was nominated by Lisa Schmidt, a curler who Flora started coaching in 1987. Several letters were included in the nomination from people that recognized Flora for her dedication to the sport of curling, her home rink of Crowsnest Curling Club and her community.

Each testimonial shared a common theme of how Flora continues to pour her heart and soul into the sport. She has been instrumental in maintaining the junior and high school curling programs, she is the first to volunteer for every single event the Crowsnest Curling Club is hosting, and she has made a tremendous impact on the lives of junior curlers that had the pleasure to be coached and mentored by her. Flora is selfless with her time and her enthusiasm for giving back to curling is contagious.

“The heart of a volunteer is not measured by its size, but by the commitment to making a difference in the lives of other people. Curling is not just a hobby, but it’s a part of me, it’s in my blood because of Flora.”

–Brenna Draper



ATINA JOHNSTON OKOTOKS CURLING CLUB

Nominated by Mike Libbus and the Okotoks Curling Club Board of Directors, Atina Johnston is the co-recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award. Over the past year Atina served as co-chair for the 2020 Sentinel Storage Alberta Scotties Tournament of Hearts. With her incredible leadership and knowledge, Atina contributed countless hours in organizing over 180 volunteers and the host committee. Her drive and determination that she displayed in her playing career definitely came to the forefront so that this event could go off without a hitch.

Atina is also the leader and organizer of the Okotoks Competitive Junior Academy and the U18 Bonspiel Chair. Her passion for the sport and the values that were instilled through her experiences as a high-level athlete is what she continues to pass on to the future of our great game. The attention to technique and her willingness to continue to learn is what makes her an incredible coach and team leader. Every person that has had the opportunity to work, volunteer and train with Atina strongly benefits from the experience.

“During the event, while working her full-time job she was a shift supervisor on top of Event Chair where she took charge and made sure that everyone understood their roles and responsibilities. She really was the face of our event. It would not have been the success it was without her.”

–Mike Libbus

CURLERS CORNER YOUTH SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD: JOSH KROKER AND TOMMY WAITE



JOSH KROKER LETHBRIDGE CURLING CLUB

Josh was nominated by Rick Kawa of the Lethbridge Curling Club and Don Chandler, coach of the Catholic Central High School Curling teams. Like many curlers, Josh's dream is to curl at the Olympics one day. In many ways he is on the right path, for he is the model of

sportsmanship, encouraging his own teammates to celebrate their opponent's well-made shots and to move past mistakes gracefully. He is respectful of his teammates, coaches, competitors, event officials and umpires. Josh is very active in the Lethbridge Curling Club, where he is very well known among the members and in the city of Lethbridge. Known as "Mr. Curling" or "The King of Kensington," the joke is that he needs to show up 30 minutes before games to just say hi to his fans.

If Josh's past volunteering is any indication of what his future volunteering might look like, then the curling clubs where Josh becomes a member will have an incredible asset in this young man. Outside of school, he is involved with Big Brothers and Sisters, is the co-president of the Rotary Interact club and volunteers for local politician Rachel Harder, all while maintaining a 95%+ average in school, curling three nights a week and bonspielsing on many weekends.

Don Chandler, Josh's high school curling coach, details how he is a pleasure to work with. He describes Josh as personable, enthusiastic and one of the most coachable curlers that he has known in over 20 years. He knows the importance of being approachable and personable and uses these skills to promote his local club's Junior Program. He is a great help in coaching curling rookies, a stellar ambassador for the sport, and a true representative for his home city of Lethbridge.

"Josh's success is a testament to his curling skill, but also to his attitude. He makes those who play with him better by keeping the game fun for them. He is an excellent curler; but, an even better proponent for the sport."

–Don Chandler

TOMMY WAITE HUNTINGTON HILLS CURLING CLUB

Over many years, Tommy Waite has demonstrated a consistent character, a love of the sport of curling and a real desire and aptitude to not only learn for himself, but also offer support and encouragement to his fellow young curlers. Tommy is an athlete that just exudes a positive attitude about his experiences on the ice, which then in turn helps other curlers to feel that maybe they want to try it.

As a volunteer with the Little Rock's Program, he is patient and kind and the young curlers love having a junior coach to help them on the ice. Tommy has taken the Club Coach course this year so that he could put in the time and effort to give back to the sport and to a team that needed a coach. There is nothing better

than seeing a young curler reach out to the other kids to get them excited about trying a new level of the sport.

Sportsmanship is not just an idea, it is an action. The act of helping, teaching, encouraging and accepting. A true sportsman has a passion for their sport and a compassion towards



their teammates, opponents, and officials. Tommy succeeds due to his positive actions and words. Character and reputation – who you are is your character – what others think you are is your reputation. Tommy Waite is solid in both and is an amazing young man that will be a great asset to the Huntington Hills program and sport of curling for many years.

"Tommy as a curler has the attitude all coaches wish they could have in an athlete. Qualities of a sportsman are character, fairness, courage, self-control, respect, integrity and so much more. When Tommy walks off the ice, sometimes you really can't tell right away if he won or lost as he carries himself with pride either way and shows pride of his team."

–Barb Dickson

CLUB OF THE YEAR: SEXSMITH CURLING CLUB



The Sexsmith Curling Club is a name that finds its way into all conversations about curling in Zone 8, a part of Curling Alberta's great north. Featuring a magnificent facility, promoting respectful competition and embracing a grand sense of community, the people of Sexsmith reveal a true sense of pride for curling, sport and participation.

The staff at the Sexsmith Curling Club have always exhibited incredible ice maintenance and grooming in preparation for every game or practice. The club's annual prized event, Sexsmith Men's and Ladies Bonspiel, features 40 teams on four sheets where the ice is scraped between every draw. Impressive to say the least.

A commitment to attracting and supporting curlers of all ages in Alberta is one of the commendable features of the club's programming. Along with hosting the Peace Curling Tour Championship for the past 12 years, Sexsmith Curling Club successfully hosted the 2020 U18 Optimist Provincial Championship. With Chairperson BJ Clarke at the helm, this event was a tremendous success thanks to strong community support and a team of exceptional volunteers.

The club is a pronounced spotlight for a busy weekly league curling regime, provincial qualifiers, clinics, drop-in curling and varied curling events. Along with its many volunteers, the Board is always eager to open the doors to local and provincial talent which enhances the reputation of this northern establishment.

Sexsmith Curling Club is geographically, but most importantly located in the heart of the town and its people. It is incredibly active and well-managed and a true reflection of a club that is committed to being a poster club for the sport of curling.



"The Sexsmith Curling Club has been groomed and now grown into a 'home away from home' for so many. This curling community has opened its doors proudly to all and has respectfully garnered a reputation for providing the curling experience of a lifetime."

—Brenda Asmussen

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR:

BRENDA ROGERS CALGARY WINTER CLUB AND CURLING ALBERTA

Brenda Rogers was nominated by Allison Earle for her outstanding contributions to the sport of curling across countless events, roles and venues. She gives back at all levels of the sport as a player, fan, organizer, official, promoter and leader. Brenda leads by example and always conducts herself with a personal level of attention to detail, integrity and care that takes an enormous amount of commitment and dedication.

A passionate volunteer, Brenda serves as the Head of Officials for Curling Alberta. She is always kind, always thoughtful and a champion of promoting the learning and love of curling to curling athletes of all ages and scope.

"She has redefined what it means to be an official, raising the bar in terms of professional demeanor, knowledge and experience. As a life-long learner, Brenda gives her time selflessly and always sets the tone to ensure that her fellow officials and the event are prepared and organized to facilitate fair play."

—Allison Earle



ICE TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR:

MARK PETA | COALDALE GRANITE CLUB



Nominated by Alyson Archibald and Kyle Beauchamp, Mark has been the Ice Technician for the Coaldale Granite Club for the past five

years, managing all operations relating to the building and the ice. He uses his background and experience to ensure the ice is keen. A guest traveling around the province said that it is the best in Southern Alberta which is a tremendous compliment. In addition to his equipment and building maintenance duties, Mark manages a group of volunteers to put ice in each year and interfaces with

the membership on a weekly basis for feedback on how to improve the ice. Mark is there countless hours to ensure the ice is prepped, scraped and ready for each group that fills the draws throughout the day. The club hosts up to eight bonspiels every year and Mark is there from start to finish to ensure that the ice is fantastic.

Mark is known for his stability, reliability and humility. Simply provide him with the required date and times, and everything is always ready. Most people who curl in Coaldale know Mark and what a great ice maker he is. His dedication, positive attitude and commitment to his craft makes Mark a deserving recipient of the Ice Technician of the Year award.

“The time and commitment that Mark has provided to the Coaldale Granite Club, I believe has helped Coaldale’s reputation of having some of the best curling ice in our region. The resulting effect has been an increase to our bonspiel attendance year over year and a stabilized membership base. This has helped keep our club financially viable and our doors open. It is with Mark’s commitment that our community has a club they are proud to be part of, and visitors a place that they will remember the next curling season.”

–Kyle Beauchamp

PRESIDENT’S AWARD:

BARB DICKSON | HUNTINGTON HILLS

The Curling Alberta President’s Award is an annual award given to an individual who has contributed greatly to the sport of curling in Alberta. I am very lucky and thankful to be given the opportunity to award this for the second year. This year, like last, left me with the challenge to select a single person. Alberta is incredibly lucky to have so many people dedicate their lives to this sport in so many ways. This year, I’ve been inspired by someone who has focused much of her attention to getting youth out on the ice. Not focused on high performance, or reaching for the podium, rather, just getting kids to try curling, while making friends, memories, and laughing along the way. Trust me when I say there is a lot of laughing.

The 2020 President’s award goes to Barb Dickson, Curling Manager of the Huntington Hill Curling Club. Barb has been managing curling at the community centre for over 20 years. This year, she is retiring. A retirement that unfortunately has come earlier than she has planned as she continues to fight breast cancer.



Through the past 20 years, Barb has been a well known, loved, dedicated, and supportive voice for the sport of curling, for her club, Alberta, and beyond.

While running a successful and active eight sheet club, which has over 750 members and multiple leagues, Barb consistently commits to supporting and going above and beyond for youth curling. During her time as Curling Manager, she has run, grown, and evolved a successful Little Rocks and Junior program. While leading these programs, Barb focuses not only on the fundamentals of curling, but also good sportsmanship, safety and most importantly – having fun!

In addition to her youth programs, Barb has always been available to introduce people to curling through Learn to Curl instruction, corporate events, Corporate Challenge, international visitors and spending time with anyone who wants to learn the sport. She will always make time to ensure everyone has a chance to experience the game of curling.

Outside her Huntington Hills Curling Club, Barb has volunteered her time to support curling with several leadership roles. Most recently she has served on the Board of the Southern Alberta Curling Association and the Alberta Curling Federation prior to amalgamation. During the amalgamation process, Barb advocated and supported that important initiative with passion. For several years now, Barb has been a vocal voice at the Calgary Area Curling Club Managers Association holding several leadership roles within. With each leadership role, Barb dedicated her time and energy to these organizations, and with her many years of experience, her advice and feedback were a valued and welcomed addition.

With all this in consideration, Barb has given so much to the sport, this alone would qualify her for recognition. However, there are three accomplishments that need to be highlighted, and in many ways, have elevated Barb's contributions to curling.

Over the past few years, Barb has identified a gap in high school curling opportunities in Calgary. With this in mind, she has worked with many stakeholders to bring Calgary back into the mix for high school curling, which led to the creation of a city-wide high school league and bonspiel. Both are well attended and growing, which is

progress onto the provincial event, and achieved great success thanks to the dedication from Barb.

Over the past 13 years, Barb's crowning achievement on behalf of the Huntington Hills Curling Club, is the development of the Noel Spiel. This annual event, held in December, has been sold out since



especially encouraging because these opportunities keep our youth engaged and active through at a critical age to promote lifelong participation in sport. Without Barb's efforts in this area and consideration of our next generation of curlers, high school curling may still not be a reality for Calgary.

This year, Curling Alberta introduced a new program called Hit Draw Tap. Targeted at kids aged 6-13, this program complimented what Barb has been teaching to this age group for years. Barb immediately grabbed onto this opportunity, and ran over 60 kids through the program in one day. Considering 450 curlers participated province wide, this was a tremendous success. With each young curler delivering five shots, this was a very full and busy day which was executed with great passion and full of fun! Several of her students qualified to

inception and attracts over 100 kids not only from Calgary, but neighbouring communities. The whole premise is based on fun! The event includes two divisions of kids under 15 years old. There are two sheets for the Little Rocks (kids under 9) using smaller and lighter rocks, and the remaining six sheets are for the Juniors (aged 9-15) who can throw regular rocks.

The day is busy, but so worth all the planning involved to make it happen. All teams receive the Olympic treatment! Every Little Rock and Junior athlete is marched down the sheets of ice and through the lounge among all their parents and grandparents holding back tears while being lead by a Bag Piper. Each team carries a large sign with their team name and two lucky kids are chosen to carry the Alberta

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and Canada flag. It's quite the start to the day! Pizza is served for lunch, and to everyone's surprise, even Santa comes for a visit. After several games, the awards happen, and Barb, full of pride, hands out trophies to all the participants to wrap up the special day. Again, this event without a doubt has had a major effect on curling with well over 1500 kids participating through the years. Many of these kids have become aspiring athletes, coaches, volunteers, and lifelong curlers.

When you add on the students who have participated in her other youth programs, that number easily becomes more than 3,000 kids over the past 20 years.

Although Barb might be stepping back from the sport earlier than she would like, her legacy will last for many years to come.

One of her past students has recently shared this sentiment with Barb:

"Barb I can't thank you enough for introducing me to the sport I've now fallen in love with and will play for the rest of my life. Every awesome memory I have from curling is all thanks to you."

Thank you, Barb, for your years of dedication to our sport of curling. Without a doubt, although retirement may feel earlier than desired, curling is far better now because of your involvement, the programs you have developed, and the curlers you have inspired.

