

IT'S OUR HOUSE

2022 • CURLING ALBERTA ANNUAL AWARDS EDITION

2022 CHAMPIONS AND ALBERTA REPRESENTATIVES



Team White, Senior World Champions

Wade White - Skip
Barry Chwedoruk - Third
Dan Holowaychuk - Second
George White - Lead
Lac la Biche Curling Club

Team Koe, Tim Hortons Brier

Kevin Koe - Skip
B.J. Neufeld - Third
John Morris - Second
Ben Hebert - Lead
Carter Rycroft - Alternate
John Dunn, Coach
Glencoe Club (Calgary)

Team Walker, Scotties Tournament of Hearts

Laura Walker - Skip
Kate Cameron - Third
Taylor McDonald - Second
Nadine Scotland - Lead
Dana Ferguson - Alternate
Shannon Pynn - Coach
Saville Community Sports Centre (Edmonton)

Team Tran/Sluchinski, Mixed Doubles

Brittany Tran
Aaron Sluchinski
Glencoe Club (Calgary)

Team Gray-Withers, U20 Women Champions

Serena Gray-Withers - Skip
Zoe Cinnamon - Third
Brianna Cullen - Second
Anna Munroe - Lead
Garry Coderre - Coach
Saville Community Sports Centre (Edmonton)

Team Booth, U20 Women Team Alberta 2

Claire Booth - Skip
Kaylee Raniseth - Third
Raelyn Helston - Second
Kate Ector - Lead
Deryk Kuny - Coach
Calgary Curling Club

Team Tao, U20 Men

Johnson Tao - Skip
Jaedon Neuert - Third
Benjamin Morin - Second
Andrew Nowell - Lead
Skip Wilson - Coach
Saville Community Sports Centre (Edmonton)

Team Runciman, U20 Men, Team Alberta 2

Justin Runciman - Skip
Steven Leong - Third
Gryffen Algot - Second
Carter Elder - Lead
James Ballance - Alternate
JC Guerette - Coach
Leduc Curling Club/
Sherwood Park Curling Club/Ellerslie Curling Club

Team Plett, Optimist U18 Girls Champion

Myla Plett - Skip
Rachel Jacques - Third
Alyssa Nedohin - Second
Lauren Miller - Lead
Chloe Fediuk - Alternate
Blair Lenton - Coach
Airdrie Curling Club/
Sherwood Park

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**Team Booth, Optimist
U18 Girls, Team Alberta 2**

Claire Booth - Skip
Kaylee Raniseth - Third
Raelyn Helston - Second
Kate Ector - Lead
Chloe Johnston - Alternate
Deryk Kuny - Coach
Calgary Curling Club

**Team Burton, Optimist
U18 Boys Champion**

Kinley Burton - Skip
Justice Jacques - Third
Oliver Burton - Second
Colby Yacey - Lead
Nate - Burton - Alternate
Tom Kitagawa - Coach
Saville Community Sports
Centre (Edmonton)

**Team Wipf, Optimist U18
Boys, Team Alberta 2**

Kenan Wipf - Skip
Zachary Duncan - Third
Michael Keenan - Second
Max Cinnamon - Lead
Nolan Duncan - Alternate
Penny Duncan - Coach
North Hill Curling Club
(Calgary) & Cochrane
Curling Club

**Team Duncan, Curlers
Corner U15 Champion**

Nolan Duncan - Skip
Spencer Else - Third
Max Weber - Second
Kesler Bachek - Lead
Tim Krassman - Coach
North Hill Curling Club
(Calgary)

**Team Foster, Master
Women's Champions**

Diane Foster - Skip
Sandra Jenkins - Third
Karen Morrison - Second
Adele Williamson - Lead
Garrison Curling Club/
Inglewood Curling Club
(Calgary)

**Team Pendergast,
Master Men's
Champions**

Mickey Pendergast - Skip
Robert Armitage - Third
Randy Ponich - Second
Kevin Pendergast - Lead
Red Deer Curling Club/
North Hill Curling Club
(Calgary)

**U21 Mixed Doubles
Champions**

Subasthika Thangadurai
Ky Macaulay
Gord Copithorne - Coach
Cochrane Curling Club

**Team Foster, Senior
Women's Champions**

Diane Foster - Skip
Karen Morrison - Third
Bev Buckley - Second
Darlene Hall - Lead
Inglewood Curling Club
(Calgary)/Calgary Winter
Club

**Team Pahl, Senior Men's
Champions**

James Pahl - Skip
Mark Klinck - Third
Kelly Mauthe - Second
John Schmidt - Lead
Cory Wilson - Alternate
Sherwood Park Curling
Club

**Team Muise,
Mixed Champions**

Morgan Muise - Skip
Ky Macaulay - Third
Shana Snell - Second
Brad Kokoroyannis - Lead
Calgary Curling Club

**Team Crough, 2021 World
Junior Qualifiers**

Elysa Crough - Skip
Quinn Prodaniuk - Third
Kim Bonneau - Second
Julianna MacKenzie - Lead
Mark Johnson - Coach
Crestwood Curling Club

**Team North Hill, Nature's
Bounty Women's Club
Champions**

Vanessa McConnell - Skip
Tia-Jayne Clark - Third
Valerie Ekelund - Second
Alice MacKay - Lead
North Hill Curling Club
(Calgary)

**Team Irricana, Nature's
Bounty Men's Club
Champions**

Robert Johnson - Skip
Lyle Kent - Third
Steve Thomas - Second
Nathan Relitz - Lead
Irricana Curling Club

**Team Smart, Wheelchair
Champion**

Jack Smart - Skip
Martin Purvis - Third
Wendy Frazier - Second
Bruno Yizek - Lead
Anne Hibberd - Alternate
Garrison Curling Club
(Calgary)

**Team Tao, 2021 World
Junior Qualifiers**

Johnson Tao - Skip
Jaedon Neuert - Third
Benjamin Morin - Second
Andrew Nowell - Lead
Skip Wilson - Coach
Saville Community Sport
Centre

2022 AWARD RECIPIENTS

CLUB OF THE YEAR:

Grand Prairie Curling Centre

TEAMS OF THE YEAR:

**Team Plett
Team White**

COACH OF THE YEAR:

Tim Krassman

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:

Janessa Allan

INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR:

Taina Smiley

ICE TECHNICIANS OF THE YEAR:

Merle and Cody Smith

**CURLER'S CORNER YOUTH
SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD:**

Jaxon Hiebert

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR:

Sherry Cormier

PARTNER OF THE YEAR:

The Optimist Group

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

John Morris

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Like many sports, curling faced adversity for the second straight year as COVID-19 restrictions evolved and slowly eased. Despite these challenges, community curling centres opened their doors to welcome members back, and players returned to the ice for leagues and events. Qualifiers proceeded, and our provincial champions were crowned through play. For the first time in over two years, fans filled the stands to cheer on their teams, with face paint, signs and pure joy on full display.

Resilience, creativity, and a community like no other, were the driving forces that paved the way for curling's return to the elusive normal. Not all the way back, but steady and determined steps forward. There was a definite energy in the air, as momentum built and excitement brewed at the return of curlers to clubs, leagues, bonspiels and championships.

Many people were instrumental to the success of the 2022 curling season. To

each person nominated, we sincerely thank you for your contributions to curling this year. Your time, efforts, and accomplishments were noticed and appreciated, and we celebrate your contributions to our great sport. To those whose nominations rose to the top and are being recognized, congratulations on your achievements. Thank you for your leadership, dedication, and positive impact on the 2022 season.

Curling Alberta's staff and Board of Directors are pleased to welcome award recipients to our annual Awards Celebration and Golf Tournament at the Quarry Golf Club. We look forward to enjoying time with friends, competitors, sponsors and curling club staff from across Alberta to celebrate our sport, share memories, and build energy towards the upcoming season.

Wishing everyone well,

Steven Young
President, Curling Alberta



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Another memorable season is in the books. Now it's time for celebration and reflection.

Each one of us has experienced the last several years differently. For myself, I think one of the positives has been the feeling of seeing the world with fresh eyes. The past season has brought an ever-heightened appreciation for all those who contribute to the sport of curling in Alberta. Despite the many challenges we've all continued to face, we have continued to grow and stay connected in order to better support one another. I have been inspired time and again by the people who have made our return to the ice, and our curling communities, possible and joyous.

To our champions and the recipients of this year's Curling Alberta awards, you are the true leaders and trailblazers that inspire us and represent the best our sport has to offer. Thank you for your extraordinary efforts, tireless contributions, and passion for curling. We are all honoured to celebrate your dedication and achievements with you, and we are grateful for the opportunity to reflect how we continue to lend each other the strength to meet our challenges head on. We are all so incredibly proud of you and our entire community.

Take good care over the summer and I look forward to seeing you back on the ice this fall.

Jill Richard
Executive Director, Curling Alberta



CLUB OF THE YEAR RECIPIENT

GRANDE PRAIRIE CURLING CENTRE CLUB OF THE YEAR

Within the city of Grande Prairie and its surrounding areas, the GPCC is a vibrant hub of curling, bringing together those new to the sport, to seasoned competitive athletes. Attracting and hosting major events and a positive impact on their community is what they do best, leading the way in creating inclusive and safe environments for people to connect, inspire and achieve together.

They offer a wide range of opportunities to engage curlers of all ages and abilities, including school programs, stick curling, weekly leagues, a competitive junior elite program and learn to curl sessions. While remaining committed to their grass roots, the GPCC's future vision involves becoming a year-round Multi-Sport Excellence Centre and is firmly dedicated to establishing Grande Prairie as a Canadian Centre for hosting major events

"The Grande Prairie Curling Centre's (GPCC) contribution to the sport and success in the curling community, shone brightest during a time of difficulty and uncertainty. Their willingness to partner with Curling Alberta to host the flagship men's and women's combined championship set them apart as Club of the Year. This was proven repeatedly over a 12-month period, when the dedicated team of staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to assist their club, community, and Curling Alberta, to positively overcome numerous obstacles to successfully run a major event safely during a pandemic."

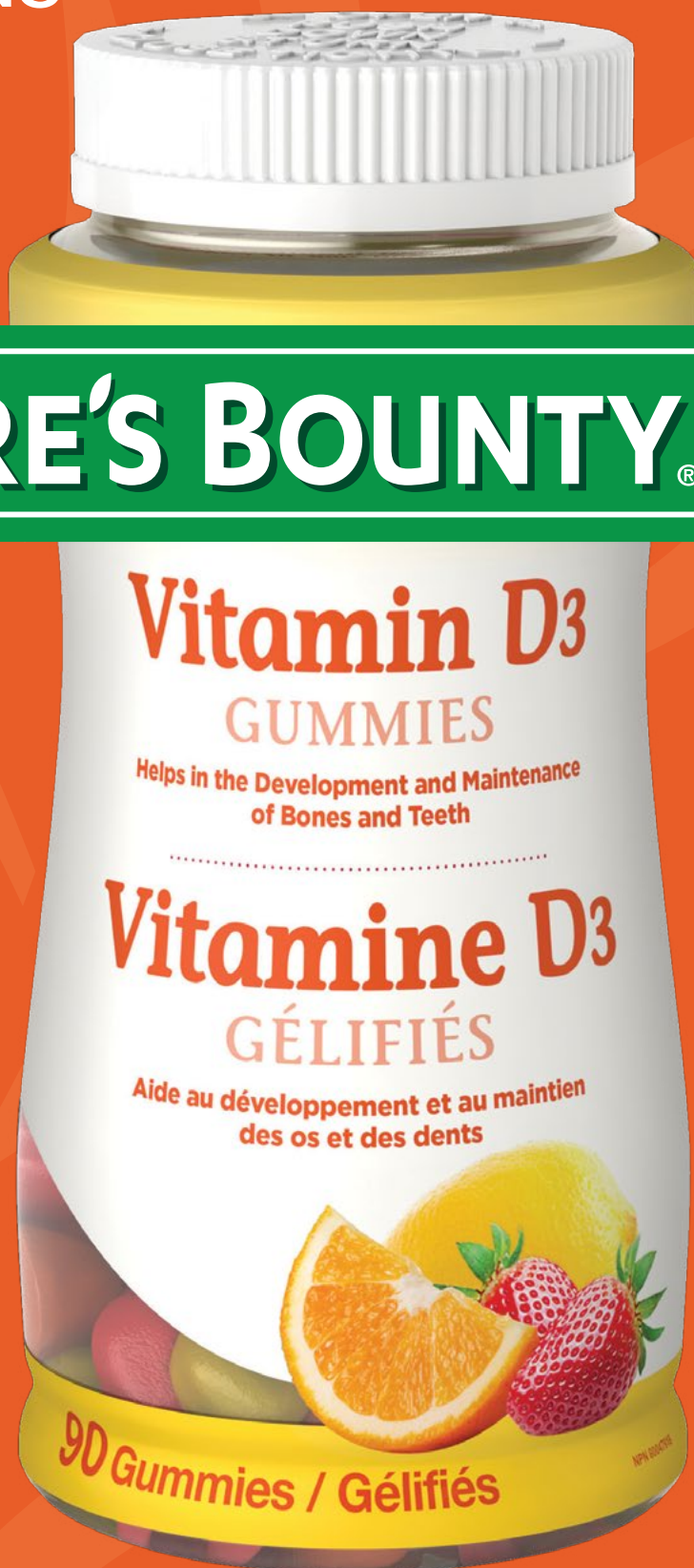
-Michael Laderoute, Championship Coordinator, Curling Alberta

at the regional, provincial, national and world level.

Thanks to the outstanding leadership of the Board, the hard work of the GPCC's exceptional staff, the guidance and energy of Operations and Marketing Manager, Layne Luckwell, Executive Manager Colin Griffith, and the overwhelming contributions of their volunteers, Curling Alberta is delighted to recognize the Grande Prairie Curling Centre as Club of the Year.



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TEAMS OF THE YEAR

TEAM PLETT

AIRDRIE CURLING CLUB/ SHERWOOD PARK CURLING CLUB

It was an all-around outstanding year for Team Plett, a U18/U20 Girls team based out of the Airdrie and Sherwood Park Curling Clubs. Their list of accolades is substantial, and was capped off with a national title at the U18 Canadian Championships in May.

Skip Myla Plett, third Rachel Jacques, second Alyssa Nedohin, lead Lauren Miller, alternate Chloe Fediuk, and Coach Blair Lenton took Alberta's junior curling world by storm this past season, winning the Banff U18, Sherwood Park U20, Okotoks U20, and AJCT Player's Championship. They were the top team on the U18 Alberta Junior Tour Team Ranking System (AJTRS) and ranked third in the U20 division.

After winning the Optimist U18 Girls Provincial Championships in Hinton, Team Plett was off to Oakville to compete at the U18 Canadian Curling Championships in Oakville. Playing against the best junior curlers in Canada, the team put on quite a performance, bringing home a gold medal. The girls were not the only star performers, as Coach Blair Lenton was awarded the highly coveted Fair Play Coaching award as chosen by the tournament officials.

Regionally, Team Plett was the best U18 team in Alberta during the 2021-22 season. Their high level of performance and commitment to excellence has earned them the honour of being Curling Alberta's Team of the Year.



"We are so thrilled to have had the fun, rewarding year of curling that we did. After 2020, we will forever remember that stepping on that ice to compete is a privilege, and we hope that we will take that reminder with us for life."

-Team Plett

TEAM WHITE

LAC LA BICHE AND DISTRICT CURLING CLUB

Lac La Biche County has certainly made their mark on the world curling stage, thanks to Wade White and his senior men's curling team. Riding a wave of momentum this season, skip Wade White, third Barry Chwedoruk, second Dan Holowaychuk, and lead George White, won the Everest Canadian Seniors Men's Championship to clinch their spot at the 2022 World Senior Curling Championships in Geneva.

Geneva is a long way from the small hamlet of La La Biche, Alberta, but a core group of family and friends had traveled across the world to cheer on Team White on in the gold medal game. With a 6-3 victory over the Czech Republic, Team White brought home their second senior men's world curling championship title.



Playing at this level requires a great deal of hard work, dedication, and commitment, and each member of Team White consistently stepped up to the plate. While it may take a village to support a team, it takes a special team of athletes to inspire that steadfast pride and love of the game from their hometown club to curling fans across Alberta.

Congratulations Team White, for being Curling Alberta's Team of the Year.

COACH OF THE YEAR

TIM KRASSMAN

It is with great pleasure that the players and parents of Team Duncan nominated Tim Krassman for his exceptional contributions to the sport of curling as Coach of the Year.

Having won multiple provincial titles and a national title, Tim possesses a clear knowledge of the many facets of the game. His list of accomplishments is impressive, but such a list does not inherently make one a good coach. Through conversations and observations, Tim quickly learned about the boys and demonstrated an investment in them as individuals, both on and off the ice. He respects each curler for who they are, inclusive of all of their strengths and challenges. His personalized feedback is reflective of their unique learning styles and emotional needs, and has helped each one become all-round better athletes.

Throughout the season, Tim worked with the team to set, reflect on, and adapt goals to help the boys reach their potential. Tim's expectations were clear: 'have fun, be a good teammate, leave it all on the ice'. He viewed each event as a learning opportunity. Going into the U15 provincials, the initial goal was to make the playoffs and Tim didn't hesitate to help them set new goals after each playoff game. To help them achieve both short- and long-term objectives, Tim leveraged the Enhanced Coaching rules and effectively used coaching interactions; he gave immediate feedback when required, but also knew

when to let them make their own decisions in order for them to learn in the long run.

The boys work hard for Tim and each other because he inspires them and their respect for him is undoubted. They were often the last sheet of curlers on the ice at practice. On the rare occasion when Tim's absence from practice was unavoidable, they followed Tim's plans and they conducted themselves as they would if he was there. Given their young age, it might have been tempting for them to lose focus, but they

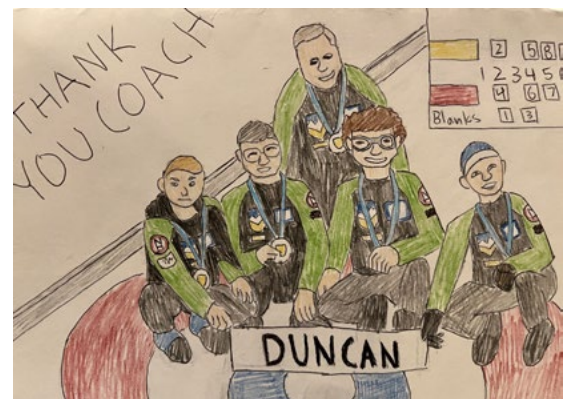
"Tim, with respect and integrity, selflessly gives of his skill, experience, and passion for the game to mentor the boys in order to make them better curlers, teammates, and citizens. His impact in the sport can be seen not just in these four athletes, but throughout junior curling in Alberta."

worked hard because they wanted Tim to know they spent their time wisely.

Tim took four boys, with varied skills, personalities, and experience with competitive curling and led them from underdogs to a U15 provincial title in just five months. His impact on this team is impressive, however, his influence goes beyond Team Duncan's successes. As a volunteer, Tim has helped curlers and coaches in the North Hill U18 Advanced Junior Program and prior to that, the

Medicine Hat Junior Curling Program. The impression he made in Medicine Hat was evidenced by the number of his former curlers who came to cheer on Tim's team at Provincials and were seeking opportunities for photos and advice with their former coach. Three of the top five curlers in this year's qualifying round of the provincial Hit, Draw, Tap competition have also worked with Tim at some point. He shows genuine interest and unwavering commitment to all his players, often watching either in person or via livestream and showing encouragement on social media. Tim's influence extends to coaches as well. Because he is approachable, it is not uncommon to see other coaches look to Tim for advice.

Team Duncan's success as U15 Provincial Champions and winners of the AJCT Player's Championship is a direct result of Tim's coaching. He patiently worked with them to develop their skills in a way that would challenge them but foster a love of the game. A positive role model who exudes kindness, patience, and respect in all he does, he helped shape the boys' personal development including learning how to win and lose with grace. His experience and wisdom have helped him to know when to let the boys make mistakes and how to learn from them. Although he is Team Duncan's coach, the profound influence he's had on junior curling in Alberta can be felt on a larger scale and will leave an impact for years to come.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



JANESSA ALLAN GRIMSHAW CURLING CLUB

Following a lengthy closure from 2010 – 2015, the Grimshaw Curling Club reopened with Janessa Allen at the helm as President. She has played a significant role ever since, organizing the annual Ice Breaker, Ladies, our Farmers & Friends, Truckers & Operators bonspiels, as well as our special 80th and 85th Anniversary spiels. She manages all the registrations, prizes, silent auction items, and any other fundraisers including raffles and 50/50s during the events.

Whatever needs to be done, Janessa automatically pitches in. When she volunteers to help, she gives that project much of her time and attention, seeing it through to completion. She has managed the club's lounge, volunteering many hours during bonspiels, league and fun nights. Janessa oversees all league registrations and schedules, as well as maintaining all the club's social media accounts. Her regular posts regarding club events and bonspiels, and updates submitted to the local newspaper, keep the local community engaged and positively promotes the club at many levels.

"Janessa is extremely dedicated to the Grimshaw Curling Club and curling as a sport. She constantly helps around the Club, whether it be in the bar, kitchen or even supporting the ice crew during busy bonspiels. Janessa makes sure to support other local clubs by curling in their events to help promote the sport of curling within our area."

Janessa has successfully applied for several grants for upgrades within the Grimshaw Curling Club, including the recent one to the local County of Northern Lights for just under \$20,000 to help replace the Ice Surface Boards which were becoming a safety hazard. She is instrumental in raising funds for a much-needed new ice plant, including more than \$64,500 from the local Municipalities.

Her leadership skills have helped guide the Grimshaw Curling Club forward, making it a community hub where people gather and socialize. "Without Janessa, the Grimshaw Curling Club would not be open today," said Ben Hill. "She was instrumental in the club's reopening and plays a significant role in the day-to-day operations. I can think of nobody more deserving than Janessa Allan for Curling Alberta's Volunteer of the Year Award."

Congratulations, Janessa, and thank you for your tireless contributions to not only your home club in Grimshaw, but to your community and the sport of curling.

INSTRUCTOR OF THE YEAR



TAINA SMILEY ST. ALBERT CURLING CLUB

As Assistant Manager with the St. Albert Curling Club, Taina is responsible for a number of tasks ranging from draw master for various bonspiels to overseeing curling instructions of youth and adult curling. Taina is the lead instructor for Adult Learn to Curl, leads all the school groups, and is in her fifth year as Head Coach of the St. Albert Junior Elite Development Program.

Well known for her technical coaching ability, Taina has been involved with hundreds of athletes, ranging from club curlers to Olympians. She oversees and coordinates both the Little Rocks and St. Albert Junior Gold programs, and grows the program by helping curlers transition from the club level to competitive athletes. As head coach of the Concordia Thunder Curling Team, she has guided them to many accomplishments including two CCAA national men's curling championships.

For the 2021/2022 curling season, Taina also began coaching Team Donaldson, who curled on the Alberta Junior Curling Tour, won a U15 bonspiel, and was a quarter finalist in U15 Provincials. Each member of that young and upcoming team has nothing but positive things to say about their coach.

"Taina has really helped me develop in the past year. She helped me improve my delivery and strategy a lot," said Rilen Donaldson.

"I have been fortunate to train with some really great instructors. But Taina has really helped me develop so much further. This year I feel I have grown so much in a short period of time. She has really helped me learn about strategy of the game as well as technique. Both my delivery and sweeping techniques she has provided amazing guidance on. She has really helped us as a team to work together and always stay positive. She focuses on the things we did well and helps with our confidence."

-Timothy Lawrence, Team Donaldson

"I have been very fortunate to have a coach like Taina for this curling season," added Tyson Parker. "She has been helpful to me and my teammates with teaching us new techniques and has been very supportive in leading us into the next level of curling."

Haydn Couprie also expressed his gratitude to Taina. "She has greatly improved my throwing technique and

weight control. She has helped with both my knowledge of the game and ways to keep myself prepared for curling."

A highly respected and familiar face around the St. Albert Curling Club, we are proud to recognize Taina Smiley as Curling Alberta's Instructor of the Year. Congratulations, Taina!



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ICE TECHNICIANS OF THE YEAR

MERLE AND CODY SMITH LETHBRIDGE CURLING CLUB



Ice technicians are the heart and soul of every curling club as they facilitate day-to-day curling operations. Each task, from installation, flooding, adding houses, hog lines, and decals, and rock conditioning,

“Cody and Merle take excellent care of the ice, and work long hours so that the curlers of Lethbridge can always have fresh ice! They are personable and are always willing to teach/talk about the game and the ice they care for.”

require slow and precise processes. Legendary for their hard work ethic and keen attention to detail, Lethbridge’s father-son duo of Merle and Cody Smith are the masterminds behind some of the best ice in Alberta.

“Cody and Merle are well-known within the club and make sure to provide all members with respect and great service,” said friend Craig Lyon. “They are always willing to teach the game and discuss ice conditions to help improve people’s game.”

Their club could not be prouder of Merle and Cody’s accomplishments. Their commitment to their local curling community, contributions during the 2022 Tim Hortons Brier, and the care and compassion they demonstrate every single day, make them Curling Alberta’s Ice Technicians of the Year. Congratulations Merle and Cody Smith!

CURLER’S CORNER YOUTH SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

JAXON HEIBERT SEXSMITH CURLING CLUB/ GRANDE PRAIRIE CURLING CENTRE

Jaxon exemplifies the ideals of sportsmanship, combined with an extreme love of curling. Jaxon started curling at the age of nine and with his huge smile and happy disposition, he quickly captured the hearts of Sexsmith curlers and competitive players throughout the Peace Country.

It is unlikely that anyone spends more time practicing than Jaxon. His dedication to the sport of curling combined with a positive attitude both on and off the ice, whether winning or losing, has ensured that he has stood out at all levels of competition. As an athlete, Jaxon has participated in many events this past year, from local bonspiels to provincial championship events, including the Optimist U18 Boys Provincial Championship, finishing as semi-finalist at the U20 Men’s Provincial Championship, and qualifying at the Canada Winter Games Pre-trials. He has also played in the Peace Tour Championship, competed in U21 Mixed Doubles, Sexsmith Super League, and spared for the Grande Prairie



Super League. Outside of playing, Jaxon also assisted with coaching in Grande Prairie’s Junior Program and Learn to Curl Nights.

“We have been blessed to have Jaxon start his curling career in our region,” said Mike Vavrek and Belle Thomas. “We will miss him but will still follow his achievements as he moves on to new endeavors with a junior team out of Edmonton.”

Congratulations, Jaxon, on being this year’s most deserving recipient of the Curlers Corner Youth Sportsmanship Award.

“What stands out for us as co-nominators, is Jaxon’s connection with everyone, his willingness to help out plus play with curlers of all ages from the very young to the elderly regardless of their curling abilities.”

-Mike Vavrek, Sexsmith Curling Club and Belle Thomas, Grande Prairie Curling Centre

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR



PHOTO CREDIT: WILLIAM VAVREK PHOTOGRAPHY

SHERRY CORMIER

Sherry took her Level I Officiating course in 2012 and moved quickly to pursue her Level II in 2014.

Typically working 3 events a year until 2016, Sherry decided that she really enjoyed volunteering as an umpire and has consistently worked an amazing 7-8 events each season!

In 2019, Sherry expressed an interest in pursuing her Level III umpire designation, and has been working on achieving that goal even through the pandemic. After completing the necessary requirements of Deputy and Chief Umpire assignments at Provincial events and receiving positive feedback, Sherry was recommended as a Level III umpire in May this year.

On behalf of the Curling Alberta umpires, I extend our thanks and congratulations

for a job well done and as recipient of the 2022 Official of the Year Award.

"Sherry is a pleasure to work with, she is very knowledgeable of the rules of the game and is always keen to help and assist whenever possible."

-Brenda Rogers, Chief Umpire,
Curling Alberta



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PARTNER OF THE YEAR

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GRANDE PRAIRIE CURLING
CENTRE



"Curling Alberta is proud to honour the 20th anniversary of our partnership with the Optimist Clubs of Alberta. Their support and vision recognize the importance of sport to our youth, how it motivates them to seek their full potential and to discover connections within their communities."

-Jill Richard, Executive Director,
Curling Alberta

Celebrating two decades of supporting junior curling in Alberta and across Canada, the Optimist Clubs of Alberta including, Mike DeNicola Marilyn Bushell, and Clint and Geneva Sopchyshyn, are Curling Alberta's 2022 Partner of the Year. Every single season, they step up, and they show up, with unwavering support for U18 curlers in our province.

Since the first Optimist Western Canadian Juvenile Curling Championships took place in 2002, Optimist continues to be an invaluable partner in providing Alberta's U18 athletes with opportunities to play among their peers at provincial and national levels of competition. Named for the Optimist Dinner Club of Calgary member who was instrumental



with Optimist's early involvement with junior curling, the Jack Harbourne trophy recognizes the top boys and girls U18 teams. For 20 years, their vision, generosity, and advocacy for youth in sport, has played a pivotal role in keeping young people engaged in curling.

As two of the original Optimist members to help create a U18 curling competition, Mike DeNicola and Bill Cummer are still key supporters today. Marilyn Bushell has served as the District U18 Curling Chair for several years and will return to that role for the upcoming season. Clint Sopchyshyn has been District U18 Curling Chair for the last two years and both he and his wife Geneva are a major force behind Optimist's financial support of U18 curling in Alberta.

As the title sponsor of Curling Alberta's U18 provincial championship, local Optimist groups continue to make dreams and possibilities come true for junior curling athletes. This year their sponsorship dollars were especially meaningful, as Alberta was able to send a second team of each gender to the 2022 Canadian U18 Curling Championships in Oakville.

The Optimist Group's mission statement states, **"By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities, and ourselves."** We are thrilled to celebrate the incredible partnership between the Optimist Clubs of Alberta and Curling Alberta, and are very grateful for their ongoing commitment to bring out the best in our junior curling athletes.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

JOHN MORRIS

The President's Award defined:

The President's Award is an annual recognition given by the President of Curling Alberta to a member of the curling community for outstanding contribution to the sport. The award is not about identifying 'THE' person best suited, but rather 'A' person suited for this award.

We are fortunate in Alberta to have a number of worthy individuals, and my hope is that we will eventually recognize all of them. Renee Sonnenberg was named the first President's Award recipient in 2019, followed by Barb Dickson and Mike Libbus, each one true pillars of the curling community with remarkable contributions. This year, another name will be added to the list and he is in good company, as they are all the leaders who have inspired us to give more, to do more, and to be more.

As to what constitutes selection for the President's Award, I learned some time ago, those people within your organization who you recognize and put on a pedestal, essentially become your organization's heroes. In other words, they become the face of your organization's identity and reflect what we as an organization believe our best behavior looks like. Guided by this definition, the acceptance of this award places a significant responsibility on the award recipient.

Behavior is defined by how a person acts and exemplifies the values that guide their decision-making. The right selection for the President's Award needs to reflect Curling Alberta's values of Fearless Leadership, Trusted Professionals, Part of a Community, and Excellence by Design.

I am confident you will agree with me that this year's recipient clearly demonstrates each of these values. As a leader in our sport, he has the capacity to translate vision into reality, has excelled at multiple levels and disciplines in the game, and



PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN MORRIS: TWITTER

brings a valued perspective to any conversation. He steps up anytime he is called upon, and champions causes when they need a voice.

Basketball legend Michael Jordan once said, "Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen." This year's recipient certainly is of the make it happen philosophy, and I am pleased to recognize John Morris as the 2022 President's Award recipient.

John Morris, or 'Johnny Mo' as he is often referred to, is a household name in curling. Often seeming larger than life, he has won provincial, Canadian and world championships both as a junior and an adult, both in the fours and mixed doubles formats. His list of accolades is long and distinguished, from his curling origins in Ontario where he won three consecutive junior provincial championships, followed by back-to-back Canadian and World Junior Championships in 1998 and 1999. John moved to Alberta in 2003, where his career took off playing with legendary skips Kevin Koe and Kevin Martin.

His curling resume speaks volumes about his level of competitive play, leadership, and commitment to excellence: 11 Grand Slam victories; 13 appearances at the Tim

Hortons Brier, accumulating three gold and four silver medals; and three world championships, resulting in a gold, silver, and bronze medal. John has represented Canada at three Olympic Winter Games, winning his first gold medal at the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver, alongside Kevin Martin, Marc Kennedy and Ben Hebert. He became the first man to win two gold medals in curling when he and teammate Kaitlyn Lawes won the inaugural Mixed Doubles event in PyeongChang.

John has stepped up as a super spare for his country on multiple occasions. One of the most notable times was when he joined forces with the 2014 Brier champions, Pat Simmons' rink, as the first ever Team Canada at the Brier, where the team went on to win the event. After the pandemic forced the cancellation of the 2022 Mixed Doubles Olympic Trials, he again answered the call and joined Rachel Homan as Canada's mixed doubles entry into the Beijing Olympic Games, finishing fifth overall.

As impressive as John's competitive career has been, it is only part of the reason he is receiving this award. When it comes to Mixed Doubles, he knows the way, goes

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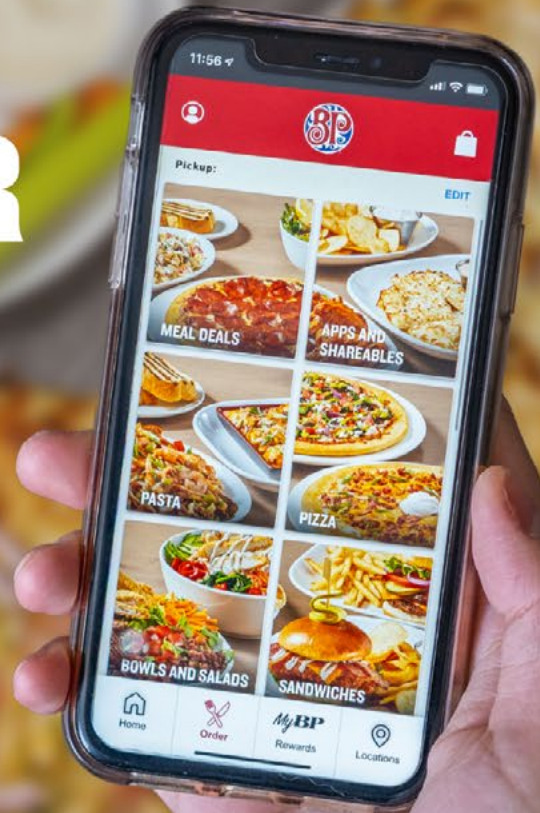


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the way, and shows the way. He has even shared his expertise as a coach in 2021 to support the Australian Mixed Doubles team to their first ever curling appearance at an Olympic Games. John's dedication and pure grit in the championing of mixed doubles over the past four years, is another significant factor in his selection for this award.

The sport of curling has undergone many changes including the number of ends in championships, broom types and fabric, the free guard zones and the adoption of the Skins game format, to name a few. No change, however, has provided such a fundamental shift and opportunity to grow the game, as the introduction of Mixed Doubles.

Mixed doubles provides curling with an exciting new discipline requiring less people and time to play, engages new curlers and countries, exposes more elite curlers in our sport, and yet another opportunity for Canadians to compete in World and Olympic championships. A game once dominated by 'fours,' is now available to 'twos.'

In the twos game, points are there to be had, no lead is safe, and both athletes share equally, but have different roles in the game. It showcases the success of great team dynamics, and never gives a player a shot off.

John did not invent the format, but stood firmly behind it, giving it both exposure and a champion.

After winning the first ever Olympic gold in Mixed Doubles in PyeonChang four years ago, John opted to leave the fours game and focus his energy on Mixed Doubles, not just in Canada, but around the world. He became a de facto Mixed Doubles spokesperson, advocating for events and opportunities that would allow athletes to advance and excel in the discipline.

In 2018, John partnered with the Rocky Mountain Curling Association to create the Qualico Mixed Doubles Classic, jointly hosted by the Banff and Canmore Curling Clubs. This inclusive World Curling Tour event has attracted leading

international, Canadian and Alberta teams in competition. John's vision was not only to have the top players play against each other, but to expose international teams to great competition, provide Canadian teams an opportunity to play top quality games, and develop new teams through exposure to the game and elite teams. Ultimately raising the bar for the discipline and challenging others to raise it even higher.

Having spent time with John on the phone, in meetings and listening to him speak, I have come to realize John's opinion and purpose is not selfish. He considers other's ideas and is as eager to see others grow as well as himself. He thrives on challenges and wants to ensure the players have access to great competition, while still having fun and enjoying the game. That is why at his event, the social aspect is as important as the competition. Music is played during games, spectators sit on the ice with the players, and players are provided the opportunity to socialize and have fun with sponsors, volunteers and spectators.

Mixed doubles is a big part of where the game of curling is heading. We are on the cusp of seeing mixed doubles specialists overtake the greatness of two top fours curlers playing the game. John is at the forefront of this key sports development in curling, a trailblazer in this discipline, and an incredible spokesperson for it.

John's continued efforts to bring mixed doubles to the forefront, is paving the way for growth and development in our sport and exciting times ahead. We have only seen the tip of the iceberg so far, and we believe as the future unfolds Mixed Doubles will prove to have a significant role in developing future initiatives, introducing new champions, and inspiring curling's revival.

I listened as John once addressed a junior team. The two points of advice I still remember most from that talk were when John told the group that he has lost more finals than he has won. He continued, "you will lose more than you win. It's putting yourself in the position to win and learning from losing, that enables you to

win sometimes. In a curling event with 16 teams, there are always going to be 15 teams that lose and are disappointed and only 1 that wins". To me it puts winning a curling event into context. Throughout an event, there are so many things that can derail you or cause you to come up just that little bit short even if you are expected to win, or are pound for pound the best team. When you get that win, it is a very big achievement to be celebrated, not expected.

Curling is only one facet of John's busy life, which is filled with a variety of interests and skill sets. He co-authored the book, **Fit to Curl**, is a certified personal trainer, a Holistic nutritionist and a highly trained firefighter in Rocky View County. A gourmet chef, he is also a graduate from the Chef's training program in New York. Recognizing the potential impact he could have and the importance of supporting youth, John has volunteered as a 'Big Brother' in Calgary since 2011 and was even selected by the International Olympic Committee as an Athlete Role Model at the 2020 Youth Olympic Games.

I remember asking John if he wanted to coach some curling clinics in the summer. He politely declined, saying the summer is for family and fishing. He believes in taking time off away from the sport so you can come back to it in the fall ready to excel and enjoy it once again.

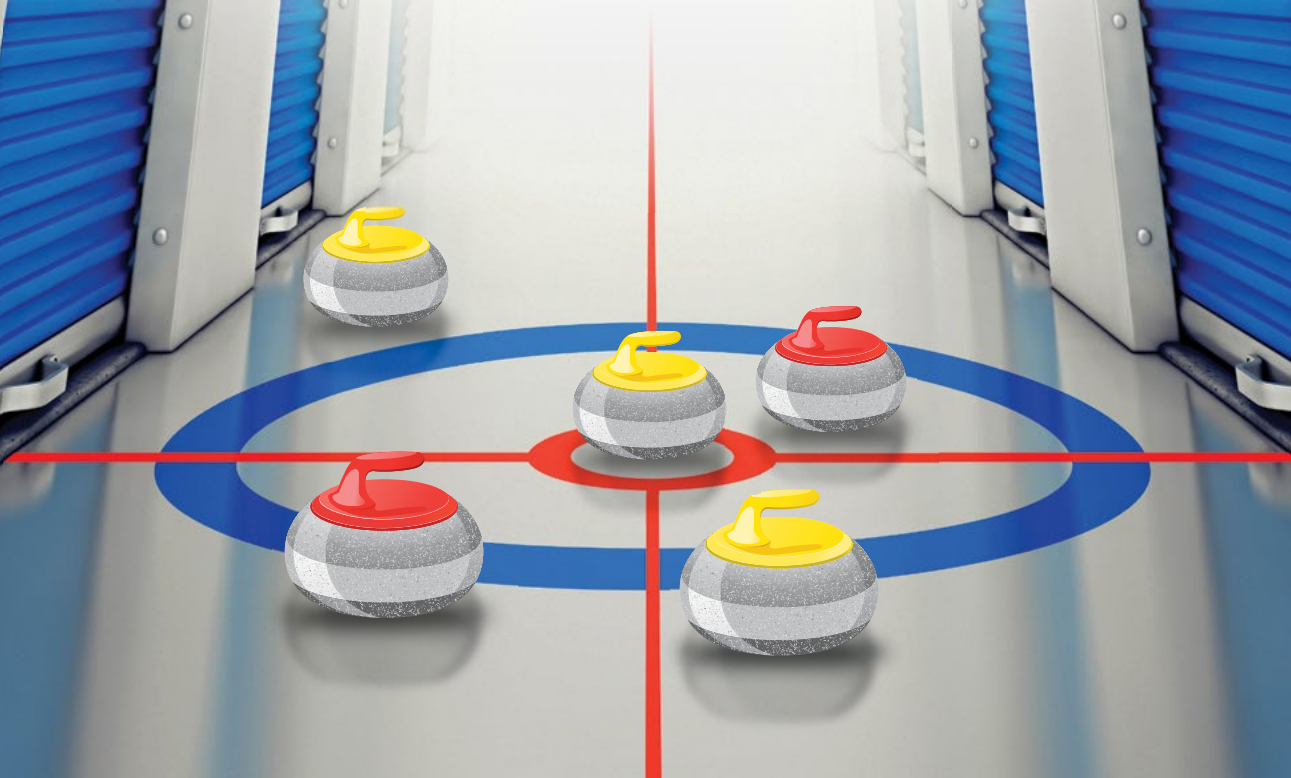
Family is the heart and soul of who John is, and his most important role is that of a loving husband and father. Along with his wife Maggie, and two kids Jack and Zoe, John lives in Canmore, Alberta, where they take full advantage of the great outdoors. Spending time with family, listening to vinyl, fishing, and cooking, are his favorite pastimes.

John Morris is becoming a legend in his own right, and on behalf of Curling Alberta, I could not be prouder to present you with the 2022 President's Award. Congratulations!



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