



# Southern Ontario Fire Fighters Curling Association

AFFILIATED WITH CANADIAN FIRE FIGHTERS CURLING ASSOCIATION

## 2014 Report from the Southern

Greetings fellow Provincial Directors, and CFFCA Executive from Southern Ontario. This being my first official report let me take some the time to introduce myself. I am Ross Hammill, a Hamilton Firefighter of 26 years, a competitive recreational curler of 24 years and Southern Executive member of 22 years. I have worked under six SOFFCA Presidents, witnessed the decline of curling membership at our championship and clubs across our province, and experienced two less than successful attempts of hosting the National Fire Fighters Curling Championship. Over these twenty-two years, I always believed that in order to continue Aubrey's dream, our goal to promote goodwill amongst firefighters through curling had to include our jurisdiction to determine and send our representative to the Canadian Championship as our number one priority. Accepting the nomination as Provincial President and Director means that I will do everything in my power to meet the challenge of growing the Southern and hosting in 2017 our best Nationals in thirty years.

This years' Southern moved to a pre-Christmas date in late November. The timing helped increase attendance for the first time in many years. Up 25%, teams featured the return of past Champions and some much-needed new faces. Played at the Niagara Falls curling club, home club of our late Champion, Vice President Shane McCready; the weekend offered time of joyful reflection, camaraderie and the dedication of our Championship Trophy in his memory. Shane's mother, Shirley attended our banquet and finals to present Dwayne Lowe, Aaron Ward, Ryan Ward, Mike Bohonos and Brian Scott with their fourth consecutive championship trophy, defeating a strong veteran team of Paul Mogavero, Todd Tsukamoto, Brian Gemmell and Frank Dellapina in an exciting last shot final.

I would like to recognize and thank the Brampton Professional Firefighters Association for their generous support as title sponsor. Cost of our championship has only grown as sponsorships become harder to secure. We have asked each team to contribute to soliciting sponsors but this has happened with limited success and in some cases detracting from our membership and team attendance. This year we offered new teams or teams with absent past members relief of the \$200 sponsorship requirement, which I am sure helped draw a few teams. However small the effort, every dollar helps keep our association solvent and helps with our continued support of Muscular Dystrophy.

In December, our executive met with representatives of the Ontario Police Curling Association to discuss our common challenges. We learned that the OPCA shares our membership and sponsorship challenges and that the CPCA is struggling, due to a lack of funds and poor Provincial support. Alberta, PEI and the Territories have not fielded teams for several years. One thing I did not want to see happen, is hosting in 2017, opposite the Police anywhere in Ontario let alone the same city as is the case in Winnipeg in 2014.

**In Support of Muscular Dystrophy Canada**

It has been the goal of our SOFFCA Executive for almost twenty years to shorten the Canadians to a more manageable and affordable length. Past Presidents, not always in attendance, have presented requests to shorten the Canadian event. The Police have had eight end games, excluding the page playoffs, for many years shortening their event to eight days, arrival on Saturday with departures the following Sunday. Televised bonspiels and cash games have now adopted eight end formats, and Provincial Curling associations may soon follow. The benefit of this has always been clear to our financially struggling association.

- Significant financial saving for host committee i.e. room, vehicle, equipment rentals
- Significant financial saving for each attendee and Provincial Association i.e. rooms, per diems
- Savings are directly reflected in sponsorship requirements
- Only one week of holidays required to attend
- Less disruption to family and commitments for attendee
- Shorter disruption to Curling club membership

This year, at our General meeting, a motion passed directing our executive to explore hosting in 2017 a shortened eight days Canadian Championship. I will therefore be present in Winnipeg briefly, due to my personal obligations, requesting your support of the following constitution change. An example of an eight-day event may be found at <http://www.policecurling.ca/policecurling/saskatoon/events/events.htm>.

### Rules and Regulations

**15.D. All games will be ten (10) ends with one full extra end/ends required until a winner has been declared. Extra ends will be continuous play (2002). A team may concede after six (6) ends of play (2010).**

Change to read

**15.D. All round robin and tiebreak games will be eight (8) ends with one full extra end/ends required until a winner has been declared. Extra ends will be continuous play (2002). Page playoff games will be ten (10) ends with one full extra end/ends required until a winner has been declared. A team may concede after six (6) ends of play during playoffs (2010).**

In closing, I ask that you discuss this format proposal with your members and share your opinions with the other directors. Your support is critical to ensuring Southern Ontario continues to meet our commitment to the CFFCA and the continued enjoyment of Aubrey's dream.

Finally, I end my report on a sadder note. It was reported by Paul Mogavero, that our great Canadian and World Champion, Neil Harrison, after a series of strokes, is now suffering with inoperable brain cancer. We asked that you share your thoughts and prayers for Neil. We will keep you informed as to his situation the best we can. I look forward to meeting all of you, finally, in Winnipeg!

Fraternally,

*Ross Hammill*, Stay Safe!