

Tavistock Gazette.

Serving Tavistock and area since 1895

VOLUME 108

TAVISTOCK, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2004

NUMBER 36



Fulop makes it three

2004 World Crokinole Champion Joe Fulop in action at Saturday's tournament.

BILL GLADDING/TAVISTOCK GAZETTE

Joe Fulop of Exeter is creating a dynasty in the world of crokinole. He has won the World Crokinole Championship in Tavistock three times in the past six years of its existence and has always placed in the top sixteen each year.

So what makes a world champion crokinole player? A steady hand, concentration, a love of the game and its many aspects, as well as a lot of practice. Joe's history in the World Crokinole Championship includes second in 1999, third in 2000, first in 2001, first in 2002, and fifth in 2003. He was also 20's champion with a high of 90 in 1999 and 101 in 2000. This year may have been the most difficult win of all. Not only did the finalists have to put up with games pressure, but two film crews and several newspaper photographers were "in their faces" throughout the final rounds. Therefore, concentration was needed more than ever before.

Mr. Fulop faced and defeated third-seeded Brian Cook of Owen Sound in the final while Dan Taylor of Etobicoke, who finished tenth in the qualifying round defeated Merv Wice of Innisfil (12th in the qualifying round) for third place. Last year's champion, Raymond Kappes placed seventh in the qualifying round while 2000 champion, Al Fuhr of Shakespeare placed 11th. Jarmo Puiras of Cornwall, PEI placed second in the qualifying round and took home the 20's trophy for 108 centre shots in ten rounds of the qualifier.

This year's recreational category, introduced in 2003, attracted more participants. up to forty-two from twenty-four last year. Underdog Mike Van De Wynchel of Waterloo, who placed 12th in

the qualifying round, captured first place followed by Greg Shantz of Burlington in second. Fifteenth-seeded Steven Wiseman of Kitchener was third and 14th-seeded Chad Tailby of Kitchener placed fourth.

Practice paid off for Bobby Pettigrew of Vienna who won an official board last year in the prize draw. He topped the junior category with Will Taylor of Millbrook who took home his second 2nd place finish, Kyle Booy of Aylmer who was third for the second year, and fourth place to last year's champion, Todd Fraser.

Cecchi MacNaughton of Andover, Massachusetts, who won the junior category in 2000 and 2002 and placed fourth in 2001, moved up to win the Intermediate title this year. He edged out Damian Lirette of Kitchener, followed by Brandon Boyd of St. Marys in third and Phillip Eby of Kitchener in fourth.

In doubles play, Jarmo Puiras of Cornwall, Prince Edward Island teamed up with Tony Snyder of Waterloo to earn the title. Brothers Raymond and Jason Beierling of Staffa placed second while third place went to Jon Conrad of Milverton and Paul Hartman of Cambridge. Fourth place was earned by Ross Wice of Barrie and Merv Wice of Innisfil.

For those who prefer cue shooting, the two cue categories saw twenty-six singles shooters and forty-two doubles participants. Oscar Weber of St. Jacobs took home the singles title and paired up with his brother, Enoch Weber of Wiarton for fourth place in the doubles category. Dennis Brubacher was second in singles and Mervin Roth was fourth. Harvey Bennewies of Kitchener placed third in the cue singles

and he also teamed up with Ivan Coward of Kitchener for second place in cue doubles. Mike Neal of Arthur and Shawn Neal of Guelph paired up for third place in doubles.

Several other awards were noted throughout the day with Alfred Ropp of Tavistock being the oldest player at 82 years and Jesse Jantzi the youngest at 7 years. Cynthia Prymak of Stratford and Paul Knowles of Guelph were presented with official WCCTM jackets as early bird registration draw winners.

World Crokinole Championship committee chairman Barry Raymer said everything ran "exceptionally smooth" while registration chairperson Valerie Kropf was pleased with the numbers.

World Crokinole Championship attracts 414 players this year!

More photos on page 6.

this year. The tournament has been growing each year and last year's goal of 400 fell short by two, but was surpassed this year with 414 players registered. They came from coast to coast in Canada, from British Columbia, to Prince Edward Island. They also travelled from as far north as the Yukon and as far south as Texas. Three European players also attended, two from Germany and one from England.

Marian Luxton of Protection Island, British Columbia attended with her niece and nephew, Catherine and Michael Brightling of Listowel. Marian hoped she would get the prize for the loudest competitor as she cheered and squealed with delight whenever she and her partner made a good shot. The pair finished 78th in the doubles field of 86.

Birch Kuch of Whitehorse, Yukon remembers playing crokinole as a child in the north. A Mennonite doctor in the community used to gather the neighbours together for games, but the family's old board is now in the hands of an uncle here in Ontario. Birch came to visit him recently and having heard about the tournament, vowed to return to play. At 24 years of age, Birch is a professional musician and a part-time baker. While here in Thivstock, he purchased a board, yet still hopes to inherit the family heirloom someday from his uncle.

Jarmo Puiras, formerly of Cambridge and for the past three years living in Cornwall, Prince Edward Island also attended with four island natives, Roy Younker and his sons, David and Bruce, and their distant cousin, Vernon Younker. Both Roy and Jarmo have been declared the Island Champions in tournaments they have been holding for the past three years at Hampshire Hall. Their last tournament boasted 30 teams of doubles and fifty singles players as well as an under 18 category. David Younker says clubs have been formed at Clyde River, Winsloe, Stratford, and by the Lion's Club, at Hunter River. Jarmo has been the champion two years running and has also earned the doubles title along with his partner Wendell Jewel.

Several players were in attendance this year from the United States. After an absence of one year, last year's SARS epidemic persuaded them not to attend, school teachers Glen Runyon, Georgia Black, and Leon Sell from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania returned for a shot at the title. Leon finished seventh in Pool B, but didn't make it to the final four while Glen finished 12th in Pool

B, but didn't make the cut for the top 16 finalists. Georgia placed 24th in the recreational category.

Brothers Roger Stewart of Loudon, Tennessee and Paul Stewart of Liberty, Texas, were both born in Canada and used the World Crokinole Championship as a way to get back to their roots. Roger was born in Galt and Paul in Hamilton before their parents moved to New York when they were both young lads. They remember playing crokinole as kids and inherited their uncle's crokinole board about 30 years ago. They stumbled across Wayne Kelly's Mr. Crokinole web site about three years ago and talked about attending the tournament together. "We've got to do this!" Roger said about attending the tournament here. To prepare, they had t-shirts printed that say, "Tenn-exas Crops: Back to our Canadian Roots." The pair will spend about three weeks in Canada visiting relatives in Ottawa and the Maritimes.

Returning for the second time in three years, physiotherapists Hans Reinhold and Karin Jeske of Bisingen, Germany, who have launched a business called "Crokinole Companions", returned to Canada to brush up on the game they love and meet with some friends they made on their first trip in 2002. Their German company has manufactured 180 quality boards fashioned after the Grey Owl board sold by "Mr. Crokinole" Wayne Kelly. Over the past three years they have sold about 100 boards to places like Finland, Spain and England. The board sells for 179 Euro dollars, but they find most people are simply interested in the buttons and prefer to save their money and make their own boards. "Even a self-made board will support the game," Hans says, when people are enthusiastic and playing just for fun.

Probably the biggest boost for the game in Tavistock this year was the presence of a film crew from TV Ontario. Studio 2 producer/director Robert Prowse spent the day at the World Crokinole Championship on Saturday, June 5, 2004, covering as many human interest angles of the tournament as was feasible within the time frame. Cameraman and former Thivstock resident Kevin Glecoff and sound man Maurice Palzot provided the technical aspect of recording play in the seven categories as well as full coverage of the final singles games. They interviewed former and present champions and documented the work of the volunteers throughout the day. The program will air on Studio 2 at 8:00 and 11:30 p.m. sometime in the next two weeks.

Cousins Jonathan and Joshua Steckley were also on hand throughout the day to continue their documentary filming of the World Crokinole Championship and wrap up weeks of preparation for tournament day.

Chairman Barry Raymer said, the WCC committee is indebted to their many generous sponsors for prize money donated to the sixth annual tournament as well as those who gave goods and services used as fundraising draw prizes. He also applauded the many volunteers who organized and worked the one-day event. "Without community support, the tournament would not be the success it is each year," he said.