



A taste of the olympics at the 9th edition of the Challenge de curling de Gatineau

On this 3rd day of October, the board of directors of the Buckingham Curling Club in Gatineau announces the **9th edition of the “Challenge de curling de Gatineau”** which will be held from Wednesday October 18th to Sunday October 22nd at the “Centre sportif Robert-Rochon” (Masson-Angers sector) and the Buckingham Curling Club.

This 9th edition of the Challenge presented by Hewitt Equipment Limited consists of the following two distinct tournaments:

1. A “men’s elite” tournament which is part of the 2017-2018 World Curling Tour (WCT) calendar and which is renowned for being one of the most important stops on this circuit.
2. An “open class” tournament which is part of the Quebec provincial circuit, sanctioned by Curling-Québec and offering teams one of most important purse of the season.

Some of the highlights of this 9th edition :

- Participation from 240 curlers from Canada, the United States, Switzerland, Scotland, China, Japan and Israel There will be 28 men’s elite teams and 32 open class teams.
- Amongst the elite teams, there are **3** squads already qualified for the next Olympic winter games in February 2018 (Japan, Switzerland and Great-Britain) as well as **8** other teams from Canada, the United States and the world group that are currently involved in the Olympic selection process .
- For Gatineau’s Jean-Michel Ménard’s foursome, the Challenge will be their last tournament before they participate in the Olympic pre-trials scheduled for November in Summerside (P.E.I).
- 150 curling games will be presented during the Challenge, 122 of them at the Centre sportif Robert-Rochon and 28 at the Buckingham Curling Club. The total purse at stake for this edition will be more than 54000\$.
- More than 20 games of the men’s elite tournament, including the final, will be web streamed live via our web site at «challengecurlinggatineau.com».

Some of the notable Canadian and international teams at this year’s event:

John Epping from Toronto, defending champion of the 2016 Challenge, ranked 6th in the world and already qualified for the « Roar of the Rings » Olympic Trials to be held in Ottawa this coming December.

Kyle Smith from Scotland, 2013 world junior champions, ranked 8th in the world and representing Great-Britain at the next Olympic winter games in South Korea.

Peter De Cruz from Switzerland, bronze medalist at the 2017 world championships, ranked 9th in the world and who will also be representing their country at the next Olympic winter games.

Yusuke Morozumi from Japan, gold medalist at the 2016 Pacific-Asia zones, represented Japan at the 2017 world championships and will be representing their country in February 2018 at the next Olympic winter games in Pyeongchang.

Among the other teams at this year's Challenge still involved in the Olympic selection process :

World Group: Rui Liu from China, 4th at the 2014 Olympic games in Sochi (Russia).

United States: Heath McCormick, 2012 USA champions, ranked 14th in the world.

Craig Brown, 2 time USA champions.

Canada : Jean-Michel Ménard (Que), Jamie Murphy (N.S.), Greg Balsdon (Ont) and Dayna Deruelle (Ont)

With respect to the Open Class event, the team from Israël skipped by Adam Freilich will be attempting to defend as 2016 Challenge champions. Other notable local teams from the Outaouais region will be skipped by Ted Butler, Roger Bertrand, Martin Patry and Mario Deschâtelets.

The schedule for this Challenge

All **men's elite** games will be held at the "Centre sportif Robert-Rochon" starting at 8h30 Thursday October 19th. The finals will be held Sunday October 22nd at 15:45.

The first **open class** games will be held Wednesday October 18th at 20:00. The three finals (A-B-C) will also be held Sunday October 22nd at 15:45 at the "Centre sportif Robert-Rochon".

The "On the Rocks" lounge located on the 2nd floor of the "Centre sportif Robert-Rochon" will allow spectators to comfortably view the many games. The daily admission fee will be \$5 for spectators. There is also an event pass available for \$15.

Thanks to a great partnership with **Curling Canada**, spectators present at this year's Challenge will have the opportunity to win passes to attend the « Roar of the Rings » Olympic qualifying tournament to be held this December 2nd to the 10th in Ottawa.

Concerted efforts to ensure the success of this year's Challenge

The Event Coordinator, Mr. Richard Faguy, underlined the great work done by Tournament Director Mr. Dany Beaulieu for recruiting such a great lineup of teams as well as all members of the 2017 Challenge organizing committee. He also emphasized the importance of the many collaborators and volunteers that will make a success of this major sporting event in our region.

Finally, he highlighted and thanked all partners that make this prestigious event possible, especially the contribution of its title partner, the City of Gatineau, its presenting partner Hewitt Equipment Limited, the official hotel of the event, DoubleTree by Hilton Gatineau-Ottawa and its major partners, Curling Québec, TC Média, Curling Canada, the Ottawa Valley Curling Association and the Corporation des Loisirs Masson-Angers.

For more details : www.challengecurlinggatineau.com

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