



Curling-Q 2021

Another Novel

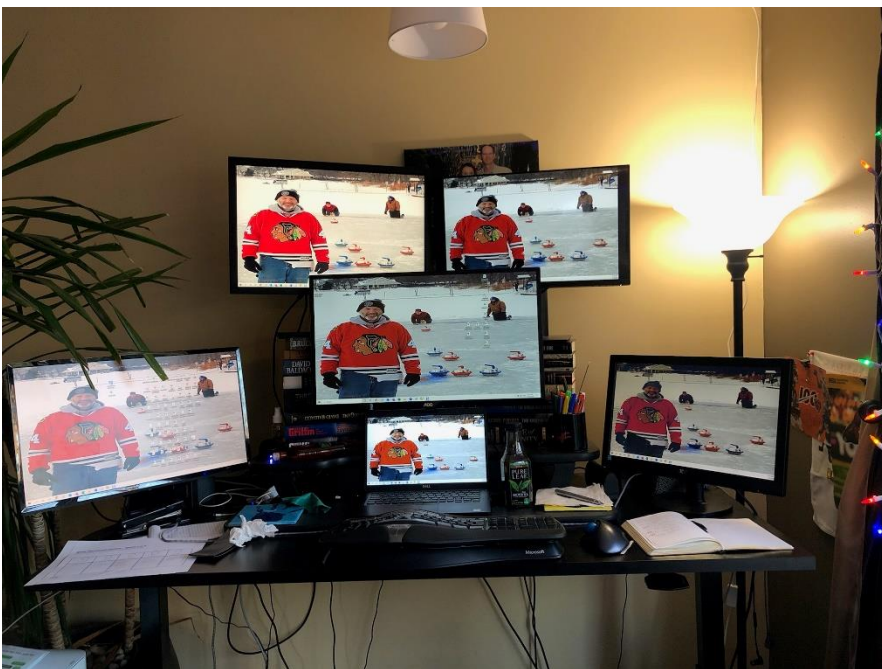
idea

In the depths of the tunnel-linked bunkers, the secret planning began weeks before the event.



There may have been up to 4 operatives in attendance. There may have been beverages. There may have been popcorn coated with an opioid-ish addictive caramel coating. When it was all over, there was no remaining trace of the popcorn. Was it starvation-inducing conditions brought on by pure team dedication? Was it the dogs that wouldn't shut the hell up the whole time? There was no evidence but for some kernels between the couch cushions and in the dental records. Apparently no one flossed that night. Plus, no one remembers. That may be due to the shots of apple-cinnamon infused moonshine smuggled in by agent #2.*

*That is not his real name, but that describes the odoriferousness. Names have been changed to protect the indecent. I'm not pulling your leg. It must have been one too many times that we pulled his finger. Plus, the chili.



ICE PREP

Auger-Dogger and Dogger-Daddy

Ice prep attempt #1: Auger, pump, extension cord, hose, and child labor. When it's very cold the water from the hose does not spread evenly like you would expect, it freezes too quickly as it splashes around creating a slush which eventually freezes into a rough surface. Plus you wouldn't believe the thumb cramps from trying to spray farther when the hose won't reach the far corners.



Attempt #1a: inspired by YouTube

Fill a cooler with water, open the drain cap, drag a towel around. This does not work mostly because of the futility of begging the child labor to stay, even after offering to double the pay rate, resulting in a solo effort into the waning hours of sunlight.



But the next morning: success! The experiment of the first center target seems to work.



The paper plate stays submerged & gets frozen in. Next year we should remember to remove the PB&J first.

ugh – more snow



Ice prep can become a spiritual experience on a calm night under the full moon



1 week to go: we become weather watchers

43 degrees and rain predicted for curling day? A potential low of 35? Are you kidding me? That's a show-stopper! We keep going but are watching closely with our fingers crossed.

when it is this cold, the shifting ice cracks and releases water up onto the ice from underneath which freezes smoothly but in a cascade more like the layered ridges seen in lava flows...



... consuming everything in its path -- including but not limited to the neighbor's snowmobile. Today's mushy slush becomes tomorrow's frozen footprints. Until...



... more snow! Criminy! Whose turn is it to shovel? The event must be getting close – the stones are here.



So we make lemonade: formation of the East and West curling lanes



We measure the ice: 23 inches thick. As cold as it is, the days are getting longer and the sun is rising higher in the sky. "Dark matter" left on the ice during sunny days – even for only a few hours – will melt itself into the surface. Ice picks, hammers, axes, and hockey pucks eventually heat-drill themselves below the surface, and sometimes all the way through. Or, using Steve's methods, you can use your cordless drill to make a flagpole-holding-hole and then when you drill all the way through the ice and you feel that sudden release of resistance against your drilling efforts you can watch your drill bit release from the not-magnetic-enough chuck extension and sink to the lake bottom. All these things will wait to be found while swimming when summer comes.



2 days to go. The event looms over us. Tensions are high. Disagreements over the best way to make circles. No one remembers the value of pi. Broomsticks are breaking. A team member gets impaled.



The body is hidden in a circle of blue sludge. But the chopping must go on.



We receive an ominous text. Tomorrow's forecast: Wind! And low mortgage rates!

28°

showers developing in the a
Winds ESE at 10 to 20 mph

lendin Refinan
Mortgage Rates Fall A

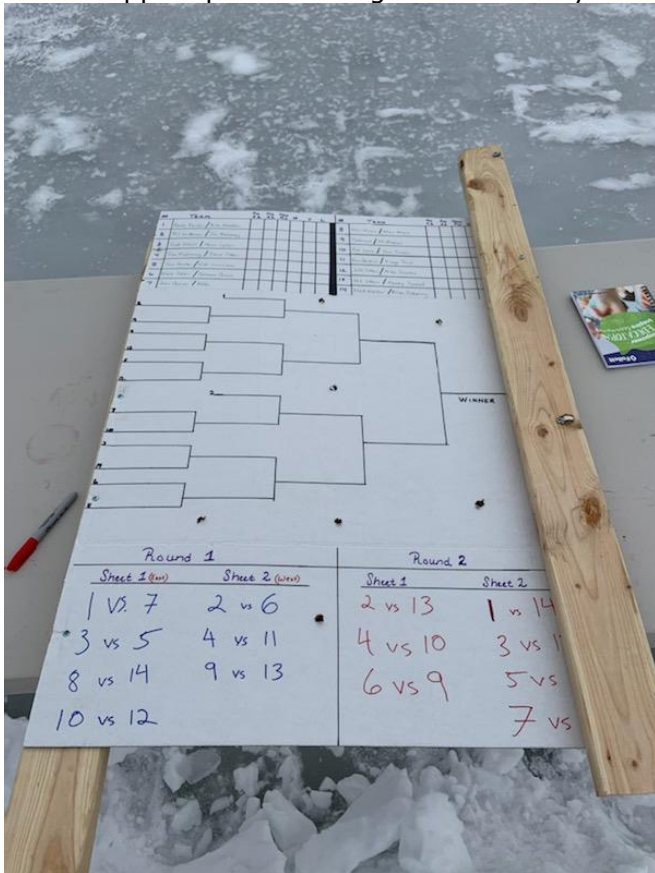
Loan amount

Loan term

Credit score

Le curling nouveau est arrivé!

The no-app-required scoring board is ready



The coveted trophy



1 hour to go before showtime: the team runs final system checks. The men's room is ready. Last night was not as cold as we would have liked, but the red circles have frozen! The wind must have helped with the freezing process. The mood changes from fretting to giddiness – for most of us. Steve calculates how to set up a 1-square-mile windscreen. It will be difficult. It will be REALLY difficult without that drill bit.



Oh say, can you see?

Practice rounds



GAME ON!



This young participant demonstrates an interesting technique. Soon after the devastating loss, he is shown at the First Aid table after being discovered stuck to a flagpole.



Action shot on the West Sheet, a.k.a. "Chuckers Lane"

They promised clouds, but the sun is starting to peek through. We whip out an abacus to calculate the pigment radiation absorption rate.

The secret to success: Aim for the slush in the center.





Guardians of the women's restroom.



Extracurriculars: ice skating, snow football, and volleyball-bucket-thing game.



A secret meeting is held inside – we are thoroughly considering the suggestion that next year’s event be moved to AZ. And all fees are waived for anyone wearing a Blackhawks hat. Including airfare. But only if airfare is still \$71 round-trip.





This eager participant realizes that all his matches are being held on the East Sheet. This will force the committee to insert another round of "Walker Rules" for 2022.



Setting up for the finals – the snow starts falling.







Remember last year
when I won?
That was awesome.

View from the Eagle's Nest



FINALISTS



The champs: trophies, medals, and belts – oh my!



Post-game cleanup and commencement of the annual burning-of-the-tree



Post-event celebration: sharing the cash prize



Group Photo



THANK YOU to all participants for bringing food, beverages, and most of all your good cheer.
See you next year.
- The Curling-Q Committee



Kevin Lydon as Ice Man
Steve Otten as BergerOtten OttenBerger
Tom Foster as [Philly] FI-ice Chopper
Ken Sankot as The Last Slush Bender

P.S.

The very next morning



As we wrap up:

- We crowned new champions for Curling-Q 2021
- Madden cashes in on the over/under for wipeouts.
- The TB Buccaneers crushed KC in the Superbowl
- The northern Midwest is in the middle of a cold snap the likes of which we have not seen in years
- Trump is in the midst of his 2nd impeachment trial
- DJIA, S&P, and Nasdaq are all at record highs
- GM workers mull company's recent announcement to convert to all-electric by 2035
- Bitcoin just crossed a new high at \$48,000.00
- A headline today: "South African variant of Covid-19 spreads to U.S. ..."
- IL is 45 out of 50 in distribution of vaccines and it looks like Pritzker is hoarding the vials under his shirt

And yet

- Walker managed to get into 80% of this year's pictures

SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE