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UNB Students National Champs!!

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Brunswickan Staff

Last Sunday, Jim Sullivan's rink composed of four UNB men, defeated Ontario's Wayne Middaugh 6-4 in the final to capture the Pepsi Cola Junior Men's Curling Championship. In doing so, Jim Sullivan along with his fellow UNB students Charlie Sullivan (Mate), Craig Burgess (Second), and lead Danny Alderman have ended a 17 year old curling drought in New Brunswick.

When the Sullivan foursome left for Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, they had anticipated winning five games - a respectable showing for the UNB team. However, the rink curled superbly from day one, and after their round robin play, found their 9-2 record rewarded them with a berth in Sunday's final.

The Sullivan rink did not even think about making the playoffs until they recorded their sixth victory.



The Sullivan rink arriving at Fredericton Airport following their victory in Prince Albert.

Photo by ROBERT WILSON

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"We never talked about it much, but when we were 6-0. I thought we had a pretty good chance to make the playoffs," commented first-year electrical engineering student, Jim Sullivan.

On the other hand, Middaugh's road to the championship game was more difficult. He defeated Alberta in a tie-breaker and then dumped British Columbia in the semi-final game.

Excellent strategies and superb shot-making characterized the final game. The teams exchanged points in the first three ends, but Ontario took two points in the fifth end to grab a 3-2 lead. Sullivan hit and stayed for one in the sixth, while Middaugh, waiting for his chance to score two points, blanked the seventh.

The eighth end proved to be the turning point in the match. With the score deadlocked at three and Ontario having last rock, Sullivan called for several centre-line guards and waited patiently. An Ontario

miss allowed Charlie Sullivan, a first-year business administration student, to curl perfectly behind the guard and set up a dramatic steal of one. The Sullivan rink applied even more pressure in the ninth end, almost stealing more points before forcing Ontario to take one while giving the last rock in the tenth and last end to New Brunswick.

In the tenth end, it was the Ontario skip who was calling for centre-like guards. Both Danny Alderman and Craig Burgess, first-year business administration and physical education students respectively, frustrated their opposition as they successfully peeled off four Ontario guards. As a result, Middaugh's final stone was wide open - barely holding the position of shot or bunting stone.

Jim's final shot was a simple takeout, but the possibility existed that he could drive the Ontario stone onto one of his own rocks at the back. Jim responded to the pressure like a veteran. He hit the Ontario

stone and stayed to score two for the 6-4 victory.

"There was quite a bit of pressure at first, but after a few deep breaths I was O.K.," commented Jim Sullivan.

At the forming of the team last summer, Danny Alderman became aware of the potential that the team possessed. "We felt we had a strong team since Charlie Sullivan was runner-up at the provincials last year and Craig Burgess had been to the nationals before, and I have always been confident of Jim Sullivan's ability. We knew that we had a shot at winning the provincials."

The team plans to curl quite frequently as Danny Alderman points out, "We will be practicing every day and entering a few more cash-spiels. We are going to Scotland in November for an international bonspiel and for training."

These men from UNB will now be representing Canada at the Uniroyal World Junior Curling Championship in Fussen, West Germany during March of 1988.