

Crazy Comebacks and Wild Playoff Races on Day 3

No lead was safe, and nothing seemed impossible on day 3 at the 17th annual Pacific International Cup in Richmond. Just ask the Alaska women's team, who were up by 10-6 after 7 ends against Colorado. Alaska third Kelly Snider says "We tried to play the end 'clean', but obviously we were unsuccessful." Incredibly, Colorado actually had a shot for 5 to win, but one rock rolled out and they had to settle for 4 and a tie game. Alaska managed to win 11-10 in the extra-end. Snider says, "To say we were fortunate is an understatement!" Alaska leads the women's International Pool with a 5 and 1 record.

An even more miraculous comeback occurred in the same Friday morning draw. California's women were down 9-0 to Oregon after 3 ends, but Sarah Walsh's team got their 'mojo' going, and rallied to win 10-9. California is 3 and 3, and still in the playoff race.

The B.C. women's pool is led by Campbell River at 4 and 1 (see feature on page 2). The Island North team lost their morning game to Royal City, but rebounded with an 11-5 win over Tunnel Town. Cloverdale, Sparwood and Vernon are

tied for second place at 3 and 2.

Most of the men's teams had 3 games on Friday, and only one team remains undefeated at 6 and 0. Comox Valley beat Summerland 7-4 in the evening draw, after earlier wins over Richmond and Langley. There's a five-way tie for 2nd place! In the last game of the night, Richmond stole in the 8th end—and extra end—to beat Kimberly 5-4. Richmond, Kimberly, Kerry Park, Langley and Summerland are tied with 3-and-3 records.

In the men's International Pool, Australia and The Yukon are tied for first place at 5 and 1. Australia beat Alaska 7-4, and The Yukon beat Oregon 7-3 in the evening draw. Washington is alone at 4 and 1 after beating Nevada 11-3. Arizona is also in the thick of the playoff race at 4 and 2, after a 9-0 win over New Zealand.

Round robin play wraps up Saturday with three more draws to determine playoff matchups. The top three teams in each pool qualify for Sunday's playoffs.

Day 3 - Shot of the Day

On a day of miracle comebacks and tremendous shots, the shot of the day goes to Comox Valley skip Ron Schmidt. Richmond was sitting 4--with hammer--when Schmidt went to throw his last stone. He executed a triple-takeout, but also rolled to a perfect freeze, leaving Richmond skip Rob Den-

nis with...nothing. "All you could do was applaud", said Dennis. Schmidt—making his 6th PIC appearance, says it was one of his best career shots. After the game, the Comox Valley players lined up the rocks to re-create the "before" and "after" for their blog.



Team Alaska's Kelly Snider delivering with Karen Spaleta (L) and Erica Blake (R) watching

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Matt Panoussi - Skip of Team Australia

PIC Bitters

If you're looking for a curler's perspective on this event, check out the blog by the Comox Valley CC guys: thepicexperience2016.wordpress.com

PIC Social Media guru Chris Summers has already spared twice for Australia, including Friday evening's draw, while this newsletter was being written. His shooting percentage was unavailable.

Yukon Skip Laura Eby is talented off the ice as well. She designed the pins for Team Yukon!

You have a biter for us? Email newsletter@picup.ca

Aussie Skip's Career-Best Comeback in Afternoon Win

Perhaps inspired by a number of jaw-dropping comebacks on the ladies' side of the draw earlier in the day, Australia skip Matt (Houdini) Panoussi performed some of his own magic at least twice in a come-from-behind 10-9 victory over California.

Australia was down 9-4 after 5 ends, before the 10-year PIC veteran dipped into his bag of tricks. Panoussi executed a perfect draw to score 1 in the sixth end and then—after stealing 3 in the 8th to force an extra end—produced the winning point with an equally perfect shot to steal the win. "It was certainly the biggest comeback we've ever had," said Panoussi. "You keep fighting."

The Australians, who improved to a pool-leading 4 and 1

with the victory, are attempting to better their previous best PIC result (a bronze medal in the 2010 event). "There's a great mix of socializing and competition (in curling)," he says. "But I've never seen as good a mix (as at the PIC)."

Since catching the curling bug (he initially imagined it would be a lark when he was invited by a few university mates to try out the game), Panoussi has been heavily invested in the sport. Not only has he continually worked to improve his own skills, he shares what he's learned with the younger generation. He's coached the Australian junior national team for the last four years, and in January led them from the World Junior-B Curling Championship in Finland to the main World Junior Curling Championships.

Birthday Girl Jonsson Celebrates in Style

Kim Jonsson celebrated her birthday Friday night at home. Well, her adopted curling home, at least. Jonsson, the Comox Valley skip who is making her 7th appearance at the PIC, has made a habit of spending her birthday on the ice at the Richmond Curling Centre. And her teammates had a birthday cake waiting after their final game on Friday.

Jonsson has obviously developed a great love for curling, but it wasn't always so. "I hated the sport. I was 15 and always sliding on my knees," she says. But 5 or 6 years later she

returned to the game on a different level, and hasn't looked back.

Among an ever-growing list of accomplishments, Jonsson was on a PIC championship team in 2012. That team also featured current teammate Lonnie Schopp, who is appearing in her 8th PIC event. Both continue to build fond memories of the annual bonspiel. "Everyone calls us the 'home girls' here."

Introducing Team... Yukon (Women)

AKA - "The Rockettes"

Home Club: Whitehorse Curling Club

Laura Eby - Skip

Years curling: 15 years.

Our current team has played together for the last 6 years.

Lorna Spenner -Third

Laura started curing at age 10 in Saskatchewan. Taught by

her Grandma and they curled together in bonspiels and league nights.

Janine Peters - Second

Started curling 6 years ago, and joined the Rockettes in 2012

Deb Enoch - Lead

Started curling in bonspiels and then league 20 years ago.