**The Prescott Curling Club and Fulford Academy**

This is a story of the Prescott Curling Club (PCC), providing an opportunity for International students (grade 9-12) to experience curling. It was the fall of 2022, after the pandemic, and a coeducational private school (Fulford Academy) was looking for curling ice time. As part of their curriculum, all students must be exposed to a Canadian winter sport. Curling was the sport of choice due to access and limited equipment requirements. The PCC had the ice availability and time to support their needs.

December 2022, a group of International and Canadian students arrived at the club. Most had never been on ice, let alone curling ice. The PCC provided all the required equipment to experience the sport. Practice time was 1 hour each week, and quickly weeded out the potential curlers from non-curlers. By January 2023, the students were kicking out of the hacks and delivering draw weight. At this time there were no other curling teams in LGSSAA (Leeds and Grenville Secondary School Athletics Association), therefore the Fulford team automatically advanced to EOSSAA (Eastern Ontario Secondary School Athletics Association), being held in Kingston Ontario. By this time, the PCC club members were aware of this Fulford International team and provided the students with everything they needed to succeed.

In November of 2023, the same Fulford girls from the previous years’ team arrived at the club to commence, practice 1 day a week. At this time, the LGSSAA league had expanded to 4 schools and 5 teams; Gananoque, Fulford, and 2 Kemptville teams. The PCC had ice availability, was central, and became the practice club for all teams and league games.

As an additional experience, the PCC wanted to demonstrate to the International students how people of all ages could play competitively. The senior players from the PCC created a female and male team to play against the Fulford students. The senior team members were 70-90 years of age and both senior teams were successful. (see picture 20231211\_164329.jpeg)

The Fulford students, boys and girls team competed for LGSSAA championship. The boy’s team was eliminated, but the Fulford girls advanced to EOSSAA, winning the best 2 out of 3, full 8 end games in one day. The team consisted of: a skip from Iran, 3 girls from Hong Kong, and 1 Canadian. (See Image0.jpeg). EOSSAA was held in Cornwall.

In 2024 -25 the Kemptville girls revenged there previous years’ loss Fulford, and to advance onto EOSSAA. When the competition ended both teams remained on the ice and practiced, as the Fulford students wanted to learn from the more experienced Kemptville players. This underscores what curling is, and creates long lasting friendships.