

Wheelchair Curling **by Nicole Stefaniszyn**

I first heard about wheelchair curling about 2 years ago through a friend of mine, so I came out one Sunday morning to see for myself what it was all about. I really enjoyed watching so I decided to try it and liked it. Unfortunately due to some health issues I had to stop curling early last year. This year I came back and tried it again, and enjoyed it even more this year than ever. It wasn't as scary as I thought it would be, all the curlers are very accepting of one another and a blast to be with. I found it to be a very friendly sport, you don't have to be Arnold Schwarzenegger or the athlete of the year, you just have to be willing to learn something new and want to have fun.

You are probably wondering "How do I curl while in a wheelchair"? To curl all you need is a stick called an extender to push the rock down the ice, it's not as easy as it looks but it's a lot of fun. There are no sweepers like in regular curling. The other team mates hold the chair of the person that is curling so their chair doesn't move and you get a better curling shot. There are also volunteers that get the rock situated for you. There are three Edmonton teams and two Calgary teams.

Currently there are three Edmonton teams and two Calgary teams. Each team consists of four players, one of which has to be a female. I am sure if you gave it a try you would enjoy it as much as I do.

Want to check out the newest paralympic sport? Come out to the Saville Sport Center 6501-115A street, Sundays between 1-3pm starting again in Sept 2008.





WHEELCHAIR CURLING THE GROWTH OF A NEW SPORT

Many of you are probably not aware of the latest addition to the Paralympics. Wheelchair curling will be the newest competitive Paralympics sport in the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia. Of course you don't have to wait til 2010 or travel to Vancouver to participate in wheelchair curling. The Saville Centre in Edmonton hosts three Edmonton teams, thanks to funding from the Alberta Curling Association. Without their support the introduction of this sport would not have been possible. Ten to fifteen curlers get together every Sunday afternoon from 1:00 – 3:00 to learn the tricks of wheelchair curling and to create new friendships.

This is a very friendly sport because you don't have to be Arnold Schwarzenegger or Athlete of the Year to participate. You simply have to be willing to learn something new and have fun. This year the wheelchair curlers will even be joining in the fun with able bodied curlers to fine tune their skills.

The requirements for this sport are to be in a wheelchair. Even if you do not use a wheelchair all the time you can still be a participant, you just have to use a wheelchair while on the ice. All curlers push the stone with a modified curling stick that suits their needs, from their wheelchair in a stationary position. There will be someone holding the chair to keep it stable as well as a helper to get your stone in position for you.

If wheelchair curling is an activity you are interested in learning more about please come to the Saville Centre (6501 – 115A Street) in September or contact Dwayne Shupac at 886-6992.



Look forward to seeing everyone in September.
By: Nicole Stefanizsyn