

Lawn Bowling Club rolls into 110th anniversary celebrations

Radiant sunlight and the aroma of coffee filled the cozy confines of the Aurora Lawn Bowling Club on Friday morning when I met with three long-time representatives of the sport.

President Raymond Noble, Vice President Gordon Logan, and Recording Secretary Derek Turnbull serve as amiable hosts and we travel down memory lane to discuss the rich history of the game first played in 13th century England and then turn our focus to three big events for the Club this Spring and Summer.

The bowling green below was in pristine condition?all six ?rinks? ready to accommodate Opening Night competitors on Monday. The triumvirate will welcome club members and new players through the day to ?a very challenging game that is easy to learn and hard to master,? as noted by Derek Turnbull?a true student of the sport.

All three note the similarities between lawn bowling and curling. Logan explains that ?The principles of curling and lawn bowling are very similar.?

?Both are played on ?rinks', teams are comprised of 4's, and feature skips. We all view lawn bowling as a great warm up sport for the curling season and curlers are encouraged to embrace this great summer activity. It's essentially curling on grass and both are great games for families to play.?

Noble concurs with his colleague and adds, ?Lawn bowling is much more like curling than bocce. It's also more like chess since it's a strategy game. Here in North America, it's seen as a seniors' game, but in Scotland, Ireland, and Australia, they have 25-year-olds competing professionally.?

Logan augments Noble's assessment: ?Lawn bowling is a traditional Commonwealth Games sport. Scotland is very good internationally and Alex Marshall is one of the country's star players. Lawn bowling is also a flourishing pro sport in Australia.?

Turnbull notes, ?The prize money attracts young people in the professional leagues in Australia.?

?The lawn bowling championships are televised in Australia as big sports events.?

All three club executives are looking forward to an auspicious occasion: the 110th Anniversary of the Bowling Club, to be celebrated on Sunday, June 23. Vice President Logan will welcome the public to the Anniversary Celebration.

?We're celebrating the establishment of the club in 1914 by Doctor Ford Butler?a local dentist?who served as the ALBC's first President.?

The club's current VP makes a contemporary case for lawn bowling as ?a very good team activity for companies.?

?It's social, easy to learn, and a great sport for team building. We hosted the Aurora Chamber of Commerce for an ?After 5 Event' last year and they're coming back for more team-building in July.?

Turnbull segues neatly from his colleague's remarks and adds, ?We continue to promote the image that we have such a beautiful place so close to Yonge Street and easy to get to for all Aurorans. It's a very relaxing setting here in McMahon Park next to the playground and tennis courts. Similar to tennis, lawn bowling is a game that we can grow both casually and right over to the competitive side of things. Our club captured two OLBA championships in 2023?District Champions for Men's Triples and Men's Seniors-- so we do have competitive bowlers among our membership.?

In addition to the range of bowlers who enjoy the game at the Club, Logan points out the relatively-inexpensive price of membership

at the ALBC.

?We charge less for a season of lawn bowling: \$140 for months of outdoor bowling?than it would cost for one round of golf and cart at the area courses. It's a mixed sport and we cater to participants from ages 10-90. The first three times on our bowling green are free as we demonstrate the sport to first-time participants. A set of bowls is \$600, but will last at least ten years. We'll custom fit the bowls to the size of the participants' hands and we have dozens of bowls for new members to use free of charge during the first season. We provide a brief introduction to the rules and then they're ready to go. No uniform is required?only flat shoes with no heels to protect the greens.?

The oldest sports organization in Aurora is also gearing up for a full demonstration of lawn bowling to first-time participants at Sport Aurora's All Sport?One Day event on Saturday, June 8 at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. The lawn bowling clinics are traditionally one of the most popular of the eight sports tackled by participants who range from 6 to 14 and President Noble ?embraces the opportunity to demonstrate lawn bowling to a new generation looking for a low impact, team sport.?

By Jim Stewart