



Staff photo by D. QUINCY WHITNEY

David Deane is flooding the ice at the new Nashua Country Club curling rink.

Don't Mock the Rock

The 'roaring game' of curling

"It's not just a rock. It's forty-two pounds of polished granite, with a beveled underbelly and a handle a human being can hold....in and of itself it looks like it has no practical purpose, but it's a repository of possibility. And, when it's handled just right, it exacts a kind of poetry – as close to poetry as I ever want to get." – Paul Gross



D. QUINCY WHITNEY



Courtesy photo by E.W. WHITNEY

Two days from today, and just a month away from the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Games in South Korea, Nashua will host its version of an Olympian celebration when it officially opens its new state-of-the-art curling rink at the Nashua Country Club – the only dedicated curling rink in New Hampshire and one of just two in northern New England.

First featured in the 1924 Olympics in Chamonix, curling became a demonstration sport in 1932 at Lake Placid, and an official Olympic sport at Nagano in 1998.

The ancient sport of curling is as captivating to its players as it is baffling to its audience.

Paintings by 16th century Pieter Bruegel (1530-1569) portray an activity like curling – stones being thrown across frozen ponds. What the passive sport of casting stones across the ice lacks in high energy and flashiness, more than makes up for itself in its subtle interplay of art and science – from the ice on which it is played to the strategy a player uses to

cast the stone.

But then what would you expect from a sport that may have had its official start as a contest between two monks? The first written evidence appeared in Latin in 1540 when a notary in Paisley, Scotland, recorded an upcoming contest between Paisley Abbey monk John Sclater and Gavin Hamilton, "a representative of the Abbot."

One of the world's oldest team sports, curling earned the nickname the "Roaring Game" referring to the rumbling sound of the 42-pound granite stones as they travelled across the ice. Curling came to North America in 1759 when General Wolf's soldiers curled on the frozen St. Lawrence River after the capture of Quebec. At the turn of the 18th century, an influx of Scottish stone cutters and masons brought curling to the United States – the first documented American curl-

The new Nashua Country Club Curling Rink casts its shadow on history – the adjacent pond in the foreground is where curlers began curling at Nashua in 1928, casting stones on the frozen pond that is the 13th hole, the "water hole" of the Nashua Country Club golf course.

ing club formed at Orchard Lake, Michigan in 1832. Boston formed a club around 1839.

Curling came to Nashua Country Club in 1928, twelve years after the founding of the club. For the first few years, curlers played on the frozen pond that is now the 13th hole of the golf course. A few years later, the first indoor rink was made by flooding the floor of an adjacent farm building – resulting in

three separate sheets of ice – a less than ideal situation as "Ice-man" David Deane of Nashua, discovered over the last nineteen years. The ice-making process changes dramatically with the new rink due to advances in technology and the fact that the new rink is now one sheet of ice with four Olympic-size curling sheets.