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SPECIAL EDITION

Feature Story



"Who's the kid?"

Editor's Note: I was getting ready to begin shooting my photo essay of the 2-day Canaccord Championship Challenge, when, in the crowd of players preparing for their first game, I spotted a good looking young player who looked out of place in a sea of seniors. "Who's the kid?" I said to the players with whom I was chatting. "Hey Kiddo!" I shouted. I just wanted his attention. I motioned for him to come over, apologized for calling him Kiddo and found out he was actually playing. I asked if we could talk during the tournament. His name is Adam Buckley and here's my surprising tale.

Young Maple Ridge phenom steals the show!

Mario Battista
Editor

Meet Adam Buckley, 16 years old and already a champion Lawn Bowler. Playing for just 4 years, he has already won several junior championships, such as the Twin Peaks, twice, and the All Home U-14, and, most recently, he earned a Silver Medal in the BC Juniors. On Saturday, he skipped his triples team to the biggest purse in BC, the \$900 first prize in the 'A' Division of the 32-team, 2-day Canaccord Championship Challenge, at the Langley Lawn Bowling Club.

With little competition available for young players, Adam often plays with older adults, where he draws a lot of attention because of his excellent play, youth and quiet, friendly demeanor. Everyone would like to have Adam on his team. Especially after last year's BC Pairs Championship, when, while skipping his team, he "defeated some very good bowlers and knocked a few teams out of the wild card playoff".

Last September, he was invited to play in the Gold Cup, in Richmond, with international champions Bruce Matheson and Cary Manns. They won first prize: \$450. Coincidentally,

Bruce and Cary, playing from the New Westminster Club, with Barbara Hammond, won the \$900 first prize in the 'B' Division of the Canaccord Championship Challenge.

Why wasn't Adam playing with his old partners? Two reasons. All team players had to be registered with the same club, and Adam plays out of the Maple Ridge Club. The more compelling reason, though, was that he got to play on a Maple Ridge Team with his grandparents Joan and George Cubiss, for the first time in a championship event. Imagine a match between the winners of the 'A' and 'B' divisions?



ADAM WITH HIS TAYLOR JR. ACE CUSTOM LABEL BOWL



"Nana, he won't listen to me..."

The Canaccord Championship Challenge is a 6-game mixed triples tournament, an excellent test of skills made much more difficult by last week's intense heat. At the beginning of this competition, Adam's grandfather, George, skipped, Adam played Second, and Joan, his grandmother, played Lead. The team won its first game but after losing the second, Adam went to Joan and commented "Nana, he won't listen to me. If he had thrown the back hand like I said, we would have won." George decided to make Adam the Skip for the third game. They won. Adam continued to skip on the second day and the team continued to win. They never lost again and won the big prize. It was no big deal according to Adam: "I feel very confident right now, both Nana and Grandpa are playing so well, that I don't have to do too much when it's my turn. Grandpa calls for the shot and I just make it." What a great end to the story! It's okay to play with Nana and Grandpa, at any age.



Young phenom

Continued

About Adam

Adam, an avid skateboarder, lives in Maple Ridge with his parents. He has just completed his 11th grade at Garibaldi Secondary, where he also plays on the Rugby team. Although his long-term plans have yet to be defined, he is oriented toward a business education. However, his short term objectives are very clear. He needs to earn enough money to pay for his car insurance, which is extremely expensive at age 16. With this in mind, he holds down two part-time jobs and plays in money Lawn Bowling tournaments. At this rate, he may be driving to school by September.



Adam Buckley playing in a major tournament together with grandparents Joan & George Cubiss, for the first time.

Adam was introduced to Lawn Bowling by his grandfather, George Cubiss, who is a past Seniors' Champion, Certified Umpire and a great coach. Adam fell in love with the game immediately. He even paid for his custom bowls by collecting and selling pop cans. He loved the game so much, that as part of his PE11 requirements, where "you have to teach a couple of classes, I decided to introduce the sport of Lawn Bowling. All the kids had fun and became pretty good at the game very fast. I thought it was weird seeing so many juniors on one green".

Adam's understanding of the game is impressive. For example, at the Maple Ridge Club, lawn bowling is played on an artificial green. The play is very different from a grass green. It's much faster and very frustrating for visiting

players. When asked why it is that Maple Ridge players are so competitive wherever they play and that the reverse is not so, Adam explained that a fast green promotes finesse play. Consequently, Maple Ridge players have a more refined game. He, further, pointed out that, to sharpen their game, most champions practice on indoor greens or artificial ones. This is not a commonly known strategy. Sounds like Adam is taking advantage of the excellent advice and coaching he receives.



Adam is an impressive and appealing young man - an up and coming star of lawn bowling. He hopes that other young men and women will follow his lead and as he says "give the game a try". ###

