

Richardson will be tough in mixed

By Arnie Tiefenbach
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Exactly who plays whom in the opening round of the provincial mixed curling championship in North Battleford tonight won't be known until just before game time.

But even before the official pair-off, one thing is obvious: Whoever draws Sam Richardson had better be on his toes.

Richardson, who is sometimes referred to as Silent Sam, swept through Regina playdowns in cyclone fashion. If someone can actually have that intangible called momentum on his side going into a provincial final, then Sam has.

Richardson, with the able assistance of Ev Krahn, Irwin Wright and Elsie Hunter, laid claim to the Regina berth in the provincial final in the minimum number of games, five. But what was especially impressive was that only once did the opposition survive past the ninth end!

"It was really amazing," Richardson says. "You know how it is in curling how sometimes everything gets rolling right for you? Well, that's how it was for us. One game was a real struggle, it went to

an extra end. But the others were over in six and seven and eight ends ... it was something."

The game that did go the full distance, and then some, was against Lorne Hamblin of the Tartan in the A-side semis. The tense struggle didn't seem to leave any scars on Sam, though. He went out a couple of nights later and demolished Randy House of the Tartan 8-2 in eight ends in the first game of the A-B final.

In all, Richardson and his Regina club rink outscored the opposition 46-17 over the course of the five games.

The opposition for the Regina four in the opening round tonight at 8 will be supplied by one of the following: Len Kirkpatrick of Lafleche, Roert Clark of Carlyle, Larry Krekiewicz of Melville, Robert Kopp of Humboldt, Barry Haidey of North Battleford, Orlo Coverett of Melfort or Bernie Yuzdzepski of Saskatoon.

No matter who it is, though, Sam figures he's likely to be a pretty tough customer.

"We've been in this thing before and I know it sure was tough then, anyway," Sam says.



Sam Richardson

Of course, the other time he was in it he won it. That was in 1973 when Glen Hall was second instead of Wright. The rink had a good run at the Canadian title

in Charlottetown, P.E.I., but wound up in second spot with a record of 8-2.

That year, Richardson had to beat a fellow by the name of Ken May in the provincial final. This year, May made it to the provincial men's showdown.

"I wondered then when we were going to hear about May in men's curling," Richardson says. "This year we found out. Actually, there were a lot of good teams at the final in '73. I remember Paul Palendat was there and there was that Craig fellow from Saskatoon."

One rock tosser of note who was perhaps expected to make it to the mixed final but didn't though, is Garnet Campbell of Avonlea. He was the defending provincial champ twice over.

Draws Friday are set for 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., and on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The first game of the A-B final is planned for 8:30 a.m. Sunday and the second game, if required, for 1:30 p.m.

It isn't tough to figure out who the curling buffs in North Battleford will be rooting for, Haidey, of course. In fact, Haidey and host city backers Linda Killoran, Barry Walker and Janice Sharp will likely be considered the favorites even if they do meet Sam in the opener.