

# *Norma O'Leary, CGCS, and the U.S. Women Win Bronze at 2014 World Senior Curling Championship*

(STEVENS POINT, Wis. World Curling Federation) - After two previous attempts, Margie Smith is a world medalist. Smith (St. Paul, Minn.) and the U.S. ladies defeated Sweden's Ingrid Meldahl rink, 8-3, to win the bronze medal this morning at the 2014 World Senior Curling Championships in Dumfries, Scotland.

"We're very excited. We've been here a couple of years and we've yet to do this (win a medal)," Smith said after the win. "We worked hard; we just needed to stay tough. We were reading the ice well and the girls were throwing the rocks really well so patience was the key." Smith's teammates include Norma O'Leary (Silver Bay, Minn.), Debbie Dexter (St. Paul, Minn.), and Shelly Kosal (Edgerton, Wis.). They are coached by Jim Dexter (St. Paul, Minn.).

Curling is a sport in which players slide stones on a sheet of ice

towards a target area which is segmented into four concentric rings. It is related to bowls, boules and shuffleboard. Two teams, each of four players, take turns sliding heavy, polished granite stones, also called rocks, across the ice curling sheet towards the house, a circular target marked on the ice.[2] Each team has eight stones. The purpose is to accumulate the highest score for a game; points are scored for the stones resting closest to the centre of the house at the conclusion of each end, which is completed when both teams have thrown all of their stones. A game may consist of ten or eight ends.

The curler can induce a curved path by causing the stone to slowly turn as it slides, and the path of the rock may be further influenced by two sweepers with brooms who accompany it as it slides down the sheet, using the brooms to alter the state of the ice in front of the stone. A great deal of strategy and teamwork



go into choosing the ideal path and placement of a stone for each situation, and the skills of the curlers

determine how close to the desired result the stone will achieve. This gives curling its nickname of “chess

on ice”.

Much like most of the week, the U.S. ladies got off to a strong start to the bronze-medal game scoring a deuce in the opening end. After holding the Swedish ladies, who have won a medal in nearly every appearance at this event, to a single point in the second end, the U.S. again scored two points. A steal of one point in the fourth gave the Americans a comfortable lead at the halfway point at 5-1. The teams exchanged deuces as the second half developed. Another steal by the U.S. ladies in the seventh end sealed up

the bronze medal win for Smith’s team.

“You realize that it’s any team, any day. You just go out there and we were pretty confident in the second year that we were going to be up there. We struggled a little bit, but it’s all about finishing and we did that this week,” Smith said.

Editors note: *While in Scotland, Norma made great use of her spare time and visited The Old Course at Saint Andrews. Congratulations Norma on bringing home the Bronze.*



*“Standing on the medal stand – as they raised the American flag – was an absolute AMAZING experience... My trip to Scotland kept getting better though, one win at a time.”*



I have been in the industry over 30 years, and have been a Golf Course Superintendent since 1983. My husband Mike, who is a former World Bronze medal winner himself, introduced me to curling nearly 20 years ago.

I love the sport of curling, but the only reason I curl is because I can't grow grass or play golf during the winter months in Northern Minnesota.

I came up to Northern Minnesota when I got married in 1988, with the intention of working on the golf course up here for about 10 years, and then relocate to the Southern part of the state where the golf season is 4 to 6 weeks longer. Sixteen years later I am still up here because the members here in Silver Bay have been very good to me, and it is really hard to quit a job you love!

I did not score very well at St. Andrews, nor did I care. I have wanted to visit that golf course since I was in college, so just being there was an absolute thrill for me. I was also



fortunate enough to have my sister walk the course with me and take over 300 pictures. I actually got to play the Old Course twice. The course is actually pretty easy if you stay out of the bunkers. I did not stay out of the bunkers. Several of the bunkers I went in were over my head, and on two occasions, my only shot was to bounce my ball off of the bunker wall to get back far enough to make a swing. The Caddie's are very professional and I had a blast with all of them. Gordon Moir, the Superintendent came to visit me on the golf course, which also added to my experience. When

I left the golf course after my second round I said to my sister, “no matter what happens from here on out – this trip has been spectacular!”. My trip to Scotland kept getting better though, one win at a time.

My experience at the World Championship was spectacular as well. I knew my team was capable of medaling, but we did make it to the World Championship last year, and did not fare so well, finishing in 6th or 7th place. This year was a different story. We played very well all week long going unde-

feated throughout the round robin and gaining the #1 seed from our pool of 8. We faced Scotland in the Semi-finals, losing on the last shot of an extra end. Scotland was playing in their home club and the crowd was spectacular. Their were obviously cheering extremely loud for their home team, and as much as I wanted to win, I could not help but feel thrilled for Scotland when they made the last shot to beat us. The crowd erupted and I genuinely felt very happy for them. This winter I also had the experience of winning the Women’s Club National Cham-



pionships that were held at the Two Harbors Curling Club. It is the first time I have ever won a big event in front of a home crowd, and the feeling is truly amazing when the entire crowd is as happy as you are when you win.

It was my fifth national championship in curling, but by far the most memorable, just because of the excitement of winning in front of the home crowd. When Scotland won our game, I sort of relived that feeling I had in Two Harbors, and I suppose that is why I was so happy for them. After losing to Scotland in the Semi-finals, we went on to beat Sweden in the Bronze medal game, and Scotland went on to beat Canada for the gold. Standing on the medal stand – as they

raised the American flag – was an absolute AMAZING experience. I truly felt like one of the luckiest people in the world! Especially when I got back home to Silver Bay to find that my golf course had wintered in the best shape in perhaps 25 years or so. I'm still riding on cloud nine.

