

Interest in curling began in the mid-1950's with a group of area residents who traveled weekly to Waupaca to curl at the Waupaca Curling Club. After a few years of trekking to Waupaca, enough interest was developed to start a curling club in the Tri-City area. With great cooperation and support from Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company, the Tri-City Curling Club was formed in 1958. The two-sheet facility was located at the rear of the Port Edwards mill parking lot, just south of the YMCA.

The club had a small viewing area behind the ice adjacent to the compressor room which conveniently served as a hiding place for broomstacking items. Eventually, a large warming room was added and the party reputation the club holds today began to take shape. The warming room was also used by NEPCO as the pay-station for the Port mill employees and because the ice area had a concrete floor in which the cooling pipes were imbedded, it served as a storage area for a variety of mill items from April to October. When the frost went down, the floor came up by the outside wall of sheet 2 creating a swing that would not be believed by today's curlers. Skips had to point to support timbers or other reference points near the hog line, call for and in-turn and the rock would still fall against the curl across the full width of the sheet. You were very fortunate if the rock stayed in the house. For many years, the annual costume party was the highlight of the year and closed out the curling season.

In the early 1970's rumors of plant expansion and the loss of our curling facilities circulated. NEPCO finally advised the club that they were planning to expand and would need the land on which the club was located. We received a one-year reprieve, but in 1975 were told that we had to move. After struggling to find a site that was acceptable to the club and surrounding residents, NEPCO again came to our rescue and offered the land above the Centralia Dam and power plant, where the Tri-City Curling Club is now located. Construction began in the Spring of 1976. With the exception of the basic pole building for the ice arena and clubhouse shell, which were erected by a commercial firm, everything necessary to complete the building in time for the start of the 1976 curling season was all done by the members.

Sweat equity and note purchases by the club members resulted in a new, two-sheet Tri-City Curling Club that was free of commercial debt. Again, NEPCO was a great help and along with Consolidated Papers, both made significant contributions of materials, equipment and expertise to move the project along. The club design and layout with its large warming room was made to accommodate future expansion of sheets three and four. For now, that area features a covered patio for outdoor grilling, even in the coldest Wisconsin weather.