

Leprechaun Picks

The days are flying by before bowlers celebrate the annual rite of spring, the O5PBA Open Championships. Just as the athletes chase the gold, we went in search of some new sages and, at the end of the rainbow found, a group of leprechauns who prepared their predictions for the victors in the championships held at Sherwood Centre in Hamilton, April 7th through 10th.

In the Men's Team competition, York Simcoe is heavily favored with veteran players, many of whom have been successful in this event in the past. Coach Cathy Barker, former O5PBA Singles Champion, has a deep lineup to call on for substitutions. Metro Toronto and Central Ontario could be potential challengers to York Simcoe domination.

In the Ladies' Team division, with home lanes advantage, Hamilton emerges as the leprechauns' clear choice. Connie Ward, Alison Roberts and Brenda Campbell have all finished in the money in Master Bowlers competition this year. Both Niagara Peninsula, led by Tracy Smith, and York Simcoe, with Sandi Horton, are expected to contest for the Gold Medal.

In the Mixed Team race, our sages were unable to reach consensus on a clear favorite. Ottawa Valley is cited as a strong possibility with veteran coach George Chrulenko. However, both York Simcoe and Western Ontario teams feature both seasoned and emerging talent that could propel them ahead. Don't discount Hamilton's team who, once again, could gain with home lanes.

In the inaugural Senior Team competition, a wealth of seasoned talent should provide exciting results. The leprechauns' two favorites are Grand River and Metro Toronto. However, Central Ontario with John Mattioli and Brenda Hamilton could prove to be the upset winners.

Continuing his domination from the zone round and recent successes on the MBO Tour, Geoff Stevens of York Simcoe was unanimous favorite in Men's Singles. Doug Stuart of Ontario Durham, a perennial competitor, is expected to mount a strong challenge as are hometown favorite Rogatien Rozon of Hamilton and former C5PBA Singles Champion Mike Stoddart of Bay of Quinte. Other possibilities cited are Jim Thorpe and Randy Main of Middlesex Elgin, Steve Konopelky of Metro Toronto and Marc Goneau of Ottawa Valley. Dave Pendlebury of Niagara Peninsula will certainly be prepared to defend his 2003 title.

Connie Ward of Hamilton is given the home advantage in Ladies' Singles. She will face strong competition from Tracy Smith of Niagara Peninsula, Sandi Horton of York Simcoe, Linda MacLean of Ontario Durham and Karole Jordan of Grand River, all of whom have posted strong finishes in MBO Tour events this season. Barb McLachlan of Tri County, former Northern Ontario Champion, can be expected to challenge for the crown. Dianne Trask, defending 2003 O5PBA Champion, will mount a strong defense of her title.

Five pin action gets underway on Wednesday, April 7th at 6:00 p.m., at Sherwood Centre in Hamilton with the first block of Singles Competition. Our thanks to Sean, Shamus, Willy, Davey and Flynn for their predictions of the finishers in the 2004 O5PBA Open Championships. As always, the Ontario Open will provide excitement and gold for some on Easter weekend.

