A huge thank you to Dave Staveteig and his world-class icemaking crew for the excellent playing conditions.

A huge thank you to Dave Staveteig and his world-class icemaking crew for the excellent playing conditions. Photo by Rich Harmer, USA Curling

The Daily Pebble
The official publication of the 2019 USA Curling National Championships  Saturday, Feb. 16, 2019

By Terry Davis, Daily Pebble Editor

After nine round robin games and two rounds of playoffs, four teams remain panning for gold at the 2019 USA Curling National Championships.

With Jamie Sinclair and John Shuster booking their spots in Saturday’s gold-medal games earlier in the day, the coveted final berths were up for grabs last night as the semifinals unfolded in front of a sold-out crowd at Wings Event Center.

2018 Olympian Nina Roth (McFarland, Wis.) and defending national champion Rich Ruohonen (Brooklyn Park, Minn.) came out victorious to clinch spots in the championship finals today.

“We love the crowds. It’s really cool to have this many people watching so we just play into them and we’re just dancing and having fun out there before games. We like to just go out there and stay loose and the crowds help with that,” Roth said.

Roth (McFarland, Wis.) and teammates Tabitha Peterson (St. Paul, Minn.), Becca Hamilton (McFarland, Wis.) and Tara Peterson (Eagan, Minn.) will take on Sinclair after a clutch last-rock draw to the button to defeat Cory Christensen’s team, 7-5.

“We’ve had two really great games against them, we always rise to the occasion, and we just have to pull out the next game,” Roth said about the gold-medal matchup.

Two fantastic draws from Roth in the eighth end resulted in a game-changing steal of two points as her team grabbed the game’s momentum.

“We were looking for our opportunities and it kind of just fell in our lap. I made a really good freeze and Cory was in a really good position to score two or three and my freeze kind of saved it – my team swept it perfectly. And then we had a really good opportunity to put one on the lid, and I’m just really happy we did it to put some pressure on her,” Roth said.

Christensen (Duluth, Minn.) and teammates Vicky Persinger (Fairbanks, Alaska), Jenna Martin (Wauwatosa, Wis.) and Madison Bear (Minneapolis, Minn.) converted a fantastic hit and roll against four Roth.

Continued on Page 3

Panning for gold

A huge thank you to Dave Staveteig and his world-class icemaking crew for the excellent playing conditions.

Photo by Rich Harmer, USA Curling
Thank you, Kalamazoo!

By Colton Wood, Daily Pebble Staff Writer

Pastrana stood on top of the bleachers at the Wings Event Center during a draw at the 2019 USA Curling National Championships. His fluorescent orange shirt singled out the former citizen of Spain.

“Get Curling? Get Answers! Ask me how to explain this silly sport,” Pastrana’s shirt read.

A Spanish immigrant, Pastrana has lived in Kalamazoo for around 30 years. After watching Nationals as a spectator in 2010 and ’15, Pastrana’s curiosity of the sport developed into him joining the Kalamazoo Curling Club in 2016.

Before the 2018 Winter Olympics, the club had around, Pastrana said, 85 members, however, following Team Shuster’s gold medal-winning performance, the club soon saw a rapid increase in interest of the sport.

“After the Olympics, we actually probably taught close to 2,000 people how to curl in about a three-month window,” Club President Marcus Gleaton said. “What that did was it allowed people in or around Kalamazoo to try curling. We have about 70 new members in our leagues this year as a result of last year.”

Among the 2,000 new curlers was Nic Gilchrist. Among the 2,000 new curlers was Nic Gilchrist. Earlier in the day, Sinclair’s team defeated Roth in the Page 1-2 playoff to march into the women’s final. Shuster’s team got past Ruohonen, 8-3. Christensen defeated Stephanie Senneker, 9-8, to advance to last night’s semifinal against Roth. Birr defeated Mark Fennor’s squad in the men’s Page 3-4 match, 5-4, to set up the semifinal with Ruohonen.

The women’s championship final will take place at 11 a.m. ET while the men’s gold-medal game will be contested at 3 p.m. The winners will advance to the 2019 World Championships.

FROM PAGE 1: GOLD-MEDAL GAMES SET

1 P.M. RESULTS:

Women’s Page 1-2 playoff: Sinclair 9, Roth 8
Men’s Page 1-2 playoff: Shuster 8, Ruohonen 3
Men’s Page 3-4 game: Birr 5, Fennor 4

7 P.M. SEMIFINAL RESULTS:

Ruohonen 6, Birr 5
Roth 7, Christensen 5

Parker Kligerman will return to the driver’s seat as he is set to pilot the No. 96 Camry. The Gaunt Brothers Racing entry hits the track for the season-opening Daytona 500 event on Sunday, Feb. 17.

Toyota’s partnerships with USA Curling will be highlighted on the decklid of the No. 96 Camry.