



ISPA INFO

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Message from the President:

Dear ISPA Members

We had a very positive AGM meeting in Montreal this year, we all realize that the future of Skat depends on our clubs developing new players and teaching Canadians how to play instead of trying to find existing Skat players. Saskatoon and Edmonton are in the forefront of doing this with a lot of success, but we are seeing signs of a few other clubs also getting on board promoting and teaching. It is great to see these new faces at tournaments and having fun like we all did in the old days. With carpooling and Air B&Bs the new players are seeing that Skat is not just a competitive game, but also a social family that enjoys travelling and fun times before and after the cards have been dealt. We had a good referee course in Hamilton where Peter Ridder did a fantastic job in educating our new referees. Congrats to the five new referees we have, that brings our total to 9 players that hold an official license to referee our great game. I would encourage every club to promote their players to take the course, even if you don't pass the course or you don't really want to be a referee, the experience of knowing the rules is well worth the course. The next course will be held next year in western Canada, so plan to attend. Keep up the good work in teaching others.
Good Cards

Ron Link

President, ISPA Canada

From the Editor:

It has been a while since the last newsletter was issued end of April. This may have to do with the fact that we had a nice summer, visitors from Germany and the editor also playing a lot of Skat, which may not be surprising to some.

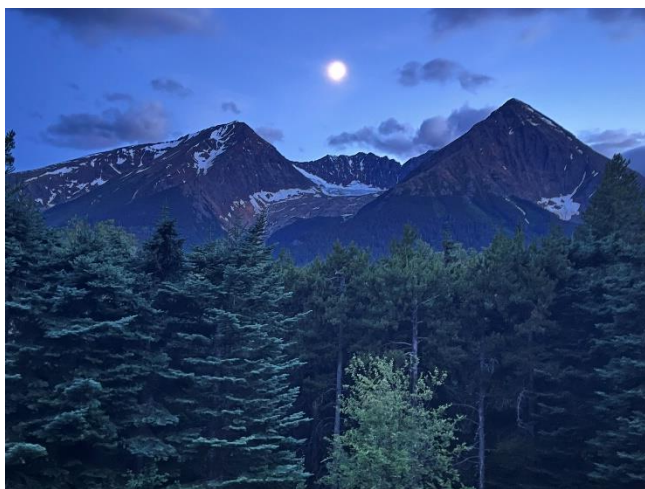
Since Ottawa, ISPA North America played eight tournaments all over the continent. It is great to see that our Skat folks (yes that includes you!) are finally travelling in normal numbers again. When it comes down to it, excelling at the execution of our beloved game is very important, but reconnecting with old friends and making new ones in the process is what attending Skat tournaments is really all about. Like Ron mentioned in his message, it is important for clubs to teach Skat to newcomers, but finding existing players wanting to join ISPA and participate in the tournament schedule is also a good way to promote the sport.



This year, we have the pleasure welcoming two new members in the West. The first one is Helmut Bork:



Helmut, having recently retired, lives with his wife Michaela in Smithers, B.C., where the two run a bed and breakfast in a location, that travellers only can dream of. The editor had the opportunity to check out Helmut's place this summer, and to say it can be recommended, is a severe understatement. Smithers is known to many as the Switzerland of Canada and Helmut's backyard underlines this:



Helmut is a very good Skat player, his first ISPA tournaments in Montreal and Ottawa made that quite obvious.

After Seattle, Helmut drove to Vancouver to pick up his friend Peter Schöpfer, to bring him to the Kelowna tournament. Peter is a retired high school teacher,

who also loves to play Skat. He demonstrated that very much so in Kelowna, where he came in seventh place at his first ISPA tournament:



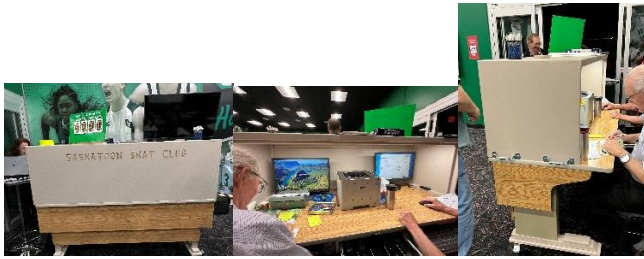
Please join me in welcoming Helmut Bork and Peter Schöpfer to our Skat community. We are looking forward to seeing the two regularly in our tournaments.

Gerd Reiner

Secretary and Editor, ISPA Canada

Tournament Results

The celebrations of our 2023 Canadian Champion Frank Heuvelmans still in our minds together with Roger Beckerman's win in Ottawa, the tournament schedule next headed to Saskatchewan, a venue that the Albertans (and probably others) are particularly fond of. Keith Koronko's introduction of the Skat Turniermanager, a database type scorekeeping application in combination with the construction of a very efficient custom computer desk resulted in an extremely well-run tournament, which our ISPA Canada president rightfully labeled as the best run tournament ever. The below shows the ingenious construction of Keith's computer desk, that is fully lockable and rolled into the tournament in a moment's notice.



SaSKATchewan Tournament

32 players from Saskatoon, Kelowna, Winnipeg, Red Deer, Edmonton, and Calgary met the last weekend in May to compete at the Sports on Tap venue in Saskatoon. On Saturday morning, some of the players may have got their hopes for a tournament win up, seeing that some players chose to party it up the night before:



These hopes however were once again crushed when Ron delivered yet another tournament win with 6032 points out of five rounds. Peter Ridder took second place with only 78 points behind, followed by third place finisher Eric Luz with 5741.



The team called “The Lucky Team”, made up of Hans Rasing, Danny Ridder, Donna Dee, and Ron Link, won the team competition:



Seriensieger honors were taken by Christine Scheer (Calgary), Peter Ridder, Kurt Wehr and Kristina Huisman (Edmonton) and Gerd Reiner (Red Deer):





Saskatoon, being a very inclusive thinking club, ensured that everyone went home with a prize, while adding a nice touch to each item, as can be seen here:



It is almost tradition now that Red Deer follows the Saskatoon tournament on the annual calendar, so the players assembled one week later at the Red Deer Skat Club for their annual tournament.

Red Deer Skat Tournament

Besides most of Saskatchenites and Albertans, Red Deer also enjoyed Dinah from Winnipeg and Helmut from Smithers as guests for a total of 37 players.

With Red Deer also using the by Peter Baumann, DSKV, built Skat Turniermanager as scorekeeping application, running the tournament is now easier than ever. Besides one team per person, Red Deer also allowed tandems for the first time as a category. Despite best efforts, the top three results all came from Edmonton players, whit Kristina Huisman winning the tournament with a total of 6739 points.

Following her was Ron Link with 6218 points, and Kurt Wehr rounded out the top three with 5788 points:



The Tandem Competition was won by the Garage Couple, Ron Link and Brett Schwartz, the latter also having won the bubble boy prize:



Having lost a wheel, coming down to Red Deer from Edmonton, the only logical team name for the winning team was “Loose Lugnuts”, representing Paul Weber, Ron Link, Kurt Wehr and Kristina Huisman.

It should be mentioned here that it was Kristina who bailed the rest out by going back in her car to grab a torque wrench to fix the stalled minivan, so they could participate in the tournament on time.



Finally, our newcomer Helmut was introduced into the prestigious club of Skatsportabzeichenbesitzer (yes, that is a word, meaning Skat pin owners) by achieving his first pin (bronze):



Also worth mentioning is that the Red Deer venue has a rather spacious parking lot with power plugs on the light poles, allowing participants to bring their trailers, fifth wheels or motor homes and stay on the grounds for the duration of the tournament. This year, this

feature was used quite a bit and led to Red Deer hiring the breakfast services of Werner Roewekamp:



As you can see, if you are not coming to Red Deer, you are clearly missing out.

The same first weekend in June, Santa Monica also competed in their tournament. With only 16 players, Guenter Pauly took the win with 5799 points, followed by Frank Dankemeyer (5595), and in third place Manfred Fabian (5168).



Respective Seriensiieger in Santa Monica were Frank Dankemeyer, right, Klaus Schmale, second from right, (2nd and 3rd round), Richard Morlock, second from left and Milton Seim, left:



After the summer break, the tournament schedule moved back East where three tournaments were played in sequence: Cleveland, Hamilton, and Catskills.

Cleveland Skat Tournament

Bill Thompson, our ISPA US president, wrote up the following summary of the Cleveland tournament: "25 players from across the US and Canada gathered in Cleveland for the annual ISPA tournament hosted by the Cleveland Skat Club. All enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Cleveland Maennerchor, our host club, who provided delicious chicken paprikash, spaetzle and cucumber salad in the Cleveland culinary tradition on Friday night. On Saturday, the Clevelanders once again showed off their cooking skills with a sumptuous potluck spread, followed by a tasty brunch buffet by the club cooks once again on Sunday. As is customary at the Cleveland tournament, courageous players who won grands without 4 were treated to buckeyes, but this time they were lovingly homemade by ISPA member Nadine Roszko.

In the tournament itself, we were delighted to award the title of champion to one of our online members, Mandi Asbury, from Hamilton, ON, who won her very first ISPA tournament ever. Mandi led the event wire to wire, outpacing noted and accomplished players like Frank Heuvelmans (2nd) and Ron Link (3rd). Mandi and Ron teamed up for the winning tandem as well, Seriensiieger prizes went to Mandi (1 and 4), Roger Beckerman (2), Peter Ridder (3), and Ron (5).

The Cleveland tournament was a great success, and we look forward to welcoming everybody again in July of 2024!"

Thank you, Bill, for this contribution to our newsletter. The winners:



Winning team:



Tandem winners:



Congratulations to Mandi for winning her first tournament!

Hamilton Skat Tournament

Following Cleveland, the players headed North across the border to participate in the Hamilton tournament. Again, the out of towners outnumbered the Hamilton players. A strong appearance of the current Canadian Skat Champion earned Frank Heuvelmans another win, his 14th ISPA tournament win with 6426 points, relegating Ron Link (5769) to second place, despite Ron having played a 2234 round. Kristina Huisman came third with 5676.



The five series won, were:

1. Kristina Huisman (1654)
2. Kevin Thompson (1533)
3. Ron Link (2234)
4. Bill Thompson (2022)
5. Thomas Rausch (1635)



The Dutch Connection, composed of Kristina and Frank won the Tandem competition with 12102 combined points.



With Hamilton wrapped up, the tournament schedule now had the Catskills Tournament next on the list, which rounded out the Great Lakes tournaments.

Catskills Skat Tournament, ROUNDTOP, NY

This tournament had not been on the calendar for a couple of years, so there naturally was excitement for it to be returning. 20 players assembled to compete, including some fewer familiar names among the players. After five rounds, Bill Thompson took the title with a total of 6157 points. Stephan Weiss from Philadelphia managed to achieve second place with 5596 points ahead of Scott McCormick (5205).



The locals, calling themselves the Bald, Bold, and Beautiful took the team win with 15627 points:



The five series winners were Stefan Weiss, Frank Heuvelmans, Michael Piasecki, Chris Wick and Peter Menzian:



The Catskills tournament concluded the tournaments in August, allowing for a short break. Next on the calendar was the 9th US Open Skat Championship in Seattle, Washington.

9th US Open Skat Championship Seattle, WA

With the US Open being as prestigious a tournament as the Canadian Championship, Seattle welcomed 39 players from the USA and Canada, as well as one player from Germany. This year, a new venue was chosen by the Seattle hosts Marianne and Hans Stewin. Marlaina's Mediterranean Kitchen had just the right amount of space for the tournament to be held. The Stewins did not disappoint and catered the whole event to the joy of all participants. Kasserl for dinner on Saturday marked the highlight, however an also very generous number of sandwiches with tartar, Mettwurst, liver sausage, head cheese and Blutwurst must also be mentioned here. A very big thank you to Marianne and Hans for their generosity!



Being taken care of that well, the players enjoyed a great tournament, which was won by Vancouver's Axel Zitscher with 6059 points, followed by local Skat Matador Hans Stewin (5660) in second place. Helmut Bork from Smithers rounded up the top three with 5488 points.



The series winners were:

1. Ron Link (1552)
2. and 4. Axel Zitscher (1640 and 1767)
3. Frank Heigl (1304), missing in photo below
5. Frank Reuter (1484)

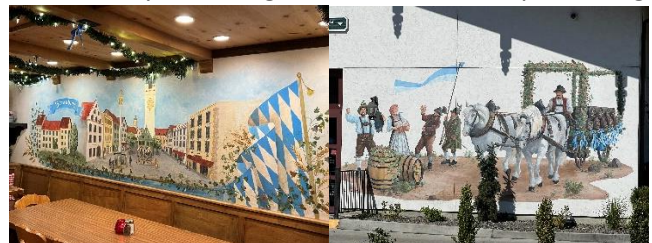


CAL-D, the winning team was made up of Richard Helwig, Frank Reuter, Guenter Pauly and Frank Dankemeyer, by accumulating 20595 points:



A special thanks also goes to Gabriel, the owner of Marlaina's Mediterranean Kitchen, for providing the venue. The players from Red Deer stayed for dinner after the tournament and can highly recommend what Gabriel and his team are cooking up!

Having a good number of players already out on the West Coast, it only made sense for Kelowna to put on another tournament following Seattle. Manfred Grossmueller agreed, and we subsequently made our way to Kelowna. While some chose to drive across the Coquihalla, others chose to visit Leavenworth on the way back, which ended up creating a delay because of a rockslide. Subsequently, the Edmontonians missed the warmup round in Kelowna. Not to say, Leavenworth is a bad choice, au contraire, this Bavarian-style village is worth experiencing.



Ogopogo Skat Tournament Kelowna, BC

The beautifully located city in the Okanagan attracted 28 players for the main tournament and the volunteers of the German Canadian Harmonie Club catered the event in their usual perfection. With a first-round result of 2317, Ron Link cemented his seat on table one and never gave it up again, winning the tournament with 6719 points. Danny Ridder came in second place (6020) followed by Kristina Huisman in third place (5932).



These Edmontonians are hard to beat, but that just means that the rest of us will continue trying.

As for the series winners, Ron took the first round with 2317, Danny the second round with 1810, Kristina the third with 1694, Gerd the fourth round with 1376 and Eric round number 5 with 1543 points.



The winning team of the properly registered teams, called "The Diamonds", was formed by Frank Reuter, Germany, Danny Ridder, Kristina Huisman, and Saskatoon's Werner Roewekamp:



It should be mentioned that between Seattle and Kelowna, there were three Grand Ouverts dealt, two of which were played as such, both in Kelowna, one by Gerd Reiner Friday night and one by Danny Ridder on Saturday.

This concludes the tournament updates.

The winter newsletter will be issued subsequent to the last three tournaments having been played, namely Omaha on September 30 to October 1, Calgary October 14/15, and Edmonton on October 21/22, with all of them having Friday night warmup rounds. The Red Deer Club is moving their Halloween tournament between Calgary and Edmonton on Wednesday, October 18 with a three rounder being played. Hopefully this will attract some Easterners and other Skat players as well to come out to finish the Skat Season in Alberta.

It would be nice to get some club updates for the last newsletter of the year.

