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CANADIAN CURLERS NOW 7-2 WITH ONE DAY TO GO IN ROUND-ROBIN

March 14, 2018

“I was excited to get out there,”



58 year-old Jamie Anseeuw has spent every game this week watching from the bench, while his teammates battled it out on the Paralympic ice.

He'd take times, watch rocks, and take notes on every shot as part of his role as alternate; and he has to be ready to play with a moment's notice if a player goes down with illness or injury.

Since entire tournaments can go by without that happening, it's standard practice to get your alternate into the game if the scoreboard becomes lopsided one way or the other.

"I was excited to get out there," said Anseeuw, who entered the game in the 5th end with a 7-0 lead vs. Slovakia. "We were up quite a bit so they decided to give me a shot at it."

Anseeuw, the oldest Paralympian on all of the Canadian Paralympic Team, hadn't thrown a rock on the tournament ice since the pre-competition practice last Friday.

"I was a little nervous," he said. "I started halfway through the game, and went out there cold. So, you do your best!"

With a seven rock lead, it was assumed that Anseeuw would only see two ends of play, as the rout would continue, and Slovakia would quit early. That was not to be, as Slovakia chipped away at Canada's lead over the next three ends.

"I knew I would just get better once I got the first few rocks out of my system," said Anseeuw. "I played a bit better as the game went on. From a team perspective, it's a bit nerve-racking having a big lead and giving it up... But we pulled through, like we have been doing."

With a final score of 9-5, the win moves Canada to 7-2, which assures the team a spot in tie-breakers, at least. With three teams at 4 losses and three draws of curling to play, there are too many permutations to figure out specifics.

What is certain, however, is that another win guarantees Canada a playoff spot. Two wins on Thursday could potentially move them as high as first place by the end of the round-robin.

"Making the playoffs was the goal, and we're really close to achieving that goal, so that's wonderful."

One more win would be sweet for Anseeuw for another reason. Not only would the team guarantee their playoff goal, but it might give him another chance to play.

"I'm really hoping that they can win in the morning. Then I might be able to play a whole game in the afternoon, complete with a warmup. That's all I can ask for. "

Canada faces Germany at 9:35 am local (8:35 pm EST) and Finland at 2:35 local (1:35 am EST). Watch cbcspports.ca for livestreams.

CANADA DOWNS NPA IN DRAMATIC FASHION

It was as though they were making it dramatic for the TV audience. Last end. Skips' rocks. One for sure, and a measure for two and the win. The measuring stick doesn't function properly. They have to get the other one from the far end of the sheet, delaying the result further. Talk about drama!

Drama for the fans at least. For the players, it was pretty obvious.

"I was pretty confident, and the NPA third looked at it and shook his head," said Canadian third Ina Forrest of the delayed measurement. "So I was pretty sure he saw it the way I saw it. Mark [Ideson] took a look to be sure."

So sure were the Canadians, that skip Ideson had thrown his last rock into the wall instead of risking any rearrangement of the situated stones.

After the faulty measuring device was replaced, it was confirmed that Canada did, in fact, score two points, enough to seal the 5-4 victory over the Neutral Paralympic Athletes. As a side note, it appeared the measuring stick was damaged when the game official tripped and fell after measuring a stone in the fourth end. She was okay, but it turns out the stick was not.

For the first time in several games, Canada didn't have a huge deficit to overcome. The most they were behind was one point (three different times), which was the situation when the eighth and final end began.

Lead Marie Wright threw two perfect shots, and an NPA miss set Canada up for a potential two. Dennis Thiessen drew to sit three, but missed his second shot, which opened the door for NPA to diffuse the situation. They rolled to bunch their yellow stones, and Ina Forrest took a crack at the double, just missing.

"It was looking good, and then it wasn't looking good, and then it was looking good again," said Forrest.

After NPA hit and rolled back to the previous spot, Forrest made no mistake, nailing the double and leaving Canada sitting three, spread across the rings.

"You're not looking at it to make it, but you're hoping that's the outcome," said Forrest, alluding to the fact that hitting one rock is hard enough from a wheelchair, with no sweepers. "I threw it a bit harder, because I wanted it to stay a bit straighter than the first shot."

NPA skip Konstantin Kurokhtin tried to freeze, but overcurled slightly. Ideson was able to punch it out and sit four, but left a little pocket. A perfect freeze by NPA may have forced an extra end, but, as it turned out (eventually), but he came up a half-inch light; close enough to measure.

"I was thinking that we could have just called it," said Forrest. "Both teams clearly saw it the same way, but once you've called for the measurement, then I guess you've gotta measure. We were pretty sure it was going to go our way, so it was an okay wait!!"

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