

11 FOR KING CARLO !

Absolutely nothing stops King Carlo Bossio, who has won an 11th consecutive tournament! This was also the 1st event of the new year, and he lost only 1 game all day. Aces were wild in Rosemont. Carlo put on a breathtaking performance of 27 wins and a single loss, this coming in the preliminary round at the hands of super veteran Michel "the machine" Decarie. With the near-retirement of his brother Gino we do not really foresee the day when the domination of the King will fade. The crown princes Coté, Pigeon and Anoussis seem to have arrived at the height of their development, and they are each beaten in turn in tournament finals. This time it was the "Slickter" (Sam) who lost to the King, a very honorable fight, but without any real suspense. André Boston Pigeon finished third by beating Pat the Phenomene Coté for bronze.



The Grand Champions

Sam Anoussis (2), Carlo Bossio (1), Andre Pigeon (3), Martin Douville (organizer)

Before arriving at this super-pro foursome there was a lot of action on the playing field. The round of 16 featured many of the strongest players in North America. No real surprises in this round, and no upsets. In addition to the top 4 aces Eric "Ricky Boy" Laroche got his pass into the quarter-finals by defeating Martin "The rage quitter" Douville in three consecutive games. Michael "the class" Brossard had to draw from the bottom of his reserves to take the tough Julian Marinoff to the limit of 5 games. Ditto for the father Lou "The living legend" Marinoff, who came back from a deficit of 2-1 in his series against the solid Michel Goupil, and finally "the machine" Decarie dismissed the young hopeful Thierry "the husky" Douville in three consecutive games. Then "the machine" met André Pigeon in a classic confrontation. These two long-time rivals met for the 8th or 9th time in NTHL tournament playoffs, in addition to their annual showdown in the LHTR finals, and this time "Boston" Pigeon won in 5 hotly-contested games. The other exciting quarter-final against Laroche went into overtime in Game 5, and it was Pat who prevailed. Positions 5, 6, 7, and 8 on the day were decided, as usual, by single elimination games, and were ultimately occupied by Lou, Michael, Michel and Eric in that order.

In the Expert B Division, which pits the losers of the round of 16 against each other, it was this humble writer (Martin Douville) who won after defeating first Gabriel Saad, then his own son Thierry, and finally Julian Marinoff in 3 very exciting matches. Bruce Turner of Ontario -- one of Canada's top Stiga players who bravely confronted this talented Coleco field -- took 3rd place, beating Thierry for bronze.



Expert B: Julian Marinoff (2), Martin Douville (1), Bruce Turner (3)

The Intermediate division (Expert B) included no fewer than 21 players. Jean-Marc "the priest" Therrien eventually confronted the surprising Ronald "Hawks" Goupil who played a great tournament, beating two strong players Patrick Joubert and Bob D'Addario to face "the priest" in the finals. Bernie Kunzler, another Stiga champion from Ontario, was making a comeback on Coleco, and he did well by taking 3rd place. The last 4 players of the preliminary round found themselves in the Beginner's division, their departure point for an amicable competition won by Esteban Rodriguez ahead of rookie Eric King (silver) and Emilie Therrien (bronze).

Finally, in the division reserved for Gameroom players, Alain Beaupré narrowly defeated Gameroom doyen Mr. Claude Laflamme, 73 years old, a proud supporter of the defunct Quebec Nordiques.



The Gameroom Winners

The next NTHL tournament will take place on February 24, in Montreal's Ellios Restaurant.

Story by Martin Douville, translated by Lou Marinoff