

Carlo Wins Eight in a Row Bossio Unbeatable in Brossard

Brossard, Quebec
October 14, 2017



Twenty-five intrepid players turned up at the Bell Center, to contest the honors at the NTHL's second event of the 2017-18 season. Hockey was in the air, as players and pucks flew around the ice rinks at ground level. Up on the mezzanine, it was table hockey, and the action was even more intense.

The day began with a brutal 24-game round-robin, as everyone played everyone with hardly a pause. Several action-packed hours later, the top 16 would make the A-division, with the 8 losers of that first playoff round then demoted to B. Meanwhile the bottom 9 players vied for hardware in C.

As often happens, Pat "le phenomen" Cote dominated the round-robin, claiming top playoff seed. He was followed by amazing Andre Pigeon, with Carlo cruising in third place. Angelo Follano nailed fourth, while Sam Anoussis rounded out the top five. Burt Brassard's strong performance gave him sixth, and Vinny Catania continued to impress in seventh. Yours truly managed eighth, followed by a game Julian Marinoff in ninth, while Michel Decarie clung to tenth.

These contenders, however, would not all survive the round of 16. While the top 5 seeds sailed through, Burt (6) came up against a determined Michael Brossard (11). Their series went the full five games, and Michael stunned Burt 4-2 in the decider. Yet another upset was in the making, as Vinny (7) fell to Michel (10) in 4 games. Inevitably, those two series changed the complexion of the quarter finals, re-arranging the anticipated matchups.

Pat (1) and yours truly (8) had expected to play one another in the quarters, and so we contrived to referee each others' opening series, to do some mutual scouting. That went for naught, as the two upsets vaulted me from 8th to 6th remaining seed. My reward? I got to face Carlo in the quarters. While I have a better record against him than most in overall round-robin play, I have never beaten him in a Coleco playoff series. First time for everything, right? Maybe, but not on this day. Our first two games were hotly contested, and both were decided by one goal in favor of the King: 5-4, and 8-7 overtime. I ran out of gas in game three (2-7), so Carlo moved on to the semis. Meanwhile Pat defeated Michael in four, and Andre likewise took down Michel in four, while Angelo dispatched a sub-par Sam in three straight games.

The semis saw Carlo face his sternest test of the day, as a determined Andre extended the King to a deciding game after leveling the series in a stunning 9-7 game four shoot-out. But once again Carlo found a way to win, getting ahead and staying ahead to take game five 6-4. Meanwhile Pat had dismissed Angelo in four games, setting up yet another Bossio-Cote final. As we have seen many a time, Pat came in like a lion but went out like a lamb, losing to Carlo in three straight games, the only close one being the third, which went to overtime (5-4). And with that, Carlo claimed his eighth consecutive NTHL tournament win, equaling an unbelievable record he himself set back in 2014. Andre defeated Angelo in two straight to take 3rd place honors on the day.



Champions: Pat Cote (2), Carlo Bossio (1), Andre Pigeon (3)

The B division semis (best of three games) saw Burt Brassard take down Gabriel Saad in two straight, while much-improved Julian Marinoff defeated Vinny Catania -- New York's finest -- in three. Julian then pushed Burt to game three of the B finals. Veteran Burt outlasted him 4-2 to win the B division, while Vinny took third spot over Gabriel.



B-winners: Julian Marinoff (2), Burt Brassard (1), Vinny Catania (3)

However, Julian's trip to the B finals gave him 10th place overall on the day, marking the second time that the Marinoff father-son duo both had top-10 finishes in an NTHL event.

The action was no less furious in the C division. Bill Holdcroft of Peterborough defeated two Quebecers -- Guillaume Pitre in the semis, and Thierry Douville in the finals -- to take top C honors back to Ontario. It is never easy taking hardware out of Quebec, so congrats to Vinny (in B) and Bill (in C).



C-winners: Thierry Douville (2), Bill Holdcroft (1), Guillaume Pitre (3)

NTHL action shifts to Ste-Sophie in November, where Carlo will have a chance to eclipse his own unbelievable mark of 8 tournament wins in a row. Since no-one is able to compete effectively against him, Carlo is obliged to compete against himself, and he seems up to the challenge. Rarely is any sport dominated to this extent by any one player. There is only one way to end King Carlo's record reign: step up, and take him down. Easier said than done, but plenty of players would like to do it. See you in Ste Sophie, where time will tell.



NTHL action resumes in Ste Sophie on November 11

story by Lou Marinoff