

UPSETS AND UPSTARTS STEAL MONTREAL SHOW
GINO CLEANS HOUSE, SWEEPS CARLO IN FINALS

*story by Lou Marinoff
photos by John Fayolle*



Montreal Classic 2015: Table Hockey Feeding Frenzy

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Montreal is one of the toughest tournaments on the NTHL tour, based on the sheer number of top players who turn out. This year was no exception: only 2 of the top 20 players (Burt Brassard and Martin Douville) sat this one out. The competition was fast and furious, and much of it defied the odds. Upsets and upstarts stole the show. Every round featured a feeding frenzy of table hockey sharks, taking big bites out of each other. Nobody escaped unscathed, not even eventual champion Gino Bossio.

Gino nearly slept through the first-round wake-up call. In the opening match of the day, yours truly jumped out to a 6-1 lead. Gino woke up in time to close the gap to 6-4; too little too late. It was a minor upset. On second thought, maybe I shouldn't have awakened him. Gino went on to crush everybody else, including his kid bro, King Carlo, en route to claiming his fourth Montreal Classic title.



Carlo (right) makes a rare save against rampaging Gino (left)

Gino is clearly the man to beat in Montreal. This year he did not drop a single playoff game, mission nearly impossible at this level of play, and with so much talent in the room. Gino swept Sergio Angelillo in the round of 16, then smoked the Cote brothers back-to-back: Pat in the quarter-finals and Francois in the semis. All in straight games. In the other semi-final, Carlo needed 4 games to dispatch Andre Pigeon, including a wild 10-8 shootout in the 4th.

In the finals, unbeatable Gino trounced a flu-ridden Carlo in straight games: 6-3, 9-5, 8-1. Any time the King loses a final, it's a major upset. Unlike the rest of us, when Carlo gets "trounced" he still finishes second or, at worst, third. Everyone else who has ever finished second or third has played brilliantly. Only on planet Carlo does "brilliant" mean "below par."

Third place on the day went to Andre Pigeon, who played exceptionally well, picking up where he left off last season and raising the bar this year. He needed to, as the bronze medal series pitted him against the biggest upstart of the day: Francois Cote.



The victors: Andre Pigeon (3), Gino Bossio (1), Carlo Bossio (2)

Earlier, Francois had made a miraculous run to the top of the A-pool. From there, as #1 playoff seed, he had fought his way into the semi-finals. That's where Gino stopped him cold, taking the wind out of his sails. Still, Francois finished fourth on the day, upsetting everyone else in his path, including yours truly in the quarter-finals. An amazing performance by Pat's elder brother. Looks like the *phenomen* factor runs in the Cote family. The younger *phenomen*, Pat, had to settle for fifth place on the day. Not his usual spot.



Francois Cote (left) shares a smile with brother Pat (right)

Alex Anoussis had a commendable performance too, finishing 6th, well ahead of his big brothers Sam and Peter. Sam, a perennial contender, fell prey to yet another of the day's many upsets, in this case to yours truly. I rallied from a 2-5 deficit in game 5 of our quarter-final, winning 6-5 in OT and sinking Sam to the B-pool.



left: Alex Anoussis battles Mike Brossard

right: Lou Marinoff upsets Sam Anoussis

If you still don't believe how tough the competition was, take a look at the B-pool winners: Eric Larochelle, Michel Decarie, and Sam Anoussis. These guys are all A players, and Sam is usually A+.



**Left: B-pool winners Sam Anoussis (3), Eric Larochelle (1), Michel Decarie (2)
Right: C-pool winners John Fayolle (2), Michel Goupil (1), Vinny Catania (3)**

Congrats as well to the C-pool winners Michel Goupil, John Fayolle, and road warrior Vinny Catania. In the under-18 division, Thierry Douville, Guillaume Pitre, and Simon Decarie took home the hardware.



Thierry Douville won the under-18 division

The Montreal Classic 2015, *de rigueur*, featured table-hockey at its best. The NTHL feeding frenzy resumes in New York in October. The sharks of the rods will bite into a Big Apple double-header: Munro on Friday October 16, and Coleco on Saturday October 17. The New York event is organized by John Fayolle, and it's always a blast. See you there!