

## Carlo and Sam Claim Double-Header as NTHL Season Opens in Peterborough

*September 8-9, 2017, Peterborough, Ontario*



The National Table Hockey League's 2017-18 season got off to a rollicking start in Peterborough, Ontario, with a Friday evening Coleco tournament on September 8, followed by a Saturday PP2 tournament on September 9. When all the dust and pucks had settled, the big winners were "King" Carlo Bossio on Coleco, and surprising "Slickster" Sam Anoussis on PP2.

Around two dozen Coleco players turned up on the Friday evening, including some of the best from Ontario, Quebec, and New York. Along with the veteran adults, a number of spirited youths and children took to the rods. A likeness of Don Cherry showed up as well, and the action left him speechless (for a change). He gave the event a resounding thumb's up. Following a massive round-robin, the round of 16 produced no upsets, but did result in the first (and hopefully the last) medical emergency of the season.

Michael Brossard came down with a sudden episode of global amnesia -- he forgot everything except how to play table hockey (at least he remembered the most important thing!), and couldn't recall winning his last few games. He also had no idea where he was, or how he got there. Peterborough being more memorable than that, an ambulance was called, and Mike was rushed to the hospital. John Fayolle displayed great sportsmanship, and friendship, in forfeiting his round of 16 series to accompany a disoriented Mike. Fortunately, Mike recovered swiftly and fully, and was back on the rods next day. He remembers everything except the amnesia.

There were no further upsets that evening, on or off the table. Top seeds Sam (#1), Carlo (#2), and Andre (#3) swept their way into the semis, joined by Dave (#5) who also swept Vinny (#4). In the semi-finals, Sam avenged last year's loss to Dave with a 3-game sweep, while Carlo similarly swept Andre. In the finals, Sam and Carlo then went toe-to-toe in a thrilling 5-game series, with Carlo prevailing 6-3, 5-4, 9-10, 3-4, and 6-4 in the deciding game. Dave outlasted Andre for the bronze, their best of 3 also going the limit. Burt Brassard (5th), Vinny Catania (6th), yours truly (7th), and Mark Sokolski (8th) rounded out the top 8.

This victory marked Carlo's seventh NTHL tournament win in a row, one shy of his record of eight in a row, which he set back in 2014. He can tie this amazing mark with a victory in Montreal in October.



*Coleco winners: Sam Anoussis (2), Carlo Bossio (1), Dave Kraehling (3)*

The younger players were very impressive as well, in skills and sportsmanship alike. The Coleco B Division was won by Matthew Sokolski, the young son of PP2 champion Mark, and a budding talent in his own right. Jake Ellis placed second in B, while Bailey Walsh took third.



*Coleco B Division winners: Jake Ellis (2), Matthew Sokolski (1), Bailey Walsh (3).*

The next day was devoted to Power Play II (PP2), a favored board in Ontario, with a strong Peterborough hometown contingent featuring Mark Sokolski and Sid Kloosterman, among other PP2 aficionados.

But this day belonged to Sam Anoussis, who stunned the crowd by reaching the finals and defeating PP2 favorite Sokolski in a five-game thriller. Carlo and Sam had actually finished 1-2 after the opening round robin, ahead of all the resident experts. Carlo won his first playoff series followed by game #1 against Bill Holdcroft, but Bill fought back and gamely dismissed the King with a pair of 3-2 victories -- avenging Carlo's sweep the night before on Coleco. Well done Bill! It's not easy beating Carlo on any board whatsoever.

Sam, however, was not to be denied. He reached the finals against the favorite Mark, and proceeded to win game #1 in overtime, 5-4, after blowing a 4-0 lead. Mark took game #2 by a 2-0 count, and led 2-0 in game #3, until Sam rallied and ultimately prevailed 5-4. Hats off to Sam, for making the finals in both events and winning the PP2 title.

The PP2 B division was won by Paul Oliveira (1), Matthew Sokolski (2), and Shirley Aguinaldo (3). In the PP2 C division, the winners were Maddison Doherty (1), Deacon Walsh (2), and Xander Robar (3). Congrats to all!

Special awards were given out as well: Matthew Sokolski deservedly received the Matt Benincasa Memorial Award for Most Promising Young Player, while Bailey Walsh was chosen by James O'Hagan to be the first recipient of the Dylan O'Hagan Memorial Sportsmanship Award.



*left: event organizer Sid Kloosterman presents Matt Benincasa Memorial Award to Matthew Sokolski.*

*right: James O'Hagan presents Dylan O'Hagan Memorial Sportsmanship Award to Bailey Walsh.*

A BIG THANKS to Sid and Maggie Kloosterman, and their entire clan, for organizing two days of top-notch table hockey in Peterborough, and for providing seemingly endless rounds of delicious food to ravenous players.

The big winner of the weekend was the ILC Canadian Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome Foundation, which received all proceeds from both events.

The NTHL's 2017-18 season continues in Montreal on October 14. The action will be fast and furious -- see you at the table!

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