

Two Kubbs In Eau Claire

Posted by eric anderson on Tuesday, May 21, 2013

Well, Eau Claire hosted a Kubb: Learn To Play & Friendly event this past Sunday. You can see pictures [here](#). You can see a video [here](#). All things considered, it was a success. Lots and lots of work, but we were able to introduce it to 50 or so new people, one of which is the new EC City Manager and his family. After the event, I started thinking more and more about a few things. One of which was a couple of the people I met at the event and another was a few stories that I either heard at the event or from the past couple weeks.

First, I met a young guy that plays on the Eau Claire team Peach Kubbler and also one of his friends. They played last year in the 2012 U.S. Championship. I had no idea who he was or anyone on their team. The team name is one of my favorites, so it was great to meet him. They are already signed up to play in the 2013 U.S. Championship. In asking him how he learned about the game, it was from a friend, or a friend of a friend, if I remember correctly. Also, his friend, who has played a lot in the past, had no idea we hosted the U.S. Championship.

A second person I met was a guy that lives outside of Augusta (small town southeast of Eau Claire) and has been playing the game for a year or two. I had never met him in my life. He was there with his son. He is trying to find a third player to round out a team for the 2013 Championship. Sounded like the odds were less than likely he would be able to field a complete team. He started talking to me about how he found out about the game and he made a set, and then he found the [Des Moines Kubb](#) website which has information about a Viking Longboat carrying ship. WOW. For all practical purposes, just outside of Eau Claire, a guy is making these? He said he had two in his trunk. I could not believe it. We walked over to see them and he pulled these out.



I had a really nice conversation with him and his little son. Hopefully our paths will cross again in the future, and he got one of the free I KUBB EC shirts. I am hoping he can find some players to play in the Championship and/or bring some longboats out to show/sell at the Championship. At least come out and watch some action on Saturday and/or Sunday.

Now the stories. Earlier in the week, we got a tweet from Mark Blazel (from the EC team Kubbsicles) that he had just introduced the game to his neighbors.

Second, in talking to my friends Josh (from the EC/Chippewa Falls team Kubb de Grace and now Ulfhednar) and Jessica Miller (she plays as well). Jessica Miller is a French professor at UWEC and recently got back from an annual class trip to Louisiana. They mentioned that this past week they had the students over for some homemade Cajun food, and yes, kubb (I wish I would have dropped over that evening). People were really enjoying both.

Third, an email from Scott Graham (from EC team Team Kubboom) told me that his daughter's soccer coach wanted him to introduce it to the soccer team later this spring.

Fourth, I went to Flynn Elementary School last week and introduced it to my daughter's third grade class. In two weeks, we will be heading there again to introduce it to 4th and 5th graders again. Also last week, we introduced it to the Wisconsin Governor's Council on Tourism and had the Secretary of Tourism playing.

Fifth, the annual Chippewa Valley Kubb League Spring Fling had 28 players a week ago, and a few of them were new players and most of the 28 have not played in the US Championship.

Sixth, I was at [The Local Store](#) yesterday doing a couple of things and the lady at the desk told me they sold quite a few kubb sets this past weekend. Not sure if they want me saying how many, so I will not, but I was blown away at the number in a weekend, in a small town, in the middle of May.

There is a seventh and more, but I will stop.

That got me thinking about how many EC-area teams we could/should have at the U.S. Championship this year and in future years. I was thinking that with all of these people learning the game (and buying sets), should we not have a waiting list this year? Then I had to take a step back and realize that a lot of us here are doing two things. Are they connected? Of course, but not totally 100 percent. First, and this is the normal progression, a lot of people in town are teaching more and more people the game, which saturates EC with kubb players. Some play once a year, some play to win the National Championship, and most between the two. Second, we are getting additional teams in the US Championship. Will we have as many EC teams as last year? Well, we will find out on June 21st when registration closes. Will the number of EC teams increase in the future? I hope so, but I guess we will have to wait and see. Will interest in kubb and the number of teams that travel to EC (and other tournaments) stabilize and/or even decrease? Again, I guess only time will tell.

Is this any different than any other community? That is up to another discussion, but when looking at what is happening and what could happen in EC, a heck of a lot of people have been introduced to kubb in the past few years here, especially in the past couple years. Could the whole community (or at least 75% of it) know about the game in another couple years? Perhaps. Then I started thinking about Gotland. I put two and two together and realized that on Gotland there are under 60,000 people. Let's say there are 200 teams this year in the VM and of them, there are 140 Gotland teams. Just a random guess/observation, as I have no real idea. 140 times 6 is 840 people. That is a lot of people (over twice as big as Dallas, Wisconsin). But the whole island knows of the game, and most have played it. So my realization was that not even close to all the people on the island play in the VM or even come out to watch. That made me feel a lot better.

Looking back at the past two weeks, it makes me realize we are doing two things here in Eau Claire. First, and one could easily make the case now that it is at a state where it will only continue to grow, but kubb in Eau Claire is starting to become a real micro-culture. Is kubb in other areas of Wisconsin and the country, yes. Absolutely. But here it is really starting to feel like a whole lot of people have played or at least heard or seen the game. Second, and this will be determined in the years to come, we are hopefully building the U.S. National Kubb Championship with local teams, but we have to realize that not even close to every kubb player in town will play in the U.S. Championship.

Speaking of that, feel free to [register](#) this week for the U.S. National Kubb Championship (only \$60/team and painted kubbs this year) and/or any of the other tournaments. We will make it easy for you and link you to a page with all the links to all of the tournaments.



