

TM

# Kubbnation

the magazine for the game of kubb

A Journey To The Home Of Kubb

## Kubb World Championship



The Most Important Throw In Kubb  
**The Drill**

Kubb In Thief River Falls, Minnesota

**Interview: Ryan Kolden**



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Kubb unites people and creates peace on Earth.  
Kubb förenar människor och skapar fred på jorden.



Cover: Team Signalgatan advancing to the Final 16 at the 2011 Kubb World Championship (Photo: Ewa Jorenbo); Above: Future kubbers at the Rockford, IL Kubb Tournament (Photo: John Connell); Top left clockwise: Roman Cahero in Baja, Mexico (Photo: Ira Miller); Lambertson, MN Tournament Top Finishers (Photo: Jason Larson); Kubb being played at Upper Illinois Valley American Cancer Relay For Life (Photo: Mitch Landgraf); Josh Feathers and Dwayne Ballmer at 2011 U.S. Championship (Photo: Becca Hodges)

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# DET FÖRSTA KASTET

## TOURNAMENT IDENTITY AND SPONSORS



Welcome back. Thanks for taking the time to look over the magazine. Hopefully you will find the 2012 edition a nice expansion from the 2011 edition.

What a year for kubb. More and more people are learning the game. Websites and clubs are forming. There are more tournaments, and all tournaments are increasing in size. You don't have to dig far to read that people all over are commenting how popular kubb is in the Midwest, and that it is growing fast everywhere.

After I released the magazine last year, I already had a long list of ideas for articles for the 2012 magazine. Some of them I was able to do, some not, and some are still on the waiting list. One that actually came to mind in September was about drilling the kubbs. I heard a couple, "You cannot give out secrets.", etc., but I went with it anyway. I am excited about the article. I wanted to provide a "How To" article, and I could not think of a better topic than the drill. For elite players, most of this is just a way of life, but for people learning the game and/or wanting to improve their skills, this will help immensely. At the same time, perhaps better players, whether they live in the U.S. or on Gotland itself, will like to read what their friends and competitors shared, and perhaps they will learn something as well. The idea started with an anticipation of two pages, perhaps three. In the end, I could have done a small book on it. Amazing.

This past year, I was able to play in and/or organize a few tournaments, actually seven. In all honesty, that probably is a couple more than I will be able to go to in the future, but it did make me start thinking about something. As tournaments mature and as new tournaments are created, they are going to create their own identities, and I am very excited about that. I often

think back to playing with my dad at the Duluth tournament where you could look out at Lake Superior.

Now, perfect examples of unique tournament identities are Rockford and Des Moines. I am on the Rockford tournament planning committee. For the first two years I was against promoting too much of the Swedish angle. I did not want people to be turned off by it and say gosh these Swedes love their blue and yellow a little too much, can't we just play kubb. My opinion has changed 180 degrees. With so many tournaments next year just in the Midwest, why not have one or two that puts an emphasis on the Swedish/Nordic/Viking aspect of the game, after all that is where it is from. Likewise, the Des Moines tournament uses a unique Swiss-system for their tournament that allows you to play against your level of play for most of your matches. I will admit, yes, I questioned it. But after playing, I loved it. Uniqueness and identity will help grow this game. I am really eager to see how tournaments mature over the next few years.

That leads me to what we can do to help tournaments succeed. Here are three numbers for you: 84, 126, and 203. If you take all the teams that played in tournaments that were widely promoted and where teams traveled at least a little, these are the number of teams in 2009, 2010, and 2011. That is some impressive growth (42 in 2008), but we are still a pretty small bunch. With that being said, as much as I truly believe that kubb is a great market for businesses to sponsor and advertise, it is safe to say we are on very few radars. I often see a blank stare and/or hear "What is that?" from hopeful sponsors. So, what can we do about it?

My motto for 2012 is, *if you support kubb, I am going to support you.* I am going to make a point to check out every sponsor website, thank them for their sponsorship (even if I don't live in that community), and if I can, make my purchases with them. I am going to let them know that Kubbation is here, and here to stay.

Kubb on brothers and sisters.



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# U.S. NATIONAL KUBB CHAMPIONSHIP

## 2011 NATIONAL CHAMPION - KNOCKERHEADS

The 2011 U.S. National Championship in Eau Claire, WI had 84 teams and 186 participants representing eight different states. There were players from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas, and Nebraska. The event raised over \$4,600 for We Help War Victims and Girls on the Run - Eau Claire County.

The day started at 5:45am with tents, tables, the flags of Sweden and the U.S., and banners being raised. Next were the 42 kubb sets. Clouds lined the sky, with a hint of possible rain in the air. At 7:15 the first teams started arriving at the Eau Claire Soccer Park. Registration began at 7:30. Quickly, pitches started filling up with practicing teams. 8:30 came. Volunteers and sponsors were recognized. Next, buttons were given out to the four players who have played all five years. Brief rules were discussed. Then the Swedish and American national anthems were played. At 9am 42 kubb pitches were played on. The Group Play round-robin was filled with reuniting with old friends and meeting new ones, a little rain (of course), and a few upsets.

Group Play was completed at 12:30. Soon after, the sun came out from behind the clouds, and the warm and humid day got a whole lot hotter, with the high reaching 88F (31C). From the mid-morning to the late afternoon, the south wind played an important role in the matches, wind speeds between 10-20mph and gusts up to just below 30mph. With the sun beating down on the 42 battlefields, several matches in the round of 32 included teams that had their sights set on elite eight status. This round was highlighted by three matches. One included two Minnesota teams made up of players with experience and high finishes in several tournaments in WI and MN, Team McKie and Tiger Blood. Another match included two teams that have in the past year performed extremely well in their respective local/regional



2011 U.S. National Kubb Champions: Knockerheads

### Results

**1st: Knockerheads** (Des Moines, IA/Leavenworth, KS)  
Josh Feathers and Dwayne Ballmer

**2nd: Kubbin' Missile Crisis** (Shafer, MN)  
Joe Pendleton and Nate Olson

**3rd: Kubbsicles** (Eau Claire, WI)  
Max Sebesta and Mark Blazel

**4th: Tiger Blood** (Eden Prairie, MN)  
Keith Yanes and Jeremie Legend

### Quarterfinals

Default (Eau Claire, WI)  
Knockerheads

Tad Kubbler (Minneapolis, MN)  
Kubbsicles

The Kubbbolutionaries (Des Moines, IA)  
Kubbin' Missile Crisis

Kastpinnar Kings (Shakopee, MN)  
Tiger Blood



2nd: Kubbin' Missile Crisis



3rd: Kubbsicles



4th: Tiger Blood

# U.S. NATIONAL KUBB CHAMPIONSHIP

## 2011 NATIONAL CHAMPION - KNOCKERHEADS

tournaments: The Kubblutionaries from Des Moines, IA and Leinenkubbels from Eau Claire, WI. The third match included Minnesota teams NW MN Kubb and Kastpinnar Kings, which lasted two hours in the blazing sun. The intensity of these three matches were on par with any match in the semi-finals.

The round of 16 saw the 2010 Nationals Champions, The Ringers, lose, the 2010 2nd place team Default need three games to beat Chippewa Falls' Über Kubbers, and The Kubblutionaries beat the 4th place team from 2010. The quarterfinals proved to be a battle, with Knockerheads eventually beating Default 2-1, in what was possibly the best match of the tournament. In the same half of the bracket, there was a rematch from the 2010 quarterfinals between Eau Claire's Kubbsicles and Tad Kubbler from Minneapolis. In 2010 Tad Kubbler won. In 2011, the two recent graduates from Memorial High School were able to pull out a victory in the three game match. In the other half of the bracket seasoned tournament veterans Tiger Blood and Kubbin' Missile Crisis made it to the semi-finals.

The semi-finals had two matches with teams with very different histories. On Pitch One, Tiger Blood vs. Kubbin' Missile Crisis. These two teams have played in tournaments in the Midwest for the past five years, many times against each other, even matching

up last year in Eau Claire. The game on Pitch Two involved The Kubbsicles and Knockerheads, two teams that had their first tournament experiences in 2010, both competing well in the tournaments they played in, but still relatively new to the larger tournaments in the Midwest. At around 9pm, both Kubbin' Missile Crisis and Knockerheads were able to make it to the Final of the 2011 U.S. National Kubb Championship. With clouds in the sky, the setting sun was not able to provide light to the pitches. At 9:30, with still 40 minutes to play before a Champion was to be crowned, darkness hit the U.S. Championship. Soon, a car was pulled up to see if headlights would help the players, and it was determined it did not. The moon and parking lot lights 100 meters away helped to some extent, as did cell phones. Then, at 10:10pm the Knockerheads knocked the king over for the 18th time of the day and Josh Feathers and Dwayne Ballmer became the 2011 U.S. National Kubb Champions. Trophies and medals were handed out to the four teams after their 13 plus hours of tournament play.

Later, around 11pm, with the park empty and quiet, the rental truck all packed, players, volunteers, news media all gone, and a new national champion enjoying the victory, a son and his father stood alone, under the moonlight, and talked about the wonderful day. Yes, kubb unites people and creates peace on Earth.



L to R: Molteberry Magic, The Farfars, Learn'd and Burned

### Consolation Results

1st: Learn'd and Burned (Columbus, IN)

2nd: Molteberry Magic (Chicago, IL)

3rd: The Farfars (Cherry Valley/New Milford, IL)

4th: Kubbros (Neenah, WI)



### 2nd Consolation Results

1st: The Skipping Stones (Rockford/New Milford, IL)

2nd: Kubb Kitties (Eau Claire, WI)

3rd: Da Beers (Des Moines, IA)

4th: Lucky Spike (Eau Claire, WI)



L to R: Da Beers, Kubb Kitties, The Skipping Stones



# FOX VALLEY KUBB

## FROM FAMILY TO COMMUNITY

Top: 2011 Fox Valley Kubb Tournament. Bottom: Chad Bevers at the U.S. National Kubb Championship.  
(Photos: Chad Bevers)

I was first introduced to kubb several years ago at my parents' annual 4th of July party. My parents had purchased a kubb set on a whim as something that looked like a fun lawn game the family could play. None of us had any idea of what it was or how to play it. So we dumped out the contents of the bag in the yard and read the instructions sent with the game. It seemed complicated at first, but we quickly caught on.

We had so much fun playing that 4th of July that it became an annual tradition to play each year at the 4th of July party with family and friends. It became so popular that my dad made a traveling trophy for the winner each year. Kubb became the talk of the summers for our family party, and there got to be some fierce competition between teams. Everyone enjoyed playing it and the winners had bragging rights for a year.

It wasn't until I bought my first set from Old Time Games that I realized just how small the original set we were playing with was. We still laugh about it today and call it the "baby set". After I purchased the set from Old Time Games, we began to play regularly in our backyard. Even my 11 and 9 year old daughters got involved in the kubb games. As expected, kubb always draws curious stares and questions, and soon we had some of our neighbors stopping over to play when they saw us with our set out.

After getting some feedback from family and friends during the 4th of July party in 2010, I decided to design a website. The Fox Valley Kubb site was officially launched as foxvalleykubb.com. Since my family and close friends loved to play kubb so much I decided to host a tournament in Appleton, WI in the fall of 2010. I got a good response from the first tournament and it went well. This past August, the 2nd Annual Fox Valley Kubb Tournament was held in Appleton with 11 teams from all across the state

attending. It was a huge success and I look forward to next year's tournament.

This fall we announced a weekly open kubb night at a local park to help promote the game. It gave people a chance to come out and try the game of kubb without any pressure of a tournament setting. The response was great and we will continue it next spring and throughout the summer of 2012. We are also looking at a place to play indoors throughout the winter.

My goal for Fox Valley Kubb is to expand next years tournament to 20-24 teams and help kubb get more exposure in the Valley. With the help from members of the club talking about kubb to others, we have more than doubled our membership from last year. I am encouraged to see the growth we've had in just a couple of years.

This past year we were able to make the Rockford tournament as well as the US Nationals and the Dallas tournament. It was the club's first real taste of kubb tournaments outside of the Valley. There is no doubt that kubb is on the rise in Wisconsin and throughout the Midwest. Fox Valley Kubb is glad to be a part of this great game. Kubb on Wisconsin!

**Written by:**  
Chad Bevers  
Fox Valley Kubb







## INTERVIEW: RYAN KOLDEN

### Kubb In Thief River Falls, MN

For you, what comes to mind when somebody mentions Minnesota? Perhaps 10,000 lakes, outdoor hockey rinks, Ole and Lena jokes, or maybe Goldy Gopher. Well, it is also home to a city in the northwest corner of the state called Thief River Falls, also known as “The Home of American Indoor Kubb”. This town of under 9,000 people has got to be, per capita or not, home to one of the highest concentration of kubb activity in the U.S., if not in the world. That is where Ryan Kolden comes into the picture. You see, he started playing kubb a decade ago, and he has been the catalyst in creating a kubb community way up north that takes a backseat to nobody.

We thought the world of kubb would like to learn more about Ryan and what is happening way up north. *Kubbnation* was able to get in contact with Ryan, who lives in Thief River Falls, MN.

*When and where did you start playing the game?*

I started playing kubb about 10 years ago. One of my best friends Tyler Vagle made a set after reading a website about kubb. After the first game I played I was hooked!

*How did you start introducing it to people?*

Soon after I learned how to play I started making sets for my friends and family to play, It wasn't long and I had my whole family playing it. Now it's our family tradition to go outside and play at Christmas. About two years ago I moved back from the Twin Cities to my home town of Thief River Falls, MN. I taught kubb to a few friends and they loved it so much that they taught their friends. It was like a domino affect. Then one year ago I talked to a couple of buddies, and we decided to do a tournament for the fun of it. The tournament was a total success. We had 26 people play, and a Thief River Falls Times Newspaper reporter

came out and took pictures and also wrote a two-page article about the Ancient Game of Kubb and its fresh start in Thief River Falls. People wanted more, so we continued to organize several tournaments afterward.

*Why do you like the game so much?*

Well... first of all I'm good at it! LOL. It's the perfect game to play with almost every person you may encounter in life, It's a fun relaxing game to play. This is one of the most fun things I have ever been a part of in my life. I have met and keep meeting a lot of good people that enjoy kubb as much as I do.

*Do you have some Scandinavian ancestry in you?*

My father is 100% Norwegian. My grandparents came from Norway.



Above: Indoor kubb in Thief River Falls, MN  
TRF Group: L to R: Nachele, Ryan, Austin, and Kathleen in Eau Claire  
(Photos: Ryan Kolden)



# INTERVIEW: RYAN KOLDEN

## Kubb In Thief River Falls, MN



*Do you think the Vikings really played kubb?*

Yes I believe that the Vikings did play kubb, or at least a game similar to it.

*We have seen some pictures of you with medals and trophies after a few tournaments. Who is the best kubb player in Thief River Falls?*

It's hard to pin point one dominant kubb player of Thief River Falls. There are about 100 people that have played in our leagues and tournaments in the last year. There are about 20 equally talented kubb players in the area, which always makes a great tournament.

*Does the local newspaper really put the kubb league scores in the sports page?*

Yes, we have a weekly place in the sports page for updates and scores of leagues and tournaments.

*We know hockey is big in Minnesota, but what is up with all that hockey tape you put on the kubbs?*

LOL! We put that on the kubbs for an indoor tournament which is played on concrete. The hockey tape stops the kubbs from oversliding or wood chipping. It makes for an awesome way to play kubb in the winter. We had two big tournaments last winter, between the two we had a total of 80 people. Everyone had a blast!

*How many different leagues and tournaments are there in Thief River Falls?*

Three leagues (summer, fall, and winter). Probably about 5-7 tournaments through out the year.

*Indoor kubb at the Dawg House. What is that like?*

Indoor kubb at the Dawg House is a blast. We move all the tables and chairs out of the way and lay down outdoor carpet on the floor and install mini barriers that go around the field. We play throughout the winter. It's a great opportunity to teach new people about the game.

*You and your son played at the U.S. National Championship. Did you enjoy it? We realize that it is about a seven hour drive, but do you think more teams will come down from northern Minnesota?*

Yes, my family and I had a blast, met a lot of great people like the Eau Claire kubb players and the Des Moines kubb players. We are hoping to send 2-3 teams for next year's tournament.

*Do you have any kubb superstitions that you do before or during a tournament?*

Think about the tournament a week ahead of time and not sleep the night before. (I am always the first one there). LOL

*Do you have any advice for anyone that wants to create a kubb club or league in their hometown?*

There are a lot of different types of kubb players, some that want to just play for fun, and some that like to play for the competition aspect. So it's good to have different types of tournaments to see what fits for everyone.

*We have noticed that there are a lot of female players in Thief River Falls. Have you consciously done anything special to get more female players involved with the game?*

There is a one-on-one women's tournament once a year that seems to get more women involved as well.

*What are your goals for kubb in TRF over the next two or three years?*

Over the next three years, we would like to get more people involved in leagues and in tournaments.

*Anything else you would like to share with the kubb world?*

Kubb has been one the greatest things in my life. It brings my family and friends closer!



Top left:: The NW MN Kubb t-shirt.

Top: Winter indoor kubb at TRF armory (27 teams).

Right: Top four at a ladies indoor kubb tournament (12 players)

(Photos: Ryan Kolden)





# KUBB IN THE NETHERLANDS

## PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Top: Looking down at the 2011 NK Kubb.

Right: Three teams from the NK Kubb. (All Photos: NK Kubb)

### How kubb got to us

We don't know them personally, but the very first Dutch kubb players appear to be people attending the Kubb World Championship somewhere in the 1990s. They are also said to be the creators of one of the trophies for the tournament, a red-white-blue kubb king mosaic.

Our story starts a couple of years later. In 2002, Willemijn Homans went on a holiday to Sweden and saw people play a strange game called "kubb". Back in the Netherlands, she visited the Kubb World Championship website and got involved in translating the World Championship Rules into Dutch. She and her husband also made plans to visit the 2003 Kubb World Championship, and asked some friends (the author of this article included) to join them. We rented a van, drove to Sweden, took the boat to Gotland and had a great time at the VM.

### Dutch championships

Back in the Netherlands, the idea for our very own Dutch Championship was born. Five of us founded Kubb Club De Lössse Pøls (literally meaning "The Smooth Wrist"), took place in the board, built a website, found a tournament location, and fiercely promoted our tournament amongst friends and relatives.

In June 2004 our first championship took place, with 40 teams competing. The tournament grew gradually to 60 teams in 2010 and suddenly boosted to 90 teams this year, adding up to about 600 people playing kubb together. The Championships' 9th edition will be held in 2012.

### Tournament setup

From the start, we had 6-player teams. We never even thought about smaller teams, as the VM was the only tournament we knew of, and they had teams of six. Later on, we found out that tournaments in Europe are mostly for 3-player teams, and that 2-player teams are common in the US. In our experience, having six players really adds to the atmosphere during the day - there are more people around to watch the final stages, and as a player, having just one throwing baton each turn adds to the pressure, which also adds to the excitement.





# KUBB IN THE NETHERLANDS

## PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

As for the tournament rules, things are very similar to the Kubb World Championship. The day starts with group play followed by a knock-out phase. Other similarities are the campsite for teams to stay over for the weekend, our after-kubb party, and a wide variation in creative team names and matching outfits. One team is especially good at this, with a new theme each year, dressing themselves up as Vikings, construction workers, or martial arts experts.

### Other competitions

The 2004 Dutch Championship was probably the first kubb tournament ever to be held in the Netherlands. In recent years, other tournaments have emerged, varying in size from six to 32 competing teams, and mostly with 3-player teams. Kubb clubs do exist, but most of them are informal groups of friends who play together as a team at tournaments or just for fun. There are no national or regional league competitions.

To be sure, there are a couple of Dutch teams who take the game very seriously, but most people see kubb (and our tournament) predominantly as a fun outdoor activity. Kubb is especially popular at campsites, which probably makes sense, given the outdoor nature of the game and the fact that people can join in easily. We sometimes compare kubb to pétanque, which is an official sport with clubs, tournaments, and competitions, but also a recreational activity.

### Future plans

Kubb is growing rapidly in the Netherlands. We see this at our tournament and also from a growing interest in the kubb games at our kubb store. One of the things we'd like to do in the near future is create an online platform for kubb players, where people can monitor their own results, subscribe to upcoming events, and easily set up their own tournaments, including team registration and managing playing schedules.

We're also preparing for the tenth anniversary edition of our championships in 2013. We aim at having 96 teams and some special anniversary guests at our yearly after-kubb party. And lastly, we're planning ahead for a renewed visit to the VM i Kubb 2013. Our last visit was in 2005, which has been way too long...

Top: Picture from the 2011 Third Place Match.  
Right: Four teams from the NK Kubb.



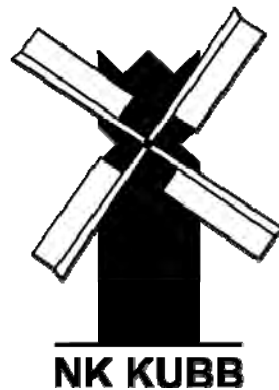


# KUBB IN THE NETHERLANDS

## PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

### The team to beat: "De Kazerne"

If we'd have to name the team to beat at the Dutch Championship, it would be "De Kazerne". Literally translated as "the barracks", their team name is also the nickname for a group of houses in the Dutch village of Nijeveen, the place where our tournament has been held from the start. They were Dutch champions in 2005, 2008 and 2010, and almost always got through to at least the semifinals in their other appearances. As a local team, they have a solid fanbase throughout the tournament, which makes their games quite special in terms of crowd involvement. The team members say they never practice - a claim we cannot verify nor deny - which certainly adds to their legendary status amongst other teams.



### Written by:

Floris Huetink

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[kubbwinkel.nl](http://kubbwinkel.nl)



2011 Dutch Champions  
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# KUBB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB



Friday at the Kubb World Championship in Rone.

Over the past couple years, I have tried to figure out a way to play in the Kubb World Championship (VM i Kubb) in Rone. The idea of finding five other people to travel over there and to play as a team was at the top of my list, but I quickly realized that would be extremely difficult, at least over the past couple of years. That is when I contacted Jens Haraldsson who lives in Sweden.

Jens and I have corresponded back and forth many times over the past four years regarding just about everything kubb. Last winter, I emailed him and asked if he knew of any teams that needed a player. To my surprise, he stated that he might have an opening on his team. After a couple of months of figuring things out, we decided that I would join his team. I communicated by email with Jens numerous times, but I had never met him or talked with any of the other teammates or even knew their names.

At the two-day Kubb World Championship, the top two teams from each of the 16 groups on Saturday automatically advance to Saturday the following year. All the other teams that register play on Friday in as many groups that are needed to fill the other spots available to have a 64 team tournament on Saturday. Only the Friday group winners advance to Saturday. This year, 31 of the 32 teams that finished in the top two in 2010 came back, and there were 33 groups (66 pitches) with 160 teams competing on Friday. Jens' team from the year before were one of the 31 teams, so our team automatically qualified for Saturday.

Jens tossed out the team name The Emigrants. He explained that the idea for the name was two-fold. First, kubb had emigrated from Gotland to the mainland, and our team consisted of five players from the mainland. In addition, kubb had emigrated to Wisconsin, where I live. Since all of my grandparents emigrated from Sweden, there was a connection there as well. Perfect and we all agreed to it. A couple weeks before the tournament, Jens designed team shirts for us, as most of the teams that play on Saturday have them and many on Friday as well. Blue and yellow were our colors. Perfect. I practiced and practiced.

While in Sweden, I was able to visit friends and family, but the main purpose was to play at the Kubb WC and to also examine how we can make the U.S. Championship a better tournament. So much went into the trip that when I finally got on the ferry, it was quite emotional with all different thoughts in my head. These emotions only grew when I finally stepped foot on the Rone IK grounds and realized that I had made it to my destination and was at the most famous location for this obscure game, which is located on an island in the middle of the Baltic Sea.

I was only on Gotland for 64 hours, but when I left, I left part of me there and something from there came back inside of me. It felt like I was leaving a place that I had called home for a lot longer than two and a half days. I met so many great and wonderful people. I fell in love with kubb yet some more, and I brought home a ton of great stories and memories. I wanted to share some of these experiences in *Kubbnation*.



# KUBB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB



Looking back at the mainland

### Thursday - 3pm

Getting to Oskarhamn's Destination Gotland ferry terminal made me really realize that I was going to Gotland. I knew the ferry was going to be big, but when I saw it coming to dock, I could not believe how big it was. My friends told me to make sure I stayed outside for the first hour to see Oskarhamn and the coastline. The sun was out, and it was beautiful to look back at the mainland from the Baltic Sea.

As is typical in Sweden, where the sun is, is where the people are. It was not a surprise that the areas with the sun shining on it quickly filled up, as people were sitting, standing, and laying anywhere and everywhere the sun was coming down. I knew what side I wanted to be facing, and I was hoping to be able to sit in silence and experience my trip on the Baltic, mentally, physically, and spiritually.



On the ferry

The side I wanted to sit on was the side that was going to face Öland, so I found a spot in the shadows of the ship and sat and stared out at the Baltic Sea. I was curious how close we were going to get to Öland. Knowing the island was home to two of



The island Öland in the distance

my four grandparents' families, it holds a very special place in my heart. While on the ferry, I mostly thought about two things. First, I thought about my great-grandfather John Helge Johansson who died while at sea on the Baltic in 1923 when he was 34 years old. I wondered who John was, what he was like, what life was like in his hometown of Köpingsvik those days, and what the day was like on December 18th when he died at sea. I also could not help but think that the Vikings sailed these waters. Looking out at the blue water, blue sky, and the islands, I realized that the scenery is the same as it was 1000 years ago and wondered what their ships looked like and how many would be out at one time in this part of the Baltic. I could not believe that I was on the Baltic Sea heading to Gotland.



Visby from the deck of the ferry

### Thursday - 6pm

I am sure books are written about Visby. For me, it was amazing, beautiful, old, and new. I only had three hours to see Visby before meeting two of my teammates who were coming from Stockholm. I made the most of it, and three hours later, I finally was able to shake the hand of Jens Haraldsson and personally say 'thank you' to him. Jens, his girlfriend Lina, and I all talked for a few minutes, got in his car, and headed south to Rone.

### Thursday - 10pm

After traveling for an hour from Visby to Rone, Jens and Lina asked if I wanted to go to the WC site and see what it looked like, as the cabin we were staying in was only one kilometer from the Rone IK grounds. I obviously said yes. We turned down a dirt road and there it was, under the dark and star filled sky, on an island in the middle of the Baltic Sea, lit with a few lights, and with the sounds of campers partying in the distance, 66 pitches set up perfectly. All the game pieces were set up ready for the next day. Jens asked if I wanted to throw a few times, and I could not pass up that opportunity. So the three of us went out and threw for five minutes.

We then went to *Ogges i Rone*, met the owners of the house, and went to bed in one of their cabins. It had been a long day.



# KUBB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB

### Friday - 8am

After waking up and getting my 2010 U.S. National Kubb Championship shirt on, the three of us walked down the quiet country road to the WC site. Before we left the property, we talked a little with the husband and wife that own the cabin. I immediately enjoyed their company. Talking with the husband, I learned that he had traveled across the U.S. I also quickly learned that he has a great sense of humor. They told us that their two sons play on a team called Signalgatan, and they finished 2nd in 2010.

Arriving at the WC in daylight was even more spectacular. This day I really wanted to see how they organize the tournament, what



Breakfast is served

things they do the same as we do it in the U.S., and what things they do differently. I was also very curious about the quality of play, knowing that most of the elite teams were not playing on Friday. One thing I loved was the *frukostpåse* (breakfast bag). In it, a typical Swedish breakfast: a sandwich, banana, yogurt, a hardboiled egg, and some Kalles Caviar to put on the egg. The three of us sat at a picnic table and enjoyed a nice relaxing breakfast in the sun, with 66 pitches set up around us.

### Friday - 10am

The first thing I noticed on Friday was the diversity of teams. Not that all tournaments that I have attended are all men between 20 and 50, but at the WC, everybody is playing, and I mean everybody. There were teams of young ladies in their 20s. There were teams of women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s. There were co-ed teams. Teams of all young teenagers. There were even teams of older couples that had to have been in their 70s. For me, this had to have been one of the best parts of the WC.

A second thing I quickly noticed was the energy given off from six-person teams. Before going to Sweden, I often wondered if I

was going to be a little bored playing on a six-person team. It was obvious that there was no boredom at this tournament and that the Kubb WC is one big party.



Team Tredje Gången Gillt from Gotland

Two other things I was hoping to do was talk to the tournament organizers and meet the team from Washington, D.C. After walking around a little, I went up to the scoring table and introduced myself to an organizer, and we talked briefly. We were speaking Swedish, and the woman asked if I would mind being interviewed. (Now, I think I can say that I can hold my own a little with Swedish, especially if I am sitting down with a friend or two and we are talking about something simple like my favorite bakery, the weather, or say kubb.) When she asked me about being interviewed, I was like sure, thinking it would be later during the day, perhaps she would tell me what the questions were, etc. Nope. She promptly cut the music playing over the sound system and introduced to all 160 six-person



Friday with 160 teams and 66 pitches



One of the dozens of campers. (Photo Johan Lundin)



# KUBB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB

teams that an American was there and started asking me questions in Swedish. It is all a blur now, but I remember her asking me a few questions, being nice enough to whisper it in English if I gave her a blank stare, and being nice enough to say that the Swedish used for the answers was good.

Next was the U.S. Kubb Club, from Washington, D.C. I really wanted to talk with them and hear their story. At the same time, I did not want to interrupt their matches. I was able to talk with them a little off and on throughout Friday and saw them again Saturday evening at the semifinals and final. I have a good feeling our paths will meet again. Kubb does that.

I also made a point to find the [OHC] Kubb Team from Belgium. I had seen a couple of their YouTube videos about their trips to the WC, and I thought it would be cool to meet them. I was able to



[OHC] Kubb Team

talk with them both days and even talked with a couple of them on the ferry ride back to the mainland on Sunday. They are great group of guys that love the game kubb (and their Jupiler beer). Check out their YouTube videos when you have time.

### Friday 2pm

As the day goes on, Group Play eventually slowed down as groups finish up throughout the early afternoon. Our team has a good relationship with the team Kärne Kubb International, which is captained by Sören Wallin. We all decided to find an empty pitch and play a few practice games. I tried not to show it there, but I can admit now, I was a little nervous. The players on my team seemed good. There were a lot of capable and excellent players all over the place, and I did not want my teammates to think to themselves, why in the world did we invite this Cheesehead to play with us. I was also very curious to see what I liked and did not like about six-person teams.

I firmly believe that some mornings you wake up and your low game can be higher or lower than usual and that your top game can be higher or lower than usual. For me, one key is to limit your low game, and if it is low, to minimize its impact and try to



Team U.S. Kubb Club

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## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB

get out of it as quickly as possible. Well, this afternoon, there was no low game, and I was extremely satisfied with my top game. I also quickly realized that I could not be bored in six-player teams. We played several games against KKI.



Tack Per-Sune. I will remember it forever

One quick side story. I had a king shot. I had been playing well. I lined up the shot. I was thinking that I was at the mecca of kubb and had more pressure than usual (and this was just a kubb friendly), as we all would love to knock down a king in Rone, right? Well, needless to say, I missed the king. From the opposite side of the pitch, I quickly heard Sören say, "Welcome to Rone". I shook my head and we all had a great laugh. The kings at the WC are noticeably larger and heavier than the ones in tournament play here. They are easier to hit, in theory, but while in Rone, there is no greater feeling than knocking one of those kings down and see it lay flat on the ground. I left the kubb friendly feeling good about my individual play and our team play. Our team left feeling extremely good about our play as a whole...that was quickly about to change.

### Friday 4pm

I was to meet Jens and Lina at 4pm by the kubb king that shoots candy in the air a few times during the day. Some of the last remaining groups were concluding and the Friday Consolation Bracket was taking place. When I met up with them, they asked if I wanted to meet Terry Ekelöf and Joakim Ekelöf. I had talked with Terry a few times over the last couple years by email, and he was nice enough to do the interview for *Kubbnation Magazine* last year. Also, I think we all can admit that Joakim is a YouTube



Saturday with Terry. His shirt says, *One time is no times. You can say that if you have won 10 world championships...now 11.* (Photo: Lina Nordfors)

kubb legend. So the three of us walked into the food tent and they were sitting down taking a *fika*. It was a lot of fun to talk with them and hear what they thought about the tournament and their team Team Ekeby. After talking with them, they went out and practiced on an empty kubb pitch. I had a feeling that a lot of people knew two of the players from the 10-time world champion Team Ekeby were now on the grounds and warming up for the next day. That was my first experience that Saturday might have a little more seriousness than Friday.

### Friday 5pm

One of the coolest things that happened during the trip was meeting the family that owns the cottage we stayed at. A wonderful couple. The husband and I talked a lot about the cross-country trip he took across the U.S. a number of years back, and he had been to Wisconsin. After the one kilometer walk back to their house, we talked with the couple for a few minutes. Afterwards, Jens, Lina, and I walked back to the cabin and the husband followed behind me a little. I thought to myself, gosh he is nice, walking us back to our cabin. But at the same time, I hoped he did not think I would get lost walking the twenty yards from his house to the cabin. Then I looked up and I about fell over. There hanging up along the fence was an American flag. I could not believe it. I asked him where he had gotten it. His answer..."Wisconsin". Kubb does amazing things. We took some pictures, I thanked him numerous times, and this trip just kept getting more amazing by the hour.



Team Bej-laug-eth from Gotland. (Photo: Johan Lundin)

### Friday 6pm

Sören invited our team to his summer cottage for dinner and kubb. There were around 20 of us there between our team, his team, and family members. Right when we arrived, I noticed not one, not two, but three kubb pitches set up. That was another example to me that kubb on Gotland is big and it is more than just a game. Dinner and conversation were great. One thing I love about travelling and kubb is the number of new people you meet.



# KUBB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB

Sören gave me a tour and history lesson about the house and property. A thing that really stuck out on Gotland is that the countryside is very different from mainland Sweden in one big way. The color of homes in the country on the mainland are mostly Falun red. On Gotland, most are white and made of stone.



Three pitches ready for the BBQ

After dinner, the teams lined up again to toss some lumber with only about 12 hours until we would be stepping into The Coliseum of Kubb. Our confidence, which at least for me earlier was very high, quickly went away. We played several games, and we only won one game, and that was the last

one. My top game disappeared, and my confidence dropped quick. I left there a little worried that I would let the team down on Saturday. Perhaps all of us were wondering where our top games went. I decided that all I could do is mentally prepare for the next day, so I did.

### Saturday 8am

After a great night sleep, the three of us made our way to the site of the 16th Annual Kubb World Championship. There was a chance of rain for the day, but it would never come. The day before, Jens informed me that I would be going first in the rotation and that the two of us would rotate between tossing out the kubbs. Knowing this, I wanted to make sure that I practiced four meter throws and my kubb tosses. With butterflies in my stomach, I was in no condition to eat my breakfast. I bought a *frukostpåse* and put it away for later.

I have organized and/or played in kubb tournaments in

There is no venue like the WC. Amazing.



numerous different cities. There is no environment that can match Rone. Not only is it the site of the World Championship on an island that seems to eat, sleep, and breathe the sport, but the atmosphere of the tournament is second to none. The Rone Church in the background and all the campers and tents at the other end just add to the amazingness of the venue. There is music coming down from a crane. It is one big celebration of kubb.

### Saturday 9am

For weeks I envisioned my first eight meter toss at the WC. I would envision the baton rotating the perfect rotation, smacking the kubb perfectly, and moving that little block of wood back at the feet of the opposing team. Going first, I lined up my throw, thought everything I wanted to think, and let it go. It was on perfect line to let my teammates and the opposing team know that this kubber from little Eau Claire, Wisconsin came to play. I was ready to lead my team out of the WC gate with a solid hit and THUD, the baton hit the ground right in front of the waiting kubb and stopped a couple of inches short of the kubb. I was disappointed, but I nodded my head and decided that I was satisfied with the first effort of the day.

We thought the first team we played that day was going to be our toughest competition in our group, as they advanced to the Playoff Stage the year before, so they were the other team in our group that were automatic qualifiers. One thing I remember about this match was the effortless motion of the guy that tossed the kubbs. It was like he was born doing it. He would find his spot, toss it nice and easy. The kubb would land where he wanted it, and he would do it again, again, and again.

Looking back, much of the morning is a blur. I did not know how serious our team would be versus us being there just to have fun. I had a feeling that since they had directly qualified the year before that we were going to be pretty serious, which was more than fine with me. I just wanted to blend in well with the team

and have the same disposition as them. One thing I do remember is the first king shot that I had. I hit it, and I wanted so bad to call my wife Erin and our two little girls Maja and Cecilia and tell them that daddy took down the king in Sweden, on Gotland, at the WC, on Saturday. I remember turning around to my teammates and saying something like that was a dream come true.

However, I also remember taking another king shot later that day, hitting him with not enough might and him leaning a little, but not going down. Another big thing is the amount of pressure taking just one throw and that throw coming perhaps every four, five, or six minutes, depending on how many kubbs are being sent back and forth. As someone that usually goes last in the rotation, I also have a whole new respect players that go first, especially if you have only one or two in your



# KUBB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB

hand to start with. Watching the teamwork and discussion during play was something that I took back with me. Strategy increases as number of players on a team increases, and I loved it.

Our group play ended with three match wins, a 6-0 record in games, never really threatened, and us playing well. I was happy to be there playing kubb, but I did want to advance to the Sweet 16, and see what that was like, so I was very excited. At worst, we were going to finish tied for 9th in the world. I was happy with the way our team had been playing and the way I was playing. We never seemed to all peak at the same time, but we were anxious to see if that would happen. Since we ended earlier than other groups, I was able to walk around and watch some games.

### Saturday 3pm

Group Play eventually ended with a few "toss offs" (see page 20). Now we were scheduled to play a team from Basel, Switzerland. Having two little girls at home (not that you need two daughters to think this way), I thought it was especially cool that our two teams were the only two teams in the playoffs with female players. The winner would advance to the quarterfinals. The pitch directly next to us was Team Ekeby. There was a different feeling at the WC on Saturday compared to Friday. There also was definitely a different feeling between Group Play rounds and the Playoffs, and that must be even more evident if you play against Team Ekeby, as I know I felt it playing next to them.

Not including the 12 players playing in our match, there were over 40 people watching our match. The pitch was surrounded. Right next to us, there were well over 100 people watching the 10-time World Champions go toe-to-toe with their opponent. Easily, this was the most people I had ever played in front of, and it was great. You could feel the energy. For each shot, the pressure, joy, and disappointment multiplied. It was exactly where I wanted to be.

It was exactly where I wanted to be, yes, but a couple misses in a row towards the end of our first game made me wonder if I would ever hit another kubb that day, and in front of all the people. Like a lot of sports, if you are not playing well, there is no place to hide. This is not how I envisioned or wanted to end my play at the WC. I knew I had to find a way to get out of the funk.

After we lost our first game, one of our supporters came up to me. She looked me in the eyes, grabbed my shoulder, and said, *Kom igen Eric* (Come on Eric). I needed that, and I needed it desperately. To start the next game, I led off by hitting an eight meter shot. We started out well in game two, but they came back. If I remember, we let them move forward, and they did severe damage to our baseline. At this level, even with six-person teams, letting a team advance is the end. I learned that quickly.

Later in the game, I had seven kubbs to toss out. I remember thinking about all the people watching. I told myself to do it just like I was in my backyard in Eau Claire. After three kubbs were placed next to each other, another one of our supporters yelled out *Kom igen Eric*. I bent down and grabbed the next two. Before coming back up, I needed to take a deep breath knowing that any faulty throw here would give them the needed advantage for the win. The next two found the previous three. Now the pressure was really on. I bent down, again taking a long, deep breath before grabbing the final two kubbs. I found my spot and landed it there. One more. Last one. Spot found and all seven were next to each other. I did a fist pump, raised my fist, looked up to the sky, and smiled. Perhaps John Helge or my grandparents Linnea, Tage, Alice, and Roy were looking down. Never had I been so nervous in kubb. That smiling ended too soon though. We were able to knock over all of our field kubbs. However, our opponents knocked theirs over as well and then finished the game by downing the king. They ended up finishing third in the world and beating Team Ekeby one game in the semi-finals.

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# KUBB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB

Looking back, not a bad team to lose to.

I will admit that I was disappointed in losing that match. At the same time, we played hard, got to the final 16 and all got along really well. It had been a great day. A day I will always remember.

### Saturday 5pm

The rest of the evening at the WC included a lot of talking with teammates and players from other teams, and watching world-best kubb. I was able to interact a little more with a couple of my teammates and players from other teams, sit in the sun, and have a couple beverages. As a player, it was amazing to play in the Group of 16. As a spectator, it was also amazing to watch how different teams operate and interact with each other. It was fascinating to see different strategies and ways that people held the batons and kubbs. What a day. The semi-finals moved to an area with a big fence around it and there were bleachers on one side. It was fun to watch players and see how they handled the situations they were in. Team Ekeby eventually won the World Championship for the 11th time after darkness had set in and the lights had been turned on.

### Saturday 10pm

Jens, Lina, and I made our way back to the cabin. Walking behind the house, there were 10 or so people sitting around a table in an enclosed patio. The owners of the house asked if we wanted to join them for awhile and drink some of Gotland's famous drink. Of course we would join them. In addition to the owners, team Signalgatan was there as well. It was an amazing couple hours. All of us talking about kubb, Gotland, life, and more kubb. I asked the husband if they talk about the WC 12 months a year in Rone. He looked at me and with a straight face answered, "No". I felt a little strange asking the question, thinking perhaps I am thinking that they take this game more seriously than they actually do. He then smiled and said, "Only 11 months a year". We all had a great laugh.

I wanted to ask the players from Signalgatan a ton of questions, and told them that. Their response was go ahead and ask away. One question I still had for people was about six-person teams, and if they really liked it. Did they not want to have at least two batons in their hands, instead of one? The response was that it is a team sport and six-person teams is the truest test.

It took me six or so years, but now I realize that six-person teams is the truest and toughest test of both individual and team skill all in one. The team dynamic is so amazing. At

the same time, it shows how well you can play with just one baton. It probably helps that it seems like the whole island plays, and if they had three-person teams there would not be enough room for half of the teams. I also remember their intensity for the sport. After playing at the WC and talking with Signalgatan, for me, it is a sport. I strongly remember Jöran's words. He goes last in the rotation. He wants the pressure. Give him a double to hit down. That is what he wants. Talking to them, there was so much intensity in their words and love for the sport.

The whole trip made me wish that I had grown up with kubb and played it when I was a boy, a teenager, and in my 20s. At the same time, it gives me even more energy to introduce it to more people in Eau Claire and beyond. I want the kids now to look back in 10 years or so and feel like kubb was part of their lives from as far back as they can remember.

### Sunday 8am

The next morning, we got up and ate breakfast with Per-Sune and Ingegerd. It was a wonderful Swedish breakfast, one that I really needed after a long day of kubb the day before followed by some of Gotland's famous beverage during the night. We said our goodbyes to our hosts and made our way back north to Visby.

Jens and Lina dropped me off at the ferry terminal. I cannot thank Jens enough for giving me the opportunity to play with the team. I also cannot thank all my teammates enough for being so welcoming. I have yet to find a word to describe my experience. Perhaps that means that it was something filled with so many great and new things, that I have never experienced something like it before. Kubb does that.



I am not sure if The Emigrants will ever line up together and play again at the Kubb WC. But they have done it numerous times and will do it numerous times in my head. The Emigrants: Eric, Lina, Jens, Micke, Kalle, and Linda



# KUBB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## A JOURNEY TO THE HOME OF KUBB



### Saturday - 3pm (bonus coverage)

If you think kubb cannot be a sport, it is safe to say that you have not been to the Kubb WC, and you have never watched or talked with a team like the Gotland team Signalgatan. These pictures were taken by Ewa Jorenbo (Stockholm). If two or more teams tie in the Group Play stage, they do not use tie-breakers (head-to-head, most game wins, etc.). Each team lines up and takes their six throws at six kubbs lined up on the opposite baseline. They announce it will happen over the sound system, and dozens of people come to watch. The team that knocks down the most kubbs advances to the Playoff Stage. The other team can enter the Consolation Bracket. Here, after a three-team tie, Signalgatan advanced to the Round of 16.



# ON THE KUBB HIGHWAY

## THE MAD TOSSERS AND RHYMES WITH TUBE



The Mad Tossers ( Ted Schmidt and Aaron Berry) at the Rockford, IL Swedish Historical Society Kubb Tournament

2011 has been a great year for kubb in the Midwest. After experiencing my first tournament in Dallas, WI in Oct. 2010, I was hooked. And I looked forward to traveling to as many tournaments as possible this year. Kubb tournaments are not only a great way to test your skills, but also learn new techniques and strategies. And most importantly, kubb tournaments allow you to share the experience of playing an ancient game with old and new friends from all of the country. Sportsmanship and camaraderie are some of kubb's best attributes.

My first tournament of 2011 was in mid-May at the Rockford, IL Swedish Historical Society Tournament. Madison mustered four teams for the relatively short morning drive. The weather looked like it may be a factor, but the showers dissipated, the skies cleared and sunshine and above normal temperatures greeted the players by early afternoon.

The range of kubb enthusiasts was remarkable. People arrived in Renaissance Fair and Steam Punk costumes or with Viking helmets and witty kubb-themed t-shirts. Players were there not to only compete, but to have fun participating in Swedish heritage and culture. We had a good time playing with teams of all different skill levels. And after being knocked out in the 2nd round of the playoffs, The Mad Tossers won the remainder of their matches to claim the consolation bracket championship and take home our first kubb tournament hardware. Rockford SHS put on a great kubb tournament.

Our next tournament was two months later at the U.S. National Kubb Championship in Eau Claire. It was the first time I've competed in any sort of National Championship. And it was a lot of fun to be able to do it in the cradle of American Kubb. I even had the chance to participate in the festive atmosphere by competing in a Kubb T-shirt design contest and winning the gracious surprise new kubb set thanks to Eric Anderson and Old Time Games.

We brought two teams to the U.S. Nationals and made the 3.5 hour drive the day before the tournament. We had time to get in some field practice that Friday evening before the sun started

setting and the sprinklers started popping up on the pitch. We then headed to the Fire House tavern for a kubb social. You know it's a kubb social when every so often someone shouts, "KUUUUUBB!" in a loud, deep voice.

The new soccer field venue was a great place to play on a quality surface. And other than a few hours of breezy conditions, the weather was perfect for the biggest kubb tournament in the hemisphere. And the Mad Tossers came roaring back from a 1-5 record in group play to making it to the "Sweet 16" playoff round and placed tied for 9th in the tournament. I learned so much from my fellow kubb players that I was successfully able to switch my kubb tossing style mid-tournament.

At the end of August, six weeks after the U.S. Nationals, it was time for The Mad Tossers and Rhymes With Tube to make the two hour trip from Madison to Appleton for the 2nd Annual Fox Valley Kubb Tournament. This tournament was far smaller than the U.S. Nationals, but they were no less enthusiastic about kubb. Chad Bevers and the rest of the Fox Valley Kubb Club made us feel very welcome. They had a great neighborhood site with the aptly named Green Meadows Park and also furnished a celebratory kubb themed cake. The weather gods smiled upon us again as we had sunny and dry conditions after a cool and breezy start.

We had a lot of fun sharing kubb with teams of all skill levels. No one took themselves too seriously. Everyone seemed to have good time joking and congratulating each other's tosses on the



Rhymes With Tube (Heidi Schwarzenbart and David Giese) at the Fox Valley Kubb Tournament (Photo: Aaron Berry)



# ON THE KUBB HIGHWAY

## THE MAD TOSSERS AND RHYMES WITH TUBE

pitch. The Mad Tossers had a last minute substitution and my mother was able to enjoy her first kubb tournament. Both of our teams were knocked out in the playoffs, but we battled on in the consolation bracket and ironically faced off against each other in the final Consolation Championship match. The match was close but Rhymes With Tube was able to capitalize on some short porches and take home their first kubb trophy. The warmth and hospitality of our hosts made the three out-of-town teams feel very welcome and we look forward to heading back to the Fox Valley next year.

Five weeks after Appleton, summer gave way to fall on the first weekend of October. My year in kubb had come full circle as two Madison teams made a return trip to the Dallas Oktoberfest Kubb Tournament. Dallas has a great small town festival atmosphere with a tasty local microbrewery (Valkyrie Brewing Co.), the longest brat (125 feet), occasional cannon and keg-a-pult shots. The Mad Tossers planned a little better this year and made the four hour trip the night before. So we arrived early Saturday morning to see frost on the pitch during set up. The Mad Tossers had some difficulty this time around and left way too many short porches to advance in either bracket. But a new 3rd member of fellow Madisonian team "Rhymes With Tube" made history in her kubb tournament debut with a two-for-one shot at baseline kubbs during a tie-breaker contest. And while we did not take home any hardware, we certainly enjoyed the Fall Finale of kubb tournaments in Wisconsin. And 2012 promises to be another great year for kubb.



The Mad Tossers at the U.S. National Kubb Championship

### Written by:

Aaron Berry

The Mad Tossers

Co-Organizer for the Madison Midsommar Kubb Tournament



### Did you know?

Paul Mullen, Über Kubbers (1), Sweden's Sons (3), and Dead Rabbits (1), made it to the most tournaments in 2011. He played in five, and he did pretty well, too.

Earlier in 2011 Paul lived in Chippewa Falls, WI, but now lives in River Falls, WI. His 2011 results were: Minneapolis (1st), Eau Claire (T-9), Appleton (1st), Des Moines (3rd), and Dallas (2nd). His total distance traveled was 1,281 miles / 2,063 kilometers.

### Appleton

107mi

172km

### Rockford

72mi

116km



# A LOOK INSIDE THE GAME OF KUBB

## AARON ELLRINGER

Since first enjoying kubb several years ago, I've tried to put my finger on why it's so fun. After much thought, I realized that kubb has all of the best parts of all of the best games. Ever. Period. And if you are reading this, you probably agree.

First off, the crack of the baseball bat. No sound feels more rewarding than that of wood on wood, and kubb has it all the time. You can hear it from across the park - what's that sound? People are attracted to it. A good hit turns heads in Kubb, too.

*No matter the age  
Molly or Matt  
nothing rattles your cage  
like the crack of the bat*

*kubb has that...  
times ten*

How about the sheer strength and adrenaline power of boxing? Kubb is in your face like that, each side taking their turns throwing the punches. Back and forth. An endurance test or the surprise KO? One round or ten?

*pool is cool  
eight ball, cannot fall  
but Kubb has king  
a more stately eight  
in order to win  
you have to wait*

Like the laid back feel of billiards? The eight ball always keeps you on your toes. Opponents can place the eight ball to their advantage, to your peril. Like the eight, the King is always in play, waiting for the next mistake so he can call the game early. His presence acts as equalizer. Everybody makes mistakes. Kubb can be laid back, but the shark is always watching.

*bowling's OK  
converse with your prey  
play day or night  
tossing balls at pins?  
that just ain't right*

Anybody can bowl, all ages, body types... even beginners can get a strike once in awhile. That's the reward. Kubb has that every time you knock one down. Success. Another strike against your opponents. There's more! In football, the shape of the shape of the ball is key. Thrown properly it soars, improperly it could go anywhere. The bounce is unpredictable. Kubb has that - batons and Kubbs can be thrown perfectly, but their shape introduces an element of chance. Anyone can win. Chess? Kubb has strategy, prediction, surprise. The game can turn in one round.

*Kubb is great!  
Kubb is tops  
Once you play  
you'll never stop*

### Written by:

Aaron Ellringer - Eau Claire, WI  
2010 U.S. National Champion - The Ringers

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# DIARIES OF A KUBB WIDOW

Erin Anderson - Eau Claire, WI

It is late and dark. The kids have been asleep for hours. I climb into bed next to my husband, and he rolls over and whispers, "Do you know what I've been thinking about?" I hear this question a few times a week all year long. Don't worry, the details won't shock you, because his next words will be about something to do with kubb. Tournament planning or rehash, what color or how many tournament shirts, who he thinks will reach the quarterfinals, change of his throwing style, whatever. I have heard it all, over and over and over. I should know by now. Welcome to the life of a kubb widow.

It's about six weeks after the National Championship. I'll be honest with you, I am tired of kubb, and I'm extremely tired of my husband's obsession with kubb. I actually accused him of not being able to go an hour without thinking of kubb, and he didn't deny it. His response was to ask me if I could go a day without thinking of kubb. I only wish...

## A typical day

On the way down to the basement to do a load of laundry I trip over a kubb set bag in the kitchen from the night before (but it is always there). Facing me is a basement floor half covered with 50+ kubb sets, all sorted by not only types of pieces, but the condition of each game piece type...kubb piece triage. That is a lot of wood and kubb OCD. While waiting for the washing machine to finish, I check email. There are no fewer than eight new emails with some version of kubb in the heading. On the desk is a stack of papers with tournament groupings from this year and previous years and receipts for medals. Folding the laundry, I put away three kubb shirts that Eric has worn that week. Another four are greeting me in the drawer. In Eric's closet, I see the numerous brackets from tournaments that he has played in papering the walls.

Sorting through the mail reveals a letter from my oldest daughter's principal. In it she welcomes back the students and tells the students what she did over the summer. You guessed it, she learned how to play kubb. It never stops. I leave Eric and the kids (of course playing kubb in the yard) to take a walk. Relaxed, I head back home. Still a half mile from home, I hear the crack and distinctive sound of a baton hitting a kubb two houses away.

I cannot help it. I smile.

Jaime Feathers - Des Moines, IA

I hate winter. Hate it. I hate the snow. I hate the cold. I hate the coats, hats, mittens and boots; and I hate driving in the snow. I hate everything about winter except for one thing...I get to spend time with my husband.

He's a hobby collector. He has been the entire 11 years we've been married. He does one thing for a while and then gets bored and tries something new. He goes into each hobby full force, nothing half-hearted. He buys all the proper equipment and accessories and is very absorbed with each one...for a while.

That's why three years ago when he first learned to play the game of kubb, I thought nothing of it. "Great," I thought. "Here we go again. A new hobby to add to the rest." Then he and the gang got connected with Eau Claire and learned about the U.S. Nationals. After that things got a whole lot more competitive around these parts. On nice days, I would look for him and find him flattening, seeding, and mowing the yard or throwing kubbs (hundreds of kubbs), ignoring burning burgers on the grill.

His first trip to Nationals, he finished in the middle. After the first thaw of spring the following year, nearly every waking sunny moment there were rhythmic thunks to be heard in the backyard. Children went unattended. Dogs unfed. My to-do lists completely forgotten. Our grill sat dusty from lack of use.

When we loaded up for the 2011 Nationals, I didn't know what to expect. I knew it was a much larger tournament and he finished in the middle last year, so I was thinking it might be similar. While I was watching him play even in the first rounds, I realized something...he was good. Actually, better than good. People were amazed by his kubb tosses. I overheard spectators talking about his team and how well they played. The last few rounds of play were hard for me to watch. When he won, I felt ashamed that I hadn't seen how good he was before.

Kubb has made it past "hobby" status and is now part of who he is. He's made great friends and so have I. So for now, its winter and I hate the cold. I'm enjoying the company as well as the (unburnt) burgers he's finally grilling for me. But when spring comes, I'll be ready to cheer him on. Who knows, he might even talk me into playing a game or two!



From the 2011 Dutch Championship. The shirts say "Help my husband is a kubber."  
(Photo: NK Kubbb)





Marcel Genal of Tallult 89 throwing at the 2011 WC quarterfinals  
(Photo Lina Nordfors)

## THE DRILL

### THE MOST IMPORTANT THROW IN KUBB

In Sweden some call it *utkastare* and others call it *inkastare*. In the U.S., well, I guess we might call it the person tossing the kubbs, in or out, I am not sure. Regardless of what the name of the position throwing the kubbs back into play, this toss is the most important throw in the game. *Kubbnation's* interview of Terry Ekelöf last year revealed that the drill technique was introduced in 1996. From there, it grew on Gotland and as more people travelled to and from Gotland, toss in the Internet and YouTube, and the drill spread. The game, then, changed forever.

Looking back at how it has evolved in the U.S., it seems the drill was first used in 2008 when the Crooked Lake Trolls used it in tournaments. During that year one or two more people started using the technique, and it started getting more popular in Eau Claire, WI. In 2009, a few more Midwest teams started using the drill.

Then, only at the 2010 U.S. Championship did the Eau Claire, WI team Default introduce the U.S. tournament world to drilling the kubbs in the front right corner of the opposite side of the pitch on their run to a 2nd place finish. From there, it did not take long for both the drill and the key placement of the front corner to explode throughout the Midwest. Based on different online videos and pictures, it seems the drill is still only being primarily used by people that play in the Midwest.

OK, that is a quick story about the history of the drill. But why the drill? Why the front right corner? What are the benefits and what are teams trying to do? More importantly, what are the different techniques to trying to place as many 7cm by 7cm by 15cm pieces of wood in an extremely small area, hopefully touching each other or on top of each other. The answer to why is pretty simple; it is the only way to survive in today's world of kubb. The how, well, it depends on who you ask.

We went on a several week journey to get as much information from as many people as we could. The intent of the article was not to proclaim who the best *inkastare* are in the world. We wanted to get in contact with the elite in addition to others that are using it as well to find out how they drill. Three names came up more than once when we were looking to talk to one of the best in the world. One name was Niklas Ahlgren (Gotland) from Elefantbajs 2000, which won the WC in 2006 and has been second twice, including in 2011, and has one third place finish. Second was Björn Görlitz (Berlin, Germany) from Fortschritt99, which is a German team that has finished second and third twice since 2008 at the WC and also is the 2011 European Champion. Third is Josef Björklund (Gotland) who plays for Menage à Trois. In 2011, they won the Swedish Championship, the Stockholm Tournament Kubbistan, and a 3-on-3 tournament on Gotland.

Other names came up as well. Some are in here and some are not, as we were not able to get in contact with everyone. We did wonder why some names were brought up and others were not, depending on who we asked. Overall, looking at it from an objective outsider, it seems like eating a premium ice cream here in Wisconsin. All agree all flavors are high quality, but depending on what you are familiar with (who you have played, who you know, who you have watched, rivalries, etc.) there are different opinions what flavor is the best. Is there an absolute best *inkastare*? We don't know, but we tried to get in contact with as many elite *inkastare* as were mentioned and then asked around some more.

#### Throwing Technique

Let's define the basic premise of the drill. The *inkastare* tosses the kubb underarm and puts counterclockwise rotation (if you are right-handed) on the kubb. Think about throwing a football and putting a tight spin on the ball. That is the kubb, except it is underarm and the rotation is the opposite direction. The object is to get the spinning kubb to hit the ground in a way so that it



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lands with one of the points digging into the ground, just like a drill.

The differences in throwing technique can be witnessed at any kubb tournament. There are drills with limited rotation and some with an RPM that resembles an Aaron Rodgers' pass. Some people look like they were born doing it and have a nice smooth release. While others, well, quite honestly, they look like they might throw their shoulder out, fall over, or both at the same time. As long as the outcome gets the job done, it is tough to criticize a drill technique.

Most people have one foot ahead of the other. Some lift the back foot off the ground during the throwing motion. Arm speed can range between slow to fast and release points are from low to high. **Jens Haraldsson** from Stockholm, Sweden, who annually plays at the Swedish Championship and World Championship and also hosts the Kubbistan Tournament in Stockholm puts a lot of spin on the kubb and his release point is relatively high. Jens talks about his process in finding the perfect way to toss kubbs, "Ever since I saw the drill technique at VM for the first time I have tried to copy it, or rather find my own way to do it right. I have tried many different grips, spin speeds, arm movements, tossing angles and so on. To be honest, I haven't found the perfect way yet. I still make small changes in many aspects." He goes on to say, "When I swing my arm, I usually continue the movement after the kubb is released from my hand, and raise the arm high. This is also for stability reasons, to have a clean pendulum movement. Maybe there's an analogy here with golf; you want to hit through the ball, rather than hit on it."

A lot of people focus on their wrist and/or arm when they drill. So when we contacted Germany, it was very interesting. You put the kubb in your hand, and **Björn Görnitz** says, "You need at least a stable fly. You have to rotate the kubb like a sparrow. The javelin guys do it too, because they want to have stable fly. So it's

the same for us. The rotation comes not from the arm or the hand. For me its only one digit. The longest one. I put this finger under the kubb and then I move from bottom to top. You have to think something like that your finger is under something very heavy and it will clamp you, if you don't pull it out from bottom to top." The bottom line is that everyone has to find their own technique to toss the best possible kubb, time after time, and, if you want to be elite, with no mistakes.

Back to team Default. Over the past two years, **Scott Forster** has been one of the top kubb throwers in the U.S., and his technique and form are extremely unique. Scott positions his feet approximately shoulder width apart and brings his arm to the middle of his body. He then brings his arm straight up for the throw. There is a spin on his kubb, but not what one would say extreme spin. For Scott, who is an avid golfer, balance is the key to a good kubb toss. He said, "This position/throw gives me the best balance...which as a result, gives me the most accuracy."

What is life like when you don't use the drill? Let's ask one of the top U.S. teams. The Minneapolis team Tad Kubbler has finished 4th, 3rd, and T-5th over the past three years at the U.S. Championship. Their *inkastare* **Eric Goplin** describes why they switched. Eric says, "I switched to drilling because it allows us to control the entire phase of our turn during a game, not just the part where we throw batons. Previous to drilling, throwing out field kubbs was like a controlled crash and seemed entirely out of our hands. The hope was kubbs wouldn't land too close to the king or roll to the baseline. It was like tossing a football and trying to control where it would roll to a stop. Drilling gives our team much greater control of where the kubbs land."

### Front Right

Now the question is, when you get the kubb to hit the ground, what do you want it to do, and why are people putting it in the front corner of the opposite half of the pitch. The second question

  
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# THE DRILL

## THE MOST IMPORTANT THROW IN KUBB

is easier to answer, so we will start there. The rules state that if you can raise a kubb in, then it must be raised in. Therefore, if a kubb is on the ground and part of it is in and part of it is out-of-bounds, the defending team is required to raise it in. If you can put one or more kubbs on either the mid-pitch line and/or the sideline, those kubbs will be raised closer together, as any option to raise the kubb away from other kubbs is eliminated. Caution is needed since aiming closer to those two lines significantly increases your chance at having to toss the kubb a second time. If you miss it the second time, well, as you know, that punishment kubb can change a game rapidly for many teams. In all honesty, unless one feels confident aiming for that corner, it is not for everyone.

Why is most everyone throwing on the right side of a kubb pitch? It is as easy as that most people are right-handed. For tossing the kubbs, it is easier to make them move left to right (more on this soon). For tossing the batons, a right handed player can toss a straight throw directly down the sideline. If you tossed the kubbs on the left side of the pitch and wanted to move them left to right, you would have to start by landing them out-of-bounds, and the risk part of the risk-reward skyrockets. When throwing the batons, if a kubb was up against the left sideline, then a right-handed player would have to angle their body or throw across themselves. The end of the world? Most would say no, but hit percentage will go down, which is the end of the world in elite-level kubb.

### When The Kubb Hits The Ground

Ok, *inkastare* tosses a kubb. Is the goal for it to just hit the ground and accept where it goes? No, it is not. Simple as that. This is where strategy and technique meet for a *fika*. Some make it look easier than others, but regardless, at this level people are trying to do the same thing. They are throwing the kubbs at different angles to have them move how they want them to move after they hit the ground. How do you do that? Well, you came to the right place.

First, let's put a couple things in perspective. In the U.S., between 2008 and 2010, only a few players have been successfully (relatively speaking) moving kubbs after they hit the ground, and that "few" number might actually be only two or three. Starting in 2010, this number increased a little, and by Fall 2011, it seemed there was an increase in teams that had a player that was proficient. However, the drill is still far away from being mainstream, and most teams in tournaments are not doing it. The top-level teams are quickly learning that it gives them an advantage. **Eric Goplin** says "With so many teams getting really good at kubb, the fact of the matter is a good drill is the difference between legitimately contending

to win a tournament or not. Currently - with very few exceptions - it separates the top tier teams in the Midwest from the rest of the field. Personally, come spring when the snow finally thaws here in Minneapolis, I work on drilling almost exclusively for a few weeks before picking up the batons."

What is going to happen after that kubb hits the ground? If you are just going to accept the outcome based on luck, well, you are not going to get very far and you are playing 20th Century kubb. The goal is to get as many kubbs as close together as possible, right? Absolutely. So, how do you achieve it? It is all about angling the kubb while it is in the air. As was said earlier, you have to find the technique that best suites you. We are all different and what works for you probably will not work for someone else.

For right-handed players, if you angle the kubb so that the front end that is travelling is more to the left and the rear (facing you) is to the right, and if you bring it down at the correct angle, the kubb will bounce to the right. How much to the right? That depends on the angle from left to right, the angle that it hits the ground, force you are throwing it, and some believe the amount of spin you put on the kubb. In contrast, if you angle the kubb so that the front end is angled to the right and the rear to the left, it will hit and bounce to the left. For right-handed players, throwing for a bounce to the right is a lot easier than a bounce to the left, due to the way you can bend your wrist and arm. Is that it? Some may think so, but the answer is no. Check this out. According to **Joakim Ekelöf** from Team Ekeby, "If I would like to place the kubb close behind the kubbs already lying on the field I dip the front end and angle the kubb towards the ground and throw the kubb looser than normally." Heck, Björn said he has five types of throws.



Eric Anderson of The Emigrants throwing at 2011 WC  
(Photo: Lina Nordfors)

**Marcus Hansson** the *inkastare* this year for Team Ekeby at the World Championship said, "My basic strategy is to get the kubb to move from left to right after it hits the ground. To make that happen I need to spin the kubb and throw it with the right angle. I turn my hand and wrist in the same angle as I want it to land with."

To get a better understanding of what angle you should bring it down at, we went to **Josh Feathers**, the *inkastare* for the 2011 U.S. Champion Klobberheads. Josh says, "I was taught the technique by a stranger at the 2010 U.S. Nationals. I had problems perfecting the technique until the player gave me the following advice: 'When drilling a kubb, don't land the shuttle, you want to crash the plane.' For some reason, that really helped me understand the angle at release, which is more important than rotation. I still use this quote to teach new people and have found they show improvement immediately." Again, pitch conditions can



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dictate your angle, but a lot more times than not, you want to crash the plane.

So we have hit and bounce to the right, hit and bounce to the left, and hit and back up a little. In talking to Joakim's brother **Terry Ekelöf**, the guy that help start all of this back in 1996, he said, "The bounce drill throw is not the ultimate *inkast*. The best would be to throw them without a bounce. I don't know if that is possible at all ground conditions - certainly not in Rone where it almost always is kind of dry and hard in the ground. In wet or damp-soft ground it is possible to throw them so they stick where they land." I am not going to argue with any Gotlander about anything kubb. So I just do what my grandpa would tell me, 'you learn a lot more sitting back and listening', so our opinion is, if you have quality versions of a variety of throws in your kubb bag, you are well on your way to being among the top-level.

As stated a couple times before, you will also quickly find out that ground conditions play a very important role. Use the U.S. Championship as a perfect example. Boyd Park, before the rain would come down, was as hard as a parking lot and had very little grass (or weeds). At the Eau Claire Soccer Park, the grass was long and much softer. The trajectory, speed, and spin for a successful kubb toss is dramatically different at the two locations.

### The Grouping

So now most people are asking, when do I throw what type of throw? It depends on how many kubbs you have, and we will walk you through that as well. We are going to take this like a typical game and start you with one kubb to toss. Obviously, you want this kubb as close to the mid-pitch line as possible to increase your hit rate. There is no need to risk being close to the sideline and remember to keep it away from the king. Toss it, and bury it right on that mid-pitch line. If you are pretty good, it all changes with two, as now, you can get a double. Likewise for a triple, and more. This may not seem overly important, but no matter what level you play at, you need as many batons at eight

meters as possible. To stay alive in any match, the bottom line is eliminating baseline

kubbs, and you can only do that if you knock over all of your field kubbs.

Now is when we have to bring up building a wall. Building a wall along the sideline is a strategy that allows you to utilize both the sideline (remember, all kubbs laying on the sideline, so that it can be raised in-bounds, need to be raised in) and the bounce to the right. So, one builds a wall along the sideline, then they toss the remaining kubbs so that they hit the ground and then bounce into the wall. This ensures that the kubbs along the sideline have to be raised closer to the other kubbs, and it provides a backstop to stop kubbs against. **Scott Forster** says, "I try to drill the first kubb(s) with no movement. Then, the following kubbs would roll to the right after they hit the ground." **Josh Feathers** agrees, "When throwing a large pile of blocks, my first kubb I will try to place it ON the centerline, close to the pin, so that it is forced in bounds. I then try to 'skip' my kubbs in right behind it. I feel that depth in the court kubbs is more important than having the kubbs close to the centerline. My first kubb pretty much just acts as a marker for my other throws, and acts as a cushion to kubbs that would otherwise roll out of bounds."

We think Scott and Josh will be happy to know that Björn and Niklas use the same strategy. 2011 European Champion *inkastare* **Björn Görlitz** says, "My starting drill should lie exactly on this point where the kubb touched the green. No roll to right or left. I try to hit the right line in the right corner. For this you have to change the rotation to very low. The kubb should fly stable, but with less rotation." He goes on to say, "Then I normally use the right spin drill. The kubb jumps to the right and will be stopped from the first one. So all kubbs are really close together." 2006 World Champion *inkastare* **Niklas Ahlgren** adds, "If I have to throw more than three kubbs I will try to get the first ones in a good position in the corner, and I will try to bounce the rest on to the first ones. The strategy varies slightly depending on the surface."

A top-notch *inkastare* that many may not know, unless you live in Switzerland is Swiss Champion **Samuel Hufschmid** from the team



L to R: Björn Görlitz of Fortschritt99; A grouping at the WC; A young Simon Pettersson throwing his 10th kubb (Photos: Björn, Sören, Simon)



# THE DRILL

## THE MOST IMPORTANT THROW IN KUBB

SMP Basel United that finished 3rd at the 2011 WC. When you are at his level, you don't even worry about a kubb going out on its first throw. Samuel says he would much rather have his kubb bounce out than not bounce enough and be left on its own. When he tosses it the second time, "For the second turn, I already have a big wall - so it's pretty safe that they're not jumping outside." Trust us when we say they do not jump outside.

At the World Championship, you will see a lot of different techniques. When building the wall, you will see people drill the first two or three with no movement. Also, you will see people that will drill their first two or three with the same bounce-right movement as their eighth or ninth. The *inkastare* finds their spot and hits it, time and time again, and builds their wall that way. Perhaps if the group of kubbs starts getting too big, they will move their aim slightly to the left. This limits any kubb from hitting another kubb on impact, which can result in a kubb coming to rest in a position that is far away from the group and requires a one-for-one baton toss. They then continue to use the left to right bounce.

### A Successful Turn

How do you know you have tossed a good group? Josh looks at how he limits his opponents options, "I am happy when my opponent has no options for kubb placement. Taking away the only defense your opponent has against field kubbs is a significant advantage. Generally, your opponents choose which end to stand a kubb on, unless you have a nice group with kubbs on the line, and huddled up together in the corner. I will generally watch the opponent right the kubbs, not to make sure they are following the rules, but more to count the kubbs they were able to make a decision on. I have found that the lower the options I give an opponent, the higher amount of kubbs our team can take down." Björn Görnitz commented the same, "Best case is, if the person who turns up the kubbs can't do anything. The kubbs are on the lines or really close to them and they can't choose the alignment direction."

Niklas Ahlgren looks at success with what his team can do with their first baton, "I am happy with my performance if I have placed the kubbs so that there is a realistic chance one stick could knock them all down. And, of course, I am never happy with a loss." Simon Pettersson (more on him soon) not only wants the other team to struggle raising them but is satisfied, "when I get applause". Needless to say, if you get applause on Gotland, you are getting the job done.

### Cleaning Up The Mess

What happens if there is a mistake? Let's start by saying that at the World Championship, where there is no seeding from the previous year, two elite teams can easily meet anytime in the group of 16. That happened this year to Björn Görnitz and Fortschritt99 when they met Niklas Ahlgren and Elefantbajs 2000 in the quarterfinals. Niklas has high regard for Fortschritt99, saying that even though Fortschritt99 has not won a World Championship, that he thinks they are the top team in the world, and when they win their first, they will continue winning. So, you have two elite teams squaring off on a five meter by eight

meter battlefield. What can one mistake do when you are tossing the kubbs? Niklas Ahlgren said Björn's one (and only) mistake in the quarterfinal "immediately led to our victory". That, *mina kompisar*, is pressure.

What happens when one kubb gets away from you and you get a bad bounce from either the ground and/or hitting another kubb. Say it ends up landing at the six meter line or off to the left by half a meter or so. What then? To be honest, this is when you find out what you are really made of. Johan Lundin of 2010 World Runner-up Signalgatan says, "I think to be a good *inkastare* you must learn to throw pretty even all the time, and how to clean up the mess when a kubb doesn't land where you planned." There are so many variables with cleaning up one mistake (or more). First, you have to stop the mess at just the one loose kubb. Then ultimately, it depends on how many kubbs you have in play, how many kubbs you have left to throw, and how many kubbs you have that got away. Say you have a group of five, one lone kubb, and one kubb to toss. You have three options. One: Toss it deep. Two: Toss towards the group. Three: Try to put that last kubb close enough to the lone kubb to get a double. The thing is, if you don't get it in a good enough location, now you have two singles that will take up at least one-third of your batons. Again, you have to know what is best for your team at that specific point in time.

A different scenario is if a kubb is short or in a position you do not want it along the sideline. What are your options then? Johan Lundin mentions that this is one of his talents, "A quality I have that I think is good to have is that I'm pretty good at knocking kubbs that are not over the line so both that kubb and the kubb I'm knocking with places good and over the line." We want to make sure everyone understands this. You toss a kubb short. The rule states that you pick up all kubbs that are not in play after you toss all your kubbs. Therefore, say you have five to toss. Your fourth one is short. You can take your fifth kubb and hit the fourth so that both are in a position where they can be raised. In addition, and this is when you are elite, if you have a kubb along the sideline that you really do not want there, you are always more than welcome to try to knock that kubb out and toss both again.

### Is It For Everyone?

A question few ask is are there any negatives from grouping in the front corner? Yes there are and the most obvious two are that it increases your chance of having a punishment kubb and it limits your angle at the grouping when you are trying to attack the group of kubbs. Let's be honest, depending on your skill level, you may not be even utilizing the sideline or mid-pitch line. With that, your group might be better served if it was half a meter or so away from the sideline to reduce your chance of having to toss a kubb a second time and give you a wider angle to throw from the sideline. The king is always there as a threat, but this is something that all teams need to think about. For Paul Mullen (Sweden's Sons and Über Kubbers), a team needs to do what they think is best at the specific time, "No matter who I am playing with or if I am the *inkastare* or not, we really look at each specific turn and ask ourselves, what is our best chance to get as many



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kubbs down in any given turn. Things change depending on who is in control of the game, pitch conditions, and where you are throwing your kastpinnar from.”

Another negative, although a lot less, is the ability to utilize the right to left bounce as much. Just in early 2011, a couple of U.S. teams have started using this technique in tournament play, one of which is Sweden’s Sons. They like to use the throw when the initial wall building is not as tight against the sideline as possible. The object of this toss lands out-of-bounds and bounces left back to the right side of the wall, hopefully on the sideline. Lastly, another thing is that it brings the referee into the match a lot more often, especially later in a tournament, as there are often calls that need to be made if kubbs are in or out and/or how to raise the kubbs if they are complicated situations.

We are not sure how often people are throwing kubbs at an angle. By an angle, we mean that you are not throwing straight parallel with the sideline. A couple of teams in the U.S. have started angling their kubb throws based on the existing group on the ground. If your group creates a scenario where you might want to move a meter or so one way or another, sometimes you can drill that kubb in a position where it was not possible if you went straight parallel with the sideline. And we will toss this little tidbit out there as well, you can get different bounces with this technique (obviously depending on pitch conditions). See, we are letting it all out in this article.

Ok, so now you have it, but should every team always throw all their kubbs short? Absolutely not, and at non-elite levels, perhaps this is the biggest mistake made during a game. Joakim Ekelöf had this to offer when to toss short and when to go long, “It depends on the ability of the team. You should never throw more kubbs short than you are sure to strike with six sticks. The only exception for that rule is when you are facing a very good team, then you sometimes needs to try to play over the ability of the team. The extra kubbs, which you think that the team won’t be able to strike should be thrown to the baseline in a cluster. This skill is very important to have when you play with teammates that suck on kubbs. Under normal conditions in Team Ekeby all

kubbs are thrown short.” If you are playing for any sort of tournament win or want to test yourself, toss them all short. However, if you are more of a Consolation Bracket level team, you may want to limit the number of kubbs you toss short.

### What Does It Take To Be Elite

Sören Wallin is from Stockholm and also spends time on Gotland. He went to his first WC in 1997, has been playing at the WC since 2005, and has watched and played a lot of kubb. We mean a lot. In addition to playing and watching kubb, he has researched the history and tactics of the game and often takes part in discussions regarding present kubb and where the game will head in the future. Sören says, “To be an elite *inkastare*, it takes Gladwell’s 10,000 hours of practice. It’s craftsmanship, and as such, it only comes with practice and experience from competing at high(est) level. No short cuts, sorry!”

Gotland’s Simon Pettersson, who in 2011 played on the team Underbettets Underhuvud 2011 at the WC, is 18 years old, started at age six, and many that we talked to think he is one of the best upcoming *inkastare* on Gotland, if not already one of the best. Regarding practice, he said, “When I was younger I trained several hours everyday, but lately I haven’t had the time to train as much as I would like.” Several hours a day? When he was younger? But don’t worry, he goes on to say, “If you train enough, anyone can become good at throwing kubbs!” Johan Lundin agrees with the need for practice, “...it’s like everything else train, train, and more training.” I think we can say, if you want to bring it, time and time again, you will need to practice.

Josh Feathers looks at how an *inkastare* needs to be ready for any situation. Josh says, “Personally, I think changing your strategy to accommodate various scenarios, tailoring your game to your partner’s talents, playing to your opponents weaknesses, and un-conditioning yourself out of routines will help an *inkastare* be ready for any situation. While changing strategies is important, there is still one thing that should remain the same: 90 percent of the game should be played on 10 percent of the field.”

L to R: Jens Harraldsson (WC 2010); Johan Lundin (WC 2010); Josef Björklund (Swedish Championship 2011) (Photos: Jens, Johan, Josef)





# THE DRILL

## THE MOST IMPORTANT THROW IN KUBB

How does a team pick their *inkastare*? For most teams, there is always one player that is better than the others. However Team Ekeby is not most teams. When we posed this question to **Marcus Hansson**, he provided a behind the scenes look at Team Ekeby, "As a tradition, the team always gets together for a barbeque and training the night before Kubb VM starts. We all live in different parts of the country so we don't have a lot of training opportunities with the complete team. And because all members of Team Ekeby are about as good at tossing the kubbs, we choose the one which is in the best shape for the day. And this time it was me."

After he was chosen to be the *inkastare*, was he excited? **Marcus Hansson** went on, "I had no expectations at all to be the *inkastare* this year actually. I never thought that I would hold for the pressure, especially in the Finals. But it worked out pretty good! I feel very proud to be the *inkastare* in Team Ekeby, mostly because you play a very important role for the team. Hopefully I will keep my position as *inkastare* until next years Kubb VM. We will know after next years barbeque."

### The Future

What is the future of the *inkastare*? Can the elite get better? **Sören Wallin** thinks they will and that will require constant high performance on all types of surfaces and due to a push from the next generation of kubbers, "The better *inkastare*, the more versatile, the better you handle any situation at hand, any bumpy or slippery surface. I think improvement lies in that direction, and I think Niklas Ahlgren and Björn Görlitz show the way. As always, there's no limit but time about what man can do. These guys will keep getting better, and all youngsters who want to compete with them will push both themselves and these guys to reach new levels." He also includes Simon Pettersson and Josef Björklund in his top four for 2011. Then he goes on to say that there are a lot of others in the mix as well, "There are several great guys in a group just beneath them. Anybody can do one or two rounds of top results and gather a pile of wood. These guys do it all the time, year after year. Very impressive!" **Josef Björklund** also thinks being elite means being good on all surfaces, "I think it's important to practice on many different places, because it's harder and softer everywhere. Then you can learn how to adjust it with a couple of throws."

**Niklas Ahlgren** agrees that there will be an increase in talent as well, and teams will need more than one *inkastare*, "I think there will be more and more people doing the drill technique really well. That will raise the overall standard of play at the World Championship. If there is only one person on your team who knows the technique you could lose a game to a lesser opponent if that kubb tosser, at the moment, is playing badly."

More than one *inkastare* you ask? Actually at the Swedish National Championship (two or three person teams), every player on a team has to throw kubbs in each round. Perhaps in the future, we will see one or more tournaments like that in the U.S. In tournaments with one required *inkastare*, if someone gets cold, it is great insurance to have a relief *inkastare* available to step in when needed.

During work for this article and talking to others before, we have heard from people that perhaps the pitch needs to be lengthened, in part to counter the increased quality of the *inkastare*. **Samuel Hufschmid** had another look at things. He said, "For me it's clear, that soon, we will have to change: only one try per kubb, not two tries. Otherwise throwing the kubbs is getting too easy and too important for the game." That makes us ask another question, with the way the game is played now, is kubb tossing a too important part of the game? We will let you discuss that.

There are a lot of people out there in the world that can put kubbs, no matter how many, in a tight group. There are also a lot of people that can do it time and time again. However, we all make mistakes. After interviewing all of these people, it seems like it comes down to how bad your mistakes are and how often you make a mistake. If you toss seven kubbs 10 times, how many of those 10 turns will there be a mistake and how bad will that mistake be. You can never let a team advance, and you need to give your teammates opportunities to blast at a group of kubbs. How good your team is at knocking over kubbs is important, but it is vital that those kubbs are close together. That is what it comes down to. That is the real test. When kubbs are going back and forth, the question is, which *inkastare* will blink first.

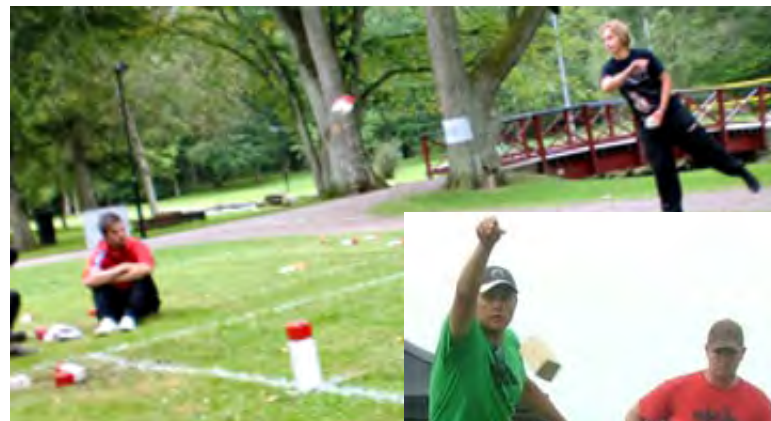
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The comments in this article are only a sampling of the interviews. For all the responses from everyone interviewed, go to [wisconsinkubb.com](http://wisconsinkubb.com). Just click on Kubbnation Magazine.

There are several drilling videos from those interviewed on the Wisconsin Kubb YouTube page. [youtube.com/wisconsinkubb](http://youtube.com/wisconsinkubb)

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We would like to whole-heartedly thank everyone that took time to answer these questions and/or send us pictures.



Top: Josef Björklund on his way to winning the 2011 Swedish Championship (Photo: Josef Björklund)

Right: Josh Feathers on his way to winning the 2011 U.S. Championship. (Photo: Josh Feathers)





Since kubb is a mainstay of the island of Gotland, we wanted to give KubbNation a look at a Gotland team. The Gotland team Signalgatan formed in 2003, and they have played in every World Championship since. In 2010, they made it to the Final and finished in second place. In 2011, they made it to the final 16. The name Signalgatan is from the name of the street where Jöran and Sammy both lived when they were in school.

Signalgatan does not only play in tournaments, but they also host tournaments as well. Since 2009, the team has hosted a kubb tournament on Gotland named the SIGA CUP. It is held one or two weekends before Midsommar. You can read more about the team on their website: [laget.se/signalgatan](http://laget.se/signalgatan).

Three of the players that originally started the team are still members: Jöran Lind, Johan Lundin, and Sammy Paulsson. Currently, there are five main players on the team, and their profiles are below.

## SIGNALGATAN

### INSIDE LOOK AT A GOTLAND TEAM



**Johan "Thomas" Grytting**

**Born:** Visby  
**Reside:** Göteborg  
**Age:** 27 (started around 6)  
**Position:** 1st or 2nd. Team's destroyer.

**Why he likes kubb:** I like kubb because it is a social, fun sport. Anyone can play it, young or old, drunk or sober, it doesn't matter. It's all accepted in the world of kubb. It's also a great sport since it can be played just to get some good times with your buddies with a cold one in your hand or it can be played dead seriously with all tactics and chalked up hands. If you ask me, a good mix of the two and you're getting somewhere!

**Best attribute to the team:** With team captain decides the tactics, who's best suited for this particular angle etc, and how to raise the kubbs. Killer "destroyer" and a decent "bazooka" throw. And if we have gained some ground, I rarely miss a base kubb. I also try to keep a watchful eye out for my team and make them drink some water every now and then. I don't want them to get too wasted or dehydrated. Sometimes, it's a fine line.



**Johan "Lode" Lundin**

**Born:** Grötlingbo  
**Reside:** Visby  
**Age:** 28 (started 16)  
**Position:** It depends on the situation. I used to be a blaster but now I'm more of "clean up" guy and I'm also "inkastare" and Captain for the team. I decide who throws and when.  
**Why he likes kubb:** Everyone can play it, old, young, handicapped, boy, girl, and so on. And its not only a competition. It's a festival or as I say in Swedish "folkfest".  
**Best attribute to the team:** I'm the most experienced player and always try to keep the mood up. The guy who keeps this team going!



**Jöran "Domi" Lind**

**Born:** Visby (grew up in Rone)  
**Reside:** Visby  
**Age:** 28 (started 16)  
**Position:** Clean up/King thrower. Always the last throw.  
**Why he likes kubb:** I have a really good time with my friends every time we play. And of course, its almost the only sport you can play in the top tier and still drink beer.  
**Best attribute to the team:** Never give up. Steady nerves. Play better when the team is a bit down, and get them all on top again with an amazing last hit.



**Sammy "Psycho" Paulsson**

**Born:** Visby  
**Reside:** Vibble  
**Age:** 28 (started 18)  
**Position:** Most of the time 2nd, but it depends on what Lode says.  
**Why he likes kubb:** What's not to like? Beer, good friends, and win against people in a sport.  
**Best attribute to the team:** For many years I often went over to the other team we played against and started talking to them to get a "psycho out", but I barely do that now. I used to be the player in the team with best hit percentage, but now I'm more of a safe player, and I'm at my best when you least expect it.



**Johan "Grabben" Holmert**

**Born:** Visby  
**Reside:** Visby  
**Age:** 27 (started 20)  
**Position:** 2nd or 3rd most of the time. Kind of a safe player.  
**Why he likes kubb:** Its fun to have a sport where its ok to drink beer at the same time. But of course the best is to have fun and play with my team.  
**Best attribute to the team:** I push the other players so we have a good mood in the team. And I have a clean and direct hit when I throw.

*"It's all accepted in the world of kubb." - Johan Grytting*





Back at the 2008 Eau Claire tournament, a three person team showed up from Colfax, WI. Not only do they consistently have one of the longest names, but no three-person team has been around longer than the Red Cedar River Yacht Club. A lot of people feel that three-person teams, with all things being equal, are at a slight disadvantage against two-person teams. Well in 2012, their disadvantage will disappear, not that they always need it, as they have finished at the top of their group in both 2009 and 2011.

It is not enough for RCRYC to just play kubb when they come. They introduced the kubb world to their homemade wooden beverage holders and have brought items for silent auction more than once.

They all have been playing for 10 years. Where does the name come from? Well, rumor has it that they have a nice little yacht collection, and they sail up and down the Red Cedar River during the summer. The "yachts" are 14 feet with 10 horsepower outboard motors.

As no surprise when we asked to profile them, they said they would love to. Marty also added, "And for what it's worth, we are looking forward to an even playing field."

## RED CEDAR RIVER YACHT CLUB

### THE LONGEST RUNNING U.S. 3-PERSON TEAM



**Marty Harmon**

**Born:** Menomonie, WI

**Reside:** Colfax, WI

**Age:** 39 (and holding)

**Position:** At the start of the game Marty is 2nd. When several kubbs are in play he will throw last.

**Best attribute to the team:** Putting the field kubbs into position.



**Missy Harmon**

**Born:** Eau Claire, WI

**Reside:** Colfax, WI

**Age:** 39 (and holding)

**Position:** At the start of the game Missy is 1st. When several kubbs are in play she will throw second.

**Best attribute to the team:** Missy keeps the team grounded when the competition is tough.



**Pan Parzyck**

**Born:** Minneapolis, MN

**Reside:** White Bear Lake, MN

**Age:** 39 (and holding)

**Position:** At the start of the game Pan is 3rd. Team's power thrower. When there are several kubbs in the field he will throw first.

**Best attribute to the team:** Power thrower and base kubb killer.

**Why they like kubb:** We all agree that it is a great family game for all ages that can be played with extreme competition or casual afternoon fun. You can play anytime and anywhere.

**Is there a significance of your jersey number:** No significance with the jersey numbers. Since our team name is the Red Cedar River Yacht Club which consists of 14' boats and 10 horsepower outboard motors we each picked our jersey name to reflect our motor preference. Pan - Johnson, Missy - Mercury, and Marty - Evinrude.



# NEWS FROM NEW GOTLAND

## KUBB HAPPENINGS IN EAU CLAIRE AND CHIPPEWA FALLS



Top four at the inaugural CVKL Oktoberfest Tournament: L to R: Mike Phillips, Gregg Jochimsen, Chris Staack, and Dave Whitehouse (Photo CVKL)

Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls continue to add new things to the Chippewa Valley's kubb mix. First and foremost, at the December 13th Eau Claire City Council meeting, the City Council passed a resolution to officially state that the City of Eau Claire is the "Kubb Capital of North America". This resolution will be a great catalyst for more things to happen in 2012 and beyond.

In September, the U.S. National Kubb Championship created a scholarship at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire. The annual scholarship will be awarded to a student who will study in one of the five Nordic countries. The first student was awarded the scholarship in November. She will be attending Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden during the 2012 spring semester.

Another 2011 happening was the creation of the Chippewa Valley Kubb League (CVKL). The story starts in September 2010, when Gregg Jochimsen and Sam Barby played kubb for the first time at the Chippewa Valley Habit 4 Humanity Kubb Tournament. They then played at the Dallas Oktoberfest Tournament. Well, after the 2011 U.S. Championships, Gregg and Sam decided that they wanted to have more opportunities to play kubb outside of kubb tournaments and at the same time introduce more people to the game. Gregg says, "CVKL was established to introduce kubb to as many people as we could, and to have a great excuse to hang out together at least once a week during the summer." For them, there was no better place than to start introducing it to their softball team.

The kubb explosion did not take long. Gregg goes on, "Over the course of the summer, we had at least 30 different players join us for kubb action. Most of the time, players had a new partner for each match, so many new friendships were established." Then they started planning a kubb tournament to coincide with the

Chippewa Falls Oktoberfest. The 21-person tournament was held in Eau Claire. Of the 21 players, only a few knew about the game in July. The tournament was set up so that everyone played with a new player each game, and the player with the most wins over the rounds of play was the winner. They will have a spring (4/28) and fall tournament (9/22) in 2012. Look out for this group, as they had two teams in the 2011 Dallas Oktoberfest semifinals. In addition, El Centro de Conexión de Chippewa Valley will be hosting a tournament fundraiser on May 5th in Eau Claire.

Over the past three years, Eau Claire kubbers have gone to different elementary schools to introduce the game to P.E. classes. This investment has paid off, as now through introducing the game to schools, several schools (Eau Claire School District and the Catholic schools) now have kubb sets for students to use in their P.E. classes. For now, these sets will be rotated between schools to allow the highest number of kids to play kubb. In addition, free kubb sessions will be offered in Eau Claire's Parks and Recreation 2012 Summer Program for kids.



From the Kubb Capital of North America, the CVKL has exploded. (Photo CVKL)

To finish it off, we go back to Gregg. Gregg, who is a social studies teacher, started a kubb club at the Chippewa Falls Middle School. Last year, they invited a local kubb player to their school to help introduce the game. In 2012, Gregg says, "Kubb Club will be expanded to include an after-school Voyagers program this spring. Students will have the opportunity to experience kubb for one hour two days a week in April and May. I'm hoping grant money will allow us to pick up a number of sets to use for the club and Voyagers. Club members are in 8th grade, but kubb for Voyagers will be open to all MS students in grades 6-8." In addition, the Middle School wood shop has taken part in the club as well. They have had the students make unique looking kings for the club. Kubb is king in New Gotland.



L to R: 4th and 5th graders at St. James Elementary School in E.C., Chippewa Falls Middle School Kubb Club (Photo CVKL), Kubb king from C.F. M.S. (Photo CVKL)

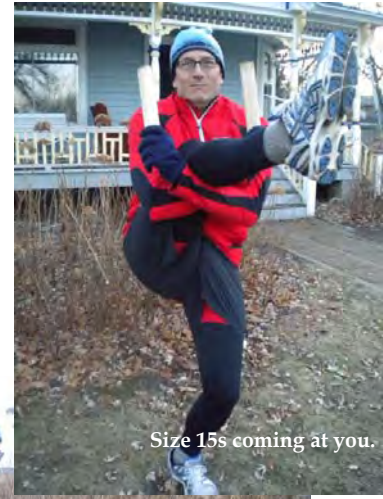


# KUBB WARM-UP ROUTINE

## HOW WISCONSIN'S ELITE PREPARE FOR THE PITCH

We all know that Wisconsin players like to have their favorite Wisconsin beverage during and after a day on the pitch. But many have started asking us how we prepare for a day of kubb. We wanted to show you first hand. As you can see, we take our warm-up routine just as serious as we take our kubb playing itself. We wanted to introduce you to our kubb leader. The one that shows us the way to mental toughness and tournament wins.

Meet Big Daddy Kubb. World traveler, marathoner, skier of numerous American Birkebeiners, connoisseur of Wisconsin food and beer, kubb player, and most importantly King of Kubba (his secret weapon). He will be the first to admit that he does not care about placing in tournaments, as he seldom even plays in them, and if he does, he is just setting up his prey (you) for a future attack. Most of the best Wisconsin players play tournaments, but not Big Daddy Kubb. You see, Big Daddy, as he is often referred to, is a backyard kubb legend in The Badger State. He is also a notorious kubb hustler. Not only are his skills sharpened on the competitive backyard kubb pitches everywhere between Beloit and Bayfield, but he is also the best trash-talking kubber in America's Dairyland. We wanted to show you some of Big Daddy Kubb's warm-up routine. You cannot get this just anywhere. No, you can only find this in *Kubbnation Magazine*. Come to Wisconsin and get some, if you think you can handle it.



CAUTION: Big Daddy Kubb's little ones are already masters of Kubba and hustling in WI and the UP.



## UPDATES FROM 2011 KUBBNATION MAGAZINE

### Kubb Collective

The Kubb Collective is going strong. Still headed by James Perkins, the group is now on KubbCollective 31 and has raised over \$6,000 since 2009.

### Terry Ekelöf and Team Ekeby

Team Ekeby won their 11th Kubb World Championship in 2011. They won the final game in their second turn. Terry Ekelöf, Joakim Ekelöf, and Tobias Hansson placed 2nd at the 2011 Swedish Kubb Championship in Nybro, Småland.

### Des Moines Kubb Club

DMK has significantly expanded over the past year. Among other things, they hosted their 2nd annual kubb tournament and started official seasonal kubb leagues. They collaborated with the U.S. National Kubb Championship to provide an in-depth, well-explained English rulebook.

### Kubb On Campus

Campus kubb clubs are still operating. The most active one right now is UW-Madison, with monthly themed kubb friendlies.



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## HOLY GUACAMOLES - 2007 EAU CLAIRE CHAMPIONS

On August 10, 2007, it was hot, and it was humid. Really hot and humid. St. Louis in the middle of the summer hot and humid. On that day, nobody would have ever guessed that the Holy Guacamoles would make history the next day on a little patch of grass called Peace Park along the Chippewa River. Kevin Connell was helping set up the eight pitches with the sun beating down on the not so level ground topped with patchy grass. Emily Connell was sitting in the shade looking like she was wondering why they had traveled from San Diego to Eau Claire in the middle of the summer. Well, a storm came through early in the morning on August 11, and the Holy Guacamoles eventually found their way to the championship game against Toasted Bagels from Duluth, MN. Soon after, the Holy Guacamoles were holding up the biggest blocks of wood at the park that day and were crowned the 2007 Eau Claire Kubb Tournament and Fundraiser champion, which many consider the first U.S. National Championship.

Looking back, they were a team before their time, as they were not just the first team to win the tournament that would eventually become titled the U.S. National Kubb Championship. They were the first with team t-shirts (and hats), first female champion, and one of the first teams with a player born outside of the U.S. (another player that day was from Uganda), as Emily is from Wollongong, Australia. Kevin is originally from Rockford, IL.

*Kubbnation* thought we would catch up with Kevin and Emily Connell and see what they are doing now. We caught up with them in San Diego, California.

We are still living in San Diego and enjoying every minute of it. Emily has become creative director at a web design company who specializes in As Seen On TV products. She

loves making crafts and you can see many of her creations at [lookwhatemilymade.com](http://lookwhatemilymade.com). Emily and Kevin started a toy company, The Jumble Bugs, the same year as winning the Kubb Championship. Emily created the Jumble Bugs in 2003 and replicas have been made available to the public. They are now working on an iPad story app for the Jumble Bugs ([jumblebugs.com](http://jumblebugs.com)). Their favorite place to play kubb in California is on the beach in Coronado, but they love coming back to Eau Claire to play with family. They still really enjoy telling the story of their 2007 championship run to the new people they introduce to kubb, and are extremely proud to have won the inaugural tournament.



Raising the block of wood trophies in 2007.



Hanging out at their home in the Normal Heights neighborhood.



**Book One:**  
Bloomie and the Birthday Blunder

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Bloomie dashed out the door with her gift wrapped in a bright pink box. She set off to meet Lattin at Jumble Beach.

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**TEAM T-SHIRT CONTEST**  
(THE TOP THREE VOTE-GETTING TEAMS WILL RECEIVE PRIZES)

SUNDAY'S **BÅSTA INKASTARE** (KUBB TOSSER) AWARD

**FIVE-YEAR BUTTONS** FOR ALL THE FIFTH-YEAR PLAYERS

PRESENT **U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP SCHOLARSHIP** TO UW-EC STUDENT



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The two goals of Wisconsin Kubb are to unite and foster better and more meaningful relationships in our communities and spread Nordic culture.

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# WHERE'S YOUR KUBB AT?

Send your kubb pictures to eric [at] wisconsinkubb.com



Krista and Russ Davis (Bel Air, MD) in front of the U.S. Capitol.



Sabino Canyon in the Coronado National Forest in Tucson, AZ.



Josh Feathers (Des Moines, IA) Mount Constitution in Moran State Park in Orcas Island, WA.



This is how Des Moines Kubb Club rolls into town when they come to your tournament.



Seven feet high ice sculpture at Boyd Park in Eau Claire, WI.



Kurt Johansson (Oskars-Kroksjö, Sweden) with an old school king in the Småland forest.



Jennie Stapp (Helena, MT) playing on a Baja kayaking trip. The kubb set stayed in Baja for others to use. Kubb unites people and creates peace on Earth. (Photo: Hunter Coleman)



Sören Wallin's (Stockholm, Sweden) New Years Eve in Rone, Gotland.



Sankta Lucia and her attendant in Eau Claire, WI



# 2011 TOURNAMENT RESULTS



## Twin Cities Winter Tournament – February 19

L to R: 2nd: Team McKie (Jim McKie & Aaron McKie - Rosemount, MN); Eric Goplin (Tournament Director); 1st: Sweden's Sons (Eric Anderson & Paul Mullen - Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls, WI)



## Rockford, IL Swedish Historical Society Kubb Tournament – June 05

Center: 1st: The Ringers (Dave Elringer & Aaron Ellringer - Eau Claire, WI); Outside: 2nd: Kubbin' Missile Crisis (Joe Pendleton & Nate Olson - Shafer, MN)



## Fox Valley Kubb Tournament – August 27

1st: Sweden's Sons (Paul Mullen & Eric Anderson - River Falls/Eau Claire, WI)

2nd: Team Shin Splitters  
(Chad Parsons & Peter Wick - Appleton, WI)



## Rockford, IL Swedish Historical Society Kubb Tournament

L to R: 3rd: RUN DMK (Chris Hodges & Josh Feathers - Des Moines, IA); 4th: Ice Kubbs (Michael Abraham & Paul Abraham - Arlington Heights, IL)



## Des Moines Fall Kubb Klassic – September 24

L to R: 4th: Wolfpack (Joe Pendleton, Nate Olson, & Aaron McKie - Shafer/Rosemount, MN); 3rd: Sweden's Sons (Paul Mullen & Eric Anderson - River Falls/Eau Claire, WI); 1st: Knockerheads (Josh Feathers & Dwayne Ballmer - Des Moines, IA/Leavenworth, KS); 2nd: King Pin (Jason Larson & Mike Larson - Chaska, MN/Des Moines, IA)



## Dallas WI/Valkyrie Brewery Oktoberfest Tournament – October 01

L to R: 3rd: Honey Badgers (Chris Staack & Brian Roach) - Eau Claire, WI; 1st: Tad Kubbler (Eric Goplin & Cole Vryens - Minneapolis, MN); 2nd: Dead Rabbits (Eric Anderson, Paul Mullen, & David Smith - Eau Claire/River Falls/Chippewa Falls, WI)



# TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

## U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP AND MORE

### 2012 TOURNAMENT LINEUP



Twin Cities Winter Tournament - Feb. 04  
Minneapolis, MN - 32 teams



East Coast Tournament - April or May  
Washington D.C. - 32 teams



El Centro de Conexión de  
Chippewa Valley Tournament - May 05  
Eau Claire, WI - 32 teams



Rockford Swedish Historical  
Society Tournament - May 19  
Rockford, IL - 64 teams



Madison Midsommar Tournament - June 09  
Madison, WI - 32 teams



U.S. National Kubb Championship - July 14 and 15  
Eau Claire, WI - 96 teams



Nordic Fest Kubb Tournament - July 28  
Decorah, IA - 16 teams



Fox Valley Kubb Tournament - August 18  
Appleton, WI - 24 teams



Des Moines Fall Kubb Klassic - Sept. 22  
Des Moines, IA - 32 teams



Dallas Oktoberfest Tournament - Oct. 06  
Dallas, WI - 16 teams  
(First ever six-person team tournament)

The U.S. National Kubb Championship will have some significant changes in 2012. These changes came from the late endings of the tournament and results from the 2010 and 2011 surveys. The first big change is that the tournament will now be a two-day tournament. The final eight teams will return Sunday morning. The other big change is that each team will need to have a minimum of three players. The rule will be that no player can throw more than two batons. After talking to numerous teams, doing our best to follow what people want from the surveys, and realizing the tournament cannot end as late, these two changes will allow the tournament to continue to meet the desires of players, both local and those that travel long distances.

There will also be a host of smaller changes as well. The Consolation Bracket semi-finals will be held in front of the bleachers. Another change will be the addition of a team t-shirt contest. Each player will receive a beaded necklace (think Mardi Gras style). Throughout Saturday, each player can distribute their necklace to the team they think has the best team t-shirt. The three teams with the most necklaces will win awards. In addition, a raffle will replace the silent auction. Each player will receive a raffle ticket at registration. Raffles will be held both Saturday and Sunday before the semi-finals. We will also recognize the best Sunday inkastare (the person that tosses the kubbs). Approximately one week before the tournament, the team groups will be released live on Facebook and WIEC Radio. The U.S. Championship will continue to do its best to create the most fair, enjoyable, and comfortable environment for players and spectators.

The year 2012 is going to be an amazing year for tournaments, as there are several kubb tournaments planned in the Midwest and some starting in other parts of the country as well.

### Top 2011 Team Names

One of the best team names ever still has to be Kubbic Hares. Yet again, 2011 saw dozens of great team names at all the tournaments. Our favorite this year was **Baby Got Backspin** and **Kubb's Your Daddy**. Of the names that had the word 'kubb' in them, here is our top 10 list...

- 10. The Kubbler Elves
- 9. iKubb
- 8. Nubbies Kubbies
- 7. Kubbonic Plague
- 6. Kubbesota
- 5. Leinenkubbels
- 4. The Kubbolutionaries
- 3. Kubb Me? Kubb You!
- 2. Kubbin' Missile Crisis
- 1. Kubb's Your Daddy

This list does not include the numerous local tournaments.

Feel free to list any tournament at [wisconsinkubb.com](http://wisconsinkubb.com).





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