

## The Oasis ... Goodbye Old Friend

Posted by eric anderson on Friday, June 26, 2015

I don't remember the first time I played kubb at The Oasis. But I will always remember the last time I played kubb at The Oasis. Last night, The Oasis hosted its last kubb matches. The invite was less than 24 hours before the last night of kubb there. It was four on four, then soon, six on six, with two little kids running around...we would have not had it any other way. Last night, I hit my first throw, an 8 meter throw from just inside the right sideline and knocking back the middle kubb. I hit my last shot of a night. Five of the seven field kubbs were still standing. Two along the right sideline and three just inside them. I went for the safe shot, a double on the left hoping to get a little action and get the triple. The double was had.

The last match I played in at the Oasis was six on six. They opened 0-2. We hit them with 3-4. They came back with 4 off our backline, so seven in play. We returned the favor and got one more off their baseline. They then won the match (with a baton in hand), with Aaron Ellringer hitting the king shot for my final game at The Oasis...I would have not had it any other way.

The Oasis has been in my life for a while. It is a place where kubb pieces were always set up and ready to play or just sitting in the elements on the side of the pitch on wire shelving. Yes, many evenings over the past years there would be a kubb party there where it would get loud and boisterous. However, many a times, I would knock on the door on my bikeride home from work, and there would not be a response. I would then find myself inkasting kubbs or throwing 8 meter throws...all alone, and it was perfect. Similar to a bench overlooking rolling hills or a river, it was a place of peace. A place that welcomed people. A place that took stress away.

I have no idea how many times I played kubb at The Oasis, but I think I played kubb there every possible hour of a day between 5am and 2am. I have had the opportunity to play with and against countless people, most from Eau Claire, but also many from out of town. By my count, five past U.S. Champions, countless first time players, and a whole bunch of players between. It was never uncommon for me to get there at 5am and sit in the back and talk about kubb and life outside of kubb, and life outside of kubb and kubb...and not all the time play kubb.

The pitch was always open to any level and age of kubb player...always...Aaron made sure of that...always. It could be two days before the U.S. Championship, and if kids wanted to play on the pitch with the adults, they were always welcome. It was also a place where if you wanted the highest level of game, you knew you would find it there. If you wanted to get better, you showed up on that pitch.

The Oasis is located on Eau Claire's Eastside Hill Neighborhood...we are known to sometimes call it Championship Hill. Settled between a blue house with four solar panels with a little strawberry patch in front of them to the north, the rear yard with a little swing set play area to the east, a balance beam in front of a wooden fence with big, thin bushes with a loud dog behind it to the south, and two big trees with bushes along the street to the west. It was kubb seclusion in our small inner-city neighborhood in our big, little town.

Kubb strategies were discussed, dissected, and implemented there; 8 meter throws were honed there; inkast techniques practiced there; a U.S. Gold Medal team trained and returned home there; 4/6 of World Silver Medal team trained there; ideas, hopes, and dreams were started on or around that pitch. Life's roadbumps and struggles, along with life's joys and happiness were shared on or around that pitch. Kubb shots of a lifetime were had on that pitch. Missed shots and hands on knees and heads down were had on that pitch. If one was to ask me what were five of the most instrumental things for the growth of kubb in EC, The Oasis would be one of those five. That was a place of sharing of ideas and innovation and daydreaming, many of which have come true. I believe every great new thing must need something like The Oasis. A place where people feel welcome and feel welcome to ask questions, discuss, and innovate.

Friendships were started, built, and strengthened on The Oasis.

Championship Hill will stand, but it will not be the same.

I will cherish the times I had on The Oasis.

Thank you Aaron.

Some pictures of the last night of kubb at The Oasis









