

Madison, WI
Saturday June 09, 2012

Madison Kubb Midsommar Tournament

19 teams from WI, IL, IA, and MN played at Olbrich Park on Lake Monona. What an amazing day of kubb. The sun was out all day and the close to 90 degrees did not feel like it at all with the strong wind off of the cool lake. At times, the wind seemed to resemble the wind at the 2011 U.S. Championship, as there were a lot of whitecaps on the lake. Speaking of the lake, in the distance was downtown Madison with the Capitol sitting beautiful against the bright blue sky. The round-robin was an introduction to kubb for a few local teams and a chance for old friends to greet and new friends to be made. There was a good mix of two, three, and four person teams. Towards the end of the round-robin and during a break before the playoffs started, all the teams were under their canopies and tents and sitting at picnic tables eating the food that each team brought (the smell of brats filled the air). It had a feeling of tailgating prior to a big game.

In the playoffs, there were a couple of surprises and probably what most people thought would happen. The surprises were Flippin' Batons (Appleton, WI) matching up against Kubb Snipers (Appleton, WI) and Kubbilicious Maximus (EC, WI) squaring up versus The Ringers (EC, WI). The Flippin' Batons are the parents of one of the players on Kubb Snipers. (Both Appleton teams were two-player teams and both EC teams were three players teams. Kubb Snipers will play at the US with one of the Flippin' Batons - look out everyone. Kubbilicious Maximus is playing at the US. The Ringers will lose one player, but gain another. Unlike the Appleton family-battle, the EC teams had never met before Madison). In the quarterfinals Flippin' Batons were on fire. In the semi-final, they lost the first game. However, they held game two in their hands at least once and could not finish off one of the pre-tournament favorites. In the other semifinal, another pre-tournament favorite, The Ringers, after a few rounds and seven or eight kubbs being tossed back and forth, were staring across at Kubbilicious Maximus throwing their sixth baton at the king in Game 1. The baton narrowly missed. The next round saw KM move up. They could not eliminate all of the field kubbs and The Ringers were able to escape. Game 2 again had most of the kubbs being tossed back and forth. In the end, both Kubb Snipers and The Ringers made it to the Final.

If you follow kubb in the US, the Final was a match-up of what most people probably expected. Eau Claire vs. Appleton. The Ringers and the history behind their team vs. probably the two or three hottest team in America right now, as they won Minneapolis in February, and their six-person team in Rockford competed against the best in the Country. The Ringers won the king toss and elected to throw first. Kubb Snipers elected to throw with the wind. A lot of spectators and teams stayed around to create a fun environment for both teams. Both teams started out strong. Chad Bevers (KS) and Eric Anderson (TR) were the inkastare for their teams, and no mistakes could be made. After numerous rounds, Eric made the first mistake and left one kubb away from the pile. That is all it took and KS were able to win Game 1. Game 2 went back and forth with KS taking an early lead. Eventually, TR were able to get back to even. Soon, eight or nine kubbs were going back and forth. Then, the mistake was made by Chad as he left two kubbs in tough positions. TR were able to take advantage of that mistake and win Game 2. The Final would have a Game 3.

After a slight break for the presentation of the third place trophy to Kubbilicious Maximus, Game 3 started. With the wind blowing and the shadows getting a little longer, both teams started off well. The difference in this game was less than spectacular inkastare play by TR and TR missing a couple key 4-5 meter shots. When several kubbs were in play, two inkastare mistakes in one turn spread out the kubbs for TR and they were not able to convert. With one of the hardest king tossed out there Chad Parsons took down the king and Fox Valley Kubb's Kubb Snipers won the Madison Kubb Midsommar Tournament. Again, Kubb Snipers showed the US that they will be a force at the US and they are perhaps the hottest team in the US.

From a WI Kubb roadtrip look at things:

We talk a lot about kubb a lot of the time. We often wonder what we ever did without this amazing sport. A few thoughts from our way home and then the next day.

First, it was a great day and introduced a lot of people to the recreational side of kubb and the

competitive side of kubb. We can say that we did not know much about Kubbilicious Maximus from EC except that we knew that one or two of the kids (in college?) played at the US last year and this year the two were playing with one of their dads. When we played against them in the semifinal, it was an awesome feeling to see them play at such a high level and have them be from EC. We take pride in the fact that so many young kids and young adults are playing this game and that some of them are looking at it as a true sport. We are excited to see more of this generation playing the game and trying to get better.

Second, KM, Kubb Snipers, and probably a couple others might really mix it up at the US this year. Only the top 16 teams from the 2011 US are seeded, and all the others are randomly placed in groups. So, some of these teams that have really stepped it up since the 2011 US, they could easily be in a group with a top finishing team from 2011...or the National Champion. For those groups, the morning turns into the afternoon perhaps at 9am.

Third, three-player teams. With a three hour plus drive home from the Wisconsin Capital to the Kubb Capital, it was fun to talk about playing as a three-person team. At the end of the day, could we have been better if our Blaster (Dave) been taken out of the 1 spot a few times during the day and tossed more 8-meter shots, so maybe his hit percentage could have gone up later in the day? Could our 8-meter/king shot player (Aaron) been better at 4-5 meter throws if he would have had that chance more often during the day? Could our inkastare (Eric) have less pressure/stress later in the day if he was not throwing second, so having to toss a lot between both short and long? Or, were we the best team we could have been due to us having all the practice at our specific positions during the day. A lot of fun things to think about. Regardless, if a team wants to think about it, three-person teams add a lot to strategy to a match.

Fourth, the inkastare. After watching this position evolve over the past year (spectator and player), it is amazing where we have come. I have a lot of thinking to do about it, as it seems like it might be getting too important (for my taste), which is part of the discussion in Europe right now, or at least I know it is in Sweden. And, in my opinion, if they are talking about it in Sweden, we need to listen to what they are discussing. I am still interested in the Swedish National Championship rule that each player has to toss kubbs. Perhaps not everyone here wants to do it, so maybe an alternative is that a tournament here in the US has a rule that at least two players on a team have to toss kubbs. Just another idea to mix things up like DM does with their tournament format. I know there are different theories on the inkastare and that it is fine to just have one, etc., and I really enjoy talking to people about the different thoughts of that (now vital) position.

Fifth, two-player vs. three-player teams. Advantages and disadvantages. One could write so much about this, that it could be an article in KubbNation Magazine and then some. After our Final Game 2 win, a fellow Berserker Kubb member said that he felt we had more energy towards the end of Game 2 and that we wore Kubb Snipers out because we had three players. I believe (I think) in a theory that in kubb, we all have our mental (and obviously physical) limits. The question is when do we hit that mental wall and what do we do with it? Stress, pressure, and fatigue during the day make us get closer to that wall. Each shot and kubb throw adds to us using energy and mental concentration (sort of like the golfer saying "get the score to the clubhouse", often a golfer just gets worn out and bogeys the last hole or two). Does a three-person team have that advantage, as over the course of a 10 round game, the player on the three-person player team throws 20 batons and the player on the two-person teams throws 30 batons. When you think about it, that is a lot more mental energy used. Take a best of three match with 25 rounds. That is 50 tosses vs. 75 tosses. At the same time, common theory is that two-person teams, with all things being equal, have an advantage. One team gets to throw 75 batons each while the others are throwing 50 each and in individual turns that third should be money.

So, what is going to happen to three-player teams at two-player team tournaments? This is no disrespect to any three-person team and not to minimize anything that any two-person team has done since day one, but I think we have seen what is going to happen. At the elite levels (for some tournaments it is only the Final-2012 Madison, for some it is the semifinal-2012 Rockford, and at others it might be a meeting in a quarterfinal-2011 DM), again with everything being equal, three-person teams are going to finally meet their match, and if they don't they have to play either perfect

or one of their best matches of their life. I guess the other team could fall apart, but then again, I am only talking about the top-tier teams, and I am not seeing that happen right now. The perfect example is the team The Wolfpack. They have been using their three-person team since DM last year. I think it is a combination of them liking it and they want to be well-oiled for the US, which is at the way top of their list. What are their results in the tournaments that they have played? First, 98% of the teams out there would want their results, but they, at this time, have struggled to break through the elite and I would say just under elite (I think there are less than a handful "elite" teams out there). Now remember, two of their players placed 2nd at the 2011 US (and a lot more) and the third has made a home in the quarterfinals and beyond in EC (and a lot more). This is not just some random team off the big city streets of the Twin Cities. I believe nobody in the US was going to beat Tad Kubbler in Dallas last fall. Nobody. But a three-person team had no chance. At the same time, for me, I do feel a little different type of pressure playing a three-player team, if I am a two-player team. That pressure is that I should not be losing to a three-player team.

This makes me wonder about a few things:

- Will/can this change and three-person teams be more competitive at the top levels?
- Will top-tier three-person teams (for whatever reason they are playing as three) redefine what they view as a successful tournament?
- Will/can more tournaments go to three-person teams (at this time it looks like the answer is no)? Will some require only two?
- The top-tier players, they have fun playing kubb, but they are also there to compete. Let's be honest, some people/teams are coming to win, and if not, they want to see how far they can go. That is part of the fun and why we practice, right? Knowing what we all know now, let's just pick Des Moines and Rockford. Take the teams that played in these tournaments in their previous tournaments (DM-11 and Rkfd-12), does a three-person team realistically believe that they can win 2012 DM or 2013 Rockford? Is a three-person team going to beat Tad Kubbler, The Knockerheads, The Ringers, Kubb Snipers, Sweden's Sons and probably have to beat two or more of them? Two words for you...good luck.
- Will/should tournaments list number of players on teams so when people are looking at results they can see a three (or more)-person team and see how far they made it?

This takes me to wondering about the future. I love three-person teams. I loved it before yesterday (played once before and as six in the VM) and I actually love it more now after playing with The Ringers. It tests the individual more and it is more of a team. I have a lot to learn about the different strategies of a three or more player team, but I am really enjoying thinking/learning about it and playing that style. I am going to enjoy this ride of learning something totally new in a sport that I thought I knew a whole lot about. My opinion is that three batons are too many in this team sport and three players on a team adds a lot to a tournament and creates more of a team. Will I still play as a two-player team? Of course, but for me three-players is where it is at.

OK, the future. I wonder if at the elite/top-tier levels if we are going to see a drop off in three-player teams playing in non-US Championship tournaments. Not that there are a lot already, but I have really admired and enjoyed watching The Wolfpack come to tournaments as three. My hope was that more teams would start doing that, especially the top teams. I was hoping, after seeing them in DM, that more teams would follow their lead. Yes, they are/were leading that "movement". For those of us in Rockford, how amazing was it to see the Des Moines and Fox Valley six-player teams? It was awesome. However, my thought at this time is that as long as we have two-player tournaments (and they are not going away anytime soon), we are not going to have three-player elite/top-tier teams play and then compete against each other, except in Eau Claire. Good, bad, or indifferent, who am I to say, but, at this time, I don't think we are going to see it, but I want to experience it as a player, spectator, organizer and most importantly as a fan of this amazing game.

A HUGE KUBB THANKS TO MADISON KUBB CLUB. IT WAS AWESOME.

For more [information](#)

FINAL RESULTS:

1. **Kubb Snipers** (Appleton, WI) - two players
2. The Ringers (Eau Claire, WI) - three players
3. Kubbilicious Maximus (Eau Claire, WI) - three players
4. Flippin' Batons (Appleton, WI) - two players



