

Martin marks a record at Skins - Toronto Sun

Written by Administrator
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RAMA, Ont. -- Ka-ching! Ka-ching! Ka-ching!

Kevin Martin brings his own cash register here.

The Edmonton skip became the first curler to win his fifth TSN Skins Game Sunday, leaving Ed Werenich and Wayne Middaugh with four each in his rear view mirror and leaving Casino Rama with \$57,000, running up his record all-time event earnings

to \$412,150.

"I just love it. Love it. Love it. Love it," said Martin of the skins game in general and the game on the challenging casino entertainment centre one-sheeter here in particular.

When it comes to curling, the uncontested, all-time money player is Kevin Martin. Especially when it comes to skins.

"More than anything, I just love the last couple of ends," said Martin of playing for the escalating sums during the eight-end games.

"You can see the tension on people's faces for the last couple ends that you don't see at the start of the games," said the Old Bear.

Canada's Olympic gold-medal winner struggled early Saturday only to close late for an \$11,000-\$10,000 win in a most memorable game with Olympic silver-medal winner Cheryl Bernard of Calgary.

Against David Murdoch of Scotland in the final Sunday it was the same game with more money on the line. In both games Martin managed to lose the first three ends before getting it going.

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Against Bernard it was more the way the girls were giving him a go, with Bernard and Susan O'Connor curling 100% and 90% respectively. But in this one it was Martin, John Morris, Marc Kennedy and Ben Hebert simply started by making a major mess of it.

"We couldn't curl worse for four ends," said Martin. "But when we got to the last end ...

"We made eight perfect shots. Every shot was absolutely perfect. For John and I it was guard, guard, guard, guard to end the game," he said of the final frame which turned out to be worth \$28,000.

Martin actually won the sixth, seventh and eighth ends. With the \$15,000 for winning the game overall, that was \$43,000 right there.

And he said he was sort of hoping NOT to win the \$9,000 for the seventh end because that would have given him hammer for the final end instead of having to steal to win the game.

Understand Martin has made a science out of this skins business.

"You want to have the hammer coming home. You have an 8% better chance of winning in skins if you have the hammer.

"That's my own math. I didn't like my chances. David is a really great player, especially at critical moments when you need the big shots. That's what I said about Cheryl, too. She makes the big shots."

Murdoch has had a run of beating Edmonton teams here.

He defeated Martin in the semi and Randy Ferbey in the final last year to earn \$70,500. And he

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was a big benefactor of some strange happenings on some very iffy ice conditions in the semi against Brier and world champion Kevin Koe in the opener Saturday.

Finally it was Martin who stopped the skip from Lockerbie, Scotland, who brought an entirely new lineup here including 21-year-old Glen Muirhead, brother of Olympian Eve who declared this to be "jumping into the deep end."

Martin has a horrible history against Murdoch including loses in the round-robin game, the 1-2 playoff game and the gold-medal game (intentionally throwing his first rock away) in the 2009 world curling championships.

In the end Murdoch won \$25,000, Bernard \$10,000 and Koe \$8,000.

The winner receives an invitation to return the following year. Martin will be back for his 13th appearance in the 23rd edition of the event here next year.

"That's the real key," said Martin. "Keep coming back."

That's the key when it comes to Briers, world championships and Olympics, too, says Martin. And it's time to move on from this sort of stuff and get back to real curling. With last week's Continental Cup in St. Albert and this event, it's now the end of silly season in the sport.

Two weeks from now it's Martin, Koe and Ferbey playing for no money at all in High River to try get back to represent Alberta at the Brier.

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