



B.C. skip Kelley Law, third Julie Skinner, second Georgina Wheatcroft and lead Diane Nelson pose with the championship trophy.

John McKenzie Photo

# The Champs

## B.C. rink wins the 2000 Scott Tournament of Hearts

In a game of inches, Kelley Law won by a foot.

The skip of Team British Columbia won the 2000 Scott Tournament of Hearts due, in large measure, to the poor play of Ontario's Anne Merklinger.

Law stole a total of four points, putting the final nails into the coffin of the Ontario rink, which also lost in the 1998 Scott final.

"We just decided now is the time," says Law, who plays out of the Richmond Curling Club. "I guess we just got a little bit of a roll there."

And their timing was perfect, British Columbia started off slow in round-robin play but ended the tournament in Prince George by reeling off six straight wins.

Not only will the rink be heading to Glasgow, Scotland for the world championships but they earned a berth in the 2002 Olympic trials.

The focus was on Law, but the real heroes for Team B.C. turned out to be third Julie Skinner and second Georgina Wheatcroft.

In Sunday's final, Skinner outshot her Ontario counterpart 81 per cent to 58 per cent.

"Did I?" was the Victoria's native first response to the question of her dominance at third.

After taking a sabbatical from the sport, Skinner (better known in the curling world as Julie Sutton) is a former Canadian champion as a skip and decided to hook up with Law, Wheatcroft and lead Diane Nelson to form what was called the 'B.C. Dream Team.'

"It's been hard being a third, but I watched my sister for years and had a good idea of what it takes. I sort of fell into the role, later in the year."



Kelley Law and her B.C. rink fought back to win the Scott in front of the home-province crowd.

Skinner was named Scott MVP and was awarded the shot of the game for a freeze in the semi-final against Manitoba that started the end for Connie Laliberte.

The other key member was second Georgina Wheatcroft, who not only curled 76 per cent but dragged plenty of rocks into the house. Wheatcroft and Nelson's worth to the team was displayed in the semi-final when several law throws nearly came up short of the house — without those shots, B.C. would have been watching from the stands.

As the team prepares for the worlds, Wheat-

croft says the confidence level is booming. "We put everything into that game," says says. "We left everything on the ice because we knew if we didn't, we wouldn't win."

Wheatcroft, who played third on a Canadian and world championship team in the 1980s, says the team has the experience to represent Canada well.

"We seem to handle the pressure pretty good," says Wheatcroft.

"With Julie having been there before, and my being there, the rest of the team will be able to draw off that."

By Shane Mills