

# A look at USA Curling's competitors for the 2006 Olympics

## U.S. WOMEN

**Cassie Johnson rink** – The Johnson rink won silver at the 2005 World Women's Curling Championship in March just weeks after winning the 2006 U.S. Olympic Team Trials for Curling. The Johnson sisters and lead Maureen Brunt also won the 2002 world junior title, and Cassie Johnson and Brunt teamed up again to win the silver the following year. The Johnson rink has an average age of 22 and will most likely be one of the younger teams competing at the Olympics in the curling field. All five team members now reside in Bemidji, Minn.

- **Cassie Johnson**, skip, 23, Bemidji, Minn., began curling in kindergarten. She is a student at Bemidji State University, and is scheduled to graduate with a major in Design Technology in December. Johnson skipped her team to the first junior women's world title in 2002. At that competition, she was named All-Star skip. Her teams were named USA Curling Team of the Year in 2005 and 2002. Johnson received the Frances Brodie Sportsmanship Award at the 2005 World Women's Championship. Curling has been in the Johnson family for many generations. Also:
  - Diagnosed with a heart murmur at the age of 12.
  - Favorite motivational quote: "If you can dream it, you can achieve it. If you believe it, it will become." – *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*
  - If she weren't curling, the other Olympic sports she would like to try: Snowboarding and hockey.
  - Enjoys dancing, rock/alternative music, fishing, shopping, web/graphic design, boating and pasta.View Cassie's complete biography at [http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/cassie\\_johnson05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/cassie_johnson05.html)
- **Jamie Johnson**, vice skip, 25, Bemidji, Minn., works as a graphic designer intern in the Bemidji area. She graduated from Bemidji State University in 2004 with a degree in Design Technology, specializing in exhibit design. Jamie loves to fish at her family's cabin in Canada. She won the 2002 junior world title and silver at the 2005 Women's World Championship. Also:
  - Favorite athlete she most enjoyed watching – Cal Ripken Jr. ... because he put his heart into the game.
  - If she could be anywhere and do anything, Jamie would "travel around Europe in a fast car."
  - If she wasn't throwing rocks, the other Olympic sport Jamie would like to try is rowing.
  - Curling heroes: Guy Hemmings (Canada), because he looks like he enjoys the sport, he has fun, and puts on a show.
  - Enjoys fishing, traveling, tennis and strawberries.View Jamie's complete biography at [http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/jamie\\_johnson05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/jamie_johnson05.html)
- **Jessica Schultz**, second, 19, a native of Anchorage, Alaska, now residing in Bemidji, Minn., began curling in sixth grade after being introduced to curling by a

neighbor. Schultz was the Alaska junior women's champion from 1999-2004, advancing to the U.S. Junior Nationals each year. She was named All-Star Skip at the 2004 Junior Nationals, where her team finished third. She was named an alternate to Team USA at that year's Junior Worlds, where USA finished fourth. Schultz joined the Johnson rink in the 2004-05 season. Also:

- Athlete she most enjoys watching – Shannon Stewart and the whole Minnesota Twins baseball team.
- If she could be anywhere and do anything, Jessica would “love to try sky diving in Australia somewhere.”
- If she weren't curling, the other Olympic sports Jessica would like to try are: “Snowboarding, because it's amazing how they can do tricks and ride rails, and gymnastics, because it takes a lot of body strength and it's cool to see the potential flexibility that our bodies can meet.”
- Enjoys camping, fishing, outdoors stuff, dancing crazily around the house, listening to music, and scrapbooking.

View Jessica's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/jessica\\_schultz05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/jessica_schultz05.html)

- **Maureen Brunt**, lead, 22, a native of Portage, Wis., now residing in Bemidji, Minn., began curling at age 6 in Portage. A two-time junior national champion, Brunt won the junior world title in 2002 and the silver medal in 2003. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in August 2005 with a degree in English. Also:

- Athletes she most enjoys watching – Andy Roddick and Alex Rodriguez.
- If she could be anywhere and do anything, Maureen would “like to be in Europe seeing as much history and walking around as much and as often as possible.”
- If she weren't throwing rocks, Maureen's other chosen Olympic sport would be, “Diving, because I've always loved watching the amazing things they can do and not make a big splash.”
- Favorite motivational quote: “Remember to have fun... and remember, winning is fun.” (Maureen's dad, Dan Brunt)

View Maureen's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/maureen\\_brunt05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/maureen_brunt05.html)

- **Courtney George**, fifth, 19, a native of Duluth, Minn., now residing in Bemidji, Minn., won the 2004 junior national title as vice skip with the Aileen Sormunen rink. George is the youngest player on Team USA but has plenty of international curling experience, having competed already at three junior world championships and the women's world championship in 2005. Also:

- If she could be anywhere and do anything: “I think I would want to be a pro baseball player out on the big fields! I love baseball, and since I was little and competing with my brother, I've always had a thing for competing with guys.”
- If she weren't curling, the other Olympic sports Courtney would like to pursue are soccer, gymnastic and softball.
- Enjoys fast pitch softball, singing, writing and doodling.
- Favorite sporting event: World Series, or any Twins baseball game.

View Courtney's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/courtney\\_george05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/courtney_george05.html)

- **Neil Doese**, coach, 61, Menomonee Falls, Wis., has a long resume which includes 28 years of coaching at all levels of curling and 11 coaching stints at the World Junior Men's Championships, World Junior Women's Championships and Women's World Championships. Doese, a school administrator, has been coaching the Johnson rink since 2003. Also:

- Teaches college curling classes at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Marquette University.
- Enjoys baseball and golf, and collecting baseball cards.
- Neil is an ordained minister.

View Neil's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/neil\\_doese05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/neil_doese05.html)

## U.S. MEN

**Pete Fenson rink** – The Fenson rink finished sixth at the recent Ford World Championships, securing the U.S. men's Olympic berth for the 2006 Olympic Winter Games along the way. Team Fenson put together a successful season in 2004-05, capturing the Olympic Team Trials title in February after finishing as the top U.S. team on the World Curling Tour Money List.

- **Pete Fenson**, skip, 37, Bemidji, Minn., began curling at age 13 after his parents introduced him to the sport. The owner of Dave's Pizza in Bemidji and Brainerd, Minn., Fenson has competed at four world championships (2005, 2003, 1994, 1993). He was named USA Curling's Male Athlete of the Year in 2005 and '03. An avid outdoor enthusiast, Fenson enjoys scuba diving and mountain biking. Also:

- Pete sees his greatest competitor as himself. "It is a constant battle."
- The athlete he most enjoyed watching compete was Michael Jordan.
- If he could be anywhere and do anything, Pete would be "on the beach, doing nothing, and not even getting that done most days."
- If he wasn't curling, the other Olympic sport Pete would like to pursue would be downhill skiing.
- Curling heroes: "My dad, and Scott Baird. They have the most to do with my current situation in the game."
- Enjoys cycling, cooking, family time, and maybe a few movies.

View Pete's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/pete\\_fenson05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/pete_fenson05.html)

- **Shawn Rojas**, vice skip, 33, Chisholm, Minn., has been curling since age 8, when he decided to critique his parents and aunt and uncle and step on the ice himself. A two-time junior national champion (1991, 1992), Rojas was named to the World Junior All-Star team both years at the vice skip position. He works as a manufacturing engineer. Also:
  - Athlete he most enjoys watching: Tiger Woods
  - His greatest competitor: "Myself."
  - If he could be anywhere and do anything, Shawn would "work on a beach somewhere down south, because I would only need a swimsuit and sandals to go to work, and I could live on a boat."

- If he wasn't throwing rocks, the Olympic sport Shawn would most like to pursue would be bobsled.
- Curling hero: "Joey Roberts, a past U.S. champion and world champion, and a very good friend who helps me out and gives me advice now and then."
- Lucky charm: "I do have a very lucky pair of boxers which I only use on select competitions."

View Shawn's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/shawn\\_rojeski05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/shawn_rojeski05.html)

- **Joe Polo**, second, 22, Cass Lake, Minn., joined the Fenson rink this season after competing at the junior level, where he was named to the All-Star team at the 2004 Junior National Championships. A student at the University of North Dakota-Grand Forks, Polo is completing an internship with Boeing Inc. in Ogden, Utah. Also:

- If he could go anywhere and do anything, Joe would "go fishing anywhere the fish are biting, because I love to fish."
- If he wasn't curling, the Olympic sport Joe would most like to pursue would be skeleton.
- Favorite motivational saying: "Don't take life so seriously. You'll never get out alive."
- Enjoys hunting, fishing, baseball and football.
- Dream job: "Taking over for Babe Winkelman."

View Joe's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/joe\\_polo05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/joe_polo05.html)

- **John Shuster**, lead, 22, Chisholm, Minn., is a student at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Shuster won his first men's national title in 2003 and followed that up by skipping his junior team to the junior men's title in 2004. Shuster has been a guest on ESPN 2's *Cold Pizza* and has been featured in *Sports Illustrated*. He began curling in high school after deciding to forego basketball. Also:

- If he wasn't curling, the Olympic sport John would most like to pursue is freestyle aerial skiing.
- Favorite motivational saying: "Everything happens for a reason."
- Enjoys golf, fishing, hunting, fantasy football, wakeboarding, Halo 2.
- Favorite athlete to watch: Johan Santana

View John's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/john\\_shuster05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/john_shuster05.html)

- **Scott Baird**, fifth, 54, Bemidji, Minn., is a four-time U.S. national champion who also won a silver medal at the 2003 World Senior Curling Championships. In addition to competing at the world level, Baird also has coached several junior teams at the World Junior Championships. He is an insurance broker and consultant. Also:

- Favorite athlete to watch: Tiger Woods
- If he could be anywhere and do anything, Scott says, "I'm in my boat, fishing. I love being on the water or close to it."
- Curling heroes: "I have great respect for Bud Somerville's World

Championship teams and Bruce Roberts' World Championship teams.”

- Favorite motivational saying: “Today is the first day of the rest of your life.”
- Enjoys fishing, hunting, golf, roller blading, boating, and laying on the beach.

View Scott's complete biography at

[http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/scott\\_baird05.html](http://www.usacurl.org/athletes/biographies/scott_baird05.html)

- **Bob Fenson**, coach, 59, Bemidji, Minn., won the men's national title in 1979 and a silver medal at the 2003 World Senior Championships. He has coached at the World Championships at the men's, women's and junior levels, winning a bronze at the 1993 Men's World Championship with fifth/alternate Scott Baird and son Pete Fenson, and a bronze at the 1992 World Junior Men's Championship with son Eric. Also:

- His greatest competitors: “The guys I go fishing with, even though they never beat me.”
- If he could be anywhere and do anything, Bob would, “Be laying on the beach in Florida.”
- If he wasn't curling, the Olympic sport Bob would most like to try would be “downhill skiing, even though I don't know how to ski.”
- Favorite motivational saying: “Every morning in Africa a gazelle wakes up. He knows he must run faster than the fastest lion or he will be eaten. Every morning the lion wakes up, he knows he must run faster than the slowest gazelle or he will starve to death. The moral to this is, when you wake up in the morning, you better be running.”

View Bob's complete biography at

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