

2017 Curling Canada National Curling Congress and Annual General Meeting Report

Joan Christie, NBCA Vice-President and I represented the New Brunswick Curling Association (NBCA) and all NB Curling Centres at the 2017 Curling Canada National Curling Congress (NCC) and Annual General Meeting (AGM). The conference was held June 14-17, 2017 in Cornwall Ontario. In my opinion, this was the most informative and best run NCC and AGM that I have attended in the last 3 years. Hopefully your curling centre will find something in this report that may be of assistance. If a curling centre would like to obtain softcopies of the presentations, please contact me.

Respectfully Submitted

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AGENDA:

- Wednesday, June 14: Member Association (MA) Presidents
- Operations Council Meetings
- Thursday, June 15: Plenary session
- Friday, June 16th: Curling Canada Operational reports
- Saturday June 17th: Curling Canada Annual General Meeting

Member Association (MA) President's Meeting - Wednesday June 14

- Operations (Ops) council is reviewing the as-the-crow flies travel subsidy funding.
- The Member Association Presidents will continue to meet via conference call on the Wednesday, 7 days before Member Association Presidents & Curling Canada Board of Governors conference call.
- Does Sport NB have funding available for teams that are going to National Championships? Others do.
- The event planning redesign is underway, The MA's have requested preliminary information so that planning can start on making teams aware of their financial responsibility.
- With the changes in the number of teams/provinces eligible to participate in National Championships, a discussion was held on "is" attendance mandatory at all national championships. Some championships will be deemed mandatory and some not. Operations Council doing a review.

Thursday June 15 Plenary Sessions:

Public Advocacy Keynote Address: Tim Powers

- Curling Canada is a \$20-\$30 Million a year company
- 1 Million curlers in Canada
- Current Liberal Government has a sports agenda:
 - Women and youth in sport
 - Want to see millennial success
 - Millennials are ages 18-36
 - Holman and Gushue are millennials and fit into Federal Government plan
- Curling needs to showcase youthfulness and youth success.
- Need to assume when discussing with all levels of government that the person/key decision makers don't know what you stand for nor know anything about the sport. Need to provide a simple message.
- To advocate for government funding; need to understand what Canadians feel about sport funding. Need to ensure it aligns with your needs and positions.
- Government of Canada Infrastructure Funding is available; curling centres need to investigate!
- Need to ensure that you don't let passion for your sport blind you to what your sport brand represents
- Curling clubs provide a community-based social hub that is becoming a lost point by today's facilities.

- Need to know your SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) profile when you present and ask for funding.
- When asking for funding, there are no second chances. Get it right. You only have one ask.
- Best success achieved 1st at the Club level; then region - Provincial Sport Organization - National Sport Organization levels.
- Probably best to ask at the club/regional level. Better chances of success.

End Message: 'Know your BRAND and what it represents'

Governance: Resby

- Curling Canada Board of Governors Governs by Policy
- Board of Directors : directs by involvement; operational in nature

Sports Marketing Session

- Optimize your marketing in real time
- Use "Top Performing Creation"
 - Google display ads.
 - NB/Curling centres should investigate how to use this tool?
- www.facebook.com/business
 - Cost effective - Hyper local - Successful - Location targeted
 - Provides new audiences/exposure - Tailored to many initiatives
 - Facebook provides support - Can tailor the ads without using an ad agency
 - Caution: watch out for "fake" Facebook advertiser solutions
- Use case: 2017 Scott Tournament of Hearts and Ford World Men's Curling Championship
 - Spent \$20,000 in advertising through the program that boosted sales up from 80% to in excess of 100% of budget. Can be used for volunteer recruitment; it supplements radio, TV and newspaper ads but extremely more affordable.

Sponsorship: Rick Ramsbottom

- Focus on partnership not sponsorship; call it partnership
- Get a copy of the free Canadian Sponsorship Landscape Study, Sept 2016
- 34% of sponsorship budgets targeted to regional & provincial opportunities
- Sponsorship is being very targeted to corporate pillars; know them before approaching
- Your organization needs to understand the top 5 value-in-kind opportunities. Usually your top 5 spend categories; use these to find partners!
- Can't say "too busy to work on revenue generation"
- Corporate Connection - need to use soft connections of who knows who
- CASE - Copy And Steal Everything or R&D - Rob & Duplicate
- Less is more: position so that a brand can "own" a program
- Take advantage of National sponsors or sponsors in larger Provinces.
- Try and work directly with the potential partner. Don't use an agency

Member Recruitment

- Learn to curl 101!!!! 3-4 hour program; 18-34% conversion rate to Adult Learn to Curl Program!!
- Also use Hit/Draw/Tap: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDRkFH-PTWM>,
- Curling Canada is creating a webinar on how to create Facebook advertisements.
 - Should be available by Fall 2017 - watch the Curling Canada Website for it!
- Benefits: Adults, Learn to Curl and youth programs
- Cost for 3 pilot centres
 - \$10,000 or \$3,000K/centre

- Average new curler stays 5 years - do the business case.

Friday, June 16th Sessions

Catherine Henderson, 2016-17 report

- Quote: "Curling was invented in Scotland but it grew up in Canada"
- Curling Canada is creating a policy on Gender & High Performance Athletes.
 - NB and Curling Centres need to consider adopting this when it is created.
- 90% of world curlers are in Canada
- 1.9 Million Canadians claimed to have curled in the past 12 months at least 1 time
 - How can they be converted to full time participants?
- Membership registration pilot is in place: More information will be provided at the NBCA Semi-Annual General Meeting on this national registration tool.
- CBC won a competitive bid to livestream wheelchair, mixed doubles, seniors and CIS/USPORT curling championships in 2018
- Curling Canada story remains largely positive but focuses on high performance. There is an opportunity to expand the grass roots voice.
- For sustainability and to de-risk, Curling Canada funding budget needs to ensure the Government of Canada funding contribution remains below 25% of requirements.
- World Curling Federation message: because the NHL will not be at the Olympics, they expect curling to be the top TV spectator draw.... Need to take advantage of the interest spike
- Danny L is working on a program to promote curling following the Olympics that centres can use. Due Fall 2017. Curling Centres Need To Use it!
 - Use it to take advantage of the "during" and ~ 2 week post-Olympic interest spike.
- Grass Roots plans:
 - Update Business of Curling material
 - Update training material of ice techs
 - **Helmet policy in the works**
- National insurance program for all curlers under investigation
- Canada 150: message "Curling in Canada is older than Canada!"

Championship Services and Curling Club Development: Danny Lamoureux.

- Lots of discussion on the power of Facebook adds and hyper targeting
- New Mascot – SLIDER
- Curling Canada has safety policies on their website. That includes proper footwear. Curling Centres should be using them!
 - All Members should sign these before stepping on the ice and be aware they exist.
 - Concussion protocol is available
 - release policies are also available (liability, photo, etc.)
 - Your Rentals need to sign a contract and the individuals need to sign waivers!
- Curling Centres need to have proper equipment (grippers, sliders, brooms) available. Charge members & rentals for the use!
- Curling Canada has a lot of information resources on their web page; investigate and USE THEM!
- Usually a curling centre is a Not-for-Profit BUSINESS; so it needs to be run as a BUSINESS.

High Performance - Gerry Peckham

- Athlete Advisory - Nolan Thiessen
- Wild card Friday announced

Curling Foundation: Brodie Bazinet

- Charitable organization: Funds for youth feeder system, scholarships, rock n rings

Social Media: Al Cameron: Need to adopt & use Social Media to promote the sport & your curling centre

Traveler National Curling Club Championships: Nothing to report

Wheel Chair and Mixed

- Mixed participation is declining while Mixed Doubles is growing
- More focus and funding will be placed on Mixed Doubles at the possible expense of Mixed.
- Reviewing the free agency policy to allow “agents” to participate in their home provinces for Mixed Doubles and Mixed events.

New Initiatives

- Curling in Canada Day: Want to align all provincial championship to fall on the same day. TSN plans to hop across the country to drop in on the championship games
- The first Under 18's National Curling Championships in Moncton was a success; Second will be held in St. Andrew's, NB
- Declining Competitive entries in all provincial play downs - Why?
 - Need more info and research
 - David Burpee: I have been appointed as member of this governance committee. Would appreciate input from curlers.

World Curling Federation

- 5 rock rule free guard zone approved at the September 2017 meetings
- Plan to implement in 2018-2019 season at world events.
- Expect changes to Curling Canada rules in 2018-2019.

Future of Curling Discussion

- More curling centres will be merged with Town/municipal facilities
- Business model will change
 - No longer part time
 - Will develop alternate uses for year round value
 - Will lead to less volunteer workers to paid staff to run a **business**
- More private-public partnerships will be developed
- Need to learn how to introduce curling to immigrants or non-traditional Canadians
- need to tap into Multi-cultural organizations.
- Develop a “New Canadian” Curling Day
- Vision: Need to improve on Marketing to deliver a Professional Product not a “whatever you get with volunteers” product. Gone are the days of “this is how we have always done it”. Curling is competing with greater number of other activities to attract the millennial’s participation. They are our future!
- in 20 years Curling Canada would like to see all clubs have:
 - a professionally trained manager
 - a professionally trained ice tech
 - professionally trained "Pro" for teaching and instructing
 - a professionally trained food & beverage employee
 - Professionalism will lead to an improved product that will be more attractive to millennials & others!
- Need to identify and promote the curling centres that are wheel chair accessible

June 17th: Annual General Meeting:

- All motions passed unanimously
- NBCA was the 1st mover of the helmet policy

===== End of Report =====