



## Executive Director Report 2019

As expected, the year has flown by. And what an extraordinary year it has been for curling in Alberta. Most notably, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 marked the date that curlers and their communities within our boundaries would finally be supported by a single governing body: Curling Alberta. The amalgamation of the four former governing organizations has been a tremendously unique and challenging experience for our Board of Directors and staff. How extraordinary is it to be presented with an opportunity to truly *transform* something so large at a foundational level? The idea is both frightening and invigorating!

As we navigated the union of four different organizations, with four different systems and cultures, this season was not without its adversities, tough decisions, and even failures. Admittedly, we experienced challenges of all kinds, including issues related to capacity, transparency, and communication- all due to a variety of circumstances. We did expect a bit of a bumpy ride this inaugural season, especially considering that the incorporation happened significantly ahead of schedule. When that happened, the Board saw an opportunity to progress some positive yet measured changes for this past season which would truly reflect a unified community. Here, it is important to remember that these changes were only a first step at the beginning of this longer-term process, and that more change and many improvements are on the way.

While we continue to extract the tremendous value of our learning, it is also critical that we celebrate our successes and the remarkable amount of progress we've made in a very short time. I continue to be monumentally proud of this organization; both for its bravery and aspirations, and for its humility and follow-through. I have no doubt that if we can remain committed to and united by what we believe, we will build the country's best, most innovative, compelling, and accessible programs.

I would also like to offer my sincere thanks and recognition to the Board of Directors and Curling Alberta staff. In the world of curling, no job description could ever be complete. Whatever task we face, I count myself lucky to work with a team whose passion, dedication, and belief in the power of sport, compels us all to come together to get the job done.

Here's a high-level summary of our most notable achievements and activities over the last year:

## Governance

- Developed the strategic goals and priorities for the organization, complete with key performance metrics, for Curling Alberta's first year and beyond;
- Created inspiring new mission and vision statements, and established the values of the organization;
- Laid the foundation for our desired system of governance by creating a governance charter document;
- Increased the organization's capacity by instituting eight priority committees with defined roles and responsibilities (i.e.- Executive, Governance, Advocacy, Competitions, Finance, Bid, Hall of Fame & Awards, and the Competitions Tribunal);
- Developed a Curling Alberta policy and procedure manual which covers priority areas such as confidentiality, conflict of interest, appeals, discipline and complaints, dispute resolution, etc.
- Hosted monthly Board of Director's meetings to provide close operational oversight and to drive ongoing leadership and policy development;
- Liaised with key stakeholders and partners such as Curling Canada and our provincial counterparts to improve communication and alignment on key initiatives;
- Ensured Board presence at provincial qualifiers and Championships to build relationships and engage with the community;
- Hosted season review session with staff and key leaders to discuss key learnings from the inaugural season, in order to devise actionable solutions and improvements.

## Marketing & Communication

- Developed a new visual identity, including logo and revitalized website;
- Unveiled Curling Alberta's e-newsletter, *It's Our House* to improve communication with our players, clubs, and stakeholders (three regular and two special editions, with one more to come);
- Launched Curling Alberta on social media (FB, Twitter, and Instagram);
- Established and documented new and key operational procedures to reflect our amalgamated organization;

- Assisted clubs and sponsors to market local events, programs, and promotions through mailouts, website, and social media campaigns.

### **Competitive Structure & Performance Stream**

- Recruited host clubs for the annual calendar of more than 50 events;
- Implemented and communicated extensive changes to the competitions policies for the 2018-2019 season;
- Successfully implemented the Respect in Sport program for parents of all players under 18 with 100% compliance to the policy;
- Launched a survey aimed to collect player, coach, and parent feedback regarding Curling Alberta's current competitions policies;
- Adopted new and more efficient procedures such as an online registration system for playdowns;
- Released a revised Cresting Policy for the 2019-2020 season, which is highly reflective of stakeholder feedback;
- Managed 12 special circumstance cases that required Tribunal involvement;
- Enhanced and improved the technical packages for the Arctic and Alberta Winter Games, and selected an supported Team Alberta at the 2019 Canada Winter Games;
- Piloted the new Excel Team Program to support aspiring performance stream athletes;
- Revised key documents such as the association's provincial qualifier and championship hosting guides;
- Developed a revised bid application and selection process.

### **Financial Viability**

- Developed the business plan and operations budget which reflects the strategic direction of Curling Alberta;
- Hosted a casino fundraiser that generated nearly \$80K in revenue for the association;
- Progressed the reduction of the organization's operating deficit (primarily through cost-savings);
- Retained all donors and grant sources and completed all accountability reports;
- Completed stub year end reporting for the four previously existing governing bodies and worked toward consolidation of all accounts;
- Established and documented internal controls and key policies such as purchasing, travel and expense, and reporting;

- Launched a Curling Alberta merchandise program;
- Successfully applied for a new casino license with the Alberta Gaming & Liquor Commission;
- Created a long-term major event hosting plan and engaged with large municipal tourism agencies to ensure Alberta continues to attract profile events.

## Club & Community Development

- Created an Advocacy Committee designed to support member clubs and other partners at the grassroots level, and to lead advocacy efforts to increase awareness and to influence policymakers to benefit our communities and our sport;
- Developed and deployed an annual club survey designed to measure the health of our sport and to determine the challenges and needs of our communities and clubs;
- Hosted five town hall meeting throughout the province to engage clubs face-to-face on subjects of hosting and membership structure/fees;
- Invested in building and maintaining partnerships with diverse stakeholders (e.g. Curling Canada, government partners, businesses, communities, other sports associations, etc.);
- Hired a full-time staff person dedicated to drive participation and advocacy efforts at the club and community level;
- Hosted two club development workshops at this year's Annual General Meeting on the topics of grant writing and benefits of hosting.

## Leadership Development

- Hosted the following courses to develop the leadership capacity in our sport:
  - One Club Coach Youth Course (11 participants)
  - Five Club Coach Courses (48 participants)
  - One Competition Coach Course (17 participants)
  - Level 1 Ice Tech (12 participants)
  - Level 2 Ice Tech (8 participants)
  - Two Level 1 Officiating Courses (69 participants)
  - One Level 2 Officiating Course (6 participants)

- Developed annual awards program to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary people who contribute at all levels of our sport;
- Recruited and oriented three new staff members (Director of Operations & Community Curling Centre Development, Competitions Coordinator, Excel Program Director) and restructured all roles and responsibilities.

## Closing

We look forward to our continued collaboration and sharing our detailed plans for the upcoming season with you this fall. As we work toward a future of expanded services and programs, our priorities for the future remain:

1. To develop new revenue generation and cost saving strategies (including a clear and compelling value proposition for membership & affiliation) to ensure the financial sustainability of the organization;
2. To work collaboratively with our clubs and other stakeholders to increase and retain frequent players, with focus on youth participation;
3. To improve the frequency and effectiveness of our communication.

Challenges and barriers still exist, but we do have achievable plans in motion to change our environment over time to make Alberta a truly healthy and united community, and a leader in curling development. The journey to inspire the curlers of today and tomorrow has only just begun.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Jill Richard, Executive Director