

## **REPORT OF THE SURVEY RESULTS COMMITTEE**

Submitted by Pat Aylward as Chair and on behalf of the Committee

March 24, 2021

### **Executive Summary**

In 2020, Curl PEI surveyed island curlers about several aspects of provincial events. Following a strong and diverse response from curlers, this Committee was formed to study the results and make recommendations. The focus of the Committee was the long-term success of the sport, and elements related to that success like growth, financial viability, stakeholder satisfaction, and ability of “Team PEI” to compete on the national stage. Starting from a variety of perspectives informed by the committee members’ varied levels of experience with the sport, the Committee used a collaborative approach in an effort to develop the best recommendations taking into account the interests of all stakeholders, the input received and the alternatives.

We do not intend to say that each member thought that each recommendation was their individual preferred solution. That’s almost impossible in any group about any complex issue. What we mean instead is that each member supports each recommendation as an option that at a minimum, they can live with, following a full conversation and consideration of the various options presented.

I haven’t summarized the recommendations in this executive summary because there’s value in the readers working through our process as reflected in the report so as to learn in addition to what we recommended, how and why we recommended what we did.

The recommendations were not the product of a vote. We believe the recommendations represent a balanced response, not a compromise, to address the issues raised by the survey and the objectives of those who responded to it, in a way that will best serve the sport as a whole in the future.

Pat Aylward,

Committee Chair

May 17, 2021

## Our Report

### Background/Context

In the spring of 2020 Curl PEI conducted a survey which was open to all Curl PEI members. The survey focused on provincial events. 155 people provided responses to the survey.

To assist the Curl PEI Executive to explore the response, this Committee was formed and provided with Terms of Reference as per Annex A. The output requested from this Committee is a report with recommendations about the issues raised in the survey.

The submission of this report concludes the work of this Committee under the Terms of Reference provided.

### Committee Composition

The Committee members are:

John Donahoe, Susan Dowling-Shaw, Sean Legerwood, Kathy O'Rourke, Landon Warder, with Pat Aylward as Chair. The President of Curl PEI Board of Directors serves as an *ex-officio* member.

In addition, the Committee received administrative support from Sport PEI curling executive director Amy Duncan. Amy also provided background and contextual information when requested. The Committee for is most grateful for her contribution.

Each member self-identified for participation. That is, there wasn't any selection process to form it. No one who had expressed interest in joining the Committee was rejected.

The Committee gave consideration to the issue of independence of its members. Committee members were from different clubs that could benefit from or be hindered by recommendations on things like venue selection for events. Some were connected to teams that might again benefit from or be hindered by recommendations on championship formats or team composition via residency. After consultation and conversation, the Committee adopted the thinking that whether any recommendation on any issue would be a benefit or a hindrance to any member depended on the situation at any given moment.

In order to have the Committee develop recommendations of any value, it had to have experience within the sport. If its members have experience in the sport, then they can benefit from or be hindered by whatever decisions Curl PEI makes and therefore potentially any recommendation the Committee makes to that body.

The Committee accepted that its members have an equal and varying potential for bias, including its Chair, and decided to proceed with that acceptance and with individual and collective commitment to serve the best interests of the sport.

## Committee Activity

The Committee held 8 meetings some virtual and some in person.

- Aug 31
- Sept 8
- Sept 15
- Sept 22
- Oct 20
- Oct 28
- Nov 29
- Dec 18

In addition to attending those, committee members studied the survey results, continued casual conversations within the curling community, engaged in their own independent thinking time, and exchanged ideas via email.

Additionally, in relation to the residency issue:

- The Committee contacted each person whose response to the survey indicated they wanted to provide more input.
- To broaden further the diversity of thought and perspectives available, the Committee identified representative voices from groups like coaches, fans, representatives from various generations or cohorts of curlers.

The Committee posed a series of questions including an open wrap up one to those just mentioned to ensure they had space to express themselves on any topic. The questions and responses were in writing via email.

Lastly for further context, the Committee asked Amy Duncan to liaise with other jurisdictions about their approach.

## Process

The conversation process of the Committee in relation to each issue followed a six-step collaborative model whereby we:

1. Set the Parameters for the conversation: we took the time to talk about how we were going to talk about the survey before we delved into substance.
2. Exchanged Perspectives: we each offered our full perspectives about the substantive issues and listened to learn as much as we could from each other.
3. Identified the Issues neutrally: we agreed early on in each conversation upon the issue in neutral language that didn't point us to any conclusion.
4. Identified the Interests: we explored the broader outcomes and objectives being expressed in the survey responses and in each other's perspectives. That is, we went deeper than surface solutions to determine what outcomes people wanted and what they wanted to avoid.
5. Generated Options: for the interests and outcomes identified in step four, we generated potential recommendations for consideration and evaluation.

6. Selected Solutions: we evaluated the options only after the full menu of choices was available. We selected the best options using as a test the extent to which the option being considered advanced the interests and outcomes identified as desirable in step four.

### Issues Arising from the Survey

The following issues arose from the survey, and while the Committee does treat them separately, it is impossible to ignore that most were intertwined in the committee work and conversations.

- Preferred days of the week to run provincial championships
- Provincial formats
- Provincial locations
- Provincial dates
- Provincial playing conditions

### Analysis and Recommendations

#### **Preferred days of the week to run provincial championships**

The objectives to be supported in the recommendation included:

- Convenience for groups beyond immediate participants (fans, volunteers, sponsors, clubs)
- Opportunities for growth
- Time management for participants, adequate notice
- Recognition of line between participatory (Under 16, 13 type) and competitive events (Tankard, Scotties, Juniors, type)

Among the options considered to further those objectives, it is recommended that:

- Events should be scheduled to end on a Sunday, starting when required as determined by the numbers of teams, facility and format.
- Change the entry deadline to 6 weeks prior to all competitive events so participants can ensure their availability. Use a survey to determine if participatory events should have a similar timeline.

#### **Venues and Ice conditions**

These two topics were difficult to keep separate, and in the end, the Committee addressed them as one topic. The objectives to be supported in the recommendation included:

- quality ice conditions
- Good rocks
- parking
- food services
- local accommodations
- local amenities
- sponsorship

- income generation for growth
- clubs interested
- Fan support
- growth
- Fielding the best team at nationals
- Recognition of difference between participatory and competitive events
- Consistency

The concerns to be avoided were:

- Risk of no hosts/facility disengagement
- Process burden to facilities

Playing conditions – ice and rocks – are such crucial factors to competition that the Committee recommends that a pure rotation for competitive events be discontinued.

Among the options considered to further those objectives, it is recommended that:

- o a process be established through which:
  - o Competitions be slotted into either of two categories: High Profile and Participatory;
  - o Criteria be established for facilities hosting High Profile events, including:
    - o Having a water purification system;
    - o Having rocks that when appropriately prepared (papered) perform consistently;
    - o Having or working with a Level Three Icemaking consultant to provide the best ice possible;
  - o A simplified expression of interest be created for venues to complete where interested in hosting High Profile events;
  - o CurlPEI provide an icemaking consultant to hosting venues for those events;
  - o CurlPEI explore ways to increase revenue from the High Profile events and to share that with those hosting Participatory events to ensure all venues benefit and participate in hosting. The Committee recommends as ideas worth exploring include:
    - o multi-year sponsorship plan packages be pursued;
    - o A committee of well-connected people be tasked with sponsorship development;
    - o That committee be asked to explore sources not currently being accessed;
    - o That Curl PEI place a high focus on income and sponsorship, as well as exploring ways to increase both levels of participation and viewer enjoyment.

There isn't a simple solution available to this complex problem of revenue and growth development. The Committee doesn't purport that the recommendation presents an easy path. The Committee does see this recommendation as a necessary one though.

### **Provincial formats and Dates**

From the survey as well as from the exchange of perspectives within the Committee, minimal concerns exist around these topics and the Committee is not making any recommendations in these areas.

### **Residency**

The final issue we discussed was that of residency as a criteria for eligibility to play in Scotties and Tankard provincial championships. The Committee identified the following objectives:

- Competitive representation
- Growth from exposure
- Opportunity for younger curlers
- Fan support
- Sense of connection with representative teams

And, the Committee would want to avoid the following outcomes:

- Loss of provincial identity
- The Brier/Scotties becoming another slam event
- The loss of revenue from major events
- Loss of reciprocity among provinces for our younger players

This conversation brought the Committee back again to the mission of Curl PEI in this way:

- If the Committee were recommending based on the objective of growth, then it would recommend pure residency or at most one non-resident whether by birthright or free agency.
- If the Committee were recommending based on fielding the most competitive representative possible, then it would recommend wide open application of free-agency and the birthright policy, even if the entire team were non-resident.
- If a dual objective exists, both growth and competition, then the Committee would recommend a policy where two members of a team may be non-resident, either by free agency or birthright status.

The CCA policy is focused on competition, targeting the Brier and Scotties. The cohort of island curlers impacted most by the policy is the next generation of potential competitors in those events. Putting aside the mission question, and focusing on that cohort's future, the Committee thinks and recommends that permitting two non-residents one of which could be permitted under the import rule, best serves their interests. This recommendation further supports fan engagement, community connection, reciprocity for islanders playing elsewhere, ability of younger Island residents to attract talent to be competitive nationally, and the opportunity for this province to field a nationally competitive team in any given year.

## Summary of Recommendations

1. Days of Week/Time of Events:
  - o Events should be scheduled to end on a Sunday, starting when required as determined by the numbers of teams, facility and format.
  - o Change the entry deadline to 6 weeks prior to all competitive events so participants can ensure their availability. Use a survey to determine if participatory events should have a similar timeline.
  
2. Venues & Ice Conditions:
  - o A pure rotation for competitive events be discontinued.
  - o a process be established through which:
    - o Competitions be slotted into either of two categories: High Profile and Participatory;
    - o Criteria be established for facilities hosting High Profile events, including:
      - o Having a water purification system;
      - o Having rocks that when appropriately prepared (papered) perform consistently;
      - o Having or working with a Level Three Icemaking consultant to provide the best ice possible;
    - o A simplified expression of interest be created for venues to complete where interested in hosting High Profile events;
    - o CurlPEI provide an ice making consultant to hosting venues for those events;
    - o CurlPEI explore ways to increase revenue from the High Profile events and to share that with those hosting Participatory events to ensure all venues benefit and participate in hosting. The Committee recommends as ideas worth exploring include:
      - o multi-year sponsorship plan packages be pursued;
      - o A committee of well-connected people be tasked with sponsorship development;
      - o That committee be asked to explore sources not currently being accessed;
      - o That Curl PEI place a high focus on income and sponsorship, as well as exploring ways to increase both levels of participation and viewer enjoyment.
  
3. Provincial formats and Dates:
  - o No recommendations.
  
4. Residency:
  - o Permit two non-residents for Scotties and Tankard provincial championships, including the import player permitted.