



PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO MEMBERS – RETURN TO CURLING 2020-2021: UPDATE

August 2020

On August 20th the Board met and decided to delay the opening of the club until early November and to extend the season into late April.

There are a number of reasons for this decision, most related to changes beyond our control, but two factors of primary concern are: an impending review of the operating restrictions currently in place (see below), and the uncertainty around the fall 2nd wave of COVID-19.

Under the current circumstances, the Board's primary concerns are the health and safety of our members and employees and the financial viability of the club itself.

Operating Restrictions

At this time, Peterborough Public Health is interpreting a league as a 50 person 'bubble' rather than treating the entire club as the bubble. What this means is that each member can only curl in a single 50 person league all season; there is no provision for playing in multiple leagues. There are no interclub games or bonspiels either.

CurlOn is working with the various levels of Government to clarify the restrictions. The Federal Ministry for Heritage and Sport has approved multiple leagues, but the Peterborough Public Health will not be releasing any changes until September 1st.

We realize that the one-league-only concept, and restrictions on after-game socializing, may lead some members to change their mind about curling in the coming season. Therefore, we want to wait until after we see the new regulations and understand their impacts, which makes an October start a very tight time frame. The physical distancing and increased sanitation rules are also evolving, but it appears we will be restricted to 15 draws a week and no more than one sweeper at all times.

The guidelines and protocols on opening from Curling Canada and CurlOn are available on their websites and will give you some idea of the changes we're facing.

COVID Surge and Financial Sustainability

The opening of the schools, the fall flu season and the surges being experienced in BC and Alberta all add to the uncertainty of opening. The recent survey indicated that 70% of the membership would like to return to curling in 20/21. And a number of the members who responded to the survey indicated their return was conditional on the state of the pandemic, so waiting another month seems prudent.

An analysis of previous years' expense and revenue streams indicates that, with only minimal bar and Division revenues, it is likely a 70% participation rate will generate a greater financial loss than staying closed. Once we open, a number of costs are incurred that can't be reversed. And if a COVID surge causes us to be closed down after a few weeks of operation, additional closing costs will be incurred.

At our last meeting, the Board came to the conclusion that the increased costs associated with opening as opposed to staying closed should be borne primarily by the members choosing to curl. This will affect the fee structure for 2020/21. Also, if the season is prematurely terminated due to COVID restrictions, a portion of the 'unused' membership fees will be retained to cover those costs associated with opening and closing the club. It is important that members recognize this prior to signing up for the 20/21 season.

Looking Ahead.

The Board wishes to form an Operating Committee composed of Division Representatives and Board Members to develop the physical distancing and cleaning protocols for the club. If you are interested in participating, please contact your Division lead or myself.

There are good models available from CurlOn, but we have to meet the local Public Health restrictions and the physical layout of our club. The challenge, of course, is ensure everyone's health and safety while offering the best season possible for the greatest number of members. We may be coming back to you with a short survey as things evolve so we will have a clearer picture of how many people want to curl in which leagues given the 'new normal'. Hopefully, we'll be able to achieve this over the next few weeks so we can get the registration process going. Please check the Lakefield Curling Club website for updates as we move forward.

Regards, Stay Safe.

Tom