



## MEDIA RELEASE

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## **CURLING: Champéry, Switzerland ready to host 2010 Le Gruyère European Curling Championships**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 29 NOVEMBER 2010**

Champéry, Switzerland - The 2010 Le Gruyère European Curling Championships for both men's and women's teams gets underway on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> of December in Champéry, Switzerland. It is the 36<sup>th</sup> edition of the event since it began in Megève, France in 1975.

In both the men's and women's events, ten national teams will compete in the 'A' Group while a further ten women's teams and sixteen men's teams will compete in the 'B' Group.

Both reigning champion skips will be in Champéry at the Palladium Ice Hall to defend their titles. Sweden's Niklas Edin won his first senior international title in Aberdeen last year while Germany's Andrea Schöpp also won European gold in Aberdeen in 2009 – her seventh - before going on to win the women's world championship title in Swift Current, Canada at the end of last season. This will be Schöpp's 24<sup>th</sup> appearance at the European Championships, a new record which beats the 23 appearances made over the years by Norway's Dordi Nordby.

Two former European champions are among the men's skips – twice winner Andreas Kapp from Germany (1997, 1992) and Scotland's Hammy McMillan - making a return in the blue of Scotland after an absence from the international arena of eight years. McMillan has won the European title a total of five times, including three successive wins in the mid-90s, making him the most successful men's skip in European Championship history.

Also in the men's 'A' Group are Norway, the in-form European team from last season with silver medals in both the Olympic Winter Games and 2010 world championships, led by Thomas Ulsrud.

2002 Olympic Bronze medallist, Christof Schwaller, leads Switzerland and 2009 World Junior Men's Champion Rasmus Stjerne skips Denmark. Thomas Dufour and Jiri Snitil, familiar names from previous Championships, skip France and the Czech Republic.

The men's 'A' Group is completed by two nations promoted from last year's 'B' Group - Russia (skip Andrey Drozdov) and the Netherlands (skip Rob Vilain).



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As well as Germany's Andrea Schöpp, the women's 'A' Group line-up includes Switzerland's Mirjam Ott, who will be looking to improve on last season's European silver medal and world silver medallist Eve Muirhead from Scotland.

Stina Viktorsson skips the team representing Sweden and follows in some illustrious footsteps, not least double Olympic champion Anette Norberg. Liudmila Privivkova leads an experienced Russian team, four of whom won the European title in 2006. Lene Nielsen returns to the international scene skipping this year's Danish team, while Ellen Vogt skips Finland and Linn Githmark is skip for Norway.

The two women's teams promoted from last year's 'B' Group are Latvia, making their nation's debut at this level, skipped by Evita Regza and The Netherlands, whose skip Shari Leibbrandt-Demmon will play lead stones.

The 'B' Group games will be played in the nearby town of Monthey at Verney Ice Rink.

The competing women's teams there will be Austria, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Hungary, Italy and Wales. They are joined by the two teams that topped the recent 'Group C' qualifying event in Scotland – Ireland, and making their debut in top international championship competition, Turkey.

The sixteen men's 'B' Group teams will be split into two round-robin sections. They are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, England, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Spain and Wales. They are joined by the 'Group C' qualifiers Belarus and Slovakia.

Both 'A' and 'B' Groups will open with round-robin play on Saturday and, after tie-breakers on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December if needed, semi-finals and promotion challenge games (including a challenge from the top 'B' Group teams as they try to qualify for this season's world championships). Medal games take place on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> for the 'B' Group and Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December for 'A' Group.

Extensive televised coverage of the Le Gruyère European Curling Championships can be seen by viewers in Europe on Eurosport. Additional live and on demand coverage will be available via the internet on the Eurosport Player. Swiss Television TSR will also air daily live coverage of Swiss games. For more details of the TV and Web TV coverage schedule visit <http://www.worldcurling.org/tv-and-web-tv-coverage-from-the-le-gruyere-european-curling-championships-2010>

Links to results can be found on the event website: <http://www.ecc2010.ch>  
All results will be mirrored on the World Curling Federation (WCF) results database: <http://results.worldcurling.org/default.aspx>

Full team line up and schedules of play can be seen on the event website: <http://www.ecc2010.ch> and WCF site <http://www.worldcurling.org/le-gruyere-european-curling-championships-2010> Daily updates from the event will be posted on the WCF website: <http://www.worldcurling.org> – **END** -



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### Notes to Editors

- 7 teams from the Women's event at the ECC 2010 will qualify for the Capital One World Women's Curling Championship 2011 in Esbjerg, Denmark (18-27 March) <http://www.wfcc2011.com> Teams already qualified for this event: Denmark (as host) Canada, USA, China and Korea.
- 8 teams from the Men's event at the ECC 2010 will qualify for the Ford World Men's Curling Championship 2011 in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada (2-10 April) <http://www.curling.ca/championships/worlds/> Teams already qualified for this event: Canada, USA, China and Korea.
- See <http://www.worldcurling.org/rankings-men-and-women> for current WCF World Rankings. Next update: after the Le Gruyère European Curling Championships
- European Curling Federation [www.ecf-web.org](http://www.ecf-web.org)

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