

The Coverage

Television coverage has always been a key element in promoting WCF championship events, and in recent years, this activity has grown, with worldwide coverage mushrooming too.

In 2004, the WCF established World Curling TV to produce, manage and distribute championship coverage as widely as possible. Now, in a normal year there will be TV coverage at both the Men's and Women's world championships, the Mixed Doubles championship, and the Junior championships, as well as both the European and Pacific-Asia Curling Championships.

Curling coverage at Olympic and Paralympic Games is also vitally important, providing as it does, a phenomenal shop-window for the sport, but, as is the case for all sports, this coverage is provided to national broadcasters by the Olympic Broadcast Service (OBS) or its Paralympic equivalent, rather than by World Curling TV.

Depending on circumstances, a growing number of nations will take live feeds. As well as Canada, most of the leading European nations and the likes of China and Japan, these include some more unexpected countries such as Brazil and Czech Republic.

At the Men's and Women's championships, edited news packages of each day's action are produced and distributed, and this work can crop up in news and sports bulletins anywhere in the world.

As an example of how this coverage has grown over the years, it is pleasing for the WCF to note that coverage from the 2015 World Women's Curling Championship in Sapporo, Japan reached over 300 million viewers.



© Michael Burns/Photography



© Doug Maxwell Archive



© Doug Maxwell Archive

Clockwise from top left: The 1979 championship in Berne, Switzerland; the 1972 championship in Garmisch Partenkirchen; the 14 sheets prepared for the 2010 World senior Championships in Chelyabinsk, Russia; the 2000 World Championships in Glasgow, Scotland; the opening ceremony of the 1971 championship in Megève, France

The Venues

In the early days, WCF championships were held in either Canada or Scotland but, with the global growth of the sport, the roster of venues has expanded too. Now, places as far apart as Sapporo in Japan, Christchurch in New Zealand, Victoria in Canada, and Moscow in Russia have each hosted WCF championships, while across mainland Europe, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Latvia, Italy, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, and Switzerland have all had championships in their country, with each bringing its own personality to the events.

So, what makes international curling special? All of these different elements and, of course, the first-class competition provided by the best players in the world!



© Bob Cowan Archive



© Vladimir Latorov

🎯 Fans & Flags



© Richard Gray



© Richard Gray



Doug Maxwell Archive



© Richard Gray



© Richard Gray



© Richard Gray



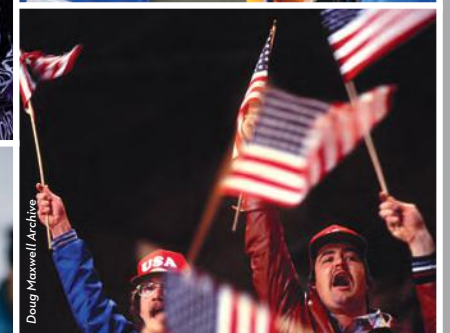
© Richard Gray



© Richard Gray



© Richard Gray



Doug Maxwell Archive



© Michael Burns Photography Ltd



© Michael Burns Photography Ltd



© Céline Stucklé

The Stones and the Ice

While it's a bad workman who blames his tools, good curling games can become great when the ice and the stones are in top order.

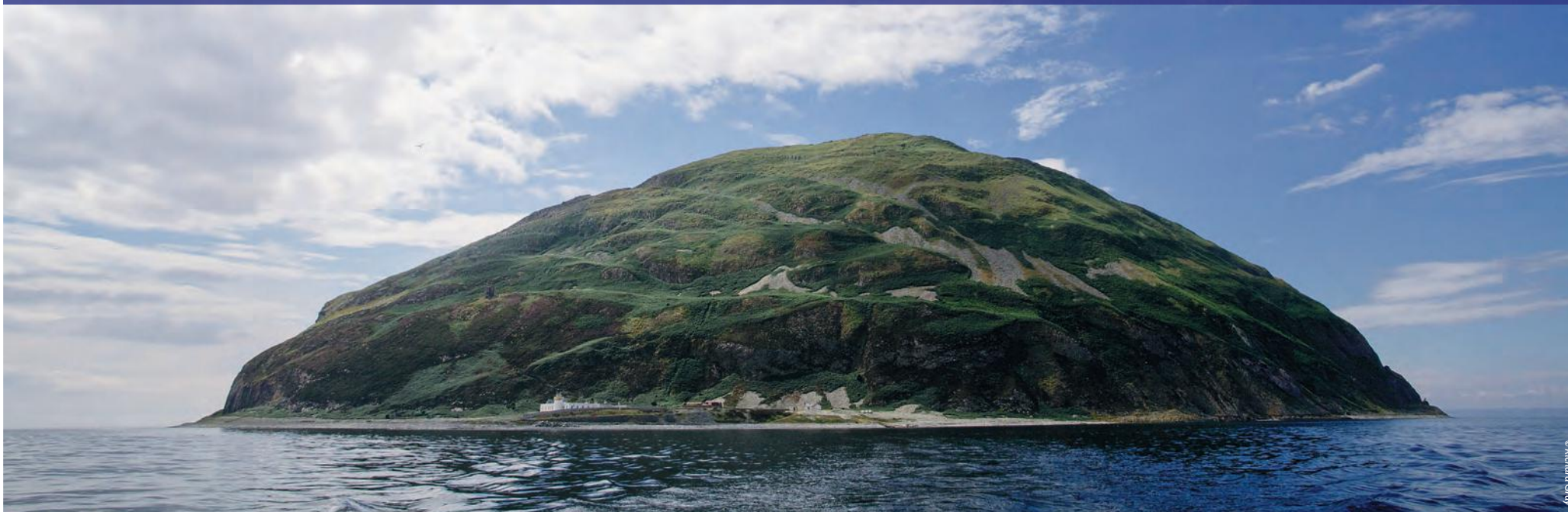
At every WCF championship, ice preparation is in the hands of a specially hand-picked, worldwide group of ice technicians, each with the experience and knowledge to produce the alchemy that will ensure great playing conditions no matter what challenges local circumstances may throw up.

The majority of championships use WCF-owned stones. If not, local stones made to the same specifications are brought into service. These stones are made of granite from the tiny uninhabited island of Ailsa Craig, a rugged one-mile long volcanic plug rising out of the Firth of Clyde, ten miles off Scotland's west coast.

The island's prized high-density blue hone granite is used as the running band on virtually every curling stone in the world, and is found nowhere else in the world in reasonable quantities, while the body of the WCF stones is made from Ailsa Craig Common Green Granite.

In recent times, the WCF has worked with curling stone manufacturers Kays of Scotland to ensure the supply of high-quality stones for club players and Olympic champions alike for years to come.

Altogether the WCF owns 24 sets of curling stones, four of which are permanently based in North America. The others spend their time being transferred from storage in Scotland to venues across the rest of the world.



© Richard Gray

Making the stones



All pictures © Richard Grey



**CHARACTERS
IN THE
GAME**

It would be strange for any organisation or activity to exist for 50 years without some memorable characters coming to the fore. Equally, it comes as no surprise to learn that over the WCF's 50 years there have been many superb players, thoughtful innovators, outstanding supporters and dedicated administrators who have all played their part in contributing to a sport that has produced unforgettable memories and life-long friendships.

The difficulty in entering into territory like this is that someone, some place, some event or something is bound to be left out. With that in mind, and apologies in advance for omissions, there are many people who deserve to be considered as real *characters of the game*.

PRESIDENTS

A good starting point is to note the ten individuals who have held the post of President.

Scotland's Elizabeth Paterson-Brown MBE



Courtesy Kenneth Paterson-Brown

They are:

1	1966-1969	Major Allan Cameron	Scotland
2	1969-1979	Brigadier Colin 'Collie' Campbell	Canada
3	1979-1982	Sven Eklund	Sweden
4	1982-1985	Clifton Thompson	Canada
5	1985-1988	Philip Dawson	Scotland
6	1988-1990	Dr Donald Barcome	USA
7	1990-2000	Günther Hummelt	Austria
8	2000-2006	Roy Sinclair	Scotland
9	2006-2010	Les Harrison	Canada
10	2010-present	Kate Caithness	Scotland

Each of these individuals contributed to the ongoing success and leadership of the WCF, with Clif Thompson and Philip Dawson being the early pathfinders in charting curling's journey into the Olympic family – a task taken on with great energy – and eventual success – by their successor Günther Hummelt. Following the inclusion in the Olympic programme, Roy Sinclair took over from Hummelt to lead an organisation that was transformed in many ways, while current President Kate Caithness has done much to consolidate curling's assured position as a popular mainstream Olympic sport through her involvement in high-level IOC Commissions and working groups. While President Caithness has become the first – and so far only female President of an Olympic winter sports federation, she was not the first female to take senior office at the ICF/WCF – that honour belongs to Scotland's Elizabeth Paterson-Brown, who became the first female Vice President in 1990. In this role, she was instrumental in the development of world junior curling.





© Michael Burns Photography Ltd



Main picture far left: Arnold and Ernie Richardson with the Scotch Cup

Top left: A Scotch cup promotional leaflet featuring Ron Northcott (Canada), Chuck Hay (Scotland), and Bud Somerville (USA)

Middle left: Canada's Al Hackner

Bottom left: Scotland's Hammy McMillan

Top right: Austria's Sebastian Wunderer

PLAYERS

Any consideration of characters in the sport naturally includes players, and in spotlighting players and teams there is no better place to start than the Richardsons from Regina, Canada. Ernie, Arnold, Garnet (Sam) and Wes Richardson arrived on the scene to dominate the early years of the Scotch Cup era. They inspired many others to emulate and eventually better the way they played and behaved, setting solid foundations for the early success of the World Curling Championships.

Among their many admirers was one of their toughest opponents, Scotland's 1967 world champion Chuck Hay, who says, "the Richardson team could play all the shots – take-out, draw, guard. We were enthralled by their play so decided to take it up." And take it up Hay and his team did, losing the 1963 Scotch Cup final to their heroes. Hay goes on to shed some light on the sportsmanship qualities of the Richardsons, saying, "Ernie invited us to his room in the hotel afterwards and explained to us that playing against the Canadian brooms you must always sweep all draws lightly due to the debris from their brooms."

In an earlier correspondence Hay wrote, "It was the marvellous way that Ernie and his team conducted themselves both on and off the ice, that sealed the success of the Scotch Cup. They won their games easily but never belittled or humiliated their opposition. They had such charm, charisma and a wonderful sense of sportsmanship. Their part in establishing the Scotch Cup was so important. It was because of them that we can all sit back and enjoy today's World Curling Championships."



That wonderful sportsmanship – sometimes known as the spirit of curling – has been sustained down the years. At the 2014 World Junior Curling Championships in Flims, Switzerland, Austria's skip Sebastian Wunderer, male winner of the players' Sportsmanship Award, spoke for many when he said, "the spirit of curling is here. Even though we're playing hard against each other, everybody's still friends."

Many teams and players have become memorable because of the strength of their play and characters – Canadian skips like Ron Northcott, Don Duguid, Ed Werenich, Al Hackner, Randy Ferbey, and Kevin Martin come to mind, as do other charismatic players such as USA's Raymond 'Bud' Somerville, Scotland's Hammy McMillan, and Sweden's Peja Lindholm.

On the women's side, there are also riches: Sweden's double Olympic champion Anette Norberg and her predecessors Elisabet Gustafson and Elisabeth Högström; Norway's Dordi Nordby, Germany's Andrea Schöpp and Denmark's Helena Blach Lavrsen - three skips with exceptional longevity at the top level; while from Canada, Sandra Schmirler, Colleen Jones and Marilyn Bodogh all graced the game exceptionally in their time.

At the Vancouver Olympic Winter Games in 2010, men's silver medallists Norway – who were to go on to win the World title in 2014 in Beijing – became memorable for an entirely different reason as they sported a wardrobe of colourful fancy-pants. They were an immediate internet hit and arguably did more than the actual games to publicise the sport, with the pants quickly gathering over a million Facebook Likes. At the 2014 World Men's Curling Championship, while wearing one of his team's more outlandish outfits – even by their own standards – Norway's skip Thomas Ulsrud confessed, "if you're wearing something like this, you just have to win!"



Former WCF Media Officer Håkan Sundström recalls a famous royal occasion:

“Over the years, some excellent curlers may have been nicknamed the “King of Curling”, but there has only been one real monarch to have played a curling stone in a world championship. That was in Karlstad, Sweden, during the opening day of the Air Canada Silver Broom in 1977.

Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, Swedish king and then only 30-years-old, had accepted an invitation to attend the opening ceremony and declare the championship open to play.

However, Swedish sports commentator Lars-Gunnar Björklund asked His Majesty to try curling for a Swedish TV programme and the King accepted - on one condition. His one demand was that the arena be closed to everybody except the TV crew. But, there was one photographer who had his working office inside the arena. Mike Burns Senior, the official photographer of the event, had his photo laboratory there and when he heard that the king would play, he fetched his largest lens and went sneaking up to a good position where he shot excellent pictures showing the Swedish king in action.

All interested media outlets were then given free access to these pictures which were then published widely, and this episode gave the King enough confidence to play the opening stone in public, the next time Sweden hosted an event, in 1983 at the European Championships in Västerås.”



© Michael Burns Photography Ltd



© Michael Burns Photography Ltd



© Cefine Sivicki



© Richard Gray



© Michael Burns Photography Ltd

Bottom left: Norway's unique playing outfit
 Top left: Sweden's Peja Lindholm
 Top right: Japan's Satsuki Fujisawa
 Middle right: Canada's Marilyn Bodoogh and her team
 Bottom right: Norway's Dordi Nordby
 Bottom middle: Sweden's Elisabet Gustafson and her team



Bob Cowan Archive



© Michael Burns Photography Ltd



© Richard Gray



HALL OF FAMERS

The original incarnation of the WCF Hall of Fame came in 1978 when the Elmer Freytag award was established to recognise outstanding sustained service to curling. Freytag himself was the US curling administrator involved in the ICF from the very beginning. The first winner of this prestigious award was Canada's Ken Watson, who, among other curling contributions, spent much time developing common rules for the countries taking part in the Scotch Cup competitions.



After 1990, this Award was re-named the World Curling Freytag Award and finally, the WCF Hall of Fame was set up in 2012 to carry out the same duty of recognising outstanding contribution to the sport, whether through on-ice exploits or off-ice endeavours. Membership is awarded for two different types of achievement – as a curler or as a builder.

Among the players inducted into the Hall of Fame or its predecessors are: Canada's Russ Howard and Ray Turnbull; Switzerland's Olympic champion Patrick Hürlimann, Norway's Eigil Ramsfjell and Sweden's Elisabet Gustafson. The builders include the late Franco Zumofen of Italy, Japan's Hiroyuki Saito and Kay Sugahara from USA.

While Ken Watson was the very first winner of the Elmer Freytag Award, he was to be followed by many other famous names from international curling's past - names like Chuck Hay of Scotland, Canada's Doug Maxwell and Robin Welsh, another Scot.



Top left: Norway's Eigil Ramsfjell

Middle left: Kay Sugahara (USA)

Bottom left: Elisabet Gustafson (Sweden)

Top right: Keith Wendorf being applauded by his Germany team in 1979 when he was announced as the first winner of the Collie Campbell Sportsmanship Award



While the decision to change the name of the Award was made after 1990, the first re-named World Curling Federation Elmer Freytag Award went to the Canadian-born Keith Wendorf in 1994, who at that time represented Germany as a player. Keith has gone on to become one of the main contributors to world curling success, over the years travelling the world, hosting clinics - for example in Kazakhstan in March 2004 - and now leading the WCF's global programme of World Championships events as the WCF's Director of Competitions and Development.



Ken Watson being presented with the first Elmer Freytag Award in 1978, by Don McLeod of Canada, who went on to win the Award himself in 1985.

Elmer Freytag



Elmer Freytag was well-known as the face of USA curling in the early days of the International Curling Federation, but before all that, he had another claim to fame... or perhaps infamy.

Professionally, Elmer was a patent attorney whose family originally came from Germany. He piloted his own plane and it was this that got him into a little trouble.

On one stormy night in the winter of 1942, he was forced to make an emergency landing in the grounds of local major manufacturer Inland Steel (which at the time was heavily involved in supporting the USA effort in World War Two). After landing, he simply climbed the fence and took a cab home, leaving the mystery of a German-owned plane in the grounds of a major War manufacturer, and leading to speculation about German spies landing!

From left to right: Horace Vaile, Warren Peterson, Harold Built and Elmer Freytag at the Quebec International Bonspiel, a favourite of Elmer's.



This group picture, taken in the Station Hotel, Perth Scotland at the 1963 Scotch Cup, includes several well-known faces, including (seated right) Canada's Ken Watson, who became the first Freytag Award winner in 1978. By coincidence, Elmer Freytag himself is seated on Ken Watson's immediate right.



Doug Maxwell Archive

Michael Burns - Innovating Photography

No consideration of curling photography can be made without the considerable influence of Michael Burns Senior. While son Michael continues to serve curling media very well, his father was the first professional photographer to follow curling regularly across the world and record the top action.

Born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1926, his family moved to Canada when he was a boy. He became official photographer for the Canadian Curling Association in 1958.



Doug Maxwell Archive



Courtesy of Warren Hansen

INNOVATORS

Throughout the history of the WCF and its activities, individuals have come along who have made their mark on the game or the organisation – sometimes permanently.

For example, Frances Brodie from Scotland was a prime mover in establishing the women’s World Curling Championship. She also instigated The Frances Brodie Award for sportsmanship at the women’s championships, making the presentations herself every year until her health failed.

On the men’s side, there was Collie Campbell, the second President of the ICF, and the men’s championship sportsmanship award is named in his memory.

Over the years, the media bench at every championship was home to many larger-than-life characters, among them Doug Maxwell and



© Michael Burns Photography Ltd

Middle: Bob Picken

Above: Scotland’s Frances Brodie, presenting Kirsty Addison (Scotland) with the Frances Brodie Sportsmanship Award in 1996

Bob Picken from Canada, each of whom made contributions far beyond the world of reportage; former media officer for the WCF Håkan Sundström from Sweden; Switzerland’s long-time President of the World Curling Media Association Erwin Sauter-Hewitt; and Scotland’s Willie Kemp.

Other individuals have contributed in several different ways, for example, Scotland’s Richard Harding first appeared as a player at the 1977 Air Canada Silver Broom in Karlstad, Sweden before going on to report on the sport for various media outlets, including the British Broadcasting Company’s (BBC) Olympic coverage in 1998 and 2002. He then went on to be a leading light in the establishment of World Curling TV, which, from modest beginnings, has grown into a global success today.

Below: Willie Kemp, long-time curling correspondent for The Scotsman newspaper
 Right: Canada's Doug Maxwell in conversation with Sweden's Lennart Hemmingson, who devised the first GTM
 Far right: Warren Hansen (Canada)



Meanwhile, no list of characters of influence in the sport would be complete without mention of Canada's Hall of Famer, Warren Hansen. He has made influential contributions to the development of curling for more than 50 years, and these have been multi-faceted. Hansen can be attributed with developing many of the umpiring procedures in use today and introducing marketing and design features – four sheets of ice for championships and events held in large ice-hockey arenas – of national and international competitions that make up the spectacle of curling.

The fact that for every individual mentioned in these pages, most readers would add a few candidates of their own just goes to show that when it comes to characters in the sport, over the years, curling has had a bountiful supply.

🎯 Every picture tells a story





THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC JOURNEY



© Richard Gray

From the early years, the WCF representatives were eager to see curling become part of the Olympic Games. After many years of hard work by several key players, including demonstrations of the sport at the Lake Placid Games of 1932 in the USA; the Calgary Games of 1988 in Canada; and in Albertville, France in 1992, curling finally appeared as an official sport in the Nagano Olympic Winter Games in 1998. The curling at these Games was staged in the Japanese town of Karuizawa.

Incidentally, in staging Olympic curling, Karuizawa became the first community in the world to act as host at both Olympic Summer and Winter Games, having staged the equestrian events of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Summer Games.

Prior to all of this, it had been believed that curling had originally been a demonstration sport at the inaugural Olympic Winter Games in Chamonix, France in 1924. However, while researching those Games for The Herald newspaper in 2006, renowned Scottish sports journalist Doug Gillon uncovered the fact that curling had been a full medal sport in 1924 and had this confirmed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). An IOC spokesperson confirmed, “we consider curling as an official sport in 1924 and all the winners of the events are considered as Olympic champions.”

Left: Canada's Olympic champions E J Harnden and Ryan Fry in action, Sochi 2014

Top right: The members of the first International Curling Congress, held during the Olympic Winter Games in Chamonix, France, in 1924

Other pictures: Curling at the first Olympic Winter Games



Courtesy of Erwin Sautter



Scottish Curler

The quest for inclusion on the Olympic programme started early and, in fact, was one of the main drivers for the name change of 1990, with the International Curling Federation becoming the World Curling Federation. A first application for inclusion was made as early as 1968 but at that time the ICF was told that it had to have a minimum of 25 nations from at least three continents affiliated before any kind of membership consideration could take place.

In the 80s, under ICF President Clif Thompson of Canada and his successor, Scotland's Philip Dawson, attempts to join the Olympic Movement were increased. Thompson met the then President of the IOC - Juan Antonio Samaranch - in Lausanne in 1984 – a meeting which facilitated the appearance of curling as a demonstration sport in Calgary but also gave an indication that it was going to be less than straightforward for curling to become a full-fledged Olympic sport.



Courtesy of Erwin Sautter



Courtesy of Ewin Sauter

Main picture: The British curlers, headed by Col Robertson-Aikman, in the march-past at Chamonix in 1924

Right: The final shot of the women's demonstration event in Calgary, 1988

Far right: The Olympic curling venue in Karuizawa for the 1998 Nagano Olympic Winter Games



Canadian Olympic Committee



Courtesy of Mitsuhiko Hasegawa



Top: The Albertville demonstration curling venue, 1992
Below: Sweden win in Vancouver, 2010



Above: Switzerland's Franz Tanner (left) and WCF President Günther Hummelt of Austria (right) toast curling's modern Olympic debut
Right: Canada win gold in 1998



From this point on, the main movers in support of curling's case for inclusion included then President Günther Hummelt of Austria; Switzerland's former world championship curler Franz Tanner, a native of Lausanne, the IOC's hometown; and Canada's Jack Lynch.

Hummelt enthusiastically undertook the task of recruiting new countries into membership while, in tandem, important lobbying went on to persuade the IOC and the other winter sports International Federations that curling would be an attractive addition to the Olympic Winter Games programme. Eventually the barriers were broken down, and curling received the green light for inclusion at the 1992 IOC sessions in Barcelona.

By this point, the organiser of the Nagano 1998 Olympic Winter Games had expressed the wish that curling should be included on their programme and so, on 9 February 1998, eight men's and eight women's teams stepped onto the ice in Karuizawa to become the sport's first Olympians of the modern era. A week later, Canada's Sandra Schmirler and her team, as well as the Swiss team skipped by Patrick Hürlimann, were crowned Olympic champions.



For every Olympic edition since then, the competition has been among ten men's and women's teams. The next exciting step-change for Olympic curling came in 2015 when the IOC agreed that Mixed Doubles would be introduced as a new discipline at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, Korea.

It has been a journey of highs and lows from the times when curling's Olympic prospects seemed remote to the point that currently exists, with curling now seen as a fundamental component of any Olympic Winter Games, but on the way the sport has made many friends in the Olympic Movement.



“Curling Pure Emotion” a statue by Switzerland’s Bjorn Zryd is unveiled at the Olympic Park in Lausanne



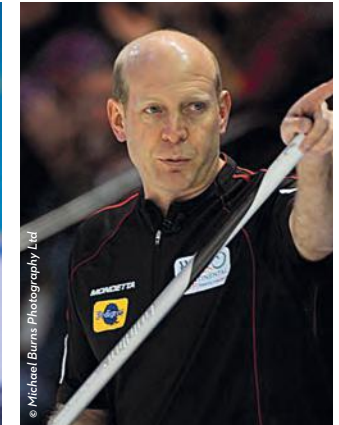
Above: The curling field of play at the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games
 Top: The 2014 Sochi Olympic cauldron
 Top middle: International Olympic Committee President Dr Thomas Bach
 Bottom right: GB win gold in Salt Lake City, 2002

A good example of this was when current IOC President Dr Thomas Bach visited the curling family in April 2016, in Basel, Switzerland to be the guest of honour at the WCF 50th anniversary banquet and to deliver the first stone of the World Men’s Curling Championship the next day.

In his speech at the banquet, Dr Bach was clear about curling’s position in the Olympics, saying, “I want to say how much we appreciate what curling is doing – in your ambitions you are truly Olympic and your sport has a great reputation in and around the Olympic family.” He also diplomatically described the 76 year gap for curling between Chamonix in 1924 and Nagano in 1998 as “a little pause” but he then added, “this renewal was a fantastic development.”

He spoke further about his personal journey with curling, saying, “my first experience with curling was in 1998 in Nagano when I saw it and followed it for the first time – since then I’ve been following curling and I am not surprised anymore about how popular it is. My first experience with curling’s popularity was in Salt Lake City in 2002. When we first saw the television viewing figures there at the time, we were

Right: 2014 men's Olympic medallist skips, (l to r) Niklas Edin, Sweden - bronze; Brad Jacobs, Canada - gold; David Murdoch, GB - silver
 Middle right: Switzerland's Patrick Hurlimann, 1998 Olympic Champion
 Far right: Canada's Kevin Martin, 2010 Olympic champion
 Bottom: The Ice Cube, curling venue at Sochi Olympic Winter Games 2014



really surprised. Since then we have seen a good and steady growth.”

There is no doubt that the sport's inclusion on the Olympic programme has transformed the WCF – not least in the organisation's finances, allowing the Federation to become stable and sustainable in a way that would have been impossible without Olympic involvement. That in turn has facilitated significant support to Member Associations and sustained much of the development work done around the world.

Also, curling's Olympic involvement has produced a growing number of celebrity fans, including Canadian superstars Michael Bublé and Donald Sutherland, USA's sprint Olympic champion Carl Lewis and Washington Redskins tight end Vernon Davis, Britain's five-times Olympic gold medal rower Sir Steve Redgrave, former Prime and First Ministers from Canada and Scotland – amongst others, and a host of European royalty, including Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik and Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

It is easy to argue that the Olympic Games have been good for curling, but it is also true that curling has been good for the Olympic Games.





© Alina Pavlyuchenko

Wheelchair curling

Wheelchair curling was first introduced to the Paralympic Winter Games programme in 2006. The venue in Pinerolo, Italy was used on this occasion as part of the Turin Games and eight teams competed, with Canada beating Great Britain for gold, while Sweden took bronze.

Four years later, the number of teams was increased to ten and Canada retained their title with a win over Korea on home ice in Vancouver, while Sweden won bronze for the second time. Canada then went on to make it a hat-trick of gold medals in 2014 when they beat Russia in the final in Sochi, with Great Britain picking up bronze. At the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, Korea, 12 wheelchair curling teams will compete for medals.

Canada's wheelchair gold winning team in Sochi, 2014 included three-times gold medallist Sonja Gaudet, pictured here with lead player Mark Ideson

