



MINUTES
of the WORLD CURLING Executive Board
Online Meeting #2025-6
on 18 June 2025

Attendees

Executive Board

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Beau Welling (BWE) | President |
| Kim Forge (KFO) | Vice-President |
| Morten Sjøgaard (MSO) | Vice-President |
| Helena Lingham (HLI) | Director |
| Sergio Mitsuo Vilela (SMV) | Director |
| Rob Niven (RNI) | Director |
| Jill Officer (JOF) | Director |
| David Sik (DSI) | Director |
| Tyler George (TGE) | Athlete Commission Chair |
| Andrew Ryan (ARY) | Independent Director |
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| Colin Grahamslaw (CGR) | Secretary General |
| Saskia Müller-Gastell (SMG) | Projects Officer/Minute taker |

The meeting started at 13:00 CET.

Presidents Update

BWE and CGR had attended the WOF meetings in the previous week, which included informal time with Ms Kirsty Coventry (IOC President elect) and presentations from upcoming Winter Olympic host cities: Milan-Cortina, the French Alps, and Salt Lake City. With only 230 days left until the next Winter Olympics, there is significant concern that key preparations—especially in Milan are severely behind schedule, creating frustration among WOF members. Services at Olympic venues are expected to be minimal due to aggressive cost-cutting, indicating these Games will differ greatly from past ones. There is a growing desire among WOF members to meet with the incoming IOC President to discuss improving collaboration, especially regarding funding, event delivery, and giving sports federations a larger role in organizing the Games.

Regarding the French Alps, there are concerns about the current state of French curling. The Board emphasized the need to improve it ahead of the Games, even raising the question of whether France should be granted an automatic curling berth. Overall, the update reflects logistical concerns, organizational tension, and efforts to strengthen the role of sports bodies

in Olympic planning. On Friday Eeva Röthlisberger is going to meet the IOC at the proposed 2030 venue to review required changes.

BWE shared an update on recent developments, particularly regarding the 2034 Salt Lake Games, which he noted appear impressively organized and ready to host at any moment.

He described the atmosphere in Lausanne as productive, with good engagement among both winter and summer sport colleagues. President Bach gave a farewell speech for WOF and some attendees participated in a memorial mass. Also, a symbolic curling stone was gifted to him.

BWE mentioned a strong positive reaction to Andrew Ryan joining the Board, which was encouraging. There had also been a meeting with a potential candidate for the other independent director position.

HLI asked about the minutes of the WOF meetings. CGR agreed to share the minutes once they are approved by the WOF members.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous Board meeting had been distributed in advance. The comments from HLI and JOF had been taken into account and are now reflected in the minutes.

To approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on 2 June 2025

***moved by KFO
seconded by RNI
and approved unanimously***

RNI pointed out that the rankings website dropdown still shows outdated information—likely last year’s rules—and needs to be updated. He also stressed that the Board should have a policy of ensuring confidentiality on contractual matters.

Conflict of Interest

TGE had been asked by NBC to do commentary for the Milan Cortina Games remotely from Connecticut. TGE will therefore not be able to attend the Olympic Winter Games.

Commission and Committee Updates

CGR asked Commission Chairs to in future highlight any needed Board decisions in their reports so these can be noted in the summary. Highlighting the bits where the Board needs to focus their attention should speed up the process in future.

Finance Commission

No further meetings

Competitions and Rules

Rule Book for 2025/2026 season

CGR informed that Eeva Röthlisberger had taken the feedback from the various webinars, the Open Meetings and from the Competition and Rules Commission and had tried to interpret that into the new rule book that had been circulated to the MAs, the C&R and the Athlete Commission. CGR suggested that the Board should provisionally approve the new Rule Book and do the final approval at a later date by e-mail.

The following comments were made:

RNI highlighted that the new rules are a significant cultural shift in the sport's officiating. Previously, decisions on rule infractions were often left to the teams, who would determine if they were better or worse off. Now, that responsibility is shifting entirely to the umpires, who will make a clear decision without offering the choice to the non-offending team.

JOF questioned why the rule is different in officiated play—where a dedicated official is present on each sheet—and wonders why the athletes' responsibility is not consistently removed across both settings, officiated and non-officiated play. The ultimate goal should be to take that onus off the athletes.

MSO questioned: How do we implement this, how do we prepare the umpires and how do we make sure the athletes respect the umpires more than they maybe do today in certain cases?

RNI emphasized that the Athletes Commission clearly expressed they do not want athletes officiating games, as it is not their role and can lead to social media abuse. Athletes should focus on playing within the rules. He stressed the importance of supporting umpires, even when they make mistakes, and called for athletes to respect their decisions even where they may disagree with them. The transition may be challenging, but it is necessary to enforce and stand by the officials.

ARY emphasized that rules and regulations are one of the most important areas that World Curling must maintain ownership of. World Curling must always be the final authority on rules and must not be influenced by other IFs or the IOC. Also, umpires should always be fully backed by the federation.

TGE emphasized that the no tick zone rule in Curling is unique because it requires no judgment from officials. Unlike other situations—such as burned stones or hogline violations—where officials must interpret or project outcomes, the no tick rule is entirely objective. The rocks simply end up where they end up, and the non-offending team decides whether to leave them as is. This lack of judgment removes any perception of bias or advantage and makes the rule clear, simple, and fair to enforce.

CGR suggested that the rule book be finalized before the end of the month taking into account any further feedback from the MAs and the member groups. The Board can then officially approve the rule book at the end of June 2025.

Recommend a preferred format for qualification for the World Men's and Women's Championships

CGR said that the feedback and input received from the MAs confirmed that World Curling is on the right track with the 18 Team World Championship and the standalone European A division. The Board should now decide what qualification format it prefers and that preferred option should then be taken to the Member Group Meetings. A final decision should then be made by the end of June 2025 so that from an operational point of view World Curling can start moving on with looking for hosts for the next Olympic cycle.

There are three qualification systems on the table:

- The pure ladder system
- The zonal qualification system
- The hybrid system

The following comments were made:

MSO: How do we rank teams/countries and how do we pull them? That has not really been presented, but it is being a demand. If we could have something to present at the MA Group meetings on how we pull together the tools that would be good. CGR advised that it would be the same system as for the Mixed Doubles but he would ask Eeva Röthlisberger to put something together. MSO indicated that there were examples where the top team from an MA and the second team were significantly different and we are only using world ranking and no team ranking which will make a difference. Maybe we could mix both rankings or have some weighing between the two? CGR replied: From a practical point of view we cannot use team rankings or we would be telling our MAs that we need to know which team they are sending by 1 January, this would have a significant impact on a number of our Members who using qualifying events.

RNI emphasized that the decision being made is for the overall benefit of world curling, not to favour any specific country. He clarified that the move to an 18-team World Championship—whether structured via a ladder, hybrid, or zonal system—is aimed at what is best for the future of the sport globally.

BWE expressed support for the hybrid approach, saying it feels like a balanced and well-considered solution resulting from a thorough consultation process with diverse stakeholders. He acknowledged it would not be perfect and that some people may disagree with it. His main concern is that the hybrid concept may not have been clearly explained, especially since it has only been presented in the webinar. He stressed the importance of upcoming member meetings to clarify the proposal and gather final feedback. Ultimately, he believed a decision needs to be made soon, and these meetings would be key in finalizing the direction.

SMV indicated he feared the hybrid option does not address the problem we have with the PCCC with regards hosting.

KFO expressed that she values consistency across disciplines: a straightforward, consistent structure—like a straight ladder—in all curling disciplines, including juniors and mixed doubles but understood the need for a compromise at this time.

The Board agreed that it could be communicated in the member group meetings that it is leaning towards the hybrid version.

Note the outline for the format of the World Juniors from season 2026/27

CGR noted the outline of the World Juniors format since it is not included in the current rule book due to the transition in format occurring next year.

JOE raised a question regarding the relegation of only three teams in the event, noting that other events typically relegate four, especially given the structure with two pools. RNI explained that the rationale for relegating only three teams was due to the concern that relegating four would be 25% of the field, which seemed excessive. He also noted the cost implications and logistical burdens, such as double playing for more teams. CGR added that there were concerns about the competitive strength of the B division—if the top 16 teams are removed, the incoming teams might not be as strong, making them likely candidates to be relegated again quickly.

Athlete Commission

No further meetings

Governance Commission

No further meetings

Technical Commission

DSI mentioned a recent technical commission meeting with KFO where brush test results were reviewed. However, it is uncertain when the commission will officially review — either before or after the formal publication. CGR suggested waiting until the publication, expected within the next week. JOE added that they should also forward the update regarding the closed window for new foam intentions to the commission, which CGR agreed to.

Nominations Committee

No meetings since the last Board meeting

Ranking Points Group

No further meetings

Hall of Fame Committee

No further meetings

DEI

No further meetings

Sustainability

No further meetings

Brush Issues

Work continues with the manufacturers to finalise the regulations for the coming season. New foam has been sent for testing by Balance Plus and a public statement is being prepared for release.

Big Ideas Update

Stakeholder Engagement:

Update paper in the shared drive with next meetings to be held prior to the end of June 2025, main topics for consideration include:

- a) Board preference on qualification system
- b) Brush Update
- c) Request for input into Congress
- d) Governance / Nominations Updates
- e) Appointment of Independent Director
- f) Update on Member Group meetings

The Board also agreed timing for **MA-group meeting dates for 2025/2026**. Meeting frequency remained, Quarterly meetings, Congress included.

#1 End November / early December

#2 End February / early March

#3 End June

E-mail from Pakistan

The Board discussed a letter from Pakistan requesting action against Israel. Key points included:

- Jurisdiction Limits: CGR and ARY emphasized that World Curling can only act against MAs, not governments. The Israeli Curling Association cannot be held accountable for its government's actions unless the Association violates World Curling's statutes.
- Comparison to Russia: JOF noted that action was taken due to direct threats to athlete safety and event integrity, which is not currently the case with Israel.

- No Indication of Threat: There is no evidence that the Israeli situation poses a risk to competitions or participants.
- Status of Pakistan: It was pointed out that Pakistan is only a conditional member and cannot propose motions or vote at the AGA.
- Next Steps: The Board agreed they can revisit the topic in a future meeting, but currently view the request as outside their authority and not actionable.

Staff Meetings 2025 Perth

Colin reported that the recent staff meetings had gone very well, with a positive atmosphere and productive discussions. Interviews for a few open positions are taking place this week and next, with the goal of filling all three remaining roles by the start of July. Overall, the feedback was positive, and the experience had been seen as successful.

Any other business

BWE suggested scheduling a separate meeting before 6 August to review the budget and to avoid the August meeting becoming too long. He recommended sending out a Doodle poll to find a suitable time for the meeting.

CGR agreed and added:

- The budget will be sent out once he and Alan Chalmers are satisfied with it.
- He is open to one-on-one meetings for anyone wanting a deeper review.
- This approach also allows SMV to take the budget to the Finance Commission.
- He would send a Doodle poll for late July to coordinate the meeting time.

DSI reported that the first application for certification had been received last week from Belgium, and 3–4 more applications are expected in the next couple of weeks. He also mentioned that a contract is currently being signed regarding the handles and they are moving into phase two of their process.

The meeting ended at 14:07 CET.