



MINUTES
of the WORLD CURLING Executive Board
Gold Coast, Australia
on 3 and 4 September 2025

Attendees

Executive Board

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
Andrew Ryan (ARY)	Independent Director
Tyler George (TGE)	Athlete Commission Chair
Colin Grahamslaw (CGR)	Secretary General
Saskia Müller-Gastell (SMG)	Projects Officer/Minute taker

Apologies:

Hong Zhang (HZH)	Independent Director
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Presidents Update

The President welcomed the Board. The President advised the Board of the following upcoming meetings that he would attend with CGR:

- Coordination Commission in Italy for the Olympics (between 9-15 Sep 2025)
- a meeting in New York with IOC President Coventry on 22 September 2025
- multiple events at the end of October such as the WOF Meeting, Sport Accord, and a discussion on the future Olympics organized by the IOC President.

The IPC assembly and elections are scheduled for the same week as the New York meeting. CGR had met or spoken with a couple of candidates, and it is currently being discussed whom to support. CGR explained that the incumbent IPC president from Brazil faces a strong

challenge from a Korean candidate, who is head of the Korean Para Nordic and Skiing Federation and runs a major sports foundation.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous Board meeting had been distributed in advance.

To approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on 6 August 2025

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

Matters arising from the Minutes

Facilities Decisions: Kinross and New Zealand:

Kinross had secured alternative funding and no longer requires a decision. Regarding New Zealand both the Technical and Finance Committees are satisfied with the proposals, and the lease is confirmed for six plus six years, with the second six guaranteed. Payments are scheduled for late October 2025.

Olympic Insurance: The Board reviewed Olympic insurance options and there was consensus:

Not to move forward with the insurance for OWG Cortina but ask for quote for OWG 2030 in French Alps

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

Conflict of Interest

The attendees were asked to declare any changes to conflicts of interest since the last meeting.

To be added for SMV: He is involved in a Brazilian company that is installing cameras in a Brazilian Curling arena.

Commission and Committee Updates

Competitions and Rules (RNI)

Youth Olympic Games 2028

CGR informed the Board that the IOC is simplifying and reducing costs for the Youth Olympic Games, with the next Summer Youth Olympic Games scheduled for September 2026 in Dakar, Senegal. Significant optimizations are required due to local constraints.

WOF had questioned the ROI of the Youth Olympic Games, noting the IOC had invested around \$100 million in the last event for 1,800 athletes.

Discussions are ongoing about reducing the number of events and athletes for the 2028 Youth Olympic Games, possibly dropping mixed teams in favour of mixed doubles. Options include 24 teams (four pools of six) or 16 teams (two pools of eight), with implications for universality and performance quotas.

A decision on the format (24 vs 16 teams) is required by the end of 2025. It is expected that the IOC will provide direction on this. Eeva is working on draws for a 24 team and a 16 team event.

As a next step, World Curling will review the qualification systems aiming to strike a balance between elite participation and universality.

RNI also suggested to have the “Points Group” as a sub-committee of the C&R to have a more structured approach from the government's point of view leading back to the Board for recommendations and also to make sure there is continuity. The Board had no objections to that.

Finance Commission (SMV)

Verbal Report of Finance Commission (FC) Meeting, 25 August

The Finance Commission had accepted the final report. An audit-level scrutiny had been performed despite legal limitations. The FC recommends to monitor finances closely due to four years of deficits and lack of reserves. The review provided met the requirements of the RFP approved by the Finance Commission.

The Board discussed whether the audit by EQ provided sufficient value for its cost of 15k, compared to previous audits by Mazars at three and a half thousand, and the potential cost of a full audit at a minimum of forty to fifty thousand. The compliance with Swiss law and the appropriateness of the current audit level were discussed. The process for deciding future audit levels was outlined, including the possibility of reverting to a lighter review or moving to a full audit for 2025-2026, as part of the budgeting process. The Board also discussed on whether the current audit level provides sufficient comfort to member associations and whether spending the additional for a full audit is justified.

Concerns were raised by CGR that a full audit would not be completed in time for the next Annual General Assembly (AGA) in 2026, and especially as it is an election AGM, potentially leaving unaudited books at the meeting.

The Board agreed that the current level of audit by EQ at 15,000 is appropriate and provides value, especially after clarifying that there is only one set of accounts involved. The current audit process is fully compliant with Swiss law and even exceeds requirements by adopting standards close to Scottish Charitable Law. The Board decided at the moment not to pursue a full audit unless there is suspicion of criminal or fraudulent activity. A decision will be made

after reviewing the 2024-2025 audit report, as per the resolution at the previous AGA, to determine whether to maintain the current level or opt for a full audit for 2025-2026.

SMV and CGR clarified that the letter of comfort from external examiners is for the Board and Finance Commission, not for MAs, and can only be shared after accounts are accepted.

Final Accounts 2024 / 2025

SMV showed the Board the presentation he wanted to give to the MAs.

Presented financials are resulting in a net operational loss of \$1.6 million. It was noted that this is typical for a pre-Olympic year, referencing 2017 as a comparable cycle. The Board should be aware that with a \$1.6 million negative result, reserves will be depleted in four years.

Discussion focused on the variances in expenses. CGR clarified that the total over-expenditure is 300,000, offset by savings in other areas, and highlighted the need to explain these figures clearly. Questions were raised about a \$30,000 increase in Athlete Commission expenses, with clarification that the increase was due to more activities and meetings rather than an increase in the number of athlete reps at events. Inflation has raised costs in multiple areas, while income has decreased, leading to greater financial strain.

In general, Board is committed to at least a zero-deficit budget and is planning sessions to address budget management for the Olympic cycle. The main issue is managing year 1, 2 and 3 of the Olympic cycle to afford the fourth year with the OWG.

Presentations to Congress should be straightforward, focusing on facts and simple explanations.

To approve the final accounts 2024/2025 and request MAs to approve numbers and discharge the Board

***moved by SMV
seconded by MSO
and approved unanimously***

Athlete Commission (TGE)

No further updates

Governance Commission (MSO)

Following feedback on questions raised by the Governance Commission, the Commission supports the acceptance as Associate Members the Armenian Wheelchair Curling Association. If the Board accepts this proposal then the application will be sent to the Member Associations for the 30 day vetting process.

To approve the application of the Armenian Wheelchair Curling Association to become an Associate Member of World Curling

***moved by MSO
seconded by HLI
and approved unanimously***

CGR added that an application from Argentina can be expected soon.

The Iranian Curling Federation have now paid all outstanding fees to World Curling and would therefore be eligible for consideration for Provisional Membership at this AGA.

It was suggested to review governance and membership processes, including requirements for full and conditional membership and roles/responsibilities.

Nominations Committee (MSO)

Discussion took place on the role of the Nominations Committee, the process for appointing Independent Directors, and the technical and constitutional aspects of Director terms.

The Board agreed it will continue to appoint Independent Directors directly, as per the constitution, with the Nominations Committee providing skill matrix reports if and when the Board requests this but not vetting or proposing candidates. The legal term for Directors is four years from confirmation, with flexibility for earlier review.

Technical Commission (DSI)

DSI provided an update on electronic handles, including meetings in Toronto, development of video analysis and stone tracking solutions, and challenges with commercial proposals and manufacturing.

Progress is ongoing, with significant cost differences between solutions noted. Testing continues, with plans to send equipment to Scotland and further games required for validation. It is planned to test the handles at ECC 2025.

Ranking Points Group

No further updates

Hall of Fame Committee

No further updates

DEI

No further updates

Sustainability

KFO reported that the sustainability report would be sent to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) at the end of September. A research project will be done at the WWCC in Canada and data will be collected there. KFO was advised to coordinate the project with Nolan Thiessen from Curling Canada.

AI and World Curling

A draft set of guidelines for how World Curling engages with AI had been submitted for the Board's consideration, along with notes from a meeting held with the IOC outlining areas where there may be opportunities for co-operation with other IFs and the IOC.

CGR explained that at the moment the biggest impact might be that by the time of Milan/Cortina all the games for social media might be clipped by AI. Discussion also took place on AI's potential for stone tracking, automatic scoring, and camera automation in Curling, with current limitations in data accuracy and prompt writing for draws.

It was agreed to link current data protection policies to AI guidelines and update as necessary. World Curling will also continue monitoring AI developments and update guidelines as needed.

World Team Championships

An outline budget for the potential World Team Championships planned for Las Vegas in January 2027 had been distributed prior to the meeting.

The importance of choosing a destination that attracts international fans and offers a unique experience was emphasized. Discussion focused on the need for an event that appeals to both traditional and new audiences, differentiating from previous formats like the Continental Cup. The in-venue experience and broadcast appeal were highlighted as crucial for success.

Concerns were raised about the financial sustainability of hosting multiple events. The need for events that generate profit was stressed, with reference to previous reviews indicating too many unsustainable events.

Everest, a funeral concierge service, is interested in partnering, particularly if the event is held in North America. Their involvement is tied to US television and the ability to bring sales representatives. Everest may seek funding from insurance companies if the partnership proceeds.

The Board debated whether to target only traditional Curling fans or expand to a broader market, including those not typically attending Curling events. The importance of creating a destination event that draws new audiences was discussed. Challenges include lack of local

crowds and difficulty importing fans, especially post-Covid. European bucket list destinations were discussed in addition to the current possible venue of Las Vegas but not resolved.

The Board's conclusions were:

- Las Vegas is considered the top choice in North America, but there is nervousness about Vegas in 2027 due to reduced Canadian travel (down 65% in June compared to this year). Alternatives in Canada are being considered.
- A budget showing a surplus is required. A three-year or six-year plan with three events is suggested, but losses for three years are not acceptable given the current balance sheet.
- Everest wants a commitment from World Curling before raising additional money. The model changes if the event is moved outside North America.
- North America is preferred for initial events to build the brand before considering international expansion.
- The product is considered strong, but success depends on securing the right location.

Russia and Israel

The RCF and ROC had met with BWE and KFO in Cortina and they are pushing for a return to play. CGR advised that once the AGA is finished there would be a discussion with the MAs on this issue. The Russian ban had lapsed on 30 June 2025. Extensive debate took place on whether to extend the ban on Russian athletes for another six months or until the end of the current season.

No formal decision was made but there was consensus

- to prioritise event integrity and athlete safety
- to discuss the issue with the IOC President

Congress

The Board discussed the programme and the presentations of the forthcoming open meetings and AGA.

Staffing Update

Closed Session

Future Priorities and Funding

Eeva Röthlisberger (Head of Competitions – ERÖ), Chris Hamilton (Head of Communications & Marketing - CHA) and Alan Chalmers (Head of Finance/COO – ACH) joined the meeting.

The discussion began with the 25-26 budget finalisation and a wider strategic discussion for the 26-30 period. It was decided that creating a detailed 26-30 budget was meaningless.

Instead, the focus shifted to establishing principles, discussing directional thoughts, and prioritising work in line with the Board's priorities. A projection of post-Olympic season costs was presented, with more fixed figures for competition structure and a potential new broadcast model.

Several cost-saving measures were debated. These included questioning the necessity of an annual Congress and the Olympic Qualification Event (OQE), given the expansion of World Championships to 18 teams. Other suggestions were to review the number of officials, potentially use more domestic umpires, and reconsider paying host fees (currently 10k-20k), suggesting a shift to a model where hosts pay the federation.

The commercial viability of broadcasting certain events was questioned. The World Juniors and World Mixed Doubles are not seen as main linear TV products. Producing basic coverage for events like the World Wheelchair Championships would cost approximately \$75 to \$100k. It was noted that while the Curling Channel is a good platform for these events, the income generated from them is unlikely to cover production costs, as they are primarily a 'family and friends' viewing experience.

The funding model for junior teams' flights was discussed. Costs have risen due to new entries from long-haul destinations like the Philippines and Bolivia. The current system has moved from paying the full flight cost to providing a grant that varies by distance.

A major topic was the broadcast strategy, focusing on the Curling Channel. The channel generated US\$126,000 in revenue, primarily from Canada (31%), the USA (26%), and the UK (11%). A stretch target of \$400,000 has been set for next year. There was a debate on balancing the channel's growth against selling exclusive digital rights to broadcasters like TSN and NHK. It was noted that the channel provides a negotiating baseline, as demonstrated by setting a \$40,000 starting price for an event with TSN based on potential channel revenue.

The Board discussed changing the subscription model from the current system (where fees range from \$200 to \$4,050) to a new model charging \$1 and requesting an email address from every registered curler. This could generate approximately \$1.2 to \$1.3 million and create a valuable database of 1.2 to 1.3 million email addresses for commercial use. The President suggested an alternative model: charging \$10 per person and give everyone free access to the Curling Channel. This would aim to solve the broadcast issue and reduce dependency on traditional broadcast deals. The discussion highlighted the value of collecting member email addresses.

A central debate was whether to continue with the traditional, expensive linear TV model or pivot to a proprietary OTT platform. Linear TV is necessary to keep major partners like NHK and TSN happy but has operated at a 'negative subsidy' over the last 10 years. Quitting it would be 'budget positive' but would lose over 100 million viewers per major event.

ARY emphasized multiple times the critical need for comprehensive data to make informed strategic decisions. The Board is currently working with 'little bits of a picture' and needs data on the ROI of production, the rate of decline in linear TV, and the growth of the OTT platform.

A significant discussion occurred regarding the payment of officials. An imbalance was noted where commercial roles like "cable pullers" are paid, but officials are not. Using more local officials to save on travel costs was considered but the savings were viewed as minimal. The federation is facing a major struggle with a shortage of officials, particularly for the upcoming season due to the Olympics occupying top-tier staff. This forces the use of retired officials. There is no clear system for training new officials at high-level events.

A debate was held on whether to continue holding World Championships in an Olympic year. Arguments against included logistical strain and top athletes not attending. Arguments for included maintaining the broadcast window and sponsor value, as not holding it could devalue the event.

The discussion centered on the future of junior competitions. One proposal was to alternate the World Junior Championships and Junior Mixed Doubles annually, effectively holding each event every two years. Another suggestion involved restructuring age categories from the current U21 to U18 and U18-25, running on alternate years to ensure players get a chance to be the oldest in an age group. The role of the championships was debated, with some viewing it as a developmental tool rather than a performance one. A major point of concern were the costs, with junior flights amounting to \$250,000, compared to competition costs of \$30,000-\$40,000. An alternative was proposed to stop covering flights and instead allocating the \$250,000 to the Development Assistance Programme (DAP), allowing MAs to use the funds for flights if they choose. No firm conclusion was reached, but there is a strong consensus that the current structure and costs of junior championships are unsustainable and require review. The ideas of alternating events, changing age brackets, and shifting the flight budget to DAP are key considerations for future planning.

A proposal was made to franchise the Mixed and Seniors championships, handing over the organisation to a local third party under a brand guideline contract. This would reduce costs and administrative burden. The governing body could potentially take a fee, such as \$500 per team. However, significant risks were identified, including loss of control over event quality (e.g., ice conditions, umpiring), which could lead to complaints and brand damage. The need for a robust license agreement with clear control mechanisms was emphasized. It was questioned what services, like media and results management, the governing body would still provide and who would bear the cost. There was an appetite to trial a franchise model offering a 'fresh start'. However, a detailed license agreement is required to mitigate the significant risks to brand reputation and event quality before proceeding.

Building on the franchise idea, the group discussed commercializing the seniors' event by allowing more than one team per country to participate on a 'pay-to-play' basis, similar to a World Masters model. This could potentially generate revenue. There was also support for adding new franchised events, such as a 'World Over 60s' and a 'World Stick Championship'. A key point of debate was whether to retain the 'World Championship' title for these franchised events, as it sets certain expectations for participants regarding standards, or to rebrand them as 'World Bonspiels' or 'World Challenger' events to reflect the different organisational model.

DAP

MSO suggested two things:

- World Curling needs to take more control of how the money is spent. We should not give the MAs money to spend anywhere else but we should give them money to spend with us (e.g. voucher system)
- The current money distribution is equal but not equitable. Therefore, World Curling should suspend, in an Olympic year, the DAP funding for all those MAs that are qualified for the Olympics with immediate effect

The Board agreed to move towards centralizing and tailoring DAP funding based on development level, rather than distributing \$12,000 equally to all countries. Support packages should in future be tailored to country size and development needs, not one-size-fits-all. Also, matching funding is a viable option and will be included in future proposals for DAP.

Congress

CGR explained that if World Curling only had a Congress in an election year that would save USD 300,000 every second year. The idea however would be to continue with open meetings on a yearly basis.

CGR emphasized his own personal position on hybrid meetings saying that one should either do meetings virtual, or face-to-face. He felt that hybrid meetings are disrespectful for those that have taken the time to turn up to the meeting. Also, with different time zones, people attending online would not be fully attentive.

The Board agreed to bring this topic up for discussion at the open meetings.

Subscriptions

CGR explained that at this moment in time the total subscription income for the Federation was around USD 42,000. Therefore, the subscription income is never going to be anything more than a tiny percentage in a turnover of nine million unless one starts moving to the idea of a per-head figure.

The Board discussed this concept and agreed that if World Curling changed to a per-head subscription the members must be offered various benefits such as a package with the Curling Channel or discounts for suppliers, etc.

The Board agreed to bring this topic up for discussion at the open meetings.

Entry fees

CGR explained that an entry fee had been charged for the inaugural WJMDCC 2025 and there had been less push back from MAs than expected. The question now arises as to whether World Curling should charge an entry fee for each event? All MAs charge entry fees for their national championships, so considering them at the world level seems justified.

There would be various entry fee models that World Curling could take into consideration:

- Flat entry fee per event (e.g. \$1,000 for mixed doubles, \$2,000 for team events)
- Entry fee per accredited team member
- Entry fee per qualification pathway (ECC-C, ECC-B, ECC-A)

KFO emphasized that in lot of the “middle countries” the players will have to pay this entry fee. ERÖ mentioned that she was struggling with linking an entry fee to how many accreditations are handed out. That changes a lot once the teams arrive and would be a huge administrative problem. ERÖ suggested implementing a flat fee, one for MD, one for juniors and one for adult teams. The Board agreed that to start with (phase 1), if agreed, the system should be kept simple. In phase 2 the entry fee could eventually be linked to the number of accreditations.

The following amounts were considered appropriate by the Board (all entry fees to be non-refundable):

- junior and MD teams USD 1,000
- adult teams (4 players) USD 2,000

The total income to World Curling would be around USD 400,000 per year. If implemented, entry fees should be charged starting in the 2026/2027 season.

SMV suggested to run participation events (mixed, seniors, stick, e-curling) under a licence model, providing quality assurance and assistance to local organisers.

Eeva Röthlisberger (Head of Competitions – ERÖ), Chris Hamilton (Head of Communications & Marketing - CHA) and Alan Chalmers (Head of Finance/COO – ACH) left the meeting.

Budget 2025/2026

CGR updated the Board as follows: NHK informed World Curling two days after the budget presentation that they would not cover the World Men's and Mixed Doubles due to Olympic commitments, causing an immediate negative impact on the budget. Various budget lines had been reviewed and adjusted, including manufacturer fees, venue income, board travel, games travel, World Academy of Sports billings, junior flights, staff planning, and broadcasting.

The following amendments to the first version of the budget were approved to reduce the deficit:

- addition of loan arrangement fee

- eliminate (in Olympic years) DAP funding for MAs that have already qualified, all other MAs receive \$9,000
- lower the marketing/media budget and remove coverage from B and C Division and Junior Mixed Doubles
- reduce Board attendance at events to one person per event
- reduce broadcast contingency by 50%

CGR clarified that the budget is presented at the Annual General Assembly for information only, not for approval by the membership.

To approve the 2025-2026 budget

***moved by SMV
seconded by MSO
and approved unanimously***