



MINUTES
of the WORLD CURLING Executive Board
Online Meeting #2026-01
on 14 January 2026

Attendees

Executive Board

Beau Welling (BWE)	President
Kim Forge (KFO)	Vice-President
Morten Soegaard (MSO)	Vice-President
Helena Lingham (HLI)	Director
Sergio Mitsuo Vilela (SMV)	Director
Rob Niven (RNI)	Director
Jill Officer (JOF)	Director
David Sik (DSI)	Director
Hong Zhang (HZH)	Independent 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

The meeting started at 12:00.

Presidents Update

BWE opened by welcoming everyone after the holidays and introduced an update on Milan–Cortina preparations. The field of play is finalized, with remaining challenges focused on logistics, particularly travel coordination. The Board was encouraged to share schedules with the office so transportation support can be arranged. CGR was acknowledged for effectively managing on-site coordination and resolving last-minute issues.

The Milan–Cortina experience is expected to generate valuable lessons for the IOC, with a formal debrief planned for mid-May following Geneva meetings. BWE emphasized using challenges as an opportunity to inform future Olympic planning.

CGR added that ice installation in Cortina would begin shortly, with overall confidence in the Milan–Cortina venue despite current cleanliness challenges due to ongoing construction. The venue’s Games branding is going up and is expected to look impressive. Ticket sales are progressing reasonably well, with most sessions over 50% sold and some key sessions nearly full, though there have been complaints about poor seat grouping, which will be raised with the IOC. Accreditations are being issued and airport-to-hotel transfers should be confirmed soon.

CGR provided an update on expectations on Board members with regards formal duties, attire etc.,

An update was provided on the December Olympic Qualification Event (OQE) in Kelowna, which was considered successful overall. The venue and local partners received strong praise, and stakeholder engagement, including meetings with key individuals, was well received. NBC’s coverage of the event was highlighted as a success, with positive feedback and optimism for expanded coverage of future events.

Considerable time had also been spent on WOF-related matters, including the election of Jae Youl Kim as WOF representative to the IOC Executive Board. Disputes surrounding the election have created political complications. A WOF strategy session is scheduled immediately after the Paralympics, with the goal of aligning future direction.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To approve the minutes of the Board meetings on 26 November 2025

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

Matters Arising Not Covered Elsewhere

None

Conflict of Interest

To be added: JOF is coaching a team at Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

Priorities and Actions

CGR explained that following the last meeting, priorities and secondary actions from the Forward Plan had been clarified. He had circulated two documents: a high-level summary aligning the four pillars with the agreed priorities and secondary actions, and a more detailed document outlining progress to date, next steps, and immediate targets. Many of these targets focus on preparation for the Geneva meetings and presenting updates there. He invited feedback on whether the level of detail provided is appropriate.

ARY supported the document but recommended adding a clear opening statement affirming World Curling's role as the global governing body to strengthen its authority against any future challenges. CGR agreed, noting the document also needs World Curling branding.

HLI raised two points: the need to clarify and update references to the internal DAP committee so its role and composition are clear, and the importance of including concrete actions to engage major MAs who have expressed interest in supporting the Forward Plan. CGR acknowledged this but noted disappointment that when asked for input most invited bodies had not responded, suggesting a need for stronger follow-up.

MSO emphasized the need to actively engage major MAs by inviting them to make concrete, specific contributions rather than general or political input. He suggested directly following up with them, including discussions at the Olympics, to clarify where and how they should contribute.

CGR agreed in principle but stressed that World Curling should clearly direct members on where help is needed, rather than leaving invitations open-ended, as past broad requests have led to little action. He advocated putting responsibility back on members who have offered support by specifying areas where their input is required.

MSO also noted that the primary goals in the document are too broad and non-specific. He suggested the Board should have a future discussion to better define priorities, such as focusing on developing and strengthening existing MAs rather than prioritizing new ones. CGR responded that more specific outcomes and metrics are being developed and will be ready for discussion and sharing by the Geneva meetings.

DSI expressed concern that the strategy document feels too brief and overly focused on short-term actions, with insufficient attention to longer-term goals beyond 2026–27. He felt some important areas, such as game improvement and innovation, are missing or not clearly stated, which may make the strategy unclear to member associations.

CGR explained that the shorter, more focused priorities reflected the Board's earlier direction to reduce the number of priorities, but agreed that broader, longer-term vision language could be added to clarify direction beyond the current action plan.

SMV noted that the document is intended to be a strategy framework, separate from ongoing operational work, which continues regardless of whether it is listed as a specific action.

MSO agreed with David and emphasized the need to strengthen the narrative and long-term storyline for presentation at the Geneva open meeting, as MAS are seeking clearer strategic guidance for their own future planning.

JOF agreed the document is fine for short-term actions but emphasized the need to keep the longer-term strategic plan in view. She highlighted that while the priorities are clear, the organization also needs to consider goals and implementation plans for the next quadrennial.

BWE and CGR agreed, noting general language can be added to signal long-term activities and innovation without altering the prioritized short-term focus.

KFO emphasized that developing a true strategic plan requires broad stakeholder engagement, research, and analysis. She stressed that member organizations, like Australian Curling, are already planning their next quadrennial and expect leadership on priorities.

CGR acknowledged this but noted that significant engagement has already occurred through prior meetings, SWOT analysis, and MA consultations, though member responses have often been limited, he felt that the Board were underplaying what they had done. He agreed more context and longer-term vision could be added, while maintaining the four prioritized actions, and suggested waiting for the new Board to confirm any major changes.

Russia / Belarus

CGR updated the Board on recent developments regarding Russia and Belarus. He noted that the Russian Curling Federation had threatened to challenge World Curling's exclusion decision at CAS, though this challenge has been postponed until after this meeting. He outlined that the IOC Olympic Summit has now removed all restrictions on "youth sports," meaning Russia and Belarus will compete under their own flags at the 2026 Youth Olympic Games, though in Milan Cortina they remain neutral athletes. CGR added that it is expected the IOC will lift all restrictions for senior qualification for LA after Milan Cortina. The IPC has also lifted all restrictions on the two countries.

CGR framed the Board's immediate decisions as twofold: whether to allow Russian juniors to participate in the World Junior Mixed Doubles in line with the IOC recommendation, and whether to reconsider or modify the current suspension for broader play.

BWE acknowledged the difficult position World Curling is in, noting the Board must decide whether to stand on its principles and accept the consequences or adapt. He explained that the IOC is directing full participation for juniors, and the IPC has already lifted restrictions. He noted that after Milan Cortina, the IOC is likely to recommend full reintegration of Russia. BWE said he is still forming his own view but recognized the inevitability of Russia being brought back in and the need to plan accordingly.

After significant discussion the Board recognized that there have been a number of changes in the global sporting picture (IOC Summit decision and advice; IPC General Assembly decision; CAS decisions on FIS and FIL) since the feedback received from members both during and after the Congress. It was also noted that the World Junior Mixed Doubles in Edmonton is, subject to IOC approval, to be used as a qualifier for the Youth Olympic Games in 2028. It was understood that for some MAs even allowing the Juniors back on the field of play would be too much. If the decision to allow it is taken it would be a test to see if the integrity of our events could be maintained or if there would be an impact.

BWE outlined three realistic options for the Board:

- continue the total ban, which would likely lead to a CAS case, although some members would support holding that principled line.
- follow the IOC's gradual recommendation by allowing juniors, which some members would oppose and may still result in a CAS challenge.
- Keep the ban for the current season but confirm to lift for next season

The Board voted on the following question: Do we follow the IOC recommendation and lift our suspension of the juniors?

Approved by majority

CGR confirmed that a public statement would be prepared.

India Governance Issues

BWE described a deep governance crisis within Indian curling, with sharply conflicting narratives between the president and the secretariat, each accusing the other of misconduct and illegitimacy. The Board is receiving large volumes of contradictory communications from individuals on both sides claiming authority, making it very difficult to determine the facts or identify legitimate leadership.

He noted that, although the federation has traditionally avoided internal politics, the situation has escalated to the point where athletes are urging the Board to intervene, warning that the current dysfunction is damaging the sport's development in India. BWE referenced past precedent, such as the federation's intervention in Poland, where governance issues ultimately led to suspension in order to drive reform. While the easiest option would be to stay out and tell the parties to resolve matters internally, BWE emphasized that the current situation is untenable, the Indian Olympic Association has provided no guidance yet, and athletes are increasingly concerned about their future under the existing structure.

MSO stated that the conflict within Indian curling is harming the sport's reputation, with online posts and media coverage fueling two opposing camps. He concluded they are close to having grounds for suspension but emphasized, per the Constitution, both sides must be given a chance to present their case. So far, attempts to encourage dialogue have failed, he recommended listening to both sides while issuing a clear warning about possible suspension.

ARY explained that conflicts within Indian sports governing bodies are historically intense, often involving claims of corruption, fake documents, and legal battles that drag on for years. He shared that even major sports like cricket and hockey face constant internal disputes. He advised that while trying to resolve the situation is extremely difficult, BWE is not alone in facing these challenges. ARY suggested registering the issue with the IOC (Jerome Poivey) and consulting experts like Kelly Fairweather (former CEO of FIH – field hockey), noting that suspension is often the ultimate outcome when internal governance issues persist.

CGR suggested that the Board write to both sides involved, notifying them that a motion for suspension would be considered. He recommended inviting each side to submit their case explaining why suspension should not occur and how they propose to resolve the dispute. The Board agreed.

MA Group Meetings

HLI outlined plans for the early March member group meetings, emphasizing preparation for discussion on a potential new topic, Russia, without adding it to the preliminary agenda. She suggested updating members on new staff, the calendar, and other relevant items, while keeping the meetings concise to lead into the open meeting. She noted that feedback on the naming convention of events had been limited and asked each facilitator to provide the comments from their meeting to CGR so he could develop recommendations for the Board to consider. Helena tasked the Board with aligning dates for the member group meetings, requesting feedback on the preliminary agenda as presented as they proceed.

Commission Athlete Commission Terms of Reference Update

TGE explained that changes to the Terms of Reference had been proposed to make them more inclusive for the top 25 spots. By extending eligibility back two years, more athletes would qualify to run, increasing competitiveness and participation. Similar adjustments had been suggested to the voting process to bring more athletes into the decision-making.

To approve the proposed new Terms of Reference for the Athlete Commission

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

Board Assessment

MSO suggested moving forward with preparing the board assessment. The Board agreed.

The meeting ended at 14:00