MINUTES
of the WORLD CURLING Executive Board
Meeting #2026-04
on 29 and 30 April 2026
Geneva, Switzerland

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 (only 29 April 2026)
Andrew Ryan (ARY)	Independent Director
Hong Zhang (HZH)	Independent Director
Tyler George (TGE)	Athlete Commission Chair
Colin Grahamslaw (CGR)	Secretary General
Saskia Müller-Gastell (SMG)	Projects Officer/Minute taker

Both BWE and CGR welcomed the Board to Geneva.

President's Update

WMCC 2026 Ogden, USA / OWG 2034 Salt Lake City

BWE reflected positively on the recent WMCC 2026 at Ogden, USA. The event was considered successful, with strong support from the local organizing group and the Olympic Legacy Foundation. The organizers were highly complimentary of World Curling's performance and expressed interest in hosting more events in the future. Early concerns centered on lower-than-expected Canadian attendance, which created marketing challenges, but organizers ultimately believed they at least broke even financially. BWE had also toured the proposed curling venue for the 2034 Olympics with local organizers and the 2034 planning team. The venue, located in the Salt Palace convention center, is adjacent to the planned Medals Plaza and will share space with the media center. BWE felt the location and setup would be a major success, praising its central location and flexibility. They had also discussed potential innovations to improve the spectator experience, including lounge-style seating and giving attendees closer access to the ice.

<u>OWG 2030 French Alps</u>

The President expressed uncertainty about plans for the 2030 French Alps Olympics, particularly around ongoing issues in Nice involving the ice sport federations. The originally planned venue in Nice had already raised concerns because it would require significant modifications. During the Olympics 2026, organizers from Monaco had proposed hosting instead, and CGR had recently toured the potential venue there. While the idea is considered promising, the venue is small, and there are concerns about seating capacity and how much space Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS) would require.

If the ice sports remain in Nice, Monaco could be a possible option. But if the events move elsewhere, such as Lyon, World Curling would likely follow.

<u>WOF</u>

BWE informed that the WOF team is preparing intensely for an official IOC debrief in Lausanne on 13 May 2026 focused on lessons from Milan Cortina and improving future event delivery. Although Milan Cortina was considered successful, there is concern that success relied too much on luck rather than strong systems and strategy. Discussions with the IOC suggest openness to exploring new approaches and structural changes.

BWE also advised that WOF are dealing with major uncertainty due to the ongoing "fit for future" reforms within the IOC, including controversial discussions about moving some sports from Summer to Winter Games, which WOF opposes. Also, significant political and leadership changes are underway with several winter IFs electing new presidents shortly.

The broader issue is uncertainty around winter sport representation within the IOC. Historically there have been three winter sport representatives, but upcoming elections could significantly change that balance. BWE emphasized that, amid all this instability and IOC-level change, it is important for WOF to remain strong and unified. More clarity is expected after the IOC debrief and upcoming elections.

SportAccord

The SportAccord Convention scheduled for May 2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan had been postponed to a later date due to the conflict in the Middle East. BWE explained that SportAccord has two main events:

- The SportAccord Convention, intended as a revenue-generating event.

- The IF Forum in Lausanne, intended mainly as a break-even gathering for Olympic and non-Olympic sports federations.

Because the convention had been postponed, the IF Forum will likely be expanded into a larger event. Looking ahead, the expectation is that Baku will host next year's event, followed by Cape Town the year after, with hopes that the organization can regain stability moving forward.

<u>IOC Session</u>

The next Extraordinary IOC Session is scheduled to take place from June 24 to 25, 2026, in Lausanne, Switzerland. This session will focus on the "Fit for the Future" reforms and the strategic direction of the organization.

<u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u>

To approve the Board minutes of 2 April 2026

moved by KFO
seconded by RNI
and approved unanimously

<u>Matters Arising Not Covered Elsewhere</u>
None

<u>Conflict of Interest</u>

To be added:

Four election candidates for World Curling elections at World Curling Congress 2026:

- Beau Welling, President
- Helena Lingham, Director
- Sergio Mitsuo Vilela, Director
- Rob Niven, Director

<u>Russia Participation Update</u>

CGR advised that the Russian Curling Federation (RCF) had now successfully paid their appeal fee to CAS so the case will now move ahead. World Curling's lawyer is preparing World Curling's position in response to the Russian challenge. There has been one further case heard by CAS relating to the FIDE (Chess), in this case there was a partial defeat for the Russian side but this related to actions regarding the management of chess in the areas of Ukraine taken by Russia rather than a direct ban on access to competitions.

CGR recounted a meeting with Ukrainian representatives regarding the decision to allow Russia into the Junior Mixed Doubles event. The Ukrainians had argued that they should have been consulted before the decision was made. In response, World Curling had said they had already been aware of the views of Ukraine, Latvia, and other members through previous consultations at Congress and subsequent feedback, so those perspectives had been considered during discussions.

BWE argued that the organization should consider adding clearer rules to its constitution that would automatically penalize or exclude members whose national federations are suspended by bodies like WADA or whose individuals appear on sanction lists. He expressed concern that World Curling currently lacks effective enforcement mechanisms and relies too heavily on the vague concept of "bringing the sport into disrepute," which is subjective and likely to lead to legal disputes, especially involving wealthy parties. ARY added that rules have to be reasonable and proportionate in law.

The Board agreed to formally ask the Governance Commission to come up with a set of proposals to expand the rationale for justifiable reasons for suspension/exclusion in the constitution to be voted on at the AGM 2026.

Finance Updates

Q3 Figures

The latest papers had been distributed in advance by email and these were now discussed.

CGR explained that the main income variances were driven by lower-than-expected social media and interest revenue, partly offset by stronger broadcasting income from some events.

The organization had expected significant social media income during the Olympics due to high engagement - around one billion impressions - but IOC restrictions prevented monetization of Olympic-related content, eliminating that anticipated revenue. In addition, the usual post-Olympic IOC payment of about $10 million had not yet been received, reducing expected bank interest income.

On the positive side, broadcasting revenues from the European Championships and Olympic qualification events exceeded expectations. However, revenues from the Pan Continental Curling Championships (PCCC) and the World Curling Channel were below forecast. This was attributed to lower international interest, weaker Canadian viewership, and scheduling conflicts with other major sports broadcasts, including a Canadian curling qualifier and the Blue Jays playoff series.

CGR also noted that many expenditure differences were related to the Olympic cycle.

On the expenditure side, several higher costs were explained by previously approved initiatives and Olympic-related factors. Approved expenses included the systems and procedures review and the addition of two World Championship pre-qualifiers instead of one European C Division event.

DAP (Development Assistance Program) costs were higher than forecast because more countries claimed larger portions of their approved funding than expected.

Meeting and event costs in Geneva were significantly higher due to increased hotel prices and much larger attendance than originally budgeted. Medical expenses also rose because National Anti-Doping Organizations (NADOs) did not carry out as much pre-Olympic testing as expected, leaving the organization to conduct additional testing as the "tester of last resort" in coordination with WADA.

Some savings offset these increases. Junior B flight costs were lower because fewer distant teams entered than anticipated. Media and marketing expenses were reduced through early flight bookings and cuts to external services once budget overruns became apparent. However, event costs for juniors increased because the organization had to absorb more venue-related costs in Copenhagen than originally planned.

Not included yet are the anticipated legal costs of about USD 10,000 for the cases at the Olympics and currently around USD 25,000 for the Russia case.

World Curling has not received information yet on what the total revenue share will be for the Olympic Winter Games 2026. However, the amount of money received from IOC has basically been the same since 2010. Taking into account inflation the real dollars that World Curling receives from the IOC are in fact declining. This is one reason why World Curling is asking its MAs to help change the system and develop new ways of getting revenue.

To accept the Q3 accounts

moved by SMV
seconded by KFO
and approved unanimously

EQ

SMV reported that EQ had carried out an assessment of World Curling's current finance systems, processes, and controls. Their findings did not expose any system weaknesses that would result in material differences to the reported accounts. One of their key findings was that QuickBooks was not optimal for World Curling's complexity: multi-currency functionality is not used causing time-consuming manual processes. They had recommended using the Xero software and this was now discussed by the Board.

CGR explained that implementing the Xero system would create time savings and improve efficiency by simplifying processes. The multi-currency functionality would remove the need for manual currency conversions, and invoices could be uploaded directly into the system, where information is automatically populated. Overall, the automation would reduce administrative work and would free staff to focus on other tasks.

The Board described the new system as a necessary operational upgrade rather than a major transformation. They felt the relatively modest investment would likely pay for itself within a year by improving efficiency, forecasting, and staff capabilities. They also suggested exploring an alternative option of purchasing the system as a service.

<u>Finance Presentation to Open Meetings – Income Models</u>

A document containing various proposals for improving World Curling's financial situation had been circulated and was now being discussed. The measures under consideration are:

- Broadcast – reduce coverage and/or production level
- DAP – tailoring the funding to the development level of MAs
- Congress – host it physically only every second year
- Junior flights – remove support for junior flights
- Entry fees - $1600-800 per team
- MA Subscriptions - Change to per head and/or per vote charge

The President emphasized that the clear message out of the Congress 2025 in Australia was that World Curling must also look at raising income, not only at cutting costs. The Board agreed to further discuss above measures at the Open Meetings to get more feedback from the MAs.

<u>Medical Working Group Proposals</u>

The discussion focused on a proposal from Bob McCormack to formalize the existing working group into a Medical and Wellness Commission, supported by draft terms of reference. CGR noted that creating a formal commission would require an amendment to the constitution to add it to the official list of commissions.

To instruct the Governance Commission to update the constitution to include a Medical and Wellness Commission

moved by JOF
seconded by KFO
and approved unanimously

JOF was appointed Board liaison for the Medical and Wellness commission.

<u>IOC Policy on Protection of the Female Category</u>

HLI reported: World Curling already operates with separate male and female competition categories. Curling relies on strength, power and endurance, as demonstrated by:

- a clear male advantage in brushing (sweeping) power
- performance comparisons in draw shot challenge, that show an advantage for male athletes, primarily due to greater sweeping power
- and differences in delivery weight, with male athletes generally able to deliver stones at higher speeds due to greater strength and power

Based on the above assessment, Curling clearly falls within the scope of the IOC policy for sports where sex-based eligibility criteria apply. There is no basis for requesting an exception.

That World Curling formally adopt the IOC Policy on the Protection of the Female Category in Olympic Sport and start preparation for implementation and

That World Curling awaits specific guidance from the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) regarding the application of eligibility criteria for Paralympic athletes, before taking any decisions or implementing measures in relation to Paralympic events.

moved by HLI
seconded by RNI
and approved unanimously

Competition Updates

Rules Consultations with MAs

A summary of the rule changes currently under discussion had been sent out prior to the meeting.

The Board discussed the process currently governing rule changes, which some Board members considered too drawn-out and time-consuming.

CGR indiciated no changes to the process should be made during the current meeting, but the discussion should resume when the new Board starts in September as part of the broader strategy review and ongoing continuous improvement process.

ECC A event – number of teams

Following an internal review on the possible structures with 10 men's teams and 11 women's teams it is proposed to increase the number of teams in both events to 12 teams with the format being 2 pools of 6 with the top two in each pool progressing to semi finals. This creates a clearer format to understand rather than two pools of 5 with teams playing the teams in the other pool without extending the event. This is subject to the agreement of the Hosts.

To increase ECC-A to 12 teams per gender pending LOC approval

moved by RNI
seconded by JOF
and approved unanimously

Update on Potential Hosts

The meeting reviewed hosting status for upcoming curling events. There are currently no hosts for the World Mixed or World Seniors, though Finland is expected to host Mixed Doubles. Interest for World Juniors has come from Finland, Scotland, and China, with Scotland preferred due to lower travel costs. Other qualifier events may return to previous hosts like Sweden or Scotland.

The Board also discussed how travel expenses heavily influence host selection, making it harder for distant regions like China or the Middle East to host unless bidding rules change to include support for flights and accommodations.

Wheelchair Classification Proposals

CGR explained that World Curling is currently updating its classification rules to align with the IPC classification code and is considering allowing athletes with unilateral amputations to compete in wheelchair curling. The goal is to expand participation opportunities, while recognizing that single-leg amputees may have some competitive advantages, so team limits may apply. The proposal has already been discussed within the wheelchair curling community and presented to Congress.

To approve the principle of allowing athletes with unilateral amputations

moved by KFO
seconded by RNI
and approved unanimously

Hall of Fame Proposals

The HoF committee would like to change the induction criteria as follows:

1. Removal of the current age qualification for players which prevents induction for Under 50’s. The Committee feel that it should be completely merit based and that being young should not prevent you from being inducted.
2. Removal of retired clause from the qualification for players. The Committee feel that playing in World Curling events should not prevent you from being inducted into the HoF, currently you must have retired, this is even more challenging with the World Seniors being recognized as an official event as players may consider themselves retired then make a comeback.

3. Automatic recognition of Past Presidents. The Committee feel all Past Presidents should be automatically recognized as members of the HoF.

To approve the three above changes to the Hall of Fame induction criteria

moved by TGE
seconded by KFO
and approved unanimously

Future of DAP

The discussion focused on the future direction of World Curling's development funding (DAP).

A major topic throughout the conversation was whether the current development system is actually achieving meaningful growth. While the number of member associations has increased significantly over the past years, the number of registered curlers has remained largely flat. At the same time, participants noted that financial pressure is increasing because IOC funding has effectively declined in real terms due to inflation, while more federations are now sharing the available resources. Several Board members expressed concern that a substantial amount of development funding is benefiting only a very small number of active curlers.

The group repeatedly returned to the broader question of what "development" should actually mean in curling. Some argued that the main objective must be to increase the number of people actively playing the sport. Others felt that development should also include sustaining junior programs, building visibility, increasing awareness, or strengthening organizational structures in smaller nations. This debate became especially visible in the discussion around floor curling. Supporters described floor curling as an affordable and accessible way to introduce people to curling in countries without ice facilities. Critics questioned whether floor curling was still serving as a pathway into ice curling or whether it had become a separate activity with limited impact on long-term participation growth.

There was also considerable criticism of how development funds are currently distributed and used. Some Board members suggested that certain member associations apply for funding opportunistically rather than through long-term planning, especially toward the end of funding cycles. Examples were given of spending on equipment or projects whose actual developmental impact was unclear. Questions were also raised about whether larger and financially stronger countries should continue receiving subsidies for items they could reasonably fund themselves. Several people argued that development money should be targeted much more carefully toward activities that genuinely create sustainable growth.

In response to these concerns, a number of reform ideas were discussed. One proposal was to introduce a clearer tier-based funding structure, where support levels and expectations would differ depending on the maturity and size of a member association. Applications would need to be submitted earlier in the year, giving both the federations and World Curling more predictability and encouraging better long-term planning. Another important proposal was the introduction of co-funding requirements, meaning member associations would need to contribute part of the costs themselves or secure support from governments, Olympic solidarity programs, or other external partners. The idea behind this “skin in the game” approach was to ensure stronger commitment and accountability.

The discussion also explored shifting part of the support away from direct cash payments toward centrally delivered services such as coaching education, regional camps, development programs, and training opportunities. Participants felt this could improve quality control and ensure that funding is used more effectively. At the same time, there was recognition that newer and smaller member associations still require meaningful support to build basic structures and remain engaged internationally.

The Board discussed how these ideas should be communicated publicly. Some participants warned that the reforms should not be presented simply as cost-cutting measures. Instead, the message should focus on making development funding more strategic, effective, transparent, and aligned with long-term growth goals. Overall, there was broad agreement that the existing system needs to evolve so that development funding produces clearer outcomes and delivers greater value for the sport globally.

The core decisions and agreed directions were:

- A working group will be created to review and redesign the development funding approach for the coming season. The group is expected to remain relatively small, with representatives from staff, the Board, and development-oriented member associations.
- The organization will move toward a more structured and strategic development funding model, rather than continuing with the current largely open-ended approach.
- There was broad agreement that future funding should involve earlier application deadlines and clearer planning cycles, so member associations know funding outcomes earlier and World Curling gains more budget predictability.
- The concept of requiring “skin in the game” was strongly supported. Member Associations will likely be expected to contribute part of the funding themselves or secure outside support, with larger nations contributing proportionally more.
- The group generally agreed that development funding should become more accountable and measurable, including clearer project plans, reporting requirements, and evidence of outcomes.
- There was support for shifting part of the support model away from direct cash grants toward centrally provided services, such as coaching courses, camps, education programs, and regional development initiatives.

- The discussion confirmed that the organization should focus more on growing participation within existing member associations rather than simply increasing the number of member associations.
- It was agreed that the reforms should not be framed as cost-cutting, but instead as a redistribution and smarter targeting of resources to achieve better developmental impact.
- The Board supported introducing eligibility conditions for funding, potentially linked to participation in competitions, reporting obligations, and membership surveys.
- There was also agreement that the current use of development funds for certain types of equipment or operational support needs to be reviewed more critically.

Electronic Handles – further development

DSI reported on the current status and future development of the electronic curling handle project. The system has now been successfully used at multiple events, and overall feedback was positive, although several technical issues were identified during operation. These included charging management problems, instability of the on/off switch under impact, and occasional calibration issues caused by rapid stone rotation. Most of these problems are expected to be resolved through firmware updates and minor hardware adjustments.

Production planning for the next phase is already underway, with orders from member associations expected shortly. DSI anticipated several hundred handle orders and aims to complete deliveries by September.

The presentation also outlined longer-term development opportunities. Existing sensors already allow the collection of performance data such as spin, acceleration, and hog-to-hog timing. Future upgrades could introduce advanced tracking capabilities through a new three-dimensional magnetometer system, enabling more detailed analytics for coaching, officiating, and broadcasting purposes.

Board members discussed how future upgrades would affect current purchasers and agreed that any future hardware enhancements should be designed in a way that protects existing investments. Potential upgrade services or premium versions may be introduced later.

A proposal was presented to approve approximately USD 11,000 for the next development phase. This funding would cover improvements to charging systems, the on/off switch, software backup procedures, and preparation for future sensor upgrades. DSI emphasized that these improvements are necessary for stable production and should not increase retail pricing.

The Board expressed strong support for the project, recognizing both its technical success and its commercial potential. It was noted that handle sales are already generating meaningful revenue, helping offset development costs.

To approve an expense of USD 11,000 to assist with further technical development of the electronic handles

moved by JOF
seconded by DSI
and approved unanimously

The Board confirmed that the project still has significant long-term development potential, particularly regarding live broadcast integration, coaching analytics, and future technology enhancements.

The discussion briefly addressed the possibility of introducing a VAR-style video review system for curling. DSI clarified that the current electronic handle technology is not intended to serve as a video review solution, although it may support other forms of data analysis.

CGR mentioned that a separate video analysis system is being explored together with Omega Swiss Timing. A prototype had already been tested in Cortina using a single camera. However, the main challenge remains whether the system can reliably operate with multiple cameras simultaneously, which would be necessary for a fully functional and viable review system in competition settings. The Board is currently waiting for further information on pricing and technical feasibility.

Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The Board reviewed and finalized a “Board Evaluation” document focusing on strategy, governance, board effectiveness, culture, composition, and reporting. It will be distributed as a questionnaire for Board members to complete over the next month, with results later discussed internally, likely around Congress.
Final comments are to be submitted within a few days before launch. The output will remain internal, and any sensitive open-text feedback may be anonymized. The process aims to assess and improve Board performance and governance.

Virtual Museum

RNI reported that the virtual museum project had made solid progress, with most of the World Curling archives already digitalized and uploaded, including trophies, medals, and major collections. Work remains on Hall of Fame materials, particularly creating written stories for each inductee.

A draft membership application process (Google form) had been prepared but will be launched after Congress rather than immediately.

A key issue is funding. RNI requested an additional GBP 5,000 to cover platform costs and continued development. Around £1,600 of this would secure platform fees for up to six years. While most of the initial upload work is complete, there is a proposal to make the system more self-sustaining going forward, potentially including contributions or fees from member associations using the platform.

The Board discussed whether the virtual museum was a strategic investment in the sport's heritage or a discretionary cost. The consensus leaned toward continuing the project, as it is largely on track and relatively low cost in the longer term.

The Board approved additional expenditure of GBP 5,000 for the virtual museum for the following financial year.

Items for Discussion from Commission Meetings

Sustainability Update (KFO)

The Sustainability Commission provided an update following participation in a major Olympic sports sustainability conference in Lausanne, attended by representatives from 37 international federations. The meetings had strengthened collaboration with leading organisations and experts in sports sustainability, including the IOC, biathlon, and other winter sports federations.

The commission had reviewed the key sustainability frameworks already developed by World Curling, including the Ice Cube Strategy, the Climate Action Plan (CAP), and ongoing UNFCCC reporting obligations. World Curling was highlighted as one of a small number of federations participating in an accelerator programme supported by Deloitte to advance sustainability planning and implementation.

Discussions at the conference focused on integrating sustainability into all areas of sport operations, including event hosting, procurement, infrastructure, partnerships, sponsorship, and education. Particular emphasis was placed on carbon footprint tracking, sustainable sourcing, reducing waste, and building collaborations with other federations and research institutions.

The commission has now begun prioritising practical, low-cost actions from the Climate Action Plan. Current focus areas include education and awareness initiatives, sustainability training, incentives and recognition programmes, travel and waste reduction guidelines, and improved sustainability criteria for event hosting. The group is also exploring partnerships around zero-plastic events and developing tailored sustainability education programmes for athletes, coaches, and officials.

Draft Concussion Policy and Draft Medical Manual and Checklist

The Board reviewed draft versions of a concussion policy and a medical manual/checklist prepared by the medical working group. The documents were presented for feedback only and not for formal approval at this stage, with Board members asked to provide comments by the end of June.

It was noted that the policies are based on established international standards, including practices used at the Olympic Games, and supported by external medical expertise. The discussion also clarified that governance responsibility for these policies will ultimately sit with the future Medical Commission once formally established.

Commission Minutes for Information

The minutes of the Health and Wellness Working Group and the Sustainability Commission had been shared in the drive. There were no questions.

Finance Presentation

SMV presented the revised financial presentation. The Board provided further feedback.

Forward Plan Updates

The discussion focused on updates to the Forward Plan for curling operations, media, and development projects.

Key points included progress on a new CRM system, which will soon be tested, and ongoing consultation about a subscription model. Social media and Olympic coverage performed strongly, with around one billion views, though newsletter growth was lower than expected because of operational distractions.

The Board reviewed broadcasting and media strategies, including testing lower-cost remote production models and debating whether mixed doubles events should continue with full TV production due to limited broadcaster interest and financial pressures facing sports networks.

The Board also discussed comparing curling’s Olympic media performance with other sports, plans for international development camps, and future competition calendar planning.

World Team Championships

The discussion focused on plans for a new world team curling championship, originally proposed for Montreal in January 2027.

Board members expressed concern about several risks:

- lack of firm US TV commitment from NBC,

- financial uncertainty, with an initial underwrite of several hundred thousand dollars required,
- overlap and competition with the new Rock League schedule,
- and broader economic and political instability.

Some Board members supported taking entrepreneurial risks to launch the event, even if the first edition loses money. Others argued the timing in January is politically and strategically problematic and preferred delaying the event to September 2027 as a season-opening tournament.

The Board debated whether to keep the event in Montreal, move it elsewhere in Canada, or potentially consider Las Vegas in the future. Concerns were also raised that changing dates or locations could jeopardize support from sponsors such as Everest.

No final decision was made. The Board agreed further discussions were needed with sponsors and broadcasters before deciding whether to proceed, delay, or redesign the event.

<u>Curling calendar</u>

The Board received a paper on restructuring the curling calendar and rankings system in order to create more structure, clearer competitive pathways, and stronger control over the sport's international event ecosystem. The current rankings system operates as a single list covering everything from small local bonspiels to world championships, with points determined by strength of field and certain "important" events receiving multipliers. The discussion centered on replacing this with a more tiered structure that would make it easier for teams, organizers, sponsors, and fans to understand the competitive landscape.

The proposal to divide events into several categories, including a Champions Series for the highest-level competitions such as Grand Slams, world championships, continental championships, national championships, and the biggest bonspiels; an Elite Series for strong international tour events below that level; a Challenger Series for developing teams and lower-tier events; and a possible U25 or "Next Gen" category aimed at helping younger players transition from juniors into adult curling. The Board members felt that this would give teams clearer goals and allow them to compete within levels appropriate to their abilities. Instead of only chasing the overall world rankings, teams could aim to become leaders within a specific tier, which was seen as more motivating and commercially useful.

The Board also discussed how national championships fit into the system. While all national championships currently receive an "importance factor," the actual points awarded still depend heavily on strength of field. This means that stronger curling nations naturally generate more ranking points than smaller countries. The Board generally agreed that national championships should continue to carry prestige regardless of the strength of field, even if the ranking outcomes differ significantly between countries.

Another major topic was the idea of strengthening World Curling's authority over events through a formal sanctioning system. The Board members repeatedly emphasized the need for World Curling to maintain control over rankings, calendar structure, Olympic qualification pathways, and event standards before external or breakaway leagues impact. Several references were made to tennis, where the ATP and WTA now dominate much of the professional game, leaving the International Tennis Federation with limited control. Members stressed that curling should avoid a similar situation by establishing clear governance now.

Under the proposed system, events would become officially sanctioned by World Curling and would need to meet certain criteria to qualify for rankings points and official recognition. Possible requirements discussed included minimum prize money, event conditions, scheduling coordination, use of trained officials, field quality, and compliance with organizational standards. Sanctioned events would also gain the right to use World Curling branding, which participants believed could eventually become commercially valuable for organizers and sponsors.

The discussion also touched on calendar management. The new tier structure would help World Curling coordinate schedules so that major events do not overlap unnecessarily and elite competitions are spread more effectively throughout the season. However, concerns were raised about how much control could realistically be exercised over lower-tier events, especially those hosted by local curling clubs that already operate around fixed league schedules and member commitments. Some Board members believed clubs would resist outside scheduling influence, while others argued that if the system created enough commercial and promotional value, clubs would eventually see the benefits of participating. There was broad agreement that the restructuring could significantly improve sponsorship opportunities and the marketability of curling. It was noted that the current rankings are difficult to follow and poorly promoted. A tiered system with recognizable branding, rankings, and potentially even end-of-season awards or finals events could create better storytelling and more attractive sponsorship products. RNI also suggested the possibility of future "Tour Finals" events for the Elite and Challenger tiers, although the Board agreed that this should be considered a later phase after the core tiering system is implemented successfully.

A brief side discussion explored whether curling should eventually introduce individual player rankings and annual awards, inspired by MVP-style recognition already used by some sponsors. However, this idea was not pursued in depth because most Board members still viewed curling fundamentally as a team sport.

The meeting concluded with agreement that Rob Gordon should continue developing the tiered rankings and sanctioning concepts. The Board viewed the restructuring as an important strategic step toward improving the calendar, strengthening World Curling's authority, creating more commercial value, and preventing outside leagues from taking control of the sport's competitive structure.