**A Proposal to Launch Family Curling Programs at Your Curling Club**

**Family curling programs:**

**STARTING A PROGRAM**

This past year in Calgary, a pilot league and two large scale sessions with ~350 players were launched. All of the learnings from these sessions and the materials needed to start a program are being shared with curling clubs such as ours. This includes marketing materials and use of the [www.familycurling.com](http://www.familycurling.com) website for promotion and training. (No fees involved)

A quality family curling program can be started by a few passionate individuals with the use of these materials. We ask that the <club name>, with our help, launch family curling programs within our community. If necessary, we can establish an association and rent the ice from the club. However, we would prefer to work from within the club.

 **CURLING CLUB STAKEHOLDER UNDERSTANDING**

It is important that all management and board members within the club fully understand what a family curling league is meant to be and the possible outcomes of such a program.

A family curling program’s goal is to recruit players who have not curled before. It then encourages them to continue curling as a family for a few years and/or to move on to existing youth and adult curling leagues within the club. This goal differs from an established league that strives to keep players returning to their league every year.

An established league can count on most of its players returning and can predict how much ice it will need the next season. Since a family curling program’s role is to recruit a high percentage of new players every session, *ice rental guarantees cannot be made in advance*.

How many sheets the club should reserve for a family league is a joint decision with the club. Where the club understands both the risk of not filling all of the sheets and the risk of turning away players, who may otherwise move on to other programs within the club.

Family curling programs, if not filled by the first week, tend to grow by a sheet or two in the first three weeks. Fees for late registrations should be prorated and the club should be paid for the additional sheet(s) starting on the week they are first used.

The club will need to provide brooms for players to use (the youth program’s brooms are fine) plus two delivery sticks per sheet. The programs in Calgary tried a number of delivery sticks and prefer a stick similar to the Olson Shooter ([www.olsoncurlingstore.com/shooter/](http://www.olsoncurlingstore.com/shooter/)) that has an open-bottomed handle attachment and does not have a telescopic handle. This style of delivery stick can be purchased for a reasonable price. It’s important that the club has the sticks on site so that a volunteer isn’t counted on to bring sticks.

Families often register as many as 4 or 5 players, so the program should try to keep fees as low as possible. - Balancing what most families can afford with the curling club’s need to cover its costs. Price may impact a family’s willingness to risk joining a curling program when they don’t know if they will like it. Higher priced programs may necessitate a ‘try it once for free’ policy.

Fees collected by the program are designed to cover the cost of the ice, online registration processing fees, insurance, promotion and miscellaneous expenses. Given the varying number of family members that may register (2,3,4,5,…), and the resulting combination of families that can make up a game, fees should be based on an average of 7 registrations per sheet.

If the club requires us to setup an association to run the program, we ask that the club help us find volunteers to assist families on the ice.

**PROPOSAL**

* As a base:
	+ Reserve 4-6 sheets for a 1.5 hour ice time on Saturday mornings
	+ 6-8 games before Christmas and 6-8 games after. (Two separate sessions with separate registrations)
* Further consider:
	+ Reserve a second 1.5 hour ice time with 4-6 sheets.
	+ Possibly run a family learn to slide program on half the sheets\*
* Alternatively:
	+ Reserve a second 1 hour ice time with 4-6 sheets serving younger families.
		- We surveyed families and had numerous responses supporting a 1 hour ice time option for cost and young player endurance reasons.

\* Family curling is positioned to advance players into youth and adult learn to curl (slide) programs. However, there are cases where this is a divergence from why people registered for family curling in the first place – to spend time together as a family. There may eventually be a need for a learn-to-slide family program.

**FACE TO FACE DISCUSSION**

Family curling isn’t just another rental league. It is a gateway for new players of all ages to become active members in a curling club. We welcome an invitation to meet with management and the board, to give all stakeholders of the club a chance to completely understand what family curling is about. It may also spark discussion on how to make it easy for family curlers to progress into other curling programs at the club.

**PLEASE**

Our goal is to enhancing the lives of youth and families. Many youth are not involved in winter team sports, partially because their strengths are not rewarded in other main stream activities. Curling is a unique game that remains a great fit for many youth. If the club chooses to launch a family curling program, we can invite that many more youth to discover if curling is the sport that enhances their lives.

Please feel welcome to ask any and all questions you may have.

Regards,