



# Minnesota Curling Association

2023 Annual MCA Board and Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 7, 2023, 7 pm, via Zoom

Lisa Rudolph, President, called the meeting to order.

Introduction of new board members:

- 1) Jason Botterill - Positioned to become 1st Vice President
- 2) Darwin Isdahl - Secretary

Jason will shadow Phil Devore in the 1st Vice President role. Normally, these positions would not be added until the annual meeting, per the bylaws. Due to the need to fill these positions immediately to continue functioning properly, the board approved the exception and filled them prior to the meeting. There were no objections to this from the membership and the positions were affirmed.

Three new arena clubs (Fergus Falls, Mower County and North Star) were recently admitted to the MCA. This would also normally be done during the annual meeting. However, since the clubs needed insurance from USCA and could not wait until the meeting, the board voted earlier to admit them. There were again no objections from the membership and the admission of the three clubs was affirmed.

While the order of the meeting agenda would have to be changed to accommodate those at a USCA meeting, it was approved without changes. The minutes from both the May 2022 and October 2022 membership meetings were approved without changes.

## President's report highlights (Lisa Rudolph):

- 1) Received 17 responses to a recent survey with some good information. Some of the highlights:
  - a) The top four statewide ways the MCA was requested to be more involved or to improve in were a central information hub, education/training/clinics, juniors programming and state playdown promotion. In response:
    - i) All spiels will be on the MCA website. All bonspiel calendars are requested by August 15th.
    - ii) Juniors programming does not have a plan beyond high school yet, but will look into possibilities
    - iii) We would like feedback on reasons clubs aren't participating in the state playdown promotion. The goal is to get more participation, including at the National level.
    - iv) Potential topics for future training and clinics are as follows:
      - (1) Adult skills instruction was the top training request. Since the cost of retention is lower than the cost of recruiting, this is an opportunity to help those curlers that we already have. There is a trial in Cambridge on this subject.
      - (2) Ice Making was the second most requested training suggestion. A couple of years ago, USA curling started holding ice summits. It has, however, been difficult to find host clubs. Lisa is currently in discussions with a club on this subject.
      - (3) USA Curling no longer does ice certifications, but we can still share information
      - (4) We would like to set up a few "Instructor" and "Official" clinics throughout the state. Part of the certification process involves spending time at events throughout the year. If we can get many going through the process, it could help relieve the challenge of finding volunteers.
  - b) The "Big Idea" clubs would overwhelmingly like to see is high school curling. We are trying to create a more cohesive plan. The current criteria is that all team members are from one school. We don't want this to be another U18. We have been talking to Dean Gemmell about this, who wants to start a National HS program using Minnesota as a model. We have taken the approach, "if you build it, they will come". We are close to naming a site for next March for a high school championship.
  - c) Significant challenges for clubs
    - i) Volunteers
    - ii) Financial health
- 2) All club info is being updated to get good contact information.
- 3) The MCA has reclaimed its Facebook page. It hadn't been updated in about 10 years. If anyone wants to be a social media person, Lisa will share the job

- 4) We are working on a television commercial next winter. It will help keep curling in front of people.
- 5) There is a group working on High School curling.
- 6) We are working on an initiative to create curling day in Minnesota.

### **Treasurer's report highlights (Norma O'Leary):**

- 1) Member count is still down from Pre-COVID, mainly because of missing a few of the largest clubs
- 2) A few clubs would like to join MCA but not USCA. One wanted to join USCA but not MCA. Some have opted out of both.
- 3) Cash flow was slightly positive this year. We have the Putnam fund if the MCA would like to offset costs for club programs. If clubs rejoin MCA at old levels, that may not be necessary.
- 4) Current offer to clubs for hosting a National championship is \$1,000. For state championships, the offer is \$750.

Lisa noted that USA Curling no longer covers the cost of instructors. Perhaps MCA could cover these costs as well.

### **First Vice President's Report (Phil Devore / Jason Botterill):**

#### *Championship Recap*

Bemidji hosted the U18s. There were five girls teams and three boys teams.

- The Ryhorchuk team won gold at Nationals
- The Hansel team won bronze

The state club championships were held at Curl Mesabi. There were three women's teams and five mens teams.

- Team Farbelow took fourth at Nationals

The mixed team championship was held as well, with Team Stolt winning bronze.

#### *Upcoming host sites for championships and clinics / certification courses*

- Would like to fill out 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 as soon as possible
- Rochester will host the first ever Arena playdown as part of the Olmstead County Fair. Nationals will be at Curl Mesabi.
- Two Harbors will host Mixed fours
- Dakota will host Arenas in 2024

- U18 playdowns will be held closer to Thanksgiving to give teams more time to book flights for Nationals
- Bemidji, Brainerd and Four Seasons will consider hosting events if the timing is right.

### **Gov 4.0 update (Marc Beyer)**

The USA Curling committee led by Marc has made preliminary recommendations to revise the membership model to focus on the individuals rather than the clubs. Some key features:

- Proposing a flat rate per sheet to clubs (for example, \$1,000 / sheet). Arena clubs would have discounted rates, as would newer clubs.
- There would be different rates for different members. Juniors would be the lowest (<\$34, for example), recreational curlers would be slightly higher, and competitive curlers would be the highest.
- It would be up to the clubs as to how they want to execute it, but there would be incentives to have USCA members.
- Surveys conducted showed that members preferred magazines to online content.
- There are approximately a total of 365 sheets for curling in the country
- Regional dues are up to the region
- The presumption is that this would take place late in 2023.

Lisa stated that MCA's plan has been to hold off on updating the MCA bylaws until this is complete. MCA's bylaws haven't been updated since the 90's.

### **Second Vice President's Report (Kathy Busch)**

- Would like to recognize Denny Bone for bringing the paper calendars back
- Asking clubs to send in bonspiel dates for the calendar
- Deadline is August 15th to get them on the poster (dates for the website are more flexible)
- Considering a marketplace on the website for curling-related items
- A suggestion was made for the website to connect players for bonspiels (looking for another teammate)
- Contact Kathy with website ideas

### **New Business (Lisa Rudolph)**

- High School curling - teams formed to do preliminary work, with a state championship in March. We will get what we can and build on it as we go.
- Curling Day in Minnesota (January 20, 2024). We want to get all curling activity across the state highlighted, ideally with a Governor's proclamation and media coverage. A suggestion was made to come up with something for local papers. Looking for help with organizing this, including media contacts for greater Minnesota.

### **USCA update (Dean Gemmell, USCA CEO)**

- Planning on the same playdown structure in 2024 (MCA runs).
- Marc Beyer has done a great job leading the committee, and the committee has done outstanding work.
- Due to the structure change, the USCA is forecasting fewer members in the first year. He wants to earn new members and feels they can build on it.
- Craig Perry is on board. He brings knowledge of Minnesota sports and facilities. Craig was on the call and stated he has passion to bring on high school curling and is available 24/7 to help.
- Working with Vikings - event center, training center (not planning to be a competitor to Twin Cities clubs).
- USA apparel and gear are planned for website.
- Twin Cities Curling Association is looking at participating in the State Fair. USCA would love to participate.

The meeting was adjourned