

REPORTS OF THE CSCA CHAMPIONSHIP AND RULES COMMITTEES

for presentation to the Annual General Meeting, April 17, 2024, Toronto, ON

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This report is provided to the members of Canadian Stick Curling Association in my capacity as Chair of the two committees. It is intended to reflect the activity of the two committees but does not include detailed discussion of the specific decisions made.

It also includes some items for consideration for the future. While there has been some consultation with the committee members on these items, it must be stressed these are strictly my own thoughts and suggestions.

The first task undertaken by both committees was to establish a Terms of Reference (ToR - attached) to serve as a guide for the activity of the committees. A document of this nature is an important part of the processes of an organization such as CSCA as it matures in its service to its members. It is essential that the first activity of the committee each year should be to review the ToR as a reminder of its mandate but also to consider any update requirements.

The second task undertaken by the committees was a complete review, by the respective committees, of the existing Rules, Championship Guidelines and Championships Logistics documents. The committees undertook this through a series of mainly email communications – followed as required by email communication with the Executive Committee and Provincial Representatives for consensus or vote as/if required. On the Championship committee side, because the 2025 venue had already been assigned to Grande Prairie, it was acknowledged that any significant change was being discussed for inclusion in the documents for 2026. For the Rules committee, the objective was to review and implement appropriate change for the 2023-24 season.

There were two types of discussion by each committee.

1) To ensure that wording in place was clear in carrying the intended message/information. It is often the case that the words in a written document do not have the same precise meaning to the writer and the reader. Often the writer incorporates an assumption that specific information is commonly understood and therefore there is shortcut wording. Unfortunately, newcomers reading the document may not have that common understanding and end up being either confused or misinformed or both. In this regard, these documents must always be living documents as each writer's assumptions may replace those of earlier writers – but the challenge of ensuring clarity must always be faced.

2) To ensure the provisions of the documents were appropriate to the vision of the organization as it matures in its role and service to its members.

In regard to Rules, the timeline objective of publication for the 2023-24 season was met, although slightly late, with publication on the CSCA website and circulation to the members through communication to provincial representatives in November, 2023.

In regard to Championship Logistics and Guidelines, a discussion about format of future championships, as initiated at the 2023 AGM in Nanaimo, was begun. The Championships Committee deferred this discussion to the Executive and Provincial Reps as significant decisions are involved. That discussion is ongoing under the leadership of the Executive Committee and will continue at the 2024 AGM in Toronto.

The related work of the Championships committee in regard to the actual documents remains unpublished and will have to be updated in context of decisions made about future format. It will be essential to ensure that the 2026 host committee acknowledges the updated documents as the guiding documents for their championship event.

Reflecting on 2023-24, one of the accomplishments I am most proud is that our Rules document has been made available in a French version as well as an English version – a very important step from the perspective

of a) at the Association level, helping expansion in Quebec and b) at a more societal level, showing that we are committed to being a fully functional national organization providing service in both official languages.

We are committed to making this happen with all major CSCA documents and have also made the investment in a bilingual logo which has already been utilized but which will be on the 2024 championship medals, crests and banners for the first time.

CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE: I want to thank the members of the Championship committee for their volunteer service to CSCA by their active participation in the Championship committee this year. Thank you to Ed Willson, Betty Mattson, and Brad Childe. It is important also to note that Brad Childe will not be continuing on the committee in 2024-25. Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to advise us at cdnstickr.e@gmail.com

As noted in the preamble, there was a substantive review of the documents. Two significant decisions were made through the Executive/Provincial Reps approval process and implemented in the 2023-24 season. These were:

1) Formalization of a bronze medal game in the national championships. This had been a standard practice but was never formally incorporated in the guidelines.

2) Implementation of a \$10 per person competitor fee. This fee acknowledged that the entry fee paid by teams was intended to pay the committee's costs of ice usage, prize money, etc. However, there was acknowledgement that CSCA has significant championship costs (such as medals, crests, banners). With a relatively small revenue stream, CSCA has costs such as website and administrative costs which are required by and of benefit to all members. As the specific championship costs noted are of interest only to those who compete in the championship, it was deemed appropriate to implement the competitor fee as an offset source of revenue.

The updated Championship Guidelines and Logistics documents have not been published and await further update, based on the future direction which is yet to be determined. However, based upon the year's activities relating to the implementation of the Toronto event, there are a number of points which merit consideration going forward. These have been itemized for review by the next Executive Committee. They will have to consider those thoughts in context of the decisions yet to be made about format of future championships.

Most significant of these, from the perspective of the curlers, relate to the process CSCA currently has in place regarding the pre-reserved spots currently allocated to each province in the national bonspiel/championship event. Administering these entries spots is a frustrating challenge for the host committee which can cause significant delays in making the draw and other event planning.

I have also made recommendations to the Executive Committee in regard to the future relationship with host committees. These are operational details which they will have to consider in context of desire to operate efficiently. However, they are obviously just "one man's opinion" to be considered by the next Executive.

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RULES COMMITTEE: I want to thank the members of the Rules committee for their volunteer service to CSCA by their work this year. Thank you to Derrell Sears, Lawrence Forbes, Rick Thurston, and Rick Robinson for their very active involvement in the review and re-formatting of the CSCA Rules. Rick joined the committee this year and added the very important perspective of the wheelchair curling community.

In addition to rules review, it has fallen to the committee chair to respond to queries to the CSCA about rules information and interpretation. This has involved a number of communications with Curling Canada officials as well as with individuals.

The key aspect of many (perhaps half) of the communications has involved the overlap from stick rules for regular 4's curling to stick rules for 2-person play. Of course, the initial response must always include the fact that CSCA has no jurisdiction in 4's curling, this is strictly the realm of Curling Canada. Usually, the result is a 2-3-4 email communication as the inquirer tries to clarify the questions and understand the responses as it is also appropriate to give input or comment on the specific questions being asked.

An example of this type of question are the queries about starting position for the delivery as individuals ask if they can use the 'forward from the hack' start position of 2-person stick curling in a regular game. There is usually some communication about exactly what "initiated from the right/left hack" (as stated in the Curling Canada rules) actually means since that is one of those wordings which is subject to much interpretation.

While the other communications involve a range of topics, one of the main ones include requests for clarification of the rules relating to start position – example, attempts to understand the apparent discrepancies between:

** there is no statement in rules that stone must touch centreline if thrown from the hack

** rules state stone must be touching centreline if thrown from a position forward from the hack to the front of the rings

** rules allow stone to be off centreline (to the 18-inch line) if thrown from a position in front of the rings.

It is not suggested these rules need to be changed but it may be appropriate to review the rules to ensure clarity of wording.

In personal contacts at events in Manitoba and through email communications, there have also been two significant suggestions for change. These are beyond the direct responsibility of the rules committee as they relate to the way the game is currently played although they are presented as suggestions which will "improve" the 2-person stick version of the game.

First, there has been expression of concerns about safety of competitors, damage to infrastructure, and integrity of the game as it relates to the increasing use of 7, 6, and even occasionally 5 second hit weights.

While those who favour the regular usage of these extremely high hit weights may be opposed to this discussion, the concern for safety of a relatively older competitor group, the concern for damage such as to hacks from overweight stones moving multiple rocks, and a concern about the lack of finesse required (although admittedly big hit weight is also a skill) all have a potential negative effect upon the growth of 2-person stick curling.

While the foregoing report, as noted, is made specifically by the writer – the following statement has been approved for publication in this report by the members of the Rules Committee.

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FOR CONSIDERATION: *Over the past year, one of the common themes of communication received is a concern that we are throwing too much weight in our takeouts. Hits have been timed in the six-second hog-to-hog range. The communications have two themes.*

1) *A concern about the safety of the players at the receiving end and a related concern about hack damage and other facility damage.*

2) *A concern that the skill game is negated by the power game and that, from the perspectives of both the enjoyment of the game by the players and interest in the game for spectators, there are concerns about the future direction of our version of the sport.*

What is generally proposed, despite the challenge it presents, is that we should be limiting the weight of hit shots to a maximum of eight (or other) seconds hog-to-hog.

There are two approaches which could be taken.

- 1) *A rules approach which enforces the max weight hit-time*
- 2) *A code of conduct approach which encourages the max weight hit time – with emphasis on player safety and respect for facility.*

The intent here is not to recommend either approach but to initiate discussion for possible future action if deemed appropriate.

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Second, there has been expression of a need to make the game more interesting/challenging by ensuring there are more rocks in play – usually by suggesting that our version of the free-guard or no-kill rule should be amended by preventing elimination of stones for at least one (and possibly more) stones. This follows the process in regular 4's curling which went from 3 to 4 to 5 rock free guard zone and then to the no-tick as skill level increased.

FOR CONSIDERATION: would the game be improved by a change to a “no-eliminate until after four stones” rule or even “after five”?

While the above rules discussions are not presented as recommendations by the Rules Committee, there is general agreement that discussion of these and other rules related topics should occur and that these discussions should take place in an atmosphere of concern for the future positive development and expansion of 2-person stick curling.

Beyond these two items, I have also made recommendations to the Executive Committee in regard to some rules discussions which I believe could be referred to the Rules committee next fall. Again, they are obviously just “one man’s opinion” to be considered by the next Executive.

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I am pleased to report a very positive relationship with Grande Prairie and we can look forward to a great event next year (April 2-7, 2025). In particular I am pleased to report that Pomeroy Hotel will be the host hotel and that the Grande Prairie committee has included us in a first (for CSCA) sponsor-partnership agreement. Pomeroy Hotel is Title sponsor to the Grande Prairie Stick Leagues and a new fall bonspiel, Title sponsor to the Alberta Stick championship and Presenting sponsor to the Canadian Stick championship. The agreement brings CSCA some new financial benefits but does not supersede our valued relationship with CIBC Wood Gundy who continues as our primary sponsor.

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Finally – thank you! As noted elsewhere, I have opted not to stand for a second term as a Director of CSCA. It has been a privilege to be involved in the organization as it evolves into what I believe is to be an important role and future in the sport of curling. However, with my past involvement as Director/President of CurlManitoba, Governor/Chair of Curling Canada, and Director/Chair of other curling bodies, I have been about 30 consecutive years serving on curling leadership organizations. I find I am no longer performing my duties to the standard I expect of myself so I am standing aside to allow others to lead CSCA into the future.

Respectfully submitted
G. Resby Coutts, Chair – Rules and Championship Committees

ATTACH: Terms of Reference – Championship Committee
ATTACH: Terms of Reference – Rules Committee

Canadian Stick Curling Association (CSCA)

CHAMPIONSHIP COMMITTEE: TERMS OF REFERENCE

COMPOSITION:

- **CHAIR:** The committee is chaired by the CSCA Rules & Events Director
- **EX-OFFICIO:** The CSCA Executive Committee Chair will be an ex-officio member of the committee
- **MEMBERSHIP:** Including the CSCA Rules & Events Director (as Chair of the committee), the committee will comprise 5-7 members.
 - No more than half of the committee members will be members of the CSCA Executive Committee.
 - It is desirable that all regions of the country be represented on the committee

RESPONSIBILITY:

- The committee makes recommendations to the Executive but does not have decision making authority.
- The committee, with direct contact through its Chair or other designated individual, serves a consulting/advisory role with the CSCA Championships Host Committee in advance of and during the event

OBJECTIVES:

- The committee has three key roles
 - 1) to ensure that CSCA Championships are conducted in a fair and consistent manner from year-to-year
 - 2) to ensure that changes to CSCA Championships from year to year are supportive of the growth objectives of the CSCA
 - 3) to manage the site bid process and to recommend a host venue for future championships to the CSCA Executive Committee

PROCESS:

- Meetings will be by Zoom or other electronic means
- Quorum will be a minimum of four committee members (not including the ex-officio member)
- Recommendations to the Executive Committee will, to the extent possible, be based on consensus of the group assembled.
 - In the event consensus cannot be reached on an order of business which can be deferred to a future meeting, the item will be deferred to allow consultation.
 - In the event consensus cannot be reached on an order of business which must be dealt with, a more formal vote (based on properly moved-seconded motion) will be called for. A majority vote of those present will determine the decision.
 - In the event of a tie vote, the committee chair may cast a second, deciding vote.
- It will be an annual responsibility of the committee to review all CSCA published host documents and to recommend, when needed, changes to the documents.

MEETINGS:

- As required, the committee will meet at the call of the Chair.
- There will be a minimum of two meetings a year
 - Meeting #1 (in the August-September timeframe) to review CSCA Host Bid documents
 - Meeting #2 (in the March-April timeframe) to review host site

Canadian Stick Curling Association (CSCA)

RULES COMMITTEE: TERMS OF REFERENCE

COMPOSITION:

- **CHAIR:** The committee is chaired by the CSCA Rules & Events Director
- **EX-OFFICIO:** The CSCA Executive Committee Chair will be an ex-officio member of the committee
- **MEMBERSHIP:** Including the CSCA Rules & Events Director (as Chair of the committee), the committee will comprise 5-7 members.
 - No more than half of the committee members will be members of the CSCA Executive Committee.
 - It is desirable that all regions of the country be represented on the committee
 - It is desirable that the wheelchair curling community be represented on the committee.

RESPONSIBILITY:

- The committee makes recommendations to the Executive but does not have decision making authority.
- The committee, with direct contact through its Chair or other designated individual, serves a consulting/advisory role with the CSCA Championships Host Committee in advance of and during the event.

OBJECTIVES:

- The committee has three key roles
 - 4) To ensure that CSCA Rules are consistent with the principles of fair play and fair competition.
 - 5) To ensure that changes to CSCA Rules from time to time are supportive of the growth objectives of the CSCA.
 - 6) To ensure that Curling Canada's published Rules of Stick Curling are consistent with the CSCA Rules.

PROCESS:

- Meetings will be by Zoom or other electronic means
- Quorum will be a minimum of four committee members (not including the ex-officio member)
- Recommendations to the Executive Committee will, to the extent possible, be based on consensus of the group assembled.
 - In the event consensus cannot be reached on an order of business which can be deferred to a future meeting, the item will be deferred to allow consultation.
 - In the event consensus cannot be reached on an order of business which must be dealt with, a more formal vote (based on properly moved-seconded motion) will be called for. A majority vote of those present will determine the decision.
 - In the event of a tie vote, the committee chair may cast a second, deciding vote.
- It will be an annual responsibility of the committee to review the published CSCA rules and to recommend changes, when needed.
- It will be a responsibility of the committee to review the published Curling Canada rules and advise of required updates as required by Curling Canada's publishing schedule (at least on a quadrennial basis.)
- It will be a responsibility of the committee to advise the Executive Committee and to recommend for or against adoption of rule changes which might be proposed both by the Executive and by members at large.

MEETINGS:

- As required, the committee will meet at the call of the Chair.
- There will be a minimum of one meeting a year
 - Meeting #1 (in the August-September timeframe) to review current rules and proposed changes.