



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

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### **Current Structure**

#### **What is a Council Sport?**

A Council Sport is a provincial sport governing body recognized by the Ministry of Sport, the major funding agency for our sport in Ontario. It is made up of two or more member organizations who deliver programs and services for the sport.

In the past, councils were formed when the National Sport Organization (NSO) recognized more than one governing body in the province. Since the Ministry of Sport in Ontario will only recognize one body, the council is formed and the Ministry holds the council responsible for ensuring all member organizations meet the [Sport Recognition Policy](#), and the Ministry works directly with the council for reporting and oversight.

#### **Why is a council sport problematic?**

There are very few council sports remaining in the province (Canoe/Kayak, Shooting, Softball & Curling) and the Ministry of Sport has made it known that they would prefer a unified single PSO. While a Council Sport structure is not the Ministry of Sport's preferred model, curling has been allowed to continue to operate under this framework due to the Ontario Curling Council's strong governance and the collaborative alignment among the three provincial curling organizations.

Administratively, there are three times as many documents required for review for funding applications and reporting.



### **Will Northern Ontario lose its voice or autonomy?**

Absolutely not! Maintaining meaningful representation for Northern Ontario is a core principle of the merger. Governance structures are being designed to ensure Northern clubs continue (through four board seats from the North) to have representation and influence in decision-making, including on matters unique to the North.

There will also be designated staff positions to support Northern clubs and competitions.

It will be incumbent on the leadership and board of the organization to ensure Northern Ontario voices and needs are heard at the provincial and national table. This is our assurance to ALL stakeholders in the province, regardless of your role in our sport.

### **How will the merger affect Curling Ontario's role?**

The three organizations will merge under Curling Ontario. Curling Ontario's mandate will expand to incorporate the programs and services currently delivered by both the OCC and NOCA. All existing programs and services will continue, but within a single, unified provincial structure.

### **Will Southern Ontario Clubs subsidize Northern Ontario Programs?**

The merger is designed around equity and shared benefit, not cross-subsidization. Budgeting and resource allocation will be guided by fairness, participation levels, and the unique needs of different regions and club needs.

### **What will happen to existing staff of the organizations?**

All current staff positions will be retained as the three organizations come together under Curling Ontario. Existing roles and responsibilities will be preserved where possible, while overlapping functions are aligned to improve efficiency, expand capacity, and enhance support for clubs and programs.

A unified organization will enable an expanded staffing structure, including the addition of a full-time staff member dedicated to youth curling and increased staff support focused on club development.

### **How many full-time staff does each organization currently have?**

Ontario Curling – 6 employees

Northern Ontario Curling Association – 1 employee

Ontario Curling Council – 2 employees



## Purpose & Timing

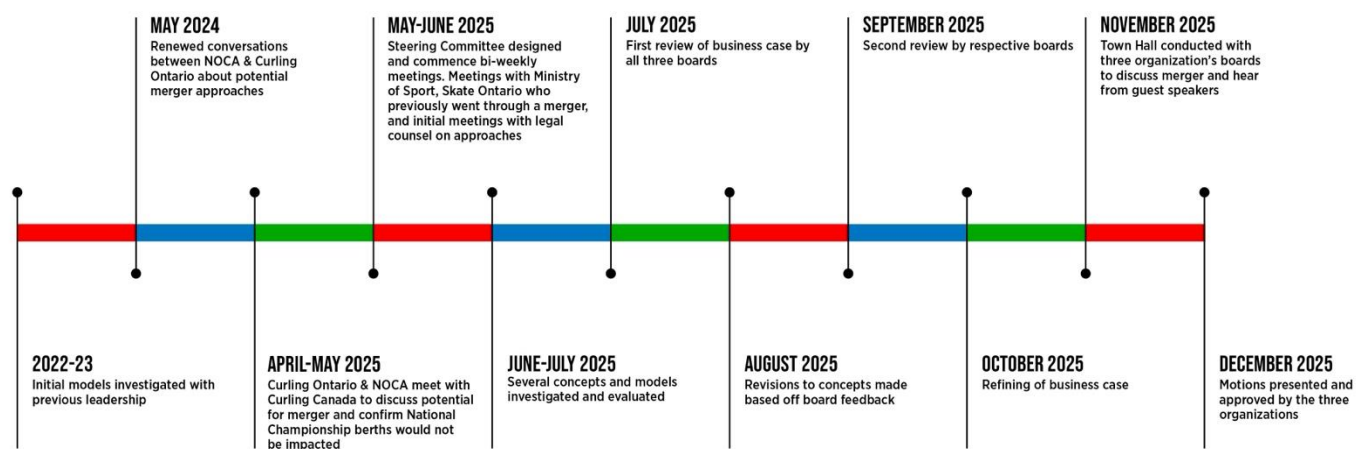
### How did we get here?

This proposal was initiated jointly by the three organizations as they explored how to ensure the future success of curling in the province. A Steering Group, made up of the three Chairs and the three Executive Directors/Managers, was convened to explore strategic options, examine current and previous models, and review earlier models developed by previous leadership.

Significant research was conducted to investigate all potential models. The Steering Committee solicited expertise from other sports who have gone through a similar merger, legal counsel, governance experts, and beyond. SWOT analyses were conducted on various models.

All three boards were engaged several times throughout the process, providing regular review and feedback opportunities.

Below are the timelines and key checkpoints completed as part of this review.





## **Why does this merger need to happen in the first place? Why now?**

Over the past five years, the three organizations have operated in a shared services model. This has included sharing staff amongst the three organizations. While some progress has been made, significant overlap and gaps remain, showing that the current approach has reached its limits.

The organizations have also identified key risks to the sustainability of curling in Ontario, including limited club development in the North, a lack of youth curling focus, confusion around the current structure, and inconsistent staffing models.

At the same time, there is strong momentum to move forward. Leadership across all three organizations supports the merger, and there is clear backing from Curling Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Sport. Taken together, these factors make it clear that now is the right time to act.

## **What other organizational structure options were considered?**

Several options were reviewed when approaching this project including, maintaining the status quo and creating a new organization (outlined in more detail below). In recent years, the former Executive Directors of the three organizations reviewed several potential sport governance models for curling in Ontario; however, each was ultimately determined to be not feasible.

- 1. Maintaining the current three-organization council model represents the status quo.**  
While we've made progress through shared services and collaborative efforts, this model has reached its limit and is no longer sustainable. Gaps in service delivery remain, and staff capacity continues to be stretched beyond capacity. Despite ongoing efforts to educate stakeholders, confusion about roles and responsibilities persist, resulting in ongoing inefficiencies.
- 2. Creating a brand-new organization** by merging the three organizations in a new entity was also considered. While this approach would offer a clean slate, it also comes with significantly higher costs (new legal structure, bylaws, business registration, banking, etc.). Given how effectively the three organizations are currently working together, there's little added benefit to justify the added complexity and delay.

## **What are the downsides of this merger?**

This merger is intentionally designed to be low-impact on the day-to-day operations of clubs and curlers, while significantly improving the level of services and support we can provide. Most members should notice little to no change in their daily curling experience, and we expect only positive outcomes - enhanced programs and services for clubs and curlers with minimal impact on stakeholders.

Northern Ontario clubs and curlers will continue to have strong representation at the board level, and Team Northern Ontario will continue to represent the region.



### **Has a decision already been made?**

As of now, the Boards of Directors of each organization have voted in favour of proceeding with merging the assets of NOCA and OCC under Curling Ontario.

The next step is for the members of NOCA and OCC to vote approving the merger..

### **Will reserves or assets be protected?**

Yes. Any assets or reserves that are currently designated or restricted will be retained and protected under the merged organization, in accordance with their existing allocations and intended purposes.

### **Competitions & Championship**

#### **How will this affect Provincial playdowns, qualifiers, and formats??**

Competition structure (including registration fees, qualification processes, formats, and beyond) will remain the same for competitions in both the North and South.

Competition formats and qualification processes in the North and South will continue to be reviewed through their normal procedures, and will be assessed independently to ensure each region's system remains effective.

To support communication across the North, there will be a dedicated website for Team Northern Ontario Teams.

#### **Will Team Northern Ontario be able to compete at National Championships**

Yes.

We have confirmed written communication from Curling Canada that Team Northern Ontario will continue to be recognized as a unique member.

"As long as our Championship Events have Provincial / Territorial representation, Northern Ontario and Ontario will be considered unique and valued members, regardless of the corporate structure that will be determined by your boards as you continue down this potential amalgamation path." - Nolan Thiessen, CEO Curling Canada

To support Team Northern Ontario, the Moose and Northern Ontario Shield will continue to serve as the official emblem for the region, appearing on team uniforms and promotional merchandise.



## **Will Southern Ontario athletes be eligible to compete in Northern Ontario Competitions?**

The current residency rules will remain for all Provincial Championships.

## **How will this affect the Ontario Winter Games and Canada Winter Games qualification process?**

The Games qualification process has always been “pan-provincial” and will continue that way with qualifier sites located across the province and registration open to all Ontario athletes regardless of location in the province.

## **Membership & Clubs**

### **Will membership fees change for our club?**

Each organization’s fee structure will remain the same to support an easy transition for clubs:

- **NOCA:** per member
- **Curling Ontario:** per sheet

Membership fees will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis as part of normal operations..

### **How will this impact our club?**

The administration of club fees and existing competition structures will remain unchanged, and clubs should expect only positive improvements, with no negative disruption to their day-to-day operations.

The most noticeable change for clubs will be improved and more consistent services and programs for their benefit..

Clubs will see increased access to services while sport development support will be strengthened across the province. With all programs delivered through a single organization, clubs will benefit from clearer communication, simpler processes, and a better understanding of where to go for support.

### **What other benefits will there be?**

- **Dedicated youth development staff** will expand provincial youth programming and provide enhanced support for youth programs within clubs across the province.
- **Expanded club development support** will provide both Northern and Southern Ontario clubs with elevated services, support, and programs.
- **Dedicated competitions staff** will support events for both Northern Ontario and Southern Ontario clubs.
- Additional sport development programs supporting Para-Curling disciplines.



### What new programs or services can the Northern Ontario clubs expect?

- **Club Accreditation Program:** Implement Safe/Inclusive/Accessible criteria with templates and resources.
- **Free Webinars:** Access recorded webinars and 10 new ones annually on various topics.
- **Club Resource Library:** Growing library of resources, templates, and policies.
- **Club Clinics Program:** Six options available, including Stick Clinic and Skills Analysis.
- **Curling Ontario Insurance Program:** Access to comprehensive insurance coverage for member clubs.
- **Business E-Learning Program:** Two courses on leadership and building inclusive curling experiences.
- **Exclusive Discounts Program:** Special discounts on various services for member clubs.
- **Street Curl Program:** Promotional kit to boost club visibility in the community.
- **Ice Team Consultants:** On-site consultations for ice-related challenges.
- **ORFA Partnerships:** Access to resources and support for operational improvement.

### Governance & Policies

#### What will the new governance structure look like?

- The new governance structure will consist of Nine Directors with skills in governance (e.g. finance, legal, HR)
- Four from Northern Ontario, five from Southern Ontario.
- Terms of three years, staggered with three vacancies per year.
- The roles of Chair and Vice Chair will alternate between the North and South regions to ensure balanced regional leadership.
- The first year of the merged organization will have a transitional board.

#### What is a “transitional” board?

The “transitional board” will consist of nine directors with skills in governance. Four from Northern Ontario and five from Southern Ontario, appointed by the Chairs of Ontario Curling Council, NOCA and Curling Ontario.

The transition board will guide Curling Ontario through the first year following the approval of the proposed merger.



### **Will there be new Bylaws?**

Yes. To support a unified organization for curling in Ontario, a working group of current Board Chairs and Presidents has recommended a new Board model and Bylaws grounded in best practices, equity, and continuity, with a mandate to serve the entire province.

Links to the Bylaws can be found on the Curling Ontario, Ontario Curling Council and NOCA websites information pages for this project.

### **Will the new bylaws be voted on?**

Yes, pending the approval of the proposed merger, a full meeting of both Northern and Southern clubs will be conducted to approve the Bylaws.

### **What are the key governance changes in the new bylaws?**

The new bylaws introduce several key changes to the Board structure. Board composition will require gender diversity, with no more than 60% from one gender. The roles of Chair and Vice Chair will alternate between the North and South regions to ensure balanced regional leadership. The Board must maintain at least four standing committees. (Executive, Finance, Nominations, and Governance)

### **When will elections take place for the new Ontario Curling Board of Directors?**

Elections to the newly structured Curling Ontario Board of Directors will take place in Spring of 2027 and be ratified at the 2027 Annual General Meeting.

### **What will be the selection process for the Board of Directors?**

Board members will be chosen through a clear and fair process led by the Nominations Committee and follow leading governance practices. Candidates will be reviewed using a skills matrix to ensure the Board includes a good mix of experience and perspectives. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed, and selections will be made to support strong leadership, good governance, and balanced regional representation. This board will serve as a governance board (not operations) to lead the organization.

### **What current policies will change under the new organization?**

The three organizations have been aligned on the majority of policies, with policy development originating at the OCC and, upon approval, being reviewed and adopted by NOCA and Curling Ontario.

Where differences exist, the best elements of each organization are being incorporated into unified policies, with the goal of minimizing disruption to clubs and members.





## **Next Steps**

### **Who will vote on the merger? When?**

Club Delegates from NOCA member clubs will vote on the proposed merger on **Sunday March 8 @ 4:00pm ET.**

Additionally, the two member associations of the Ontario Curling Council, Curling Ontario and NOCA will vote on the proposal by special written resolution.

Curling Ontario member clubs will not be required to vote on the merger as Curling Ontario is the acquiring organization.

### **What information will clubs receive before voting?**

Starting in February, clubs will receive key information to help guide their decision. This will include the business case presentation, several town hall meetings, and a frequently asked questions document.

### **How can clubs ask questions?**

Public Town Hall meetings with opportunities for Questions and Answers will be held in early February. Additionally, club delegates can direct questions by email to the NOCA / OCC / Curling Ontario Executive Directors.

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