



Scottish Curling Competitions Committee Meeting

22 October 2020 – 09:00

Zoom Meeting

Members Present: Susan Kesley (SK), Nick Rennie (NR), Jayne Stirling (JS), Graham Lindsay (GL), Tom Kirk (TK), Gail Munro (GM), Andrew Kerr (AK), Bruce Crawford (BC), Keith Prentice (KP), David Murdoch (DM; guest, partial attendance), Ian Young (IY), Gavin Fleming (GF)

1. **Apologies**

Kyle Waddell (KW; guest), Gina Aitken (GA; guest)

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Approved as accurate – **SK** proposed and **KP** seconded.

ACTION – **JS** to publish to website.

3. **Matters Arising**

GL will confirm update of Terms of Reference (ToR) with the Board, but the recommendation put forward by Competitions Committee was agreed at previous Board meeting.

ACTION – **GL** to confirm and arrange update of ToR.

4. **Draws & Formats**

The below table was shared prior to the meeting.

Scottish Women's Championship	10 entries	
Scottish Men's Championship	8 entries	1 potential withdrawal for WJCC travel
Scottish Mixed Doubles Championship	26 entries	Up to 5 withdrawals for WJCC
Scottish Junior Men's Championship	10 entries	
Scottish Junior Women's Championship	8 entries	
Scottish Senior Men's Championship	23 entries	
Scottish Senior Women's Championship	6 entries	

Scottish Curling Women's Championship

It was confirmed that the rules dictate that a single round robin will be played.

GF asked if there was reasoning for increased women's entries – **JS** cited some changes to team personnel at the upper end of the Junior age group, and also junior teams local to Dumfries taking the opportunity to gain experience as reasons for increased entries.

Scottish Curling Men's Championship

Currently there are 8 entries who would play a single round robin, but there is a high likelihood that a team may withdraw to accommodate travel to World Junior Curling Championships in Beijing, China (this was confirmed by **DM**). This would leave us with 7 teams which would require a double round robin to be played.

It was agreed that **JS** would look to add a ninth team to the Championship, potentially giving younger junior teams (particularly local ones) the chance to gain experience, offering them a discounted/paid entry fee.

The committee agreed that a review of how the Championship is formatted when we have seven teams was a good idea – **NR**, **SK** and **KP** were particularly keen to progress this.

GF asked about changing the rule for the coming season if we wished to amend the format. **GM** voiced she wasn't comfortable with this as teams have entered with the current rules, and it was agreed that we would progress as per the rules.

When considering potential formats, **DM** mentioned that teams could face a 17 game week at Worlds, so felt we could consider having a longer event to prepare teams appropriately.

KP asked about splitting the event to make it more accessible for teams who may have external commitments, but **DM** said that splitting the event into two shorter chunks wouldn't really achieve the desired effect.

SK confirmed that we should play as per rules, but highlighted that if teams withdraw due to illness or other last minute issue, then the round robin would proceed with a bye. **SK** also supported that moving forward we need to ensure that we have a robust number of games to decide our Scottish Champions.

The group agreed that we should highlight to teams that they may need to be prepared for last minute changes, as if there were multiple withdrawals then rescheduling may be required.

There was discussion around whether we should keep the current eight teams and have a team in reserve if required, but it was agreed that any teams invited should be offered a place in the draw immediately, and would play regardless of any withdrawals.

Scottish Curling Mixed Doubles Championship

JS shared that she had met with **DM** and Greg Drummond for an initial discussion around potential formats, taking into account that the number of teams could vary between 20-26 based on the outcome of the Scottish Curling Junior Men's Championship. Concepts are currently being worked on for both two section and four section first rounds of the Championship.

GF –having fewer games is more likely to encourage future entries, and **GM** doesn't want to exclude run of the mill curler, so is also supportive of fewer games. **GF** also shared the idea of running initial stages of the event over a weekend with the latter stages moving into the week – meaning that the eliminated teams could return to work. The group felt this was a good idea to explore moving forward, and that consulting with competitors may give a clearer idea of whether this would be a useful adjustment to look at.

SK felt that last year worked quite well.

DM – Four groups is likely to be the better option, shared that the time off work argument is countered by the fact that smaller groups may lead to a more robust (and longer) playoff format. Mentioned that a longer format gets potential Worlds representatives better prepared for the long round robin format they would experience.

JS - shared personal views as a competitor that getting more guaranteed games offers better value to entrants, and feels that the four guaranteed games that were offered last season didn't feel like good value.

Scottish Curling Junior Championships

Women's – 8 entries, single round robin to be played.

Men's – 10 entries, single round robin to be played.

Scottish Curling Senior Men's Championships

BC - shared for context that if restrictions continued to hamper international events and the number of participants, that the World Mixed Doubles Championship (usually hosted in tandem with the World Senior Championships) would likely take priority.

Qualifiers for Men currently due to take place in December. **JS** shared that with the number of entries, it would be possible to amend the format for the finals to accommodate all teams that have entered – which would mirror the changes made to the Masters Championships for this season.

KP – happy with the option of straight to finals, with **SK** agreeing, and noting that this would make accommodating withdrawals more manageable, as post qualifier withdrawals could pose challenges.

GM – enquired if dialogue had been entered into with host rinks on this topic. **JS** confirmed that informal conversations had been had with Ayr (qualifier host) who agreed that if only one qualifier venue was required that they would be happy to step back and allow Forfar to be the sole hosts. **AK** confirmed that this was the case, and they would have no issue not hosting a qualifier.

Scottish Curling Senior Women's Championships

Six entries, to play a single round robin – playoff structure to be confirmed at later stage.

5. COVID-19 Cancellations & Postponements

Current status of events shared in advance of meeting:

Competition	Status	Details
U21 Greenacres (18-20 Sep)	New Date	New date 11-13 Dec
U14 Forfar (3 Oct)	Re-Postponed	New date: TBC
Scottish Senior Mixed (2-4 Oct)	Postponed	New date: TBC
U21 Edinburgh (9-11 Oct)	Postponed	New date: TBC
U17 Lanarkshire (17-18 October)	Postponed	New date: TBC
U17 Lockerbie (31 Oct – 1 Nov)	Postponed	New date: TBC
Scottish Masters Qualifiers (3-5 Nov)	Cancelled	All teams now playing at Finals in Feb.
Scottish Province Championship (6-8 Nov)	New Date	New date: 9-11 Apr to be announced
U21 Inverness (6-8 Nov)	Cancelled	Replaced - Dumfries 20-22 Nov
Scottish Junior Championship (2-6 Dec)	Postponed	New date: 12-17 January
Skill Award Challenge (12 Dec)	Postponed	New date: TBC
Four Nations (29-31 Jan)	Postponed	New date: Jan 2022
Henderson Bishop (22-25 Feb + local quals)	Cancelled	
Morton Trophy (9 March + local quals)	Cancelled	
Maxwell Trophy (9 March + local quals)	Cancelled	

JS shared with the group that asking entrants for their thoughts on various aspects of the event, including any barriers/obstacles to their participation had been well received by members, and is a strategy that we should look to continue as we navigate the season.

JS/SK shared their thoughts on categorising competitions based on how likely they are to go ahead, to help guide planning and workflow moving forward. The following structure was proposed:

1	Likely to go ahead if restrictions allow.
2	Potentially at risk of being cancelled.
3	At high risk of being cancelled.
4	Cancelled.

The group shared their thoughts on how we should proceed with the competitions for this season, particularly focussing on the months until the calendar year end. The group unanimously agreed that as the governing body for the sport we must be seen to be doing the right thing, and KP noted that we should err on the side of safety and caution at all times. GF posed the question of whether we should be holding any events at all at this stage, and NR shared that he agreed with KP, and that hosting events in the near future didn't sit well with him.

There was a discussion around the travel and accommodation implications of taking part in competitions, and the group agreed that although the actions of participants outside of the competition venue aren't our

responsibility, we should ensure that we do not offer competitions where participating while remaining within the Scottish Government guidelines would be highly impractical.

Decision Summary

Events currently listed as 'Postponed' may be slotted into the latter stages of the season, or may be cancelled.

Any events cancelled from this point onwards would not be rearranged, as capacity in the second half of the season is limited, both in terms of calendar space and operational capacity.

Any events which are significant in terms of International Representation will be given priority, and will go ahead if at all possible.

Any non-essential events will be placed in Category 3 – at high risk of being cancelled.

Asham Age Group Slams – any events that do go ahead will be treated as individual events, and no cumulative points will be awarded. Available prizes should be shared between events.

ACTION – JS to communicate to WCF that we would not require places at the Fussen camp next summer.

All events to 4 January 2021 to be put in Category 4 and cancelled.

Committee to reconvene in early December to come to decisions about events beyond 4 January 2021.

ACTION – JS to communicate to all relevant parties the above decisions.

NR requested that information about planned cancellations was held by committee members until **JS** indicated that the relevant groups had all been informed.

6. **COVID-19 Specific Rules**

The following notes were shared with the committee in advance:

Umpires are keen to have a clear procedure for dealing with teams who do not comply with COVID related rule changes, eg. using two sweepers. It is accepted that there may be accidental infringements that would require a gentle reminder, but the main area of concern is if a team was to intentionally ignore the guidance.

It will be made clear to teams in the Team Meeting Document/Team Information Sheet which additional rules will be in place for the event.

The framework of 'quiet word, formal warning, and then sanction applied' would seem logical, but the sanction would need to be confirmed. Would removal of one player from the game be effective, or should we look to game forfeiture?

DM asked for clarification on which situations these potential rules would apply to, and it was confirmed that Scottish Curling will approach **sportscotland** in the coming months with the aim of arranging that there would be exemption from distancing requirements on ice for our major championships, ie. Junior Women's, Junior Men's, Women's, Men's and Mixed Doubles).

JS confirmed that it was likely that these rules would be required for events other than the above listed, and were to provide for situations where the guidelines were intentionally ignored to potentially obtain a competitive advantage.

*There was some questions from **DM** around the expectations of hosts for major championships, and if they were in the loop with potential limitations to their event, eg. not having spectators at Scottish Men's/Women's. **JS** confirmed that regular contact was made with hosts to ensure that expectations were clear for all involved.*

NR – returned the conversation to the agenda item topic, and suggested that we use the existing warnings framework used for inappropriate behaviour.

SK agreed, and said it is important that we explain to participants why the rules are in place.

JS asked the group to consider what the sanction should be, and voiced that she felt that sanctions for an individual (as we have for inappropriate behaviour) would be ineffective in this situation.

The committee were all in favour of using the existing warning framework, with the sanction being that the game being played would be forfeited.

IY and others confirmed that the procedure and sanction should be clearly noted in the Team Information Sheet/Team Meeting Document and in the Team Meeting.

7. **Bidding**

The group considered if contracts should be extended by one year if an event is cancelled in Season 2020-21, and if so, would the host rink be expected to provide the ice at the same prices as previously bid.

Scottish Men's/Women's Championships Contract Extension Request

NR let the group know that Dumfries had requested an extension of their contract for the Scottish Men's/Women's Championships (even if they are able to go ahead this season) in light of the fact they are keen to invest in their facility and other aspects of the event such as hospitality and legacy, but are unable to do so to the fullest extent for 2021.

GF – asked if it would be possible for Dumfries to detail their planned/current investment to support this request.

SK – not very comfortable with doing that as it shuts out other rinks who may look to bid for the next available season, and feels we need to go back to tender for the next season after Dumfries' current contract.

KP – great personal experience of previous events at Dumfries (including World Senior Championship) and would be happy to support this.

DM – said that we need to not get ahead of ourselves too much at this stage, and **JS** highlighted that the next championships that rinks would be able to bid for (if the extension was granted) would be in 2024, and this may demotivate any rinks who are aspiring to hosting this key event.

GF – may have considered things differently if they had noted the investment etc. in the first place we may have looked differently, but **NR** explained that they are only asking due to the change in what the event will look like.

JS – noted that by the time it comes to holding their second contracted event, they will know if they have been successful in securing a third through the open bidding process, and could invest accordingly.

The committee agreed that the current two season contract would stand, and we would encourage Dumfries to include information/details of their current and planned investment as supporting information for bids for future seasons – which the committee would seriously consider.

Season 2021-22 Bidding Process

AK shared that Ayr were having difficulty filling in the bidding form due to current uncertainties, and noted that there were likely to be price increases in light of the challenging season rinks are currently experiencing.

GM shared the general feeling of the Ladies Branch that the hosts of any cancelled events should be afforded an automatic contract extension, and then shared her thoughts as an ice rink manager that we should go ahead with bidding as normal keeping in mind cancellations when allocating events, and this would allow for price increases should the rinks wish to do so.

DM – there may be some who want an extension, but some who may not, so an automatic extension may not be the way to go. Also mentioned that our usual aim of achieving geographical spread of events may be knocked out of sync if contracts were extended.

GF asked if ice rinks could be offered an extension on the same terms which they could choose to accept or reject.

JS highlighted that allocations may be tricky if they are to take place prior to the end of Season 2020-21, as we may not know which events are going ahead and thus who would be receiving an extension.

IY felt we should run the bidding process as normal, with consideration given to venues who missed out on hosting particular events due to COVID-19.

JS and **GM** agreed that this was the fairest option for all rinks.

Decision: bidding process – extension of deadline to end of February, with decisions to come after we know what is going ahead in Season 2020-21.

GM reported that Ladies Branch would like the hosts of the Henderson Bishop and Morton Trophies to be carried over to the following year. The committee agreed that these decisions lie with the Ladies Branch and are endorsed by the Competitions Committee – and as such the hosts of the cancelled 2020-21 events will be offered the opportunity to host in 2021-22. It was confirmed that this was an acceptable deviation from the above decision as these are Ladies Branch allocated events.

ACTION – JS to inform all rinks of new timescale for bidding, and procedure for cancelled events.

8. **AOCB**

No points raised.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

Meeting to take place early December.

ACTION – JS to circulate Doodle poll to establish best availability.