



A CURLING CONNECTION

Curling Canada Takes Actions to Increase Female Involvement in Youth-based Programs

BY JILLIAN KENT



On February 7th, Curling Canada celebrated National Girls and Women in Sports Day with the Canada-wide rollout of their new female-specific Try Curling Program, Girls Rock. When it comes to female involvement in sports, statistics show that girls in their preteen and teen years are three times more likely than their male counterparts to drop out of activities. The *Rally Report* published in June, 2020, that only 18 per cent of women aged 16-63 are involved in sport. Girls Rock aims to change that, using a female-led, female-participant program that creates a safe and fun space for girls to try a new sport with their friends.

Created by the Women Curling Leaders' Circle, Girls Rock was first held in conjunction with the 2022 BKT Tires & OK Tire World Women's Curling Championship. It was intended to be a one-time event; however, the large and positive response received encouraged the Leaders' Circle to run the pilot program in various other locations across the country. The program model was tested, refined and documented for more than two curling seasons before it was handed over to Curling Canada's For the Love of Curling program for distribution nationwide.

The momentum behind this growing initiative includes commitments from the following member associations across Canada to host a Girls Rock Program in the 2023-2024 season: CurlBC, Curling Alberta, Yukon Curling Association, NWT Curling Association, CurlManitoba, Northern Ontario Curling Association, Curl ON, Curling Quebec, Nova Scotia Curling, New Brunswick Curling Association, Newfoundland & Labrador Curling Association, and Curl PEI.

All provinces and territories have received resources to kick-start their regional Girls Rock efforts, including the official program guide, marketing assets, and event signage, as well as \$1,000 or \$750 to help run the program. Additionally, Curling Canada and the Women Curling Leaders' Circle will continue to run an annual Girls Rock event in conjunction with the Scotties Tournament of Hearts (STOH). This year Girls Rock participants were at the Scotties in Calgary for the opening weekend draw, providing them the opportunity to watch women succeed at the highest level of their sport. Witnessing the impact of female success in sport, on and off the ice, is a vital aspect of this program.

Corinne (Cori') Morris, former lead for Canada's Cheryl Bernard during Team

Canada's 2010 Olympic silver-medal win at the Vancouver Olympics, has been involved in Girls Rock since the beginning and believes the program is essential in creating meaningful connections to sport for young girls.

Whether it is through curling, or they go on to find another sport or activity to inspire them, the program provides the connection and foundation to support young girls' dreams and goals.

Girls Rock and countless other youth-based curling programs are only made possible thanks to the generous donations and support of the Canada-wide curling community. You can support this program, or so many others outstanding initiatives, with a gift to Curling Canada's For the Love of Curling program at curling.ca/ftloc or by scanning the provided QR code.

