

The Business of **CURLING**

Le curling, nos affaires

DECEMBER / DÉCEMBRE 2000

**MAINTAINING
A SOLID CORE**
The search for new
members begins at home

**THE SANDRA
SCHMIRLER
FOUNDATION**
Remembering
one of the greats

OPEN HOUSE
Providing new
opportunities for
non-traditional players

FILLING THE COFFERS

Charity Events
Prove Profitable for
Canadian Curling
Clubs

PLEIN LES POCHES

Les événements de
charité s'avèrent
rentables pour les
clubs de curling

CANADIAN
CURLING
ASSOCIATION
CANADIENNE
DE CURLING



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Le curling, nos affaires

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Zivan Saper**

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A 24-year veteran of the industry, Joe Isjford knows the importance of keeping current club members happy. As the ice-maker and manager of Winnipeg's West Kildonan Curling Club, Isjford finds innovative ways to entertain existing members and generate additional members through the power of word-of-mouth advertising.

By Bruce Deachman

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By Bruce Deachman

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Charity events are proving mutually beneficial for organizations and host curling clubs throughout the country. Benevolent bonspiels are having a significant impact – both on and off the ice – for the less fortunate, and effectively serve to raise the profile and profit margin of the facility.

By Barre Campbell

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La tenue d'événements de charité s'avèrent rentables pour les organismes de bienfaisance et les clubs de curling à travers le Canada. Les parties de bienfaisance augmentent la visibilité des organismes tant sur la glace qu'à l'extérieur de l'aréna et rehaussent l'image et la rentabilité des installations.

Par Barre Campbell



Canadian curling clubs do a pretty good job at attracting new people to our sport. Every year, clubs can expect anywhere from 10 to more than 100 first-year curlers will walk through the doors wanting to see if curling is for them. Plus, as far as we can

tell, this interest is more than just a trend, it is a regular occurrence.

The problem the sport has, however, is that for every 50 people who walk through the front door, there are 50 people going out the back never to return. Therefore, the need for curling facilities to expand their focus to membership and customer retention is critical.

Imagine reducing the number of people from 50 to 25 who go out that back door, (you are going to lose a percentage of your members every year no matter how successful or innovative you are) all the while continuing to attract the 50 new recruits each year. This is called real growth and provides momentum for your club.

With a steady flow of new members and an increase among those who renew each year, your operation will be impacted in a number of ways. You will have a larger pool of potential volunteers. Your best source of new members - your current ones - will increase; and, there will be a significant effect on your financial situation: fees, food and bar revenues and fundraising.

This issue of the Business of Curling Magazine offers your club some tips on improving retention toward the ultimate goal of real growth. We hope you will also enjoy the story on charity curling tournaments. They've been working well in the golf world and many of those charities are now looking for similar opportunities in the winter.

We trust you will find all of the information useful and we look forward to your comments.

Enjoy the magazine!

Zivan Saper

Zivan Saper
President
Canadian Curling Association

Les clubs canadiens de curling réussissent assez bien à inciter les gens à essayer notre sport. Chaque année, les clubs peuvent s'attendre à ce que de 10 à plus d'une centaine de personnes franchissent le seuil pour la première fois afin de voir si le curling saurait les intéresser. En outre, à ce que nous sachions, ce genre de participation ou manifestation d'intérêt en début de saison est plus qu'une tendance; c'est en fait très courant.

Toutefois, le problème auquel fait face le sport est que l'arrivée de cinquante personnes coïncide avec le départ de cinquante autres, peut-être même pour toujours. Par conséquent, il est essentiel que les installations curling se concentrent également sur le maintien des membres et des clients.

Imaginez réduire le nombre de départ de 50 à 25 personnes (peu importe votre succès ou l'innovation dont vous faites preuve, vous aller perdre un certain pourcentage de vos membres chaque année) tout en continuant d'attirer 50 nouvelles recrues tous les ans. Ceci, connu sous le nom de croissance réelle, donne une impulsion à votre club.

Un flux constant de nouveaux membres et une augmentation du nombre de membres qui renouvellent leur adhésion chaque année auront diverses répercussions sur vos opérations. Vous aurez une plus grande réserve de bénévoles potentiels, votre meilleure source de nouveaux membres - vos membres actuels - augmentera et vous constaterez une incidence considérable sur votre situation financière : cotisations accrues, plus de recettes provenant des ventes d'aliments et de boissons et une meilleure collecte de fonds.

Ce numéro de la revue *Le curling, nos affaires* donne à votre club des conseils sur un meilleur maintien en vue de l'atteinte du but ultime de croissance réelle.

Nous sommes persuadés que toute l'information vous sera utile et nous anticipons avec plaisir vos commentaires.

Bonne lecture!

Zivan Saper

Zivan Saper
Le Président,
Association canadienne de curling

TAPPING INTO A NEW SOURCE OF REVENUE

Benevolent Events Prove Emotionally and Financially Rewarding for Today's Curling Clubs

BY BARRE CAMPBELL

Bob Villeneuve wanted to figure out a way to do something good. Then an idea came during a discussion with a group of friends.

Villeneuve learned that the mother of one of his friends had been diagnosed with kidney disease, and he tried to figure out a way to help. That's when he came up with a plan for a bonspiel to raise money for the Kidney Foundation of Canada. "You look around and see that there are a lot of golf (charity) events during the summer, but there's nothing in the winter," says Villeneuve. "I'm not a curler, I'm a golfer. But I figured that we should do something with curling."

The first annual "Throw a Stone for Kidney Disease" was held in 1998 on the first Friday of March – kidney month in Canada – at the Ottawa Curling Club, and the event was a success – both on and off the ice. A team entry fee of \$400 provided players with at least three games of curling, a champagne breakfast, lunch, a steak dinner and chances to win door prizes donated by Ottawa-area businesses.

"The players loved it," says Villeneuve, third-generation owner of an insurance business in Ottawa. Many of the 20 teams came from the area's insurance companies. But the big winner was the Kidney Foundation. The first "Throw a Stone" raised \$7,000 and the amount grows every year. Last year, almost \$12,000 was collected. "It makes you feel good," says Villeneuve. "When you hand (the charity) the cheque, it's great to know that you're spending some energy to help people who might be less fortunate than you – and it helps business," he says. "Somewhere down the line, I'm sure we've received business out of this."

Administrators of other charity groups have recognized the success of benevolent bonspiels like Villeneuve's. The Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Canada organizes a huge event known as the JDF JetForm Technospiel – an event aimed at players and companies from Ottawa's growing high-technology sector. "A lot of the companies have curling leagues or teams that compete



Charity events: a veritable pot of gold.

during the winter, so curling is becoming even more popular among these guys and girls," says Pamela Mason, manager of Fundraising and Development for JDF Canada.

The Technospiel, hosted by the Ottawa Hunt and Country Club, started last winter and attracted 24 teams and 30 sponsor companies including JetForm, the title sponsor, along with major sponsors Nortel, JDS Uniphase, Calian Technologies, Hewson, Bridge & Smith Advertising, Eftia and OSS Solutions. The event, using a curling-inspired slogan: "A cure is just a stone's throw away," raised \$22,500 for juvenile diabetes research, an amount that JDF considered a major success for a first-time event. The projection was for \$20,000.

Mason is confident that the next Technospiel will be larger and more successful than the first one. "We expect to raise even more than last year – somewhere between \$30-35,000 net," she says. "We've canvassed last year's curlers and already we have one-third of our 36 teams committed to playing, and we haven't even begun to advertise."

Entry fee for the next Technospiel is \$500. Like the inaugural event, the fee guarantees the curlers at least three games – more

if one qualifies for the playoff round – entertainment, dinner and a chance to win prizes donated by the sponsors. Last year's awards banquet entertainment was provided by Gord Paynter, a comedian from Ottawa who lost his sight at the age of 21 because of juvenile diabetes. An exhibition match was held between the team from JDS Uniphase and a group of visually impaired curlers. Says Mason, "That game provided additional interest in the sport and it increased awareness that adult blindness is one of the leading complications of diabetes."

"When you hand (the charity) the cheque, it's great to know that you're spending some energy to help people who might be less fortunate than you – and it helps business."

**—Bob Villeneuve
Ottawa, Ontario**

She suggests that the Ottawa Hunt and Country Club served as an ideal venue for meeting the needs of the organizers and was a major contributor to the event's success. Villeneuve also praised the Ottawa Curling Club for its support. "They were great to us and we were treated very well," he asserts. Both believe that clubs gain credibility in the community by hosting charity events. Not only do they show a willingness to help local charities, but they also introduce curling and their establishments to people who have never played the game before.

"I think we introduce a lot of people to the sport of curling," says Villeneuve. "Most of the people in our event have never curled before. They enjoy it, they have a lot of fun, and they look forward to returning next year."

But the main reason that Villeneuve is involved is to help. "Who knows that maybe one day I'll need a kidney," he says. "I could get even more out of this."

(The moral of the story is simple: charity curling events are a new source of business for Canadian curling clubs. They generally take place during off-peak hours, involve many non-curlers, generate significant food and bar revenues and will raise the profile of the facility. Search out those companies who run summer golf or other charitable events and offer your facility to them. Your contribution to the charity could be the donation of the ice time and hours worked by your staff. Given the venue, the charities will then put their army of volunteers to work and will organize the day. Alternatively, the club should be prepared to offer excellent meals and first-rate bar service. Work together and both the charity and the club will benefit – it's definitely a win-win situation.)

Barre Campbell is a writer for the Ottawa Sun

EXPLOITER UN NOUVEAU FILLON

PAR BARRE CAMPBELL

Les événements
de charité
s'avèrent
rentables pour
les clubs de
curling.

Bob Villeneuve voulait trouver le moyen de faire une bonne action. Puis, une idée lui est venue pendant une discussion avec un groupe d'amis.

M. Villeneuve avait appris qu'on avait diagnostiqué une maladie du rein chez la mère d'un de ses amis et il essayait de trouver une façon d'aider. C'est alors qu'il a pensé à un bonspiel pour recueillir des fonds au profit de la Fondation canadienne du rein. «Vous regardez autour de vous et voyez qu'il y a beaucoup de tournois de golf de bienfaisance pendant l'été, mais rien l'hiver», a signalé M. Villeneuve. «Je ne suis pas un joueur de curling mais un golfeur. Toutefois, j'ai pensé que nous devrions faire quelque chose avec le curling.»

Le premier Throw a Stone for Kidney Disease annuel a eu lieu en 1998, le premier vendredi de mars – le mois du rein au Canada – au Ottawa Hunt and Golf Club et l'événement a été couronné de succès – tant sur la glace que hors glace. Des droits d'inscription de 400 \$ par équipe ont permis aux joueurs de participer à au moins trois matchs de curling, en plus d'avoir un petit déjeuner au champagne, un déjeuner, un dîner de bifteck et des chances de gagner des prix de présence donnés par des entreprises de la région d'Ottawa.

«Les joueurs ont été ravis», a affirmé M. Villeneuve, propriétaire de troisième génération d'une entreprise d'assurance à Ottawa. Un grand nombre des vingt équipes étaient composées de personnel de compagnies d'assurances de la région. Mais la grande gagnante a été la Fondation canadienne du rein. Le premier Throw a Stone permis de recueillir 7 000 \$ et le montant s'accroît chaque année. L'an dernier, on a amassé près de 12 000 \$. «On en retire un bon sentiment, dit M. Villeneuve. Lorsqu'on donne le chèque (à l'association de bienfaisance), c'est formidable de savoir qu'on consacre un peu de son énergie à aider des gens qui sont peut-être moins chanceux que nous. Et ceci nous aide au point de vue affaires, ajoute-t-il. À un moment donné, je suis persuadé que ceci a accru nos affaires.»