



## **WCF position on equipment used for domestic or recreational curling**

In 2015, athletes and sport experts began to observe unusual reactions when curling stones were swept with particular types of curling brooms using previously unseen techniques. Over the subsequent months the WCF undertook a number of studies in order to understand what was occurring and to determine if specifications for curling brushes and/or amendments to the rules for sweeping were necessary.

As a result of what was learned, the WCF has drafted equipment policies and specifications for brushes, which will apply to all WCF championships and events. These policies are now in effect following approval of the required motions at the WCF Annual General Assembly in Stockholm, Sweden on 10 September 2016.

It is anticipated WCF Member Associations will adopt these rules and policies for their championships and elite tours, such as the Curling Champions Tour, the World Curling Tour and the Grand Slam of Curling, are expected to follow suit.

One important issue which remains outstanding is how the pending specifications for brushes might impact leagues or competitions outside of WCF championships and elite competitions.

The WCF recognises a great deal of previously compliant equipment, both new and slightly used, remains in the hands of manufacturers, retailers and individual curlers. It is neither reasonable nor practical to expect this equipment should be immediately discarded in favour of equipment conforming to the pending specifications.

The WCF and its Member Associations have no legal jurisdiction regarding equipment used at competitions outside their own events. However, many within the sport are looking to the WCF, as the governing body responsible for the sport worldwide, for guidance.

Therefore, taking into account the findings of the Sweeping Summit and following consultation with curling equipment manufacturers and WCF Member Associations, the following is the WCF position on this subject:



1. The findings of the Sweeping Summit were based on testing performed by elite athletes in championship conditions. While the results of the testing were produced by top athletes, the findings have some validity for all levels of play.
2. The WCF encourages equipment innovation which increases the enjoyment and enhances the curling experience. Going forward, with the exception of fabric coatings and treatments (because of their proven potential to enable a directional sweeping effect and potentially damage the ice), the recreational market provides a good opportunity for curling equipment manufacturers to trial new concepts and designs.

Innovations aside, the WCF expects it is likely that over the coming years curling equipment manufacturers will only produce sweeping equipment which generally conforms to the WCF Equipment Standards.

3. Recognising there are different types of competitions and that participants of widely varying levels of ability may participate in the same events, it may be desirable for organisers to establish “conditions of competition” for their leagues, competitions and events, using what was learned at the Sweeping Summit and taking into account the ‘Spirit of Curling’.

As such, the following may provide some guidance for organisers and individual participants:

- a. For leagues, competitions or events contested primarily for recreation or fun, or for competitions or events contested primarily by novice or inexperienced curlers, it may not be necessary to limit which sweeping equipment can be used as a condition of competition.
- b. For leagues, competitions or events where substantial prizes or awards are earned, it may be advisable to require sweeping equipment conforming to WCF specifications be used as a condition of competition.
- c. In keeping with the ‘Spirit of Curling’, individuals who are elite competitors or very proficient sweepers should consider whether it is ‘fair’ that they



use non-conforming equipment in a recreational competition even if the rules allow it.

4. The act of sweeping produces friction and collects debris in the fabric. The result is the fabric on the brush head is subject to normal wear. With use, decline in a brush heads sweeping performance can be expected. Typically, participants outside of those competing in elite competitions have paid little attention to the condition of their brush head. The importance of doing so is now better understood.

The WCF believes a good analogy is that curling brush heads should be treated more like golf balls, than like golf clubs. A golfer, regardless of their ability, wouldn't likely attempt to use the same ball for an entire season. Similarly, replacement of curling brush heads, pads or covers, like golf balls, should occur on a regular basis.

Some manufacturers suggest curling brush heads should be replaced once a season if they're used once per week, twice per season if they're used twice per week, and so on. The WCF believes this to be a useful guideline for recreational participants to consider.

5. The WCF will continue to monitor curling at all levels and, in consultation with its Member Associations, curling equipment manufacturers and other stakeholders, re-evaluate the positions taken in this document not later than 1 September 2017, to determine if any amendment is required.