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23. July 2020

Dear Curling Family,

I hope this letter finds you well despite what has been an extremely challenging year to date.

The COVID-19 pandemic has definitely impacted us all in one way or another, whether it be from the initial onset of warnings here in Canada and BC and the subsequent worry and fear that accompanied those warnings or from the business closures, quarantine and uncertainty that followed.

To date it appears that our Province has done incredibly well in 'flattening the curve' and I hope that you and your families have all been fortunate enough to have avoided any health related issues linked to COVID-19 and the 'new normal' that we are now faced with.

As part of this 'new normal', our government, health authorities, places of work, the businesses we frequent and our recreational pursuits have all been forced to adapt and to adhere to new processes, rules, and procedures put in place to ensure our safety/health and that of those around us.

For some businesses, complying with these new requirements has been extremely tough and for some it has been nigh on impossible. In the sporting and recreational realm, some organizations have been able to restart while many are still in limbo, unable to resume due to the inherent nature of their activities (close physical contact, numerous participants, closed indoor environment etc.).

As Curlers, we should all be very impressed with the documentation and recommendations that have been distributed by our sport's governing bodies, Curling Canada and Curl BC. If you have not had the opportunity to read what was put out by them please see the following links <https://www.curlbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Return-to-Curling-Guide.pdf> and https://www.curling.ca/files/2020/07/CC-Manual_Return-to-Play_CAN_EN.pdf.

It is clear that a great deal of effort and research has been put into creating these documents. However, what is also unfortunately abundantly clear is that there is no single turnkey solution or a universal procedure manual that can be applied to Curling Clubs of differing size and financial stature. All Clubs have a myriad of unique considerations to take into account before they can

look at prepping ice for the upcoming Fall and Winter. In the case of HSCC, the considerations the Board has to take into account comprise the following;

1. COVID-19 Safety for participants – More than 50% of the HSCC membership is comprised of members 65 years of age and older. The health and safety of our members is of paramount importance and this demographic means that our members are one of the most vulnerable populations in relation to risk of getting an infection and developing severe complications: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/vulnerable-populations-covid-19.html>
2. Expenses - HSCC operates on a very tight budget. Reducing expenses is not a realistic option. Outgoings such as wages (ice technicians & administration), hydro (\$25k in 2019) and repairs/maintenance are all essentially fixed costs. In recent times, it is only in 2018 & 2019 that revenue has slightly exceeded expenses.
3. Revenue – What revenue can realistically be expected to be unaffected by the current circumstance surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic? Will league enrollments suffer? What events will be permitted to be held come winter? (e.g. events are currently limited to 50 or less participants and this precludes us from holding Bonspiels). What public bookings will be possible (i.e. these account for 20% of HSCC revenue). What level of interest will there be and how, if activities were to take place, would they need to be accommodated to ensure social distancing?
4. Logistics –Our Curling facility has not been designed to easily accommodate the new requirements such as social distancing. The foyer is narrow, and the already limited space is additionally challenged by benches and equipment storage (i.e. sliders, grippers, brooms etc.).
5. Staffing – Operationally, the HSCC relies on Squamish Valley Golf Club employees during the Curling season to tend to ice making and associated duties as well as administration. COVID-19 Safety procedures call for a significant amount of extra labour. In relation to Curling activities, this would include enhanced sanitizing of rental equipment (brooms, sliders, grippers), enhanced sanitizing and cleaning of rocks, door handles, washrooms and other high volume/high risk touch points. It would also require staff to be on hand to help with scheduling and coordinating league player arrivals and departures to ensure that the Club is giving all participants the ability to social distance.
6. A ‘second wave’ - the possibility of a ‘second wave’ forcing the Club to close down early or mid-season. In February of this year we were fortunate that the closure of the Club occurred towards the end of the season and whilst it cost us some public booking revenue and a season shortened by a few

weeks, the financial impact was minimal. An earlier forced closure would have significant financial impact on the HSCC, quite possibly of a magnitude that we would not recover from.

Given the above considerations, the HSCC Board has made the extremely difficult decision to cancel the 2020/21 Curling Season. This decision had to be made early as ice preparations would usually begin in the next few weeks and registration would be just over a month away. This is not a decision that was arrived at easily and I like you am disappointed that we have had to take this action. However, I know that we are making the right call for both our Members and Visitors, our Staff and for the future viability and longevity of our Club. In the coming months the HSCC Board will work with SVGC Management to look at ways of minimizing costs between now and the 2021/22 season as well as looking at possible uses for the ice arena (not involving an ice surface) that might bring in some revenue for the Club.

On behalf of the Board of the HSCC I thank you for your understanding and I wish you and your families the best of health.

Yours Sincerely,

Brenda Sims

President -Howe Sound Curling Club.