



NSCA Major Events Strategic Vision and Tactical Plan

NSCA Competitions Committee

2008

DRAFT

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Document Approvals

The following approvals list defines the required approvals for major revisions to this document. The NSCA Competitions Committee Chair may approve minor revisions and edits. Records of approvals will be noted in the document Revision Chart section.

Required Approvals	
Owner	NSCA Executive Board

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1. PREAMBLE

The last twenty years has seen a tremendous growth in curling visibility. The national profile of curling in Canada increased significantly with the introduction of week-long coverage of the Brier and Scott Tournament of Hearts in the late 1980's and has been further bolstered by curling's inclusion to the Olympic Winter Games.

Provincial championship curling in Nova Scotia, for the most part, has remained unchanged during the same time period. There have been a few format and schedule changes but there has been no attempt to increase the stature of the curling through increased exposure of championship events. Several provinces in Canada have developed a provincial championship model to maximize the exposure of the sport in their region. This has been done in various ways such as incorporating television coverage, moving championships to arenas, and attracting corporate sponsorship.

The Nova Scotia Provincial Men's Curling Championship (the Tankard), the Provincial Women's championship (the Scottie's), and the Provincial Junior Championships are the flagship events for curling in Nova Scotia. These events represent the best opportunities to showcase Nova Scotia's best curling and increase the profile of the sport in Nova Scotia.

Two major curling championships are coming to Nova Scotia in the next four years. The premiere event in curling, the Brier, is coming to Halifax in 2010, and the Canada Winter Games will feature curling in 2011. The Nova Scotia Curling Association believes the built-in energy, visibility, and access to private and public stakeholders associated with these major events should be leveraged to build the provincial curling brand.

The Nova Scotia Curling Association, through its Competitions Committee, presents this Strategic Vision and Tactical Plan as the plan for growing Nova Scotia's championship events to their fullest potential.

2. CURRENT STATE ANALYSIS

2.1 Where are we?

To date, the NSCA has taken measured steps in evolving the major competitions in its purview. The conditions of play and event venues have, for the most part, remained unchanged for a generation. There have been various changes in format over the years with the current state being a 16-team triple knockout to a Page System playoff for the men, an 8-team round-robin with a Page System playoff for the women, and an 8-team triple knockout for the juniors.

Nova Scotia has had curling success in recent years including national championships in the men's and women's events. This is attributed to some exceptionally talented teams playing in Nova Scotia. It is a goal of the NSCA to deepen the field of teams capable of producing high finishes in national championships.

2.2 Where do we want to be?

The NSCA, and by extension its member competitors, want to exploit the major competitions to maximize the popularity of the game and build the tier one competitions as the showcase for curling in Nova Scotia. The potential benefits of showcasing the best curling in Nova Scotia are:

- Increase the profile/celebrity of Nova Scotia's curling athletes
- Increase participation of young people into the sport
- Improve access to private and public funding
- Improve the preparedness of Nova Scotia curlers for National championship conditions

The NSCA is committed to exploring the opportunities available to build its major competitions into mainstream sporting events.

2.3 How do we get there?

The evolution of the NSCA tier one events will be achieved through strategic and tactical means. The strategy provides the guidance and building blocks on which the tactical plan is executed.

The strategy will:

- Manage events toward larger venues and improved playing conditions in a phased approach
- Leverage the benefits derived from Nova Scotia being the host of the 2010 Brier and the 2011 Canada Winter Games
- Be executed in a transparent manner with participation from a diverse group of curling stakeholders - player's, clubs, NSCA Directors, other

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 NSCA Executive

- Defines strategy parameters and mandate
- Approves strategy elements, first in concept and subsequently in form
- Contributes to strategy development
- Provides direction and guidance as needed
- Ensures strategy development and execution adheres to NSCA policy

3.2 NSCA Competitions Committee

- Owner of the NSCA major events strategy
- Contributes to strategy development
- Facilitates player involvement
- Executes tactical plan within accordance of NSCA policy

3.3 Competitors

- Contributes to strategy development
- Participates in forums, strategy sessions, and other tasks as required
- Maintains a broad vision of the mandate

4. STRATEGY

The NSCA Major Events strategy looks to fulfill the objective of maximizing the value of major provincial championship events. The strategy is designed to:

- Create an event with a high public profile
- Produce playing conditions that resemble national championship conditions
- Produce provincial champions that are prepared for national competition

The strategy charts a phased approach for evolving the NSCA major championships and intends to use the profile and leverage associated with the 2010 Brier and 2011 Canada Winter Games. The strategy provides direction in seven areas:

1. Venue selection
2. Competition format
3. Ice conditions
4. Rocks
5. Media support
6. Corporate support
7. Communications

4.1 Venue selection

A quality venue is an integral part of the success of a championship event. There are a number of components that define the quality of a venue as it relates to hosting a championship event:

- The ability to produce four sheets of competition-worthy ice
- A facility capable of hosting the players, officials, volunteers, and a significant number of spectators
- A local population from which to draw the required volunteers and a base of spectators
- Local infrastructure to meet the needs of the travelling public (lodging, proximity to major highways, and food establishments)

State	Description	Result
Current state	Clubs bid for hosting privilege No defined requirements for acceptance Venue selection includes non-competition factors such as history, politics	Inconsistent results for NS at Brier No title sponsor and limited interest from new corporate partners Media coverage limited to

	Media / sponsorship coverage varies from year to year	print and ad-hoc web sites Spectator capacity and view planes not consistent
Proposed state	<p>Tier 1 events to be held at Tier 1 clubs</p> <p>Tier 1 clubs are predetermined with input from players and NSCA directors</p> <p>Championship rotates through Tier 1 clubs until future state vision is realized</p> <p>Tier 2 (and other) clubs are given primary consideration for other NSCA championships</p>	<p>Capacity for spectators, players, media</p> <p>High-calibre play and grass-roots interest is better showcased to potential corporate partners</p> <p>Playing conditions more aligned to national championship conditions</p> <p>Opportunity for on-ice spectator seating</p> <p>Conditions consistent with national championship conditions breed more consistent results</p> <p>Tier 2 clubs embrace other events and build them to new levels</p>
Future state	<p>Major championships hosted in an arena setting</p> <p>Low financial risk to Nova Scotia curling community</p>	<p>Events become revenue generators instead of expenses</p> <p>Facility has required capacity for media infrastructure, spectators, players</p> <p>Increased exposure will attract corporate partners</p> <p>Playing conditions aligned to national championship conditions</p> <p>Provincial teams are better prepared for national championships, thus breeding improved results</p> <p>Event tendered to managing partner in low-risk manner</p>

4.2 Competition format

There are a number of valid playdown formats available for use in provincial championships. The playdown structure contributes to two objectives of major championship events:

- Produce a worthy provincial champion
- Provide a structure that is easy to understand, friendly to the non-curler and media, and generates a level of excitement for those in competition and those following the competition

State	Description	Result
Current state (Men's)	16 team, triple knockout to a Page system playoff Two zones contribute 7 teams each with a second-chance tournament used to fill the final 2 spots	Provincial championship teams not tested during zone playdown process
Proposed state	8 team, round-robin playdown to traditional 3 team playoff	Playing conditions more aligned to national championship conditions Every team plays every draw providing clarity for those wanting to watch a particular team
Future state	8 team, round-robin playdown to traditional 3 team playoff	Playing conditions more aligned to national championship conditions Every team plays every draw providing clarity for those wanting to watch a particular team

4.3 Ice conditions

Quality ice conditions result in high caliber play which, in turn, produces the best team as the champion for the event. Championship events should leverage the skill and experience of qualified ice technicians to create the best ice a venue can support.

State	Description	Result
Current state	Ice conditions managed at the local club level by local ice technicians	Ice conditions that do not reflect national championship conditions and are subject to

	Ice conditions vary from year to year and are impacted by factors such as weather, facility infrastructure, and ice technician experience No inspection of conditions prior to championship	change year over year Occasional poor quality ice that effectively closes the skill gap between high-caliber and mid-calibre teams
Proposed state	NSCA contracts with qualified ice technicians to produce the best ice for any given event Local ice technicians partner with experienced ice technicians and develop ice making skill-set	High quality ice produces high calibre play produces high calibre champions Conditions consistent with national championship conditions breed more consistent national championship results
Future state	Arena setting provides the facility to produce national championship calibre ice	High quality ice produces high calibre play produces high calibre champions Conditions consistent with national championship conditions breed more consistent national championship results

4.4 Rocks

Curling rocks, along with ice, are the tools by which curling is played. Consistent, quality rocks allow curlers to execute curling shots based on skill without the influence of outside factors such as inconsistent running surfaces and mismatched rocks in a set. Championship events require the best quality tools in the tool chest to ensure competition is based on skill and not unknown influencers.

State	Description	Result
Current state	Events are played using the rocks from the host club Rock conditions vary from year to year, with many championships played using sub-standard rocks Some championship results on a particular sheet can be correlated to rock set	Inconsistent rocks that do not reflect national championship conditions Mismatched rocks effectively closes the skill gap between high-caliber and mid-calibre teams
Proposed state	NSCA purchases and maintains a set of championship rocks	High quality rocks produce high calibre play produces high calibre champions

		Conditions consistent with national championship conditions breed more consistent national championship results
Future state	Arena setting uses championship calibre rocks to produce national championship calibre conditions	High quality ice produces high calibre play produces high calibre champions Conditions consistent with national championship conditions breed more consistent national championship results

4.5 Media support

Media exposure is a key component to maintaining the growth and popularity of curling. Media exposure provides broad access to the competitive aspects of curling, to the fun and leisure qualities of curling, and can make celebrities of the best curlers in the province. Championship event exposure will showcase the best that Nova Scotia curling has to offer, attracting corporate partners and improving grass roots participation.

State	Description	Result
Current state	Media coverage varies on event location, competing sports events Media channels limited to print, score updates on local sportscasts, and on-line score updates	Public awareness varies from year to year
Proposed state	Major events hosted in media-friendly locales Relationship built with partners in multiple media channels (TV, print, Internet, radio) 2010 Brier and 2011 Canada Winter Games are leveraged to build media awareness of provincial championship curling	Major events are exposed to greater population Events gain following and reputation as elite championships Brier and Canada Games translate to sustained media engagement with provincial championship curling Champions and contenders become recognized entities
Future state	Events broadcast over accessible channel Coverage of major events	Media coverage provides advertising revenue opportunities

	leads mainstream media segments	Media exposure generates non-curling sports fan interest Elite curlers achieve celebrity status with region
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4.6 Corporate support

Corporate support provides a necessary offset to the significant expense of holding a top quality event. Maximizing corporate participation in curling allows for funding of events and programs such as championships, youth development, coaching, and other evolutions of the game.

State	Description	Result
Current state	Title sponsorship for major championships not leveraged to full value Event committees burdened with sourcing most sponsors Event sponsorship heavily dependent on local support	Major events do not deliver revenue to fund NSCA initiatives Event amenities and facilities constrained by limited budget Small business called upon time after time to support local events
Proposed state	Major championship brand established and attracts sponsor interest Title sponsorship provides funds for investment in curling, not just expense coverage 2010 Brier and 2011 Canada Winter Games are leveraged to build corporate awareness of provincial championship curling	Corporate sponsors recognize value in partnering with championship curling Major events produce sponsorship revenue that funds other NSCA initiatives Corporate sponsorship contributes to evolution of major events (facilities, marketing, etc)
Future state	Championship events attract long-term sponsorship agreements with high profile corporate partners	Predictable sponsorship revenue allows sustained funding of NSCA programs

4.7 Communications plan

Communication is the number one tool for building support, gaining recognition, and organizing efforts to achieve meaningful results.

State	Description	Result
Current	Communication of NSCA	NSCA efforts not fully

state	<p>strategy, intent, and progress not regularly communicated to stakeholders</p> <p>Communication delivered through traditional media (press release, documents to member clubs)</p>	<p>recognized by curling community</p> <p>Occasional perception of hidden agendas</p>
Proposed state	<p>Communication tools leveraged to gain support and awareness of NSCA initiatives</p> <p>Communication and feedback opportunities created to ensure broad input to NSCA programs</p>	<p>Curling stakeholders understand the objectives and actions of the NSCA</p> <p>Curling audience is expanded through the use of new communications channels</p> <p>Support of NSCA initiatives is readily achieved, allowing for efficient implementation of new programs and ideas</p>
Future state	<p>Communication activities evolved to regular campaigns</p>	<p>NSCA program messaging is integrated to most initiatives</p> <p>Communications execution becomes routine and contributes to brand development</p>

5. TACTICAL PLAN

5.1 Gaining support for the strategy

The success in evolving the NSCA major events to elite status is contingent on gaining the endorsement of the major stakeholders of these events, namely the players and the Nova Scotia Curling Association executive.

The following tasks and timeline has been developed to build the required support to execute against the strategy:

Item	Date
Draft strategy delivered to Competitions Committee	December 8, 2009
Draft strategy delivered to NSCA Board	January 1, 2009
Draft strategy endorsed by NSCA Board as a concept. Permission received to evolve strategy through collaboration with players and stakeholders.	January 10, 2009
Draft strategy posted on NSCA website	January, 2009
Communication sent to member clubs regarding draft strategy	February, 2009
Communication sent to players regarding draft strategy	February, 2009
Strategy Forum 1 -	March, 2009
Strategy Forum 2 -	April, 2009
Revised draft delivered to NSCA Board	April, 2009
NSCA Annual Meeting. Strategy endorsed by NSCA Board and member clubs.	April, 2009

5.2 Executing the strategy

The evolution of the NSCA major events will be an incremental exercise. Each season will introduce ideas, changes, and initiatives that build the NSCA major events on different fronts. The detailed plan will fill in according to the input of various stakeholders. The following high-level calendar of events outlines some of the major deliverables of the strategy:

Year	Men	Women	Junior
2008/09	Chester	Bridgewater	Halifax
Goal:	Coin-flip to determine last rock in first end		
Develop a shared vision of success			
Build support for the vision	Championship rocks purchased by NSCA and used in Tankard	Championship rocks purchased by NSCA and used in Scotties	Championship rocks purchased by NSCA and used in provincial

Implement initial steps toward optimizing playing conditions	Event hosting program introduced to NSCA Board		
	Strategic Vision endorsed by NSCA		
2009/10	Site TBD	Site TBD	Site TBD
Goal: Use best in class facilities to host events Build support for playdown format change (men's) Leverage Brier to identify corporate and media partnership opportunities	Event hosting program implemented to NSCA Board		
	Proposal for playdown change to 8 team round robin submitted to NSCA		
	NSCA rocks used in provincial competition		
	Brier held in NS		
	Strategic Vision reviewed and revised as required		
2010/2011	Site TBD	Site TBD	Site TBD
Goal: Evolve and showcase events to broad audience Leverage Canada Winter Games to identify corporate and media partnership opportunities	Canada Winter Games held in NS		
	8 team round robin implemented for Tankard playdown		
	NSCA accepts expressions of interest for event management in an arena		
	Strategic Vision reviewed and revised as required		
2011/2012	Site TBD	Site TBD	Site TBD

Goal: Progress opportunities to move events to mainstream venues (arena)	Strategic Vision reviewed and revised as required		
2012/2013	Site TBD	Site TBD	Site TBD
Goal: Deliver best in class event	Strategic Vision reviewed and revised as required		

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6. APPENDIX

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