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March 19, 2024.

GNCC Board and Members,

We are pleased that you are considering our invitation to rejoin USA Curling as a Recognized Regional Association. Our two organizations can do more for the sport together than apart, and we believe our membership is looking forward to the curling community coming together again.

We understand the desire of your organization to ensure a productive relationship with USA Curling. We also hope you can appreciate that USA Curling must represent the entirety of curling in the United States. The Board feels strongly that all parties must be treated equally—bylaws, policies and procedures, and/or rules should apply to all Recognized Regional Associations.

Below, I have addressed the five conditions/concerns you shared with GNCC clubs.

1. “Since the GNCC is being invited to rejoin and, because the GNCC had a board seat when its membership was revoked, the GNCC shall have a board seat immediately upon accepting the invitation to rejoin. The GNCC shall appoint a representative to that seat at the GNCC’s discretion. Current by-laws state the GNCC would not be eligible for a seat until after the reallocation in 2025.”

Reflecting the desire of USA Curling to bring the curling community together again, the GNCC seat remains open and ready to be filled at any time.

Last year, after the process of reapportionment of Board members, the USA Curling Board allocated a seat to each of the three highest blocks of membership in the country: Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the GNCC. Three other Board seats are shared among Recognized Regional Associations (RRA), in the same manner that has been in place since the previous reapportionment.

The seat remains vacant, and the Board of Directors can fill the open spot should the GNCC decide to rejoin as an RRA. USA Curling leaves it to each RRA, or groups of



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RRAs, to determine how and whom they nominate as a candidate for the Board of Directors of the national organization.

That said, once candidates are nominated, the Nominating & Governance Committee must vet them to ensure that, at a minimum, the person is a USA Curling Member, has completed required SafeSport training, has no pending SafeSport complaints against them, and passes the mandatory background screening. The Nominating & Governance Committee shares its review with the Board of USA Curling.

These requirements are consistent among Boards of all US Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) National Governing Bodies (NGB). The USOPC also requires that any individuals serving on an NGB Board, both upon taking office and on an annual basis, agree to the Ethics and Conflict-of-Interest policy of the organization. Those documents can be found in the Policy & Procedures document on the USA Curling website.

2. “By accepting the GNCC as a regional association, the USAC Board will grant the GNCC the right to immediately recall and replace its representative on the USAC Board should its representative vote in favor of any proposal that the GNCC Board believes hinders the growth of curling and conflicts with the GNCC’s mission to grow curling.”

Both the USA Curling bylaws and the Board of Directors celebrate diversity of thought and opinion. Nothing should ever dissuade Board members from expressing opinions or voting their conscience on any issue—debate is encouraged and valued, differences must be acknowledged and respected.

It is expected that USA Curling Directors be supportive of the national organization and our work to grow the sport of curling. In the past, that has been misconstrued to suggest that Directors cannot voice opinions or opposition. The reality is that any Board should engage in genuine back-and-forth, demand results of management, and bring forward important issues.

Acquiescence is not required, but there are responsibilities. Directors should be advocates, with backgrounds that allow them to provide guidance and expertise to



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the management team, build a stronger culture, sharpen strategic focus, and ensure financial sustainability.

The removal of a Director from the Board of any organization is a serious issue, and due process for that Director must be respected. There is a detailed process for removing a Board member by the USA Curling Board of Directors and USA Curling members—we would expect that the process of removing a Board member by any RRA would be equally rigorous.

Ultimately, Directors nominated by regions have the ability to change their Director upon the completion of any two-year term. Directors are not automatically up for re-election. They must be renominated by the RRA, or group of RRA's, prior to re-election. So, an RRA(s) could simply not re-nominate a person who they did not feel was reflecting the values of the RRA and nominate someone else for the next term.

As stated above, USA Curling leaves it to each RRA, or groups of RRAs, to determine how and whom they nominate as a candidate for the Board of Directors of the national organization. That person must go through the Nominating and Governance Committee process after they are nominated by the RRA(s).

3. “By accepting the GNCC as a regional association, the USCA will state in writing that (1) the GNCC has no financial relationship with the USAC in any way and (2) that the GNCC is not a Creditor or Guarantor of the USCA in any way. This stipulation shall be recorded in the USAC Board meeting minutes as a board resolution.”

No Recognized Regional Association has or ever has had a financial relationship with USA Curling, and neither is a creditor or guarantor of the other party. There is nothing to indicate otherwise in USA Curling bylaws or Policies & Procedures, but the Board will pass a resolution to that effect, and apply it to all RRAs.

4. “The GNCC will collect its own regional fees for any USCA playdown. The USCA will collect only those playdown administration fees owed to the USCA.”

USA Curling has no issue with an RRA collecting playdown fees.



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All other RRAs utilize MyUSACurling/Sport80 to collect regional playdown fees in order to simplify registration and make it a one-step process for competitors.

When the championship season is completed, we work with each RRA to reconcile fees and return the amounts they are owed. We have never retained registration fees owed to a regional association.

In 2023-24, we also significantly reduced our charges for regionally-based playdowns—it is now a \$25 per person administrative fee and only teams that qualify are charged the national championship fee.

5. “No GNCC member club shall be forced to leave the GNCC and join another regional association. Further, no club can be barred from joining the GNCC by the USCA.”

USA Curling will not take any action to force clubs to either leave an RRA or join another.

We do believe that regional associations tied to a reasonable geography play a vital role in the growth of our sport by delivering services and creating connections at a more local level than a national organization can.

The curling community is strongest when it works together. In our opinion, it will be unproductive if RRAs are competing for Member Clubs like conferences currently are in college football. We are better as teammates than rivals.

We provide this feedback to the GNCC Board, its clubs, and its members to be constructive and transparent. We hope it can help fuel further discussion.

Sincerely,

Bret Jackson

**Bret Jackson
Chair, USA Curling**



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