

Braehead Curling Development Group

Chairman's report – 2013/14

This year has been a very busy one for the members of the committee. There have been many challenges, much achieved, significant strides in important areas, and several areas of controversy.

Club Development

A key priority for clubs at last years AGM, was that you wanted the BCDG to provide additional support for the development of your clubs. Action taken:

- To share best practice we ran a very successful club development seminar at which over 50 people attended. There were a number of key outcomes and much discussion about **how we get clubs well organised and fit to receive new members**. Perhaps more in our discussions later.
- You requested us to find out from RCCC where clubs could get further info on financial support for coaching and club development – Judith has recommended – the 'Help for Clubs Website' at www.sportscotland.org.uk/clubs/helpforclubs. For information – Awards for All are not taking applications for funding until after 4th August.
- We undertook a club 'survey monkey' – which was sent to every Braehead club, and this allowed us to provide new curlers with details of all responding clubs on our website, the Braehead noticeboard, and publishing a club booklet. Over 30 clubs have replied, and clubs can still complete the survey, by emailing the BCDG. Many thanks to Jon Heggie for his very considerable work done on this area on your behalf
- We had also planned to run an IT support series of workshops for clubs interested, but family illness caused this to be cancelled and will be run early next year.
- Promoting the Olympic Try Curling sessions on our website, in order to encourage loads of new curlers, resulting in 700+ attending Braehead with 80+ booked into beginner lessons.

Membership Issues

At last years AGM we discussed the issue that Braehead was requiring club secretaries to collect Braehead membership fees on their behalf. We met with Bruce Harley on a couple of occasions, tried with limited success to minimise workload for club secretaries, and agreed jointly with Braehead, a letter of explanation and guidance. The key part of the agreement with Braehead, being that Braehead had indicated strongly that should the number of curlers paying membership fees this year rise substantially then the likelihood was that ice charges would remain unchanged into season 2014/15. As we now know, Braehead are to increase costs for season 14/15 from £12 to £12.50p per person - a big disappointment for all curlers.

Website and IT

In the summer Gordon Nicholl stood down after 3 years supporting us through running the website. Gordon did a great job, and we are much in his debt. Jonathan Heggie took over in September and has completely revamped the site. He will talk you through further during his report. Suffice to say, my view is that the Braehead Curling Development Group have the best Scottish curling website, and was top for hits of all rinks during the Olympics. The establishment of a curler database now allows us to provide regular updates on all things curling to the registered subscribers

Junior Initiative

A key priority that has emerged for the BCDG has been the need to stimulate a substantial increase in juniors at Braehead, and our junior initiative has led from numbers going from 12 attenders to 48 in just one season. The main challenge here however is for Braehead to provide suitable and cost effective junior ice, and for us to provide sustained and well planned organisation and leadership. More of this in the Junior Development report.

Coaching

A key component of our work is to assist coaches to develop, and to recruit and train new coaches. There is a strong need for a robust coaching strategy, and BCDG is very fortunate to have the support of Alan Hannah to develop our BCDG Coaching Strategy. He will take you through the results of our coach meeting, survey, a high level re-organisation of our website to support this, and his thinking on coaching for the coming years.

RCCC Developmental Outcomes

This year, the way the outcomes have been bundled together by the RCCC has meant that many have not been achievable and this will require to be shortly renegotiated for next year.

Competitions

The Braehead Open, Superleague, Brechin/Allcomers (many thanks to Valerie Lindsay for her organisation), and Small Clubs league have all been pretty successful from both the numbers and fun point of view.

The BCDG Mixed Doubles event had 15 teams and was again very much enjoyed. Unfortunately Braehead are no longer supportive of it being a mid week event, which has implications for its continuing.

The Ladies Open numbers remain lowish and could do with a rethink to stimulate a better entry.

This year we also organised a farewell Bonspiel for Meta Eccleston who is leaving for Canada, and this was very enjoyable with 70 people taking part.

Finance

Our finances remain reasonably healthy. Our further investment in cameras - £1500, and new computer and webhosting - £1000 has made a big difference in the quality of what we can provide, and probably completes for some time to come our IT infrastructure.

On the VAT front John has done an excellent job of saving clubs the requirement to pay VAT. The loss of income from no final BCDG bonspiel will have to be made up by some alternative fund raising means

Work with Braehead

Our work as a development group with Braehead has been somewhat troubled this season. In previous years there have been many areas which we have been able to progress well with Braehead. However this year, a number of issues have caused significant difficulties:

- Club secretaries having to collect membership fees for Braehead.
- Concerns regarding Braehead's policy of charging for re-arranging ice,
- Stone preparation for major championships.
- BCDG Mixed Doubles no longer to be allowed on a mid week basis.
- Negative comments about our website and webcasting,
- BCDG bonspiels now to be charged on a per person basis, and
- A disagreement about junior ice costs.

As a result the BCDG has been reviewing our roles and responsibilities.

Attempts to establish a meeting with Braehead management to resolve these latter issues, have been rebuffed. In the latter part of our meeting I would value discussion on club expectations of BCDG regarding working with Braehead.

Committee

This year Alan Sloan has stood down to concentrate on Glynhill responsibilities, Liz Paul has retired after 5 years of very valuable service to BCDG, and David Horne also stepped down, after a huge amount of work. I feel very privileged to have had these people serve on our committee.

If I am re-elected as Chairman, then this will be my third and last year, and therefore a key task for me is to ensure that the future committee is strong and able to undertake their work on your behalf.

Can I remind you each, that as best practice, I think that people who undertake significant areas of service need to know that they can come off committee after a couple of years work, knowing that they are being replaced, by others with skills and commitment.

One of the additional ways forward is to have **support responsibilities** – areas undertaken by individuals without having to become fully involved in the work of the committee. The areas that come to mind are seminars, one off bonspiels, production of brochures, fund raising and sponsorship.

Strategic View

Taking a view on strategic planning, our priorities are shifting away from capital expenditure, towards financial and organisational support for junior development, our coaching strategy, and continuing our support for club development which we see as central to our work.

We very much value the guidance of clubs on their priorities, and your support in every aspect of our work to develop curling at Braehead.

I hope you will agree by the end of the meeting tonight, that the BCDG has been working hard and that despite the contentious areas, we have addressed a number of strategic issues and taken significant strides forward.

My huge thanks to my very able committee for their tireless work on your behalf.

Dr Gary Macfarlane - April 2014