

This years Fall Springfield league ran over 6 weeks on Wednesday nights from 7:30-9:30. While this league mostly operated smoothly and as usual some distinct changes for operational and arena management purposes.

League Management

League management was accomplished by Mike Harwat and Bruce Clingan. Management operations were smooth, and were relatively easy on the coordinators. Bruce and Mike split operations, with Mike handling scorekeeping and game management and Bruce handling communication, and league and team format. Split operations work well, but split coordinators should develop a schedule for after game tasks like when scores will be completed and when emails go out. Because we didn't set these goals emails and scores went out seemingly randomly. It worked out ok, however this is an area that could have been improved on.

Team Selection

Team selection was done in draft format. This decision was made solely based on ease to coordinators. Each participant was given a note card with their name and was asked to place their name under the appropriate team. There were complaints about this draft format, but frankly those complaints didn't outweigh the workload benefit of this type of team selection. For leagues where no one steps up to coordinate this team selection worked very well. It is recommended when using this format that it is communicated to members that if this league is recreational none of our competitive teams should be playing together in these leagues. They should be broken up at some level. League coordinators should be given the authority to split these teams in recreational leagues using this team selection format. It is recommended that teams that have played in 2 or more competitive leagues together in the last two curling seasons should be considered competitive teams. Regularly competitive teams should not be competing together in these leagues, it has a negative impact on the competition in the league and doesn't promote growth in newer curlers.

League Format

League format was done using a points based system. Teams were awarded points based on W/L, End Win, and Points Scored. Only the first 6 ends counted for End Win and Points Scored points to account for the possibility of not getting in all 8 ends. It is recommended that this be bumped up to 7 ends (when 8 end games are being played), as this would give teams more of an opportunity to score points, and since games always completed 7 ends each week. Because there were not enough weeks for a round robin matchups were accomplished by order in the total points. This did result in a couple of teams replaying each other, but by the end of the league teams were matched up really well and games were much closer. All things considered this league format worked pretty well and would be good to use in other shortened league formats.

Registration

This league had 27 participants. No outside marketing was accomplished, no registrations were opened to non-members.

Substitutes

Substitutes continue to be a problem in dealing with. Many spots were filled with subs, but these were hard to manage on the league coordination side. While it was communicated to have subs notify the league coordinator who they are there to sub for making it impossible to track subs each night. Because of our substitute policies we need subs to sign in, also because they have not signed a waiver for the year. We need to find a way to communicate that people need to notify who they are subbing for each week better, but it's unclear how to do that.

Another concern that arose was teams not notifying coordinators that they didn't have enough players to play. A couple times in the league teams were short players and pulled players from other teams, however the players that are pulled should be handled by the coordinators. This is because of the possibility that newer players or junior players are left in less than ideal situations.

Junior Curling

This was our first league with junior curlers since the implementation of our Junior Curling initiative. The league had one junior curler, age 10. Overall things went well. There is a distinct weakness with curlers in this age group when ice conditions get tricky, however a noticeable improvement was noticed from the beginning of the league to the end of the league. As the season goes on we will potentially have leagues with as many as 3 juniors competing at the same time, it is important that we are carefully considering and monitoring what we can do to improve their experience and to improve their integration with adult curlers.

Recommendations/Observations for Juniors in this league

- Juniors will constantly need work. While it is important that they have fun and are enjoying themselves, it is also important that their teammates and competitors are constantly striving to make them a better curler.
- Focus should be given on the basics such as knowing what is going on in the game, being an active participant, discipline in setting up a shot and working through a routine. Juniors that are hitting the line will be far more successful in the long run, so focusing on this area is important.
- Everyone working with juniors should spend considerable effort on encouraging pace of play and sportsmanship rules and tips.
- Junior curlers should be playing on the front end of teams not the backend of teams.
- Juniors under 15 should be kept on teams of 4 if at all possible. There is a distinct disadvantage to a younger youth sweeping alone, and doing so effectively over the course of an entire game. Further when on a team of 3 they don't get the level of feedback that we should be focusing on them getting.
- Members and other competitors should be encouraged to treat these junior curlers like adults would be treated with similar expectations. I noticed several members who while not being disrespectful, almost thought it was their role to entertain and supervise junior

curlers. This isn't the case, we should set an expectation of maturity with our juniors, and members should be the role model in that aspect.

Timing of Games

For the first time in our history with NTPRD Chiller we had a user group renting ice behind us and in front of us. Concerns were brought up by the venue before the league about time management, and these concerns proved to be invalid. Our members did a great job of making sure that we were off the ice at the appropriate time. One thing implemented in this league that worked well was that games started at 7:30. There was no waiting on permission to start, you just started. Also announcements were done for the most part prior to the league start time. Instead of having a floating game end time or a start last end no later than time teams were told that no play may happen after 9:30 (the end time of the league). This worked really well.

Setup

Setup duties were assigned to the winning teams. This again worked really well, and falls within the spirit of the first round being bought by the winning team. No additional thought had to be put into managing setup, it was done every week.

Overall Recommendations

It is recommended that the following be adopted based on the operations of this league:

- Announcements take place 5-10 minutes prior to the start of the league. All participants should be encouraged to arrive 5-10 minutes early to hear any announcements there might be. No announcements should be done after game start time.
- League participants who do not have enough players to play must notify a league coordinator, who can then re-arrange teams to allow all teams to play. Coordination among teams doesn't work well.
- All league setup tasks should be handled by the winning teams as our way to encourage an element of the spirit of curling. This is our "first round".
- Junior curlers under the age of 15 should be kept on 4 person teams if at all possible. When teams need to be rearranged for absent players, teams with juniors should not be brought down to 3 players unless it is the only option.
- More promotion of the "Spirit of Curling" is necessary as we grow new members and a juniors program.