

***Sport 21* Background Report no. 17**

This is no. 17 in a series of background reports being prepared during 2002/03 to inform the revision of *Sport 21*, the national strategy for sport in Scotland.

A Profile of Curling in Scotland

Research Digest no. 95

by

© **sportscotland**

Published by
Research Unit
sportscotland
Caledonia House
South Gyle
Edinburgh EH12 9DQ

Tel: 0131 317 7200
Fax: 0131 317 7202
email: research@sportscotland.org.uk
website: www.sportscotland.org.uk

ISBN 1 85060 424 X
Price £5
October 2002

FURTHER INFORMATION

This report is available on **sportscotland's** website:

www.sportscotland.org.uk

Governing Bodies of Sport. Outline information on the Scottish governing bodies of sport is contained in a Fact Sheet in the series of *Sport 21* information papers. The **sportscotland** website includes contact details of all [governing bodies](#) plus links to their websites.

Participation. Reports on sports participation are published annually. The current version is [Sports Participation in Scotland 2001](#) (**sportscotland** Research Digest no. 90). This is available on the website and will be superseded by the report for 2002 in early summer 2003.

Sports Clubs in Scotland. The full and summary versions of the report [Sports Clubs in Scotland](#) (**sportscotland** Research Report no. 75 and Research Digest no. 59) have been published and are available from **sportscotland** and on our website. Reports with the responses to all the questions in the national survey of clubs (from which a selection for curling are included in this report) have been published for the following ten sports where the sample sizes were considered large enough to justify individual analyses. These are also available on the website.

Angling	Football
Athletics	Golf
Badminton	Hockey
Bowls	Swimming
Cricket	Tennis

Facilities Database. **sportscotland** maintains and continues to develop a substantial database of sports facilities in Scotland. Four projects in 2002 are updating the information for indoor sports facilities, pitches and courts, golf facilities and countryside sports provision and are also addressing qualitative aspects and the resulting refurbishment and replacement implications. These follow the publication of [The Ticking Time Bomb](#) that identifies the implications for Scottish swimming pools over the next 20 years. Information from the facilities database may be obtained by contacting: alexander.major@sportscotland.org.uk (0131 472 7525).

Profiles of Individual Sports. This series of profiles of individual sports draws on governing body information; participation data; sports club survey; and the facilities database. The following sports are being profiled in these Background Reports designed to inform the revision of *Sport 21*, and the profiles are being placed on the website during the autumn of 2002.

Angling	Cricket	Hockey
Athletics	Curling	Rugby
Badminton	Football	Swimming
Bowls	Golf	Tennis

CONTENTS

Page

3	Acknowledgements
4	Section 1: Organisation of Curling
5	Section 2: Profile of Curlers
9	Section 3: Profile of Clubs
14	Section 4: Facilities for Curling

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by **sportscotland's** Research Unit as part of a series of Background Reports to inform the revision of *Sport 21*, the national strategy for sport in Scotland. It was one of 12 profiles of sports that include information on the organisation of the sport; participation; clubs; and facilities. The participation and clubs sections are based on information from two studies commissioned by **sportscotland**:

- The curling information from the survey of sports clubs in Scotland derives from analyses by the Planning Data Management Service of the sports clubs questionnaire data gathered by the Survey Unit on behalf of the Centre for Leisure Research, all of Edinburgh University.
- The curling information from the regular survey of sports participation by the general public that derives from System's Three's Scottish Omnibus Survey.

sportscotland is grateful to colleagues at the Royal Caledonian Curling Club for their help; and the 61 curling clubs throughout Scotland who took the time and trouble to complete questionnaires.

sportscotland
October 2002

SECTION 1: ORGANISATION OF CURLING

- 1 Curling has a long history in Scotland from where it has spread to the rest of the world. The first recorded example of a curling-type game dates back to Paisley in the mid-sixteenth century.

Governing Body

- 2 The Royal Caledonian Curling Club (RCCC) is the national governing body for curling, with branches and affiliated associations and clubs worldwide. It was founded in 1838 with the aim 'to unite curlers throughout the world into one Brotherhood of the Rink'. Contact:

Royal Caledonian Curling Club
Cairnie House
Avenue K, Ingliston Showground
Newbridge EH28 2NB

tel: 0131 333 3003
fax: 0131 333 3323
email: office@rccc.org.uk
website: www.rccc.org.uk

- 3 There are 585 clubs in Scotland affiliated to the RCCC with nearly 15,000 members in 2002:

Honorary members:	699
Junior members (under 18)	686
Junior members (18-21)	136
Ordinary members	<u>13,306</u>
Total Scottish membership	14,827

SECTION 2: PROFILE OF CURLERS

- 4 About half a per cent of the adult (16+) and child (8-15) respondents had taken part in curling within the previous four weeks during the season (Table 1). The adult figure has remained fairly constant since data collection started in 1987. When these rates are applied to the Scottish population, about 20,000 adults and 3,000 children had taken part in curling.

Table 1: Participation in Curling During the Season, 1999-2001

Participation (most popular 2 mos)	Adults (aged 16+)	Men	Women	Children (aged 8-15)
Participation in last four weeks during the season				
% of respondents	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.6
No. of participants (000s) ¹	20	11	9	3
² Base:	6,237	2,994	3,243	1,006

- 5 In terms of the number of participants, curling is similar in popularity to cricket and hockey for adults and yoga for children (Table 2),

Source

Since 1987 **sportscotland** has commissioned data on sports participation every other month from System Three's Scottish Opinion Survey. This is a monthly survey of about 1,000 adults (aged 16 and over) from 40 sampling areas in mainland Scotland. Since 1998 children (aged 8 to 15) have been included in the survey. The question asked is:

- In the last 4 weeks, have you taken part, however informally, in any of these sports or physical recreations in Scotland?

A showcard with a list of sports is used so that respondents are in no doubt as to what to include and acts as a reminder. The last four weeks is a period that normally results in good recall, particularly of the number of times they have taken part. It also allows a rough definition of 'participation' to be determined, excluding those who rarely take part. 'However informally' emphasises that participation is not limited to formal or competitive activity. The focus is on participation by Scottish residents in Scotland.

The data are analysed for **sportscotland** by the Planning Data Management Service of Edinburgh University. Sports participation questions are included in the survey every other month throughout the year, but for purposes of identifying actual participation rates only data from the most popular two months each year are analysed, in order to avoid artificially lowering the average with rates from out-of-season participation. Results over three years are combined in a three-year moving mean. This is intended to boost accuracy by increasing the sample size, and to smooth out year-on-year variations that are simply due to sample fluctuations. Statistics on participation in curling are provided here for 1999-2001. For further comparisons with other sports, see **sportscotland's** Research Digest no. 90, *Sports Participation in Scotland 2001*, also available on **sportscotland's** website. This is updated annually, usually early summer.

¹ Population figures are from the General Register Office for Scotland 2000 mid-year estimates provisionally revised on the basis of the 2001 Census.

² Here and throughout, the 'Base' figure is the total number of respondents to the question.

Table 2: Participation in Sports/Physical Recreations During the Season, 1999-2001

Sport/Physical Recreation	Adults (16+)	Children (8-15)
Percentage of respondents during most popular two months		
Walking (2+ miles)	32	21
Swimming	22	52
Football	11	62
Cycling	10	43
Golf	10	15
Keep fit/Aerobics	9	11
Dance	9	19
Snooker/Billiards/Pool	8	15
Multigym/Weight training	7	4
Running/Jogging	6	38
Tenpin bowling	6	10
Hillwalking/Climbing/Mountaineering	5	5
Bowls	4	2
Angling	3	6
Badminton	3	22
Tennis	2	18
Sailing and other water sports	2	2
Yoga	2	0.5
Basketball/Netball/Volleyball	2	37
Martial arts	1	6
Ice skating/Ice hockey	1	10
Horse riding	1	5
Athletics	1	22
Table tennis	1	8
Rugby	1	11
Squash	1	3
Skiing	1	3
Gymnastics	0.7	17
Curling	0.5	0.6
Hockey	0.5	18
Cricket	0.4	4
Judo	0.1	1
<i>Base:</i>	<i>6,166</i>	<i>996</i>

Figures are from a representative sample of households in mainland Scotland participating during the four weeks prior to interview in the most popular two months for each sport, cumulated over 1999-2001.

Social Profile

- 6 While a national sample of the general population is the only means of obtaining meaningful figures on participation in sport, the effect is that the following profile of curlers is based on a small number (48) within that sample (Table 3). Significant margins of error should be assumed. (For more details of the survey, see the box on 'Source' above.)

- 7 Two-thirds of the adult curlers in the sample were men. It will be interesting to see whether the impact of the Scottish women's gold in the 2002 Olympics has influenced this ratio.
- 8 Curling has an excellent profile for inclusiveness across the age groups. Most sports cater primarily for younger people, but 75 per cent of adult curlers were aged 35 and over compared with 68% of the adult population generally. Equally the youngest adults were fully represented: 17 per cent of curlers were aged 16-24 compared with 14 per cent of the overall population.
- 9 Curling is less inclusive in terms of social class: most (88%) of the sample were from white collar backgrounds, compared with 45 per cent of the population as a whole.

Table 3: Social Profile of Curlers 1999-2001 and Population

Profile	Adult curlers	Scottish population³
	Percentage of adults (16+)	
Gender		
Male	67	47
Female	33	53
Age		
16-24	17	14
25-34	8	17
35-54	48	36
55+	27	33
Social class⁴		
AB	48	19
C1	40	26
C2	10	22
DE	2	33
<i>Base⁵:</i>	48	4.077m

³ Population figures are from the General Register Office for Scotland 2000 mid-year estimates provisionally revised on the basis of the 2001 Census.

⁴ AB Higher and intermediate managerial, administrative and professional.

C1 Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional.

C2 Skilled manual workers.

DE Semi-skilled or unskilled manual workers; apprentices in skilled trades; casual or lowest grade workers; state pensioners or widowers; those entirely dependent on the state long term through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons.

⁵ The base number for Tables 3 and 4 is the all-year figure (not just the two most popular months) over the three-year period for those who reported that they had curled during the four weeks prior to interview.

10 Two-thirds of the sample of curlers were members of a curling club (Table 4).

Table 4: Club Membership of Curlers

Club membership	Adult curlers
Percentage of adult respondents	
Yes	67
No	33
<i>Base</i> ⁵ :	48

11 During the season, nearly a third (29%) of adult curlers played at least once a week (Table 5).

Table 5: Frequency of Participation in Season

Frequency (most popular 2 months)	Adult curlers
Percentage of adult respondents	
Less than once a week	71
Once a week	16
Up to twice a week	3
More than twice a week	10
<i>Base</i> ⁶ :	31

⁶ For frequency, only those who curled during the most popular two months have been included, on the assumption that 'off-season' frequency may be different from that at the most popular period of the year.

SECTION 3: PROFILE OF CLUBS

- 12 In the summer of 1999 Edinburgh University undertook a major survey of clubs in Scotland on behalf of **sportscotland**. The following section gives key results on the organisation of curling clubs compared with results from all clubs in the survey. A total of 61 completed questionnaires was received from 107 sent to curling clubs, a response rate of 57 per cent. The response rate for all clubs in the survey was 36 per cent.

Year Established

- 13 Reflecting the long history of this sport, over half (55%) of extant curling clubs were founded in their current form over 100 years ago. Some of these can document a continuous history back to the second half of the eighteenth century.

In which year was your club established in its present form?

Year	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
Pre-1900	55	15
1900-1949	8	19
1950-1969	13	12
1970-1979	11	14
1980-1989	11	17
1990-1999	2	23
<i>Base</i> ⁷ :	53	3,038

Governing Body Affiliation

- 14 The overwhelming majority (89%) of clubs are affiliated to the Royal Caledonian Curling Club.

Is your club affiliated to the governing body?

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
Yes	89	91
No	11	9
<i>Base</i> :	61	3,462

⁷ Here and throughout, the 'Base' figure is the number of clubs who gave a reply to that question.

Competition

15 Almost all (95%) curling clubs take part in external competitions.

Does your club take part in any external competition events, matches or leagues?

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
Yes	95	88
No	5	12
<i>Base:</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>3,450</i>

Membership

Membership Numbers

16 The curling clubs who responded had an average membership of 68, although numbers varied widely including a few very large clubs that affected the average as the majority (62%) had between 20 and 59 members.

What is the total membership of your club? (Including players, non-players and social members)

	Curling	All Clubs
Average mean no.	68	133
<i>Base</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>3,396</i>

Adult/Junior and Male/Female Playing Membership

17 Less than half (41%) of the responding clubs catered for junior members, but the large majority (81%) included female members.

*Are there adult and junior **playing** members in your club?*

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
Adult and junior playing members	32	55
Only adult playing members	59	30
Only junior playing members	9	15
<i>Base:</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>3,217</i>

Are there male and female **playing** members in your club?

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
Male and female playing members	74	66
Only male playing members	19	28
Only female playing members	7	6
<i>Base:</i>	53	3,240

Membership Involvement

18 Most (60%) of the club members were mainly involved in recreational curling, with a third (34%) mainly involved in competition.

Approximately what percentage of members are...

	Curling	All Clubs
	Average percentage for all responding clubs	
...involved mainly in recreational sport?	60	44
...involved mainly in external matches/competitions/events?	34	48
...non-sports players/social members?	5	8
<i>Base:</i>	58	3,002

Waiting List/Concessionary Rates

19 Only two per cent of the clubs (ie, one club in the responding sample) had a waiting list for membership.

20 Less than half (40%) of the clubs offered concessionary rates for members. Of those that did, about three-quarters offered concessionary rates to children and half to students.

To which groups do clubs (that offer any) offer concessionary rates?

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs that offer any concessions	
Children	71	68
Students	54	39
Those on benefits or low-waged (eg, senior citizens, unemployed)	4	54
<i>Base (clubs with any concessionary rates):</i>	24	2,035
Multiple responses, so figures sum to more than 100%		

Change in Membership Numbers

21 More clubs (42%) reported a decrease in their membership than an increase (29%).

In the past five years, has membership of your club...

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
...stayed the same?	29	38
...increased?	29	35
...decreased?	42	26
Don't know	0	1
<i>Base:</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>3,353</i>

Change in Membership Age

22 Another fairly simple indicator of the health of clubs is whether they are attracting new young members. However, over half (56%) reported that the average age of their membership had increased compared with a tenth (11%) that it had decreased.

In the past five years, would you say that the average age of the members of your club has...

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
...stayed the same?	31	43
...increased?	56	40
...decreased?	11	15
Don't know	2	2
<i>Base:</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>3,359</i>

Club Issues

23 Reflecting the significant number with declining or ageing membership, the major issue for curling clubs – more than for clubs generally – was attracting new members. (It should be noted that this survey took place before any impact of the recent Olympic and World Championship successes.) There were concerns about shortages of volunteers in many sports, but this was not an issue for most curling clubs.

Are any of the following [see list below] an issue in your club?

Curling All Clubs

Percentage of responding clubs

Yes	92	94
No	8	6

Base:	60	3,409
-------	----	-------

If YES, those identified as issues:

Curling All Clubs

Percentage of responding clubs that identified any issue

Attracting new junior members	82	68
Attracting new senior members	60	55
Retaining existing members	53	54
Attracting women members	38	41
Attracting family members	29	25
Financial difficulties or uncertainties	15	41
General shortage of volunteers	13	50
Shortage of volunteers/staff with technical skills	5	33
Shortage of volunteers/staff with management skills	5	29

Base (respondents identifying any issue):	55	3,199
---	----	-------

Multiple responses, so figures sum to more than 100%

Sources of Income

24 The main source of income for almost all (86%) of the curling clubs, compared with 56 per cent of all clubs in the survey, was membership fees.

What has been the main source of the club's income over the last 12 months?

Curling All Clubs

Percentage of responding clubs

Membership fees (incl pay & play, casual, day tickets)	86	56
Grants	3.5	3
Fundraising	3.5	15
Match or game fees	3.5	5
Other	3.5	3
Base:	57	3,025

SECTION 4: FACILITIES FOR CURLING

- 25 Curling originated on lochs and specially constructed ponds, but as ten inches of ice are required for the traditional outdoor Grand Match between the North and South of Scotland, the last took place on the Lake of Menteith in 1979. The sport is now dependent on a network of ice halls currently numbering 30 (the database is under review – see final page), the first opening in Crossmyloof, Glasgow, in 1907. They are located in the following council areas:

Aberdeen City	2
Angus	2
Argyll and Bute	1
Dumfries and Galloway	3
Dundee City	1
East Ayrshire	1
Edinburgh City	2
Fife	1
Highland	2
Inverclyde	1
Moray	1
North Ayrshire	2
Perth and Kinross	3
Renfrewshire	2
Scottish Borders	1
South Ayrshire	1
South Lanarkshire	2
Stirling	2
Scotland	30

- 26 Most of the halls contain four, five or six rinks:

No. of Rinks	Halls
One	1
Four	12
Five	5
Six	9
Seven	2
Eight	1
Total	30

Facility Ownership and Problems for Curling Clubs

27 The following information is taken from the national survey of sports clubs in 1999 also used in the previous section.

Ownership

28 Most curling clubs relied on halls that were owned commercially (57%), by local authorities (37%) or by another club (22%).

Who owns the facilities where your club usually plays/competes/participates?

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
Commercial leisure, health or sport facilities	57	7
Local authority leisure facilities	37	42
Facilities owned by another club	22	8
Outdoor/natural resources	3	13
School facilities	2	15
Facility owned by the club	2	30
University or college facilities	2	4
National training centre	2	2
<i>Base:</i>	60	3,320

Multiple responses, so figures sum to more than 100%

Facility Problems

29 A fifth (19%) of the clubs stated that their playing/training was held back by facility problems. A quarter (24%) of those using local authority facilities and commercial facilities considered that their playing/training was held back, and 15 per cent of those using facilities owned by another club. These proportions were less than half of those for the whole sample of sports clubs in the survey.

Is the development of your club's playing/training held back by any problems with facilities? (Proportion responding 'yes' by facility type used.)

	Curling		All Clubs	
	Percentage of responding clubs using each facility type			
	%	<i>Base</i>	%	<i>Base</i>
All facilities	19	59	43	3,365
Commercial leisure, health or sport facilities	24	33	56	307
Local authority leisure facilities	24	21	57	1,479
Facilities owned by another club	15	13	49	280

Base: Number of responding clubs using each facility type

- 30 Specific problems with the rinks they used were each only identified by small proportions of clubs. The most significant were availability of ice time when needed, raised by 14 per cent of clubs, and the fact that there was not a rink available locally (12%).

Which of the following problems affect the facilities your club uses?

	Curling	All Clubs
	Percentage of responding clubs	
The facilities are not available when needed	14	19
The facilities are not available locally	12	13
The facilities are too expensive	7	22
The facilities are of poor quality	5	20
The facilities have inflexible management	2	10
<i>Base (all responding clubs):</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>3,365</i>
Multiple responses		

Facility Issues for the Future

- 31 In 2002 consultants were engaged by **sportscotland** to undertake audits of outdoor and indoor sports facilities in Scotland. The audits include all ice halls that are normally available for public use in Scotland.
- 32 The study is due to report in mid-2003. It will update the database of ice halls (which will be reflected in a revision of the website version of this report). It will also establish the general condition of these facilities, and determine the capital cost of bringing them up to a safe and acceptable standard and then maintaining them in reasonable condition to the year 2025.