

The Case for Converting Your Rental League to a House League

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Background

So... you're in a rental league and you love coming to the rink from October to March on a certain day, at a certain time to curl with your friends and get caught up afterwards over a bite or drinks in the lounge. You've been doing it for years. Originally, the league may have had a legacy attachment to a service organization, company or professional organization.

Times change. Curlers come and go...but lately it's mostly go. Every year it gets just a bit harder to rejuvenate membership and your numbers are decreasing. Plus, the logistics in this day and age of wrangling a bunch of people, handling their payments, doing the draws and generally keeping things going (never mind the liability issues...) are not the same as they were back in the day. So long time league organizers (which may even include you) are starting to look for a way to pass the torch, only there aren't a lot of people putting up their hands.

The answer: consider "internalizing" your league and having it run by the Garrison. There are advantages both from the individual curler's perspective as well as for the league as a whole (and certainly its organizers).

Advantages

- **Preservation of your weekly curling slot.** With its resources, the GCC will be able to increase the number of curlers playing on your day and time and preserve your curling slot. Whether you're in a men's women's, seniors, open or mixed league, whatever number of curlers you have - we'll add to it. The inevitable progression of a decreasing rental league membership means that, at some point, the GCC will take back the sheets to create new programming on that day and time.
- **Ongoing rejuvenation of league members.** After we initially preserve your weekly curling game, the GCC is better positioned, given the scope of our operations relative to a stand-alone rental league, to continually access new curlers to ensure your league registration remains robust from year-to-year. In addition to "lateral" moves from curlers and teams playing at other clubs, the GCC's novice and development programs are constant feeders into our regular leagues.

- **Spares are easy to find; and you can spare in other GCC leagues at no cost.** The GCC has ~1,100 members and all of them are eligible to spare throughout the season; accordingly, our teams have the ability to call on a large number of potential spares should they find themselves down a curler or two. Conversely, this gives our members the ability to curl more frequently as spares, *at no additional cost*. Think of a curling world where you could play in your own league *and* maybe even spare in other leagues once and a while!
- **The existence of institutional continuity and professional management.** Because the organization of a rental league rests entirely on the engagement of one or two key individuals, rental leagues are vulnerable to disruption should an organizer leave or become overburdened with administrative obligations (as many organizers experienced during COVID). The GCC, through its professional management, provides institutional continuity offering comprehensive financial, programming, communication, instruction and governance expertise. This includes administration of the Curling Alberta Individual Curler Fee.
- **Opportunity to participate in increased levels of competition and represent the club.**
 - Our league structure allows teams to move within a series of flights. Depending on their records and the number of registered teams, we have a promotion/relegation after each round, ensuring that you're playing more competitive games as your record improves. Meanwhile, teams who are not at that level find their way into a division with teams of similar ability.
 - Ability to participate in the GCC Club Championships. League winners face off against each other in the Club Championships, allowing the top teams to meet during the final weekend of the season.
 - Ability to represent the GCC at events and bonspiels, including some with the potential to carry on to the provincial and national levels.
- **Free practice ice.** GCC members have unlimited access to free practice ice which can be booked 7 days in advance. Non-members (such as curlers in rental leagues) can only book 3 days in advance and they pay a fee for a 45-minute session.
- **Reduced rates for instruction.** The GCC has one of the top instruction programs in the province, with many elite curlers (Olympics, Scotties, Brier, Slams) on the teaching roster offering lessons at discounted rates for members.

Ok, but what about...

When considering internalizing a rental league, here are the most **frequently-asked questions** we get:

- **Can we keep our “unique” format?** Yes and no. For the first year, we'll keep your format (if you want) to help with integration; but you won't participate in club championships. Then, in Year 2, you'll adopt the same format we use across the entire GCC regarding rosters, divisions, playoffs, etc. (to see what that currently looks like, [click here to go to our website](#) and look at our current Information Circular). One of our goals - after providing a great experience on and off the ice - is to have consistency from league-to-league in terms of formats.
- **Will we have a preferential right to register ahead of other curlers?** Yes. All existing rental league members will have a 7-day preferential period in which to keep their spots. After that, registration opens up to others. In subsequent years, returning teams at the GCC always have a chance to re-up ahead of new teams. Registration occurs
- **Will my cost to curl go up?** Yes. But you'll benefit from all the advantages noted above; *and* they are likely going to go up anyhow with an upcoming revision to the GCC's fee structure with its rental leagues. Starting with the 2026-27 season, a rental league's fees will have the financial equivalent of a minimum 5-sheet commitment over a minimum of 19 games; meaning that if your league had been taking only 3 or four sheets, it will be charged as if it was using five sheets.

The fee structure at the GCC is as follows:

- Annual membership fee: \$50
- Annual curling Alberta fee: \$22 (which rental league curlers pay as well)
- League fee: \$313-\$471, depending on the day and time of the league

We encourage all rental league curlers and their organizers to candidly assess their go-forward plans and consider whether internalizing your league makes sense.