

# British Curling Annual Report 2024

## (for presentation at the AGM February 2024)



### Introduction

This report summarises the key activities and achievements of British Curling Ltd during the period March 2023 – April 2024. That represents the period since the last Annual General Meeting, although the financial commentary will be restricted to the financial reporting period of October 2022 – Sept 2023 inclusive.

The period reported on has been the first year since the covid pandemic where we have been able to function “normally” without restrictions in the training or competition environment. That has been a welcome return, and the accounts show that return with more normal spend on International travel as a result. Give the slightly later AGM this year, we can cover results at world championships across two playing seasons for both the Olympic and Paralympic Programmes.

### Competition Results

As a performance focused business, our key metric annually is performance by the teams we support in the world championships. Traditionally that has been Scotland teams at senior, junior, Olympic and Paralympic events, but with the addition of support through Sport England, this extends now to include the England Wheelchair curling programme.

The summary below covers both seasons 2022-23 and season 2023-24 which concluded as this report is written:

#### World Junior Championships.

**2023:** Scotland travelled to Fussen in Germany with an extremely young men’s team from Dumfries – Team Carson, and the more experienced women’s team skipped by Fay Henderson, whose team had earned promotion from the B division earlier in the season. Team Carson performed superbly in taking a bronze medal, with Fay Henderson, Robyn Munro, Holly Wilkie-Milne, Laura Watt, and Amy Mitchell took a stunning gold medal and returned as World Junior Champions.

**2024:** The World Junior Championships hosted in Finland and once again Team Carson earned the right to represent Scotland, whilst Robyn Munro took over a skip for the women’s team. A tougher event compared to the year before saw the men’s team finish 6<sup>th</sup>, and the women’s team finish 9<sup>th</sup>, and relegated to the B Division for next season.

#### Women’s World Championships.

**2023.** Having missed out the previous season due to Covid, Team Morrison were selected to represent Scotland in Sweden at the 2023 World Championships. Finishing 12<sup>th</sup>, their performances showed at times the potential envisaged as the team rebuilds following the retirement of key players after Beijing 2022.

**2024.** Team Morrison were selected once again, and finished 8<sup>th</sup> in the championships held in Sydney, Canada. Progress demonstrate from the year previously, and the team as a whole had a strong season on tour rising up the world rankings. Olympic Qualifying points were secured, but more will be required in season 2024-5 to ensure a GB women’s team in Milan-Cortina.

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## Men's World Championships.

**2023.** Team Mouat travelled to Ottawa, Canada with high hopes having had a strong season on the world tour. They delivered when it counted, taking a gold medal in some style defeating the hosts Canada in the final in front of 7500 biased spectators.

**2024.** Seeking to defend their World Title, Team Mouat once again represented Scotland at the championships in Schaffhausen, Switzerland. In a high quality competition, agonising defeats in the semi-final (vs Canada) and then the Bronze Medal match (vs Italy) resulted in a 4<sup>th</sup> place finish. Olympic qualifying points secured.

## World Mixed Doubles Curling Championship.

**2023.** Jennifer Dodds and Bruce Mouat were selected to represent Scotland for the championships in Gangneung, Korea. 5<sup>th</sup> place finish after losing the quarterfinal to the USA.

**2024.** Sophie Jackson and Duncan McFadzean were selected to represent Scotland after winning the Scottish MD championships. The event took place in Ostersund, Sweden, and the pair finished 6<sup>th</sup> (losing the quarter final to Switzerland). Good Olympic qualifying points secured ahead of the Milan-Cortina games.

## World Wheelchair Curling Championships

**2023.** Scotland competed in the Team and MD event, whilst England competed in the MD event only. A strong showing by all, with the results below:

Scotland Team – Bronze medal

Scotland MD – 8<sup>th</sup>

England MD – 5<sup>th</sup>

**2024.** Back in the 2018 Paralympic venue the Team and MD events ran separately in Korea. The results below for both Scotland and England:

Scotland Team – 10<sup>th</sup>

Scotland MD – 10<sup>th</sup>

England MD – 9<sup>th</sup>

These results mean that Scotland have secured strong points towards Paralympic Qualification (which runs across the 2023/2024/2025 World Championships). Scotland secure points on behalf of Paralympics GB (by agreement with World Curling).

## Off ice highlights and impact

British Curling is reliant upon brilliant people to create the impact we seek. It was therefore excellent – after a strong recruitment process, to promote from within the British Curling team when **Greg Drummond** took on the role of Olympic Head Coach.

This significant appointment created a vacancy in our coaching team, so recruitment of three Apprentice Coaches followed – continuing the principle of “growing our own” coaching workforce. **Al Scott, Luke Carson** and **Niall Ryder** were appointed to these innovative new positions, and with the support of UKSport and Sport Scotland are benefiting from coach development support and guidance, as well as mentoring and input from the wider coaching and SLT team.

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A significant development in our Paralympic Programme saw the appointment of **Cheryl Lappin** as Para Pathway Manager. Cheryl's remit is to re-invigorate and re-establish a pathway for wheelchair curlers across the UK, seeking to ensure a stronger flow of talent either new into the sport, or potentially transferring from other elite sports programmes. This work is essential and the partnership approach with especially English Wheelchair Curling, Scottish Wheelchair Curling, and Scottish Curling is pivotal to success. New athletes have been identified, and are now in regular training seeking to challenge for places in squads and teams for Scotland, England and GB.

In the summer of 2023, UKSport approached British Curling and asked if Nigel Holl could be seconded part-time to work on a project they wished to develop. This was agreed by the Board, and it has enabled staff development promotion and development opportunities. In order to ensure all aspects of business covered, **David Leith** was promoted to Interim Performance Director, and **Stephanie Stewart** to Interim Chief Operating Officer. The secondment continues and it has further enabled recruitment (p/t) of **Nikki Gibson** to cover aspects of the Head of Performance Services remit.

### Financial situation

The Annual Accounts have been prepared (FRMWork – financial advisers) and audited Sumer Audit Co. They will be presented to the AGM for approval.

The Accounts show a surplus across the year (and across the business as a whole) of some £27k. All surpluses are re-invested into the British Curling programme as a whole, and given that the majority of our income comes from public sources (UKSport, Sport Scotland, Sport England), we are bound by tight procedures and contracts regarding that income use.

The impact of inflation across all budget areas is being felt. Costs of international travel especially have been challenging, and it is a credit to the team that tight cost control is ensuring we remain within budget both within the year, and across the cycle to September 2026 (when our current investment from UKSport concludes).

### Breakdown of Spend

The Statutory Accounts (presented to the AGM along with this Report), provide the essential financial information for the business.

For the members of British Curling, it is understood that greater financial detail is of interest, and further information will be circulated separately ahead of the meeting.

**Nigel Holl**

**Executive Performance Director**

**April 2024**