

In non-Olympic years, your curling club may be looking for ways to generate interest and enthusiasm for curling and to spark interest among the public. The Curling for Charity event developed by Cape Cod Curling Club may be just what you're looking for.

The gist is that it is a one-day spiel built on the collaboration of curling club members, paid staff and volunteer supporters of a designated charity, and area businesses and community members. While it takes a little investment of time and energy up front, the pay-off for everyone involved is remarkable. At our club, we have done 11 events in the past 14 years, raising roughly \$175,000 for our partnering charities while gaining new membership, anchoring our presence in the community, and earning the reputation of being a very, very good neighbor.

In a nutshell, here's how we do it.

What	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curling for Charity• A one-day bonspiel featuring all new curlers who raise and/or contribute money to support a designated charity.• These new curlers are recruited by the charity to compete in this event and are given 2-3 training sessions by members of CC Curling Club.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This event helps the charity by raising money and awareness for its cause.• It also gives the curling club a few benefits: community exposure, internal pride, and a pool of new members.• It's fun!
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We typically do this event in November, which capitalizes on the spirit of generosity associated with Thanksgiving and allows us time to train the participants. While it's true one charity event raised \$40,000 in a single day, it's also true the amount of money raised is equal to the level of organization, motivation, and dedication of the charity itself.
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The curling club forms an ad hoc "Curling for Charity Committee," usually consisting of 3-4 people, including someone with a personal connection to the charity, a club officer, and a representative from our publicity committee.• The curling club board identifies a charity, usually one recommended by a member curler. A team of 3-4 leaders from the charity meet with curling club representatives to discuss what is involved, the timeline for completing incremental steps, and the importance of meeting these deadlines. The curling club emphasizes that it is the charity's efforts and ability to recruit sponsors/benefactors as well as individuals to curl. It's important to be clear on this from the beginning!
Money sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The curling club and the charity canvass local businesses, such as law firms, retail stores, restaurants, etc., as well as public employers, such as military bases, police and fire departments, and schools to enter a

team. Sometimes, organizations will collaborate to field a team. For instance, at a recent event, four pastors from different churches entered a team (and won). Each team is charged an entry fee of \$1000. For private businesses, the employer usually donates this as a charitable contribution, and in the case of public employers, the folks who have agreed to curl will make personal contributions or get donations from friends and family. We insist team members have never curled before. This is a real hit and assures everyone is on equal footing.

- Additionally, the charity is expected to reach out to its donor network and the larger community to contract for sponsorship support: event sponsor, warm room sponsor, sheet sponsors, etc. If a charity has a larger donor base, you can get creative in designating these “opportunities.”
- The charity also solicits raffle prizes from local retailers and service providers for a drawing that takes place on the day of the spiel. Both curling club members and the charity sell these raffle tickets, for which we charge 3/\$25 or \$10 each.
- We also encourage the charity to print a program book in which they recognize their sponsors and sell additional ads.
- Curling club members continue to sell raffle tickets throughout the day of the spiel to the crowd of spectators and supporters on hand. We also have a donation basket prominently displayed throughout the day.

Logistics

- The size of your club determines the number of participants needed for this event. We are a three-sheet club, so we recruit 12 teams, each of which plays two four-end games. We have two morning draws, a break for lunch, then two more draws in the afternoon. Then there is a Finals round, determined by points, in which participants are piped on and winners receive a trophy of some kind. This keeps everyone around for much of the day, which adds to the energy and camaraderie of the event.
- We’ve found it useful to recruit five-member teams to allow for no shows and subs.
- Each team is assigned a “coach,” a volunteer from the curling club, to prepare them for the spiel. Coaches and curlers meet at a mutually convenient time for 2-3 sessions in which players learn basic skills, rules of play, and simple etiquette. Coaches are on hand the on day of the spiel to advise their players.
- We eliminate the free guard zone rule on the day of the spiel.

Promotion

- The curling club and the charity jointly share in promoting this event. Our publicity committee informs area media outlets through regular press releases, including photos of charity bigwigs. Especially for larger charities and/or smaller communities, these people have name recognition that newspapers are likely to pick up on. Internally, we ask league managers to announce the event, and we use both these announcements and our e-blast system to recruit club members to sell

raffle tickets. We also promote the event on our website and through our social media platforms.

- The charity is expected to use its marketing resources to do similar things.
- We make sure all the curlers invite friends and family members to come out and support their players on the day of the event.

Tips

- We encourage each team to come up with a clever name and to wear some type of team uniform. They have a lot of fun with this and are very creative.
- It's imperative to choose a charity that fits this model. Our experience tells us the charity should be one for whom \$15-\$20,000 is a meaningful amount. Also, the charity must have the internal resources to recruit curlers, sponsors, and raffle donations. We don't partner with religious or political organizations.
- We have developed two documents to help this event go smoothly. One is a Participant's Guide, which has tips about curling, suggestions for this particular event, and basic rules of play. The second is a Progress Chart showing the overall timeline and incremental deadlines for individual tasks. Make sure everybody on the committee is familiar with this early on.

Our job

- Provide facility.
- Provide team training.
- Organize the competition.
- Provide announcers.
- Provide internal and external publicity.
- Post signs on the day of competition.
- Hang sponsor signage inside curling club.
- Sell raffle tickets.

Charity's job*

We always provide a lot of support in these tasks, but we let the charity know up front that these responsibilities are ultimately theirs.

- Recruits teams.
- Recruits sponsors. Provides banners/signage to the club.
- Oversees raffle by getting prizes, getting tickets, etc. Manages raffle on the day of the event.
- Designs and prints an event booklet.
- Provides lunch food on the day of the event. This can be something they've purchased or had donated. They can offer it for free or for sale.
- Manages logistics at the club on the day of the event. For example, parking, donations, food sales, raffle drawing, etc.
- Manages information display at the event.

The bottom line is that if your club has chosen a charity with an enthusiastic following and a good donor base, your event will raise money, spirits, and knowledge of curling.