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## An Open Letter to All of USA Curling

Dear Supporter of Curling,

The most recent steps in the regeneration of the USA Curling competitive programs were taken these past few days at a gathering of athletes, coaches, USA Curling officers and staff, and U.S. Olympic Committee staff in Minneapolis. The "working group" participants were selected to represent a cross section of curling interests in the nation.

To provide a little background, the majority of the funds spent on USA Curling competitive programs are provided in an annual grant from the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC). The USOC awards the grant based upon its belief in the strength of USA Curling's High Performance Plan to produce sustained competitive success and ultimately Olympic medal winners. USA Curling submitted a High Performance Plan (HPP) for the 2011-14 quadrennial in April. It was essentially an update of a 5-year plan created in 2008, with the addition of a thorough review of the 2010 competitive year.

The 2011-14 HPP was submitted with the knowledge that critical program details remained to be filled in. At the same time, intense internal and external reviews of the previous 18 months of the USA Curling high performance program were being completed.

The meetings this week began with a thorough study of the internal and external reviews, and debriefing of the high performance program staff. The daylong process ended with key learnings, or knowledge, from both reviews being identified and summarized. Following this, the working group analyzed the knowledge gained from the reviews; identified factors critical to future sustained success; created a vision of what a successful Olympic team will look like in Sochi in 2014, and began discussing how to make that vision a reality.

The regeneration process started when USA Curling athletes, coaches and leaders became convinced that the programs in place were no longer adequately preparing our teams to consistently be the best in the world. To continue doing business as usual would be unfair to anyone who ever put on a slider with dreams of someday winning a medal for the USA, as well as to those people just cheering from the sidelines. The process is about integrating high performance principles into the current competitive curling programs in the United States, while maintaining the heritage of the sport. It is about providing the right athletes with the right training opportunities, going to the right competitions, with the best leadership and coaching available. A plan delivering Olympic success will also positively impact all other levels of USA Curling programs, from world championship teams to the grassroots levels.

Using the above philosophy, the working group in Minneapolis began to develop program ideas to accomplish the objectives. A smaller group will now work with the critical success factors, philosophy, and ultimate goals to build the program details for the 2011-14 High Performance Plan. The 2010-11 season will essentially be a transitional year, with widespread development, education and outreach.



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There are no changes anticipated to the current national playdown structure and qualification process for the world championships. Team funding as athletes may have known it in the past will not likely be available this season, at least not in the previous “direct from USOC to athlete” form. Those pinning their training schedules on USOC funding are advised to plan as if funding will not be available. Should funding become available, they will be that much better off.

The completed High Performance Plan is due to the USOC by Sept. 1. The working group is planning to hold several “town hall” meetings around the country in the coming weeks to share the key learnings from the reviews, the critical success factors identified, the High Performance Program philosophy going forward, and program concepts introduced to date. A crucial part of these meetings will also be listening to those who attend, gathering input and ideas, and taking it all back to the program planning group. More details about these forums—open to all USA Curling members, not just competitors—will be posted on the USA Curling website as soon as they are available.

Sincerely,

Chris Sjue  
President

Kent Beadle,  
Vice President, Elite Programs

Rick Patzke  
Chief Operating Officer