



Curling Canada High Performance Athlete Replacement Policy 2024/25 & 2025/2026 Seasons – Mixed Doubles Discipline

Published: December 29, 2024

INTRODUCTION

On July 27, 2023, Curling Canada announced new qualification criteria to determine the two curling athletes to be nominated to represent Canada at the 2026 Winter Olympics in the mixed doubles discipline¹.

As outlined in the Curling Canada Internal Nomination Procedures (INP) posted on the Curling Canada website², the winners of the 2025 Mixed Doubles Curling Trials (MDCT) will be nominated to represent Canada at the 2025 World Mixed Doubles Curling Championships (WMDCC) in Fredericton, New Brunswick (April 26 to May 3, 2025) and at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milano-Cortina, Italy (February 4 to 10, 2026). These two athletes will be referred to as the “qualified athletes” for the purposes of this document

The 2025 MDCT in Liverpool, Nova Scotia (December 30, 2024 to January 4, 2025) will be held more than a year in advance of the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) athlete nomination deadline (January 17, 2026) for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milano Cortina, Italy.

While the additional time to prepare to represent Canada at World Curling sanctioned international events is intended to provide a benefit to these qualified athletes, the extended timeframe between qualification and the start of these World Curling sanctioned events also presents a greater likelihood a qualified athlete is unavailable to compete in one or more of the World Curling sanctioned events.

PURPOSE

As of December 30, 2024, Canada has not yet officially qualified to compete in the mixed doubles discipline at the 2026 Winter Olympics. Canada is qualified to compete at the 2025 WMDCC, an important qualifying event to determine the first eight (8) nations qualified for the Winter Olympics in the Mixed Doubles discipline. If Canada does not secure an Olympic berth at the 2025 WMDCC, it would need to secure one of the final two (2) qualifying berths available at the last-chance Olympic Qualification Event (OQE) held December 15-20, 2025³.

This policy is intended to supplement the INP published on August 30, 2024 by providing additional clarity and transparency around how Curling Canada will deal with scenarios where one or both qualified athletes are unable to properly prepare for, or compete at one of these important World Curling sanctioned international events due to an accident, injury, illness or other related concerns.

The policies outlined in this document were prepared with input and consultation from Curling Canada senior leadership, high performance (HP) staff, Curling Canada’s Athletes Council, and other external stakeholders.

¹[Curling Canada | MD Trials moved up!](https://www.curling.ca/blog/2023/07/27/md-trials-moved-up/), <https://www.curling.ca/blog/2023/07/27/md-trials-moved-up/>

² [Curling Canada | Becoming Team Canada](https://www.curling.ca/becoming-team-canada/), <https://www.curling.ca/becoming-team-canada/>

³ [Milano-Cortina-2026-Qualification-System-for-Curling_V1.0.pdf](https://worldcurling.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Milano-Cortina-2026-Qualification-System-for-Curling_V1.0.pdf), https://worldcurling.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Milano-Cortina-2026-Qualification-System-for-Curling_V1.0.pdf



PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

The Curling Canada HP team is committed to seeking and developing ways to optimize athlete performance through its National Team Program (NTP) and to achieve the performance objectives presented to Own The Podium (OTP) in its annual submission(s). Sport Canada and OTP are major stakeholders, partners and financial contributors to Curling Canada's high-performance programs and its member athletes.

It is of critical importance the teams representing Canada at World Curling sanctioned events are capable of and likely to achieve a podium performance. The winning team from the 2025 MDCT, comprised of a male and female athlete, will have successfully competed against and beaten Canada's top teams to earn the right to be nominated to represent Canada.

ELIGIBILITY

Curling Canada supports the two qualified athletes provided they follow their HP-approved training /competition plan and are both available to compete at the each of the World Curling sanctioned event(s) they have qualified for. The published INP confirms this intact team represents Canada's best opportunity for achieving a podium performance on the World stage.

If either qualified athlete is unavailable to properly prepare for or compete at one of these events, due to accident, injury, illness or any other related concern, that team will have lost 50% of their members. A loss of 50% is believed to be too high of a threshold to be considered an intact team for eligibility purposes. This is consistent with World Curling rules at international events where "teams must forfeit any game(s) in which it fails to have both players playing for the entire game". In the event this loss of an athlete occurs prior to any future World Curling sanctioned international event, Curling Canada will nominate a full alternate replacement team to represent Canada instead of allowing the remaining available qualified athlete to select a new partner.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The eligibility of the qualified team will be determined in advance of each event they have qualified for. For clarity, if a qualified athlete is unable to compete at the 2025 WMDCC or the 2025 OQE (if necessary) and a replacement team is sent in their place, but both qualified athletes are healthy, available and properly prepared to compete with their partner at a subsequent event (2025 OQE or 2026 Winter Olympics), they would not lose their right to compete at these events regardless of how well the replacement team finished at earlier World Curling sanctioned events.

REPLACEMENT TEAM SELECTION TIMING

Curling Canada will publish the procedure to identify a replacement team prior to the 2025 MDCT and the replacement team selected as a result of this policy is to be announced well in advance of the next major World Curling sanctioned international event in late April 2025. To ensure all athletes competing in the 2025 MDCT are aware of this athlete replacement policy, each of the 16 qualified teams (32 qualified athletes) will have received an emailed copy in advance of the start of the 2025 MDCT and this policy will also be published alongside the latest version of the INP on the Curling Canada website.



REPLACEMENT TEAM SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection decision for the replacement team will be made using a variety of factors that may help predict a team's podium potential at a World Curling sanctioned event. A comprehensive list of the selection criteria that will be evaluated is listed below:

- Team results (placement, statistics & analytics) from the 2025 MDCT.
- Team performance in mixed doubles competitions during the 2025 Trials Qualification period (August 1, 2023 to December 9, 2024). The focus will be on the quality of results in mixed doubles events over each team's aggregate ranking (2025 Trials CMDR) throughout the qualification period. The relative strength of field for each mixed doubles event result may also be considered.
- Previous competitive experience at World Curling sanctioned international events in either discipline for both team members.

REPLACEMENT TEAM SELECTION PROCESS

Phase 1:

The remaining fifteen (15) non-winning teams who participated in the 2025 MDCT will be evaluated based on the above factors. Curling Canada will identify a maximum of five (5) teams that it believes exhibit the greatest podium potential. These teams will move forward onto the 2nd phase of the selection process.

Proposed deadline for completion: January 31, 2025

Phase 2:

Curling Canada HP staff will meet with each of the shortlisted teams to outline the expectations involved with being selected as the replacement team (including developing an approved training & competition plan), confirm their continued availability for all future international events they may be required to compete in on short notice, and to outline the support that will be made available to the selected team to ensure their continued readiness.

The additional information collected during this consultation period will be used to supplement the evaluation process already conducted in Phase 1 of the selection process prior to making the final replacement team selection.

Proposed deadline for completion: February 28, 2025



REPLACEMENT TEAM SELECTION PANEL

The selection decision will be the responsibility of a 3-member selection panel. The selection panel will objectively consider all the criteria stated above for phases 1 and 2 of the selection process.

The selection panel will consist of:

David Murdoch - Curling Canada High Performance Director

Scott Pfeifer - Curling Canada Mixed Doubles National Team Coach & Program Manager

Renee Sonnenberg - Curling Canada Analytics Lead

For Phase 1 selection, each panel member will discuss and individually nominate four (4) teams believed to be the mixed doubles teams most likely to exhibit podium potential in international competition. If any team is unanimously agreed upon by each panel member, those teams will advance to Phase 2 of the selection process. Any teams receiving votes from 2 of the 3 panel members will also advance to Phase 2 of the selection process.

For Phase 2 selection, each panel member will discuss and register a single vote to the team they believe, after evaluating all the available criteria and information before them, will be most likely to successfully fulfill the role as Canada's replacement team until the end of the 2025/26 season.

The Phase 2 team receiving a majority of the votes from the selection panel will be provisionally selected and announced within 48 hours of the final decision. If each panel member votes for a different team in Phase 2 of the nomination process, the team the High Performance Director voted for will be the final provisional selection. The selection will remain provisional at least until the opportunity for the appeals process has concluded.

The Selection Panel shall inform the Chief Executive Officer of the panel's selection decision.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Should there be any conflicts between the interpretation of the wording contained in this policy and the most recent version of the Curling Canada INP posted on the Curling Canada website, the INP shall supersede the wording and interpretations contained in this policy.

If there are any disputes arising from this policy, an athlete may wish to consult the dispute settlement mechanism and appeal process outlined in the Curling Canada INP posted on the Curling Canada website.