

Curling for Disabled People in Scotland



SCOTTISH DISABILITY
SPORT

This fact sheet provides an overview of curling for disabled people in Scotland. It also provides useful contact details to signpost you to your local club to develop your skills and start to play, volunteer or coach disabled people in curling.

The Development of Curling

A sport of precision and accuracy, curling is thought to have originated in Scotland in the 16th century when people would play the sport on frozen lochs and ponds during the winter months. Curling is a sport in which players slide stones on a sheet of ice towards a target area which is segmented into four concentric rings.

The sport made its debut at the Winter Paralympic Games in Turin in 2006. Wheelchair Curling was included in the last three Paralympic games (2006, 2010 and 2014) and Scotland has a strong tradition of representation within GB teams.

Though many may assume that it would be near impossible to curl with a visual impairment it has proved to be a sport that can be mastered by effort, coupled with clear communication and teamwork. Vision Impaired curling is a fast growing discipline throughout the world's curling nations.

The sport of wheelchair curling has continued to develop in Scotland and there are now 10 wheelchair curling clubs across the country. Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) continue to be represented at Scottish Wheelchair Curling Association (SWCA) meetings. The Royal Caledonian Curling Club (RCCC) represent Scottish Wheelchair Curling interests on the British Curling Group.

Five Scottish wheelchair curlers were selected to represent GB at the Sochi Winter Paralympics in 2014 with the team winning a bronze medal.

Scotland has competed at the Wheelchair World Championship every year since 2002 where they have won gold, silver and bronze medals. Only a team of four players can be on the ice at any one time but the overall team size is five for each Championships. Scotland finished in 6th place at the 2013 WCF World Wheelchair Curling Championships in Sochi.

The majority of wheelchair curlers in Scotland have come from a mainstream sports environment.

The current performance pathway is split into two levels with an Elite Squad and an Scottish Wheelchair Curling Association (SWCA) Spokes Squad.

A number of wheelchair curlers have been identified by British Curling and RCCC on the high performance pathway and as such receive Scottish Institute of Sport support. The High Performance National Coach continues to lead the Scottish and GB programmes.

The Classifications

Paralympic Wheelchair Curling is for individuals with significant impairments in lower leg/gait function (e.g. athletes with a spinal injury, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, double leg amputation etc.) who usually require a wheelchair for daily mobility use.

Coach Education

The RCC runs Level 1 and 2 coaching awards which are on the qualifications framework (not inclusive of disability).

A wheelchair curling coaching course and visual impairment coaching module are run annually and organised by the RCCC.

Some Facts & Figures

The granite for the stones traditionally comes from Ailsa Craig, an island off the Ayrshire coast of Scotland. The stones have a circumference of 91.44cm and a height of not less than 11.43cm. The weight including the handle must not exceed 19.96kgs.

The first World Wheelchair Curling Championship was held in January 2002 and in March that year the International Paralympic Committee granted official medal status to Wheelchair Curling for mixed gender teams.

The GB Wheelchair Curling Team was made up exclusively of Scottish players in 2006, 2010 and 2014 the team won a silver medal at the Torino Paralympics in 2006 and a Bronze in Sochi in 2014.

Leading Performers

The GB Wheelchair Curling Bronze Medal winning Team at the 2014 Sochi Winter Paralympic Games:

Gregor Ewan (Elgin),
Aileen Neilson (Strathaven),
Angie Malone (Girvan)
Bob McPherson (Bellshill)
Jim Gault (Lossiemouth)

Competitions

SWCA deliver a wide range of competitions annually.

They are:

Scottish Wheelchair Curling Championships,

SWCA Friendship Trophy,
Star Refrigeration's National Pairs,
British Championships
SWCA Shotmaker Competition.

Wheelchair Curling Clubs in Scotland

There are a number of wheelchair curling clubs and these can be accessed via the following link:

<http://royalcaledoniancurlingclub.org/development/disability-programmes/wheelchair-curling/wheelchair-curling-clubs/>

Key Contacts

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Head Office

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Websites

British Curling – www.britishcurling.org.uk
Scottish Disability Sport –
www.scottishdisabilitysport.com
British Paralympic Association –
www.paralympics.org.uk
IPC – www.paralympic.org
Royal Caledonian Curling Club—
www.royalcaledoniancurlingclub.org