



Deer Lodge Curling Club
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MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT

The Deer Lodge Curling Club and Thistle Curling Club are announcing their amalgamation ahead of the 2023-2024 curling season.

The Deer Lodge Curling Club (DLCC) and Thistle Curling Club (TCC) are proud to announce that they will be joining forces at the end of this curling season. The two clubs both have over 100 years of storied, curling history in the City of Winnipeg and are looking forward to this upcoming merger and everything that they can accomplish by working together. This new partnership between the DLCC and TCC will provide countless benefits and opportunities for their members and the community at large.

As most people in the curling community are aware – the sport’s popularity and engagement has been on a slow decline over the past 10-20 years. This is due to a number of societal changes that have been chipping away at membership numbers for a while now. At the competitive level, the sport is seeing a bit of a resurgence with more established funding and events. But at the club level, everyone is experiencing challenges with attracting new members, recruiting volunteers, and maintaining aging facilities that are not designed to be year-round operations as costs continue to rise.

There are a few driving forces and reasons for this merger, but they can almost all be summarized by saying that pooled resources and membership will make for a stronger, and healthier organization. Rather than have two curling clubs fighting to break even financially every single season, the DLCC and TCC Boards of Directors are taking a proactive approach in order to avoid both clubs not being in existence in 5 years’ time. In recent memory, Winnipeg has seen the closure of the West Kildonan Curling Club, Rossmere Curling Club, Grain Exchange Curling Club, CFB Winnipeg Club, Victoria Curling Club, and the Valour Road was taken over by the Thistle when their previous building tragically burned down in a fire. The DLCC and TCC Executives are very aware of these situations and the current climate – so are thrilled to be proactively making moves to strengthen the sport at the grassroots level for the community, and prevent against these important institutions being wiped-out from the landscape.

In the past few years, all of the land immediately surrounding the Thistle Curling Club has been purchased by one development company, leaving the TCC as the lone holdout. When they were presented with an offer for purchase by the developer, the Executive of the TCC started exploring



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options and opportunities. The Thistle approached the DLCC and engaged in preliminary discussions back in April of 2022. The merger was not meant to be for the 2022-23 curling season, but communication remained open and the two clubs are thrilled to make this announcement together now.

The plan is for the Thistle Curling Club to sell their building and property in the West End and both clubs will come together to play at the existing Deer Lodge facility in St. James off of Ness Avenue. The Deer Lodge is nestled between the St. James Civic Centre and the Assiniboine Golf Course – providing a fairly central location that is less than a 10 minute drive from the Thistle.

The Thistle Curling Club and Deer Lodge Curling Club each have about 600 curlers who come through their building each and every week. Despite this, there is still a lot of open ice time available at each facility. By coming together under one roof, the draws will be full, labour efforts can be maximized, and assets from the two facilities can be pooled. Redundant equipment and accessories that will not be required will be sold off and the proceeds put directly back into improvements at the DLCC facility.

The Executives of the two clubs have already put together a proposed draw schedule for the 2023-2024 season that can accommodate almost all of their existing leagues with very little compromise required. The goal of this merger is to maintain membership numbers and create a strong and healthy curling club for generations to come.

The larger membership base coupled with the influx of cash to match future grant applications will allow for some much needed upgrades to the curling club. There will also be a bigger pool of curlers to get involved in volunteering and to come take part in the community events and fundraisers that go on at the DLCC throughout the Winter.

This upcoming Summer will be a busy one with lots of planning and moving as the two clubs move into one facility in preparation for next curling season. But this announcement is a very exciting one that is full of positivity and potential as the soon to be merged organizations look to the future and what they can build together.

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