

Belfast Curling Club

2021-2022 COVID-19 Policy

OCTOBER 2021

History-

During the 2019-2020 the Belfast Curling Club closed 2 weeks early due to the Governor of the State of Maine signing an Executive Order proclaiming a state of emergency.

The last activity was the Wood Family Bonspiel in March 2020, where cleaning and sanitation protocols were implemented at the moment.

The COVID-19 Task Force began meeting in July 2020 to review information from the CDC, develop protocols for a safe opening of the Belfast Curling Club. A survey of the membership willing to curl with the protocols was conducted. The results were about 25% of the membership would be willing to curl. It was determined that it would not be cost effective to start the ice making process to open the club with so few willing to curl and the lack of certainty that the club would stay open in the midst of the ongoing pandemic.

The Belfast Curling Club did not open for the 2020-2021 curling season. The membership was encouraged to donate their membership dues or any amount of money for the ongoing bills that the club has every month all year.

Purpose-

The intent of this document is to share with the Board of Directors and membership the information that guided the Belfast COVID-19 Task Force to the procedures, protocols and policies that has led to our recommendations. Our guiding question was and continues to be; How can we curl and keep our membership safe?

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 virus is extremely contagious as well as the Delta and other variants of the virus. These viruses are spread mainly from person to person contact and aerosol vapor. In addition, the geographical layout of Belfast Curling Club membership includes people living and/or working in at least eight of Maine's sixteen counties. That is about a 100 mile radius from the Belfast Curling Club.

For these two reasons the Belfast Curling Clubs procedures and protocols need to be committed to reducing the spread of COVID-19. The following guidelines we are recommending are based on current medical understandings about reducing harm from COVID-19. At this time the Maine CDC guidelines recommend masks be worn indoors by all individuals regardless of

vaccination status due to high transmission of cases locally and specifically in Waldo County where the Curling Club is located. These guidelines/protocols may change as new recommendations and information become available. At this time, the Task Force has gone with protocols we feel will meet the needs of our guiding question.

These protocols and guidelines will apply to all members of the Belfast Curling Club and other individuals occupying the facility. Where this document does not address a specific aspect of membership, curling, or elsewhere- the bylaws and any other applicable document already presented to membership will apply. Where there is no specific guidance provided (rules of the game) members are expected to adhere to general rules of curling and where applicable the safest course of action to aid in the prevention of spread of COVID.

COVID-19 Vaccination Standard

Effective at the time of registration and/or before coming to the Belfast Curling Club, for the 2021-2022 curling season, all people who are medically eligible must show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to enter the Belfast Curling Club facility with the exceptions noted:

- people who are younger than the minimum age eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination,
- people with a letter from a MD, PA or NP (no other credentials will be accepted) stating that they are unable to be vaccinated against COVID-19
- contractors and other similar workers performing maintenance, delivery or similar activities for the club. If they are working after November 1, 2021 membership will be notified that they are in the building.
- These exceptions do not apply to Bonspiel participants and their guests.

Anyone claiming an exception above must wear a mask at all times in accordance with the mask policy found later in this document. When eating or drinking the mask may be pulled down but must be replaced unless actively putting food or drink in your mouth.

Registration online will have a place to answer if you are vaccinated against COVID-19 and there will be a place to upload a copy of your immunization record or medical exemption letter. This will be coordinated by Rick Fitzsimmons. Operations will be notified of the people vaccinated before leagues are established.

Bonspiel chairs will require proof of all participants' vaccination records to be uploaded prior to the date of the event. If Bonspiel participants are bringing guests, they must include their vaccination records.

The proof of vaccination will be deleted after it is documented.

Anyone exhibiting symptoms believed to be caused by COVID-19 or other contagious illness shall not enter the Belfast Curling Club regardless of vaccination status.

For contact tracing purposes, everyone will sign-in upon entering the Belfast Curling Club including the date and time they entered.

Rationale-

-Vaccination is the way forward to reduce COVID spread and consequences, both according to the CDC and medical professionals on the Taskforce.

-It is important to have the opening of the Belfast Curling Club be a welcoming and social atmosphere on and off the ice. Vaccination is the only way this can be achieved because:

*Non-mandatory vaccination policy is hard to enforce, and there are many more opportunities for confusion and risk of transmitting variants of COVID.

*Contact tracing has shown that, among non-vaccinated individuals, a high risk activity is eating/drinking together with substantial risk of transmission. It can therefore be inferred that sweeping/curling close together would pose a similar risk.

*Strict vaccination policy allows for more assurance that the curling year can continue safely. Outbreaks of COVID that result in extended shutdowns would negatively impact Belfast Curling Club's financial security and viability and make it harder for members to return.

*Our survey showed that, with over 40% of the membership responding, a majority (almost 90%) wanted everyone to be vaccinated.

*As a private club where there is increased risk of contact between members on the ice, we have the responsibility to be more cautious and make additional efforts beyond those by federal, state and local guidelines and ordinances to keep all members healthy and enjoy all aspects of the sport of curling.

*The COVID Taskforce is committed to continue to meet in December to review current reasons to assess whether policy changes would be recommended for the second half of the season. The Board can also ask the Taskforce to reconvene to review recommendations at any time as changes in the COVID situation change.

It is the club's hope that un-vaccinated members will get vaccinated to be able to curl this season.

Mask Policy

Mask wearing will be mandatory regardless of vaccination status when the State or County recommends face coverings indoors. This includes during play.

The MASK protocol for the first half of the curling season will be that masks will be worn in the building at all times regardless of a person's vaccination status with the exception of when people are actively eating or drinking. It will be re-evaluated by the Board of Directors on a monthly basis.

Proper Face Covering includes the mask covering the person's nose, mouth and chin completely. Face coverings or masks with vents are prohibited.

Masks can be removed when actively eating or drinking.

When masks are mandatory, failure to comply may result in any or all of the following: that person or persons being asked to leave the premises, team forfeiture and leave the premises, entire league suspended for that session and everyone leaves the premises or the Belfast Curling Club closed to for up to 24 hours.

The mask policy will be enforced in each league by the Skips and any Director in the building.

When masks are not mandatory, anyone is permitted to wear a mask within the facility at any time without bias.

All non-vaccinated individuals subject to exemptions as listed above and are over 2 years of age **MUST** wear a mask at all times.

All contractors, subcontractors and delivery persons will wear masks in the building after November 1, 2021.

Operational Procedures

Everyone will sign-in upon entering the Belfast Curling Club including the date and time they entered.

During league play, there will be signage on the doors signifying restricted entry for members only to discourage visitors who have not been provided with the COVID-19 Policy and who have not shown proof of vaccination. During rentals and Learn to Curl events, participants will be required to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination at registration. This policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Curling Procedures

The standard rules of curling shall apply without alteration. Due to interest in lowering transmission of illness in general, please do the following;

- Broom taps instead of handshakes
- Wipe down shared equipment after each game- rock handles, stabilizers
- Use hand sanitizer
- Sheets 1 and 3 start at the far end and sheet 2 at the normal end.

These curling procedures will be followed with or without the indoor mask requirement.

Broomstacking/ Bar/ Food Procedures

During the continued Pandemic and indoor mask recommendation, Broomstacking will look different;

- We will limit the number of people behind the bar to no more than two at a time.
- Teams are encouraged to reduce congestion at the bar by sending one or two people up at a time to get drinks.
- The pews will be located in the banquet room during league play and will serve as a place to change shoes and leave belongings while our lower level is closed. This will allow the tables in the warm room to be spread out for maximum social distancing.

Food preparation, serving and meal seating during a Bonspiel

We may have a capacity limit during bonspiels, and bonspiel participants will have priority. BCC Members will have access to the club when they are volunteering or may visit on the deck.

Self-serve buffets will be limited with food served by volunteers as much as possible. All servers will be masked.

To avoid congestion, one broomstacking group or approximately 8 people will approach the meal service area at a time.

Event Procedures

All participants of bonspiels, learn to curls, pickup games, and similar events will be subject to the same vaccination policies as previously noted.

These participants will be provided COVID-19 policy at the point of registration or communication with event coordinators as applicable. It shall be the responsibility of the participant or the coordinator of participants (e.g. person representing a rental group) to ensure that all participants are adherent to the policy.

At the point of participation, each participant shall be required to show proof of their vaccination status and that they are not currently experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

COVID- 19 Policy Enforcement

1. Adherence to the COVID-19 policies is required by all members and guests and participants in club activities (bonspiels).
2. If evidence exists that a member, guest or participant has falsified their proof of vaccination, they will be immediately removed from the club. Members are subject to Board of Director's approval to continue as members.
3. Occasionally, people may forget or have momentary lapse in compliance with the expectations around coming to the club when they have symptoms of COVID-19 or wearing a mask. As a first step, please offer a friendly reminder to follow the policies.
4. During league play, failure to comply with this policy may result in any or all of the following: that person or persons being asked to leave the premises, team forfeiture, entire league suspended for that session or the Belfast Curling Club closed to for up to 24 hours.

Each member will have to decide their own level of risk and risk-tolerance given these circumstances. Any member who chooses to participate in curling must observe the following risk-mitigation practices and sign necessary documentation to attest they have read and understand their commitment to others also deciding to curl.

Member responsibility

- Members will not enter the Club if they have a cough, shortness of breath, chills, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, or muscle pains.
- Members will not enter the Club if they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 or have been advised by a medical professional or public health authority that they should be isolating or quarantining.
- **Members who are later confirmed to have COVID-19 and entered the facility during the time they were potentially contagious must notify their league skip and COVID-19 Committee Chair Sierra Dietz.**
- Confidentiality of the person will be respected.

Club response

- A notification will be made to club membership regarding the positive case and the timeframe.

- The club will cooperate and provide all requested information to Maine DHHS, and other government agencies.
- If there are multiple confirmed COVID-19 cases among the members, with a plausible linkage, the Board will consider what further action will be taken.

Belfast Curling Club COVID Policy Summary

- All members and bonspiel participants show proof of COVID-19 vaccination before entering the building; exceptions from DR, PA or NP only (except for bonspiels) - people with exception must wear mask at all times
- When the CDC is recommending masks for indoor venues in Waldo and surrounding counties where members live and work, a mask mandate will be issued for all people in the Curling Club regardless of vaccination status.
- No visitors (non BCC members) during league play.
- Sheet 1 and 3 will start the games at the far end of the ice house, Sheet 2 will start at the near.
- No sharing of equipment and stones wiped down after each draw.
- Tables for broomstacking will be spaced in the warm room with the pews in the banquet room for changing shoes and leaving belongings.
- 2 bartenders at a time only during league play (3 during a bonspiel if needed)
- Everyone entering the club will sign in on a clipboard at the entrance for contact tracing purposes.
- In case of a positive COVID test result contact committee chair Sierra Dietz.
- When in need of a sub, players must consult (1) the spare list for their league, (2) any member listed on any of the league schedules. All spares must have provided proof of vaccination in order to enter the club and play.
- The club will provide funds for additional signage, spare masks, and cleaning supplies.