

# The Curling Group Secures US\$5 Million in Seed Funding to Grow the Sport of Curling; Announces Board of Directors

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TORONTO, Sept. 26, 2024 /CNW/ - The Curling Group ("TCG") announced today that it has raised US\$5 million in seed funding to take the sport of curling to new heights through strategic investments, innovation, and content production that will broaden the sport's global reach. The round was led by Toronto-based venture capital firm Relay Ventures.

Co-founded by sports, media, and entertainment industry veterans Nic Sulsky and Mike Cotton, The Curling Group announced its launch in April 2024 by **acquiring the Grand Slam of Curling** event series from Sportsnet (Rogers Communications Inc.). The Grand Slam of Curling is the world's only international curling event series, featuring the best men's and women's teams from around the world.

In recent years, global interest in curling has risen dramatically, sparked by its popularity during the Winter Olympics and a new generation of young and charismatic international curlers. At the same time, niche sports markets are rapidly expanding, and popularity is booming thanks to the ability to engage and monetize growing fan bases through direct-to-consumer digital offerings and streaming platforms. Understanding these trends, The Curling Group is dedicated to professionalizing the sport while reimagining how curling content is created, distributed, and consumed.

The rise in curling's popularity is reflected in the interest of pro athletes and celebrities, including former NFL star Jared Allen and current NFL stars George Kittle and TJ Hockenson, who are all a part of The Curling Group's initial group of investors. Two-time Olympic gold medal curler John Morris and Olympic gold medal curler Jennifer Jones are also serving as strategic advisors.

The Grand Slam of Curling season begins with the HearingLife Tour Challenge on Tuesday, October 1st in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. This marks the first Grand Slam event under the stewardship of The Curling Group. Enhancements to the Grand Slam of Curling experience and product will be immediately noticeable, including a total rebrand. A first look at the new branding can be viewed [here](#).

## Board of Directors

Additionally, The Curling Group has unveiled its newly-created Board of Directors, whose collective expertise will guide The Curling Group moving forward:

- Maryann Turcke (Chair) – RBC Board Member, former Chief Operating Officer of the NFL, former President of Bell Media
- Nic Sulsky – Chief Executive Officer of The Curling Group, former Chief Commercial and Revenue Officer of PointsBet Canada, former President of Monkey Knife Fight
- John Albright – Managing Partner of Relay Ventures
- John Kawaja – President of G/FORE, former President of TaylorMade, former head of North American marketing for adidas, and two-time Canadian Men's Curling Champion (1983, 1990) and World Curling Champion (1983, 1990)
- Nicole Musicco – Former Chief Investment Officer of CalPERS, former Partner at RedBird Capital

## Quotes:

### Maryann Turcke:

"As the value of niche sports properties continues to rise, we are also seeing an evolution within the sports landscape on how fans choose to engage with content and on what platforms. The Curling Group is well-positioned at the forefront of this evolution, bringing together industry leaders to identify innovative ways of reaching curling's growing global fanbase."

### Nic Sulsky:

"Curling's global image is long overdue for a makeover, and we've made it our goal at The Curling Group to provide a reimagined, elevated offering that matches the changing face of the sport. Today's announcement will accelerate our plans to spark massive growth within the curling world, providing fans with more ways to engage with the sport through content creation and innovation, while identifying curling's untapped monetization potential."

### John Albright:

"We've been investing in sports tech & media since our inception, including companies like FUN Technologies

(acquired by Liberty Media), theScore (acquired by Penn National), and Playmaker (acquired by Better Collective), among many others. All of this has led us to become deep believers in the importance and value of sports content and fan engagement. The Curling Group has a rare opportunity to develop and produce sports content and engage over 100 million fans on a global scale. We are very excited to support the development of the sport and business of curling alongside the amazing team at TCG."

#### John Kawaja:

"Curling has global reach and is ready to go to the 'next level'. As a former curler who has watched the steady growth of the game over the past decades, I'm energized to be a part of curling's next chapter by supercharging the sport for fans around the globe."

#### Nicole Musicco:

"Investing in niche sports like curling can offer unique investment opportunities for those with the vision to see its untapped potential. The Curling Group has positioned itself where passion, community, and emerging trends will converge for long-term growth."

### About The Curling Group

The Curling Group is a sports business venture dedicated to revolutionizing the sport of curling through strategic investments and a commitment to innovation and content production. In 2024, The Curling Group acquired the **Grand Slam of Curling** event series, including global media rights.

### About Relay Ventures

Relay Ventures, founded in 2008, is one of Canada's leading independent VC fund managers. The Firm is presently investing out of its fifth fund which commenced in 2022. It has invested in more than 130 companies and successfully exited more than half through M&A and IPO. The Firm has a team of 20 professionals with offices in Toronto, Calgary, and San Francisco.

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