



Curling Alberta Announces ECI Pilot Project

Curling Alberta is pleased to announce that it will institute the Enhanced Coaching Involvement (ECI) pilot project for the 2020-2021 season, including the postponed events that were originally scheduled in the spring of 2020. The purpose of the ECI pilot project is to allow coaches to better support their teams by giving them more convenient and frequent access while the game is underway.

This begins by positioning the coaches on the backboards, where they are better able to view the game and listen in on their teams' conversations. Furthermore, in younger age categories (i.e., U15, U18, and U20), the ECI pilot project also gives them the opportunity to interact with their teams a pre-determined number of times each end.

"The ECI pilot project allows coaches to truly be part of the game, and in the process to enhance their athletes' learning and performance," says Excel Program Director, Rob Krepps. "But, in the interest of promoting self-reliance, we've taken a progressive approach where there are fewer opportunities to interact as athletes get older."

To this end, in the U15 and U18 age categories each team will be allowed two coach interactions per end, with each lasting a maximum of 60 seconds. Then, in the U20 age category, the frequency is reduced to one coach interaction per end, again lasting a maximum of 60 seconds. Finally, in all other categories (i.e., men's, women's, mixed doubles, etc.), the traditional two 90-second timeouts remain in effect; understanding that sitting in on the backboards still has other advantages.

For example, regardless of the age category, participating coaches are allowed to meet with their teams for up to 60 seconds between ends. They are also given a better vantage point on the game, since they will have a chair at each end of the rink, and will travel down the designated sideline to the backboard behind the skips after each end.

"With safety in mind as our top priority, the ECI pilot project has been designed to align with Curling Alberta's COVID-19 policies, including the provision that coaches wear a mask and maintain at least two metre distance from anyone not in their cohort at all times," says Executive Director, Jill Richard. "I'm

excited to see this pilot play out. Not only are we expecting to see improvements in our athletes' performance out on the ice, but in our coaches and their satisfaction as well as we empower them to be more involved in the game.”

To find out more about Curling Alberta's ECI pilot project, please [CLICK HERE.](#)