

Celebrating 2021 International Men's Day – 19th November



Today is International Men's Day – 19th November. Over the coming days, we will celebrate some of the contributions of Australian men in Curling. There are many individuals who have influenced and shaped Australian Curling since its inception.

Today is about promoting discussion about:

- 👉 Maintaining a healthy body can strengthen men's mental health;
- 👉 Creating healthy lifestyle builds men's mental health;
- 👉 Developing a healthy mindset keeps men mentally strong; and
- 👉 Mateship keeps men mentally strong. Connect with a mate today.



Jim OASTLER – First ACF President

In celebration of International Men's Day on 19th November, we dig into the archives to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of Jim Oastler. Jim began as the President of the Australian Curling Association in Victoria from 1989 to 1994. During this time, the Australian Men's team played in their first international challenge (Oslo, Norway) in 1990 where Jim was team manager/media officer. It was around this time the ACA became the Australian Curling Federation with Jim at the helm.

In these early days Jim was instrumental in liaising with Pacific region countries to have the World Curling Federation (WCF) recognise the Pacific zone to include Asia, Oceania, & Africa which ultimately created the Pacific Curling Federation where Jim served as VP of the PCF. Jim represented the PCF and ACF at WCF meetings numerous times (too countless to list!).

At the 1992 Olympic Winter Games in Albertville, when the Australian Men's team competed in the demonstration sport with 8 other countries, Jim also represented Australia as team manager and media rep. The 1993 Pacific Curling Championships were hosted in Adelaide and Jim coordinated the ABC TV production of this event.

Wheelchair curling began as a discipline in Australia in 1994 and Jim, being on the WCF Program and Services Committee, co-wrote a proposal for Wheelchair Curling to be established. This turned out to be just the beginning of Jim's involvement in spearheading Wheelchair curling with the discipline being tested in 2000 within Europe and official acceptance at the International Bon Spiel and workshop held in Switzerland that year. The WCF held the first World Wheelchair Curling Championships in 2001 with 9 countries, and Jim finally saw the inclusion of Wheelchair Curling at the 2006 Paralympics Winter Games.

In 2015, Jim stepped away from curling to pursue personal interests in making documentaries (he's still doing this!!), however his incredible legacy of involvement within Australian and International Curling still remains. Jim's extensive media knowledge, connections, perseverance and commitment to developing Curling for Australia and the Pacific region, as well as advocating for the inclusion of Wheelchair curling at an international level, have shaped what Curling is today.

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First Men's Team

As part of International Men's Day on 19th November, we celebrate the trailblazers who have shaped Australian Curling. Pictured here is the first Australian Men's Curling team from 1990 and it marked the first time Australia was represented internationally. An Australian contingent flew over to Canada to first train in Vancouver and then Ottawa, before flying over to "The Australian Challenge" held in Oslo, Norway from 9-13 December 1990. The countries they played against were Japan, France, Wales, England, Germany, Italy, Holland and Austria.

The team was made up of: Hugh Millikin (skip), Jim Parker (third), Dan Joyce (Second), Steve Hewitt (Lead) and Lloyd Roberts (Alternate) with Gerald Chick as the team advisor.

Many of you will recognise most if not all of those names as they have been involved in various aspects of curling for many years and helped create a foundation for international opportunities that our Federation and its members benefit from today. There were many obstacles to overcome for this initial Challenge and all of those involved have paved the way to smoother processes and competitions.

Photo (L-R) Jim Oastler, Gerald Chick, Hugh Millikin, Jim Parker, Steve Hewitt, Dan Joyce and Lloyd Roberts. Photo courtesy of the Hewitt archives.



SENIORS

International Men's Day on 19th November gives us the perfect opportunity to look back and recognise the Men who have paved the way in Australian Curling. This is the first Senior Men's Curling team who competed in February 2003 at the World Senior Curling Championships held in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The team consisted of Skip Lloyd Roberts, Vice-skip Neil Galbraith, 2nd Jim Oastler, Lead Richard Leggat.

There were 15 Senior Men's teams and 10 Senior Women's teams in Winnipeg for this event - although the first appearance by an Australian Senior Women's team was in 2013. The next Senior Men's appearance at the World's was in 2005 featuring Skip Lloyd Roberts, Vice-Skip Tom Kidd, 2nd Jim Oastler, and Lead Neil Galbraith. Australia did not have representation again until 2009. Every year since

2009, a Senior Men's team has represented Australia with 9 of those featuring Skip Hugh Millikin until the World Championships were cancelled due to the Pandemic.

Photo (L-R) Jim Oastler, Neil Galbraith and Lloyd Roberts.

Photo courtesy of Lloyd Roberts

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Dave Thomas

As part of International Men's Day on the 19th November, it is important to understand how the Australian Curling Federation became recognised as the National Sporting Organisation (NSO) for Curling in Australia. Dave Thomas (pictured) was instrumental in finalising the first version of the Member Protection Policy (MPP) which was submitted with a suite of documents in the application to the Australian Sports Commission.

There are many factors involved in this recognition process – some were implemented in the early 90's when the Executive, at that time, had the foresight to rename the Australian Curling Association to the Australian Curling Federation. Along the way, The Rules (constitution) were created and then updated, and other working policies created. The only obstacle at the time when applying for National Sporting Recognition was the ACF did not have a Member Protection Policy.

Dave and Matt Panoussi, the VCA Representative on the 2015/16 ACF Executive, collaboratively worked on the original 27-page MPP with Dave taking it to completion. Document creation is an arduous process and without their efforts, this particular document would not have been completed. The Member Protection Policy outlines legal obligations any sport is required to meet in order to prevent and address discrimination and harassment and to protect children from harm and abuse.

On the 16th March 2016, the Australian Sports Commission officially recognised the ACF as the National Sporting Organisation for Curling subject to terms and conditions set out as part of the recognition. There are many benefits to this recognition, one being the ability for State associations to apply for grant funding as most funding models require a sport to be nationally recognised. The next time you apply for or are successful with funding, you can thank Dave and Matt for their efforts on the MPP creation enabling the NSO recognition application to be successful.

As a long-time Queensland Curling Association (QCA) member, Dave has served both as the President of the QCA at various times and as a QCA Representative on the ACF Executive board. When reviewing policies and rules Dave is a real asset to the ACF Executive Committee. He also competed in successive World Senior Curling Championships for Australia from 2009 – 2011, with the Senior Men's team winning bronze twice in that time.

Photos © WCF



Australia at the 1992 Winter Olympic Games in Albertville

Today we look back at the first Australian Men's team at the 1992 Winter Olympic Games.

Over the past few days the ACF has featured some of the trailblazers in Australian Curling as part of International Men's Day on the 19th November. It seems fitting to end this celebration of Men's Curling with the first appearance at an Olympic Winter Games with the team of (L-R in Photo) Hugh Millikin (skip), Tom Kidd (third), Dan Joyce (Second), Steve Hewitt (Lead) and Brian Stuart (Alternate).

Curling was a demonstration sport at the 1992 Winter Olympics. The competition was held in the patinoire Olympique of Pralognan-la-Vanoise, near the host city, Albertville. This was the third time curling was a demonstration sport at the Winter Olympics with 1932 and 1988 being recorded officially as other years. Curling was officially added to the Olympic programme at the 1998 Olympic Winter Games in Nagano.

In 1992, there were 8 countries: Australia, Canada, France, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United States. Switzerland won the gold medal over Norway with a 7-6 score. Australia was in Pool A with Norway, Switzerland, and Great Britain where close games were lost to Great Britain and Norway and they beat Sweden.

Incredibly, since 1990, skip Hugh Millikin has continued to Curl at an elite level representing Australia at an astounding 11 World Men's Curling Championships, 24 Pacific-Asia Curling Championships, 2 World Mixed Doubles Curling Championships, 9 World Senior Championships and 3 World Mixed Curling Championships. That's a whopping 420 games. Anyone notice the corn broom in the photo??

Photo © 1992 Article by Sportswriter Ian MacLaine of Canadian Press (photo taken at the Garmisch-Partenkirchen Worlds of the Albertville team)