

# SWOT Analysis of Curling Clubs: Market Position and Sustainable Development in the Post-Olympic Era

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**Abstract:** The research provides an in-depth discussion on the market positioning and sustainable development strategies of curling clubs after the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Qualitative research methods such as SWOT analysis, interviews and participant observation were used. The study found that curling clubs exhibit significant advantages in terms of training rinks and coaching teams, but at the same time suffer from internal disadvantages such as confusing management mechanisms, a lack of volunteers, and insufficient advertising efforts. External challenges included increased market competition and unbalanced geographical development of the population. The research suggests that curling clubs should strengthen volunteer training, optimise service models, prepare for commercial tournaments, and make full use of the media for publicity in order to enhance market competitiveness and community influence. In addition, it is recommended that clubs strengthen internal management and improve operational efficiency to meet the new challenges of the post-Winter Olympics era and achieve the goal of sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Curling Clubs, Market, Sustainable Development, SWOT Analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of China's economy, people's demand for living standards is no longer limited to solving problems such as meals and lodgings, but the spiritual world and physical health are becoming more and more important. Through the proposal of national fitness project, sports officially enter the people's vision, in order to meet the needs of fitness, a large number of fitness clubs, swimming clubs, etc. have sprung up in the market. In 2022, Beijing successfully organized the Winter Olympic Games, since then the winter sports have received more and more attention from the public, more and more people are enjoying the experience of ice and snow sports and there are more and more enthusiasts, which has a positive impact on the development of ice and snow sports in China. Curling, as a gentleman's sport (no physical contact between the athletes involved in the game), has attracted the attention of children, young people and even the elderly. The advent of the post-Winter Olympics era has increased the public's awareness of curling, which provides opportunities for the development of curling clubs. However, at present, Chinese curling clubs have many problems due to factors such as slow transformation, and it is important to grasp the opportunity of the post-Winter Olympics era to attract more people to participate in curling and to promote the commercial growth of curling clubs. Based on Northeast China and the capital city of Beijing (the first and best curling region), the research explores the commercial positioning and long-term development of curling clubs in the post-Winter Olympics era, and obtains relevant information to seek a path for the sustainable development of curling clubs.

## 2. Definition of Terms

### 2.1. Post-Olympic Era

The essence of the era is time, which refers to the division of time within a certain time frame in the past, using politics, economy, culture and so on as the basis for defining time, so the era represents a specific point in time. When defining the post-Winter Olympics era, according to most scholars' analyses of the Winter Olympics benefits: divided according to time phases, the five years after the end of the Winter Olympics is an era, and the time period of the impact of the Winter Olympics on the host country's economy, society, and sports, etc. is five years. Therefore, the post-Winter Olympics era mentioned in the research starts from 2022 to 2027.

### 2.2. Clubs

Sports clubs originated in Europe and have been in development for over 200 years. During these 200 years, sports clubs have become the main means of participation in sports for people in Western countries. Sports clubs are sports organisations formed spontaneously by sportsmen with a certain sports hobby in order to conduct sports streams, sports competitions, etc. Sports clubs are organisations in which all social citizens have the right to participate, the interests of their members are fully protected, and their members have the right to make decisions. When analysing the attributes of sports clubs, most of the sports clubs are spontaneous organisations of the private masses and are dominated by a single sport. They have a strong public interest character, and their operation and development are managed by a specific sports federation.

### 2.3. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development refers to the relationship between

the natural environment, the ecological environment and economic development; it also refers to a new concept of development. The Chinese government has played a very big role in promoting the establishment and development of sports clubs, and most of the sports clubs are financed by the government, but due to the limited funds of the government, it can not give sufficient long-term economic support, so if the sports clubs want to obtain long-term development in the fierce market competition, they must optimise their existing system, choose the suitable business methods to ensure that they have a place in the market competition. Therefore, if sports clubs want to obtain long-term development in the fierce market competition, they must optimise their existing system and choose suitable operation methods to ensure that they have a place in the market competition. Therefore, sports clubs should not only serve the national sustainable development strategy in the actual development process, but also actively explore the sustainable development strategy in the market competition. Through actual investigation, the main problems faced by Chinese curling clubs at present include insufficient social influence, lack of operating funds and high operating costs. Under such circumstances, sports clubs can achieve the sustainable development of curling clubs by expanding the source of funds, reducing operating costs, strengthening the control of liquidity, and vigorously promoting curling clubs, etc. under the dual role of internal and external factors.

### **3. SWOT Analysis of Curling Clubs in the Post- Olympics**

#### **3.1. Strengths Analysis**

##### **3.1.1. Consistent with the character of the public**

The curling sport originated in Scotland, where the Scots extended the spirit of gentility to curling, making it an elegant sport in the winter events. Curling is an intellectually stimulating game of skill and tactics and is known as "chess on ice". Compared with other winter sports, curling has less physical contact and lower physical requirements for athletes. Curling is a sport with a high proportion of intellectual factors, and Chinese sports have a more obvious advantage in skills as well as intelligence-related competitive sports. Therefore, curling is in line with the sports characteristics and sports habits of the public in China.

##### **3.1.2. Excellent curling training sheets**

In the post-Winter Olympics era, clubs have excellent sports sheets and brand new sports equipment and facilities. With the success of the Winter Olympics, a large number of high standard and high profile international curling venues have emerged, such as the AY Club in North East China, the ice cube club in Beijing and the HT Club. The complete venues ensure efficient skating, spinning and skimming of the ice, thus adding to the curling experience. In addition to this, sports venues are not only limited to curling training, but catering, accommodation, spa and other fitness and recreational facilities ensure the profitability of the venue's added value.

##### **3.1.3. Strong coaching team**

With the development of ice and snow sports, more and more universities and colleges in China are offering undergraduate education in ice and snow sports, among which Beijing Sport University, Capital Institute of Physical Education, Harbin Institute of Physical Education and Jilin

Institute of Physical Education have set up postgraduate training centres for ice and snow talents. Modern sports need comprehensive and complex sports talents, not only in curling requires excellent skills, but also to understand sports training, sports rehabilitation, sports psychology, as well as related event preparation, competition rules and other knowledge. Through the understanding of curling club coaches, compared with other sports, curling club coaches are basically educated above bachelor degree, and have national team or professional team experience. It can be seen that the curling coaching team has a high level of qualification.

#### **3.2. Disadvantageous Analysis**

##### **3.2.1. Inadequate management of clubs**

Scientific management system is an important guarantee for curling clubs to achieve the operation of colleges and universities, and only strict management mode can promote the healthy and lasting development of curling clubs. Perfect rules and regulations and sound operation mechanism is the existing curling clubs in China generally lack of problems, so in the internal staff and members of the management of the lack of implementation, due to the club may exist in the artificial consciousness of the vicious competition also led to the management of the effect is not as good as expected. In addition, due to the influence of China's national system, the top management of the clubs has strong administrative colours, which is a far cry from the management model of modern enterprises.

##### **3.2.2. Lack of volunteers**

The participation of volunteers in the daily operations and activities of a club is essential, not only to reduce the club's day-to-budget expenses, but also to strengthen the connection with the community and thus increase the impact. However, most of the current Chinese curling clubs' team members are paid full-time staff workers, with volunteers only appearing at major events. In the volunteer team, most of the participants are only there to complete their school work or in exchange for extra credit policies, therefore, there will be serious negativity when working, and when encountering professional problems, they usually cannot be well answered, which restricts the development of curling to a certain extent.

##### **3.2.3. Neglect of media campaigns**

New media communication campaigns play an important role in the marketing of curling clubs. Through the investigation, it was found that the number of consumers who knew about curling clubs through online introduction was relatively low. Although most Chinese curling clubs have set up online campaign channels, such as WeChat public accounts, the actual public numbers are poorly constructed, not operated by a professional team, and the platform is slow to update information. Even the official website of the China Curling Association (the highest organisation of curling in China) has been closed for a long time in arrears, which has caused many people seeking cooperation and aspiring to participate in the curling industry to encounter obstacles everywhere. Therefore, curling clubs need to devote more attention to network promotion, and the publicity work should not be superficial.

#### **3.3. Opportunities and Challenges**

The success of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games will undoubtedly make more national attention to curling, which will greatly develop people's enthusiasm to participate in ice and snow sports, and also promote the development of

ice and snow sports in China. Due to the successful realisation of the policy of "300 million people participate in ice and snow sports", a series of policies have also promoted the development of curling, and these policies have played a positive role in promoting the development of curling.

The popularisation and promotion of curling should start at the grass-roots level. The sport should not be promoted solely for the purpose of talent development at the competitive level, but rather, mass sports should be given the same or even higher strategic importance as competitive sports. In the southern region of China, access to and understanding of curling is still very limited, mainly due to the scarcity of ice and snow venues in the region and the lack of promotion of curling culture. Meanwhile, despite the relatively high participation rate in curling in the northern part of China, the motivation of the masses to participate in curling is often limited to the needs of recreation or further education.

The development of sporting activities as an integral part of the modern socio-economic system is significantly influenced by changes in the external environment. For example, in times of epidemics, the income and consumption levels of the population may continue to decline, which will lead people to re-evaluate the use of their funds and thus selectively reduce some expenditures that are considered non-essential, of which sport is unfortunately one of them. In addition, consumer attitudes in some regions are relatively outdated, with some populations believing that physical labour is a sufficient substitute for physical activity, and therefore not interested in additional investment in sport. In regions such as Harbin, where per capita income is lower than the national average, the public's ability to spend on sport is limited, which further restricts the commercial transformation and sustainable development of curling clubs.

#### 4. Conclusion

Through participant observation and interviews, we knew the development status of curling clubs in different areas of China, and explored the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and challenges faced by curling clubs in business transformation and sustainable development with the help of SWOT analysis, and the research conclusions are as follows: compared with summer sports, the popularity of curling is still unsatisfactory, and there is an imbalance in the development of south and north and the difference in curling atmosphere is obvious. Most of the curling clubs are small in scale, and the management mechanism is not perfect, which is the main factor restricting the development of the clubs. The number and quality of volunteers in China's curling clubs still needs to be improved. Currently, curling clubs are in the period of market transformation, with a single financing channel, lack of mature market operation mode and insufficient commercialisation, failing to give full play to their market-oriented functions.

According to the above, the following suggestions are proposed: curling clubs should improve their own structure. Improved management mechanism should be constructed within the club to help the league run efficiently. The training and recruitment of volunteers should be strengthened, and curling talents can be cultivated jointly with colleges and universities so as to absorb more talents into the ice and snow industry. More attention should be paid to the publicity of the curling club. Increase the publicity of curling clubs with the help of network and multimedia channels, building club brands and shaping curling stars, etc., and at the same time, increase the number of sports related to curling such as ice skating and ice discs. In conclusion, curling clubs belong to the sports industry, and its key task is to seek economic benefits and growth. It is believed that through the emergence of various commercial activities such as club leagues, the development of the clubs will be transformed and upgraded, and a well-established business operation mode will be created in order to achieve sustainable development.

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