

Applications for the 2016 Optimist U18 International Championships in Canada Now Available

The Optimist International Club of Canada has invited USA Curling to send 3 boys' and 3 girls' teams to the Under-18 Championships to be held in Edmonton, which is located in Alberta, Canada, at the Jasper Place Curling Club and the Saville Community Sports Centre between March 30-April 3, 2016. In addition to the competition and banquet, there is a half-day of training by some of Canada's top instructors.

This event is a wonderful opportunity for young teams to participate in a competition that typically includes teams from the Canadian provinces, Japan, and Europe. The Optimists want to emphasize that this event is designed to give young, developing teams a chance to improve their skills in a friendly, international championship. We encourage all qualifying juniors (see guidelines below) to apply.

The Optimist International Club requires that all players be seventeen years of age or younger as of June 30, 2015. Only one boy's team and one girl's team can represent any state. In regions historically drawing from multiple states, players may be drawn from within the boundaries of the region. More than one team from a multi-state region may be considered for participation within each gender if the teams (typically determined by the home state of the skip) clearly represent different states (as determined by the Selection Committee). Applicants must provide proof of residency and proof of age. Coaches must be at least 21 years old, pass a background check, and complete the USOC online SafeSport training modules.

Applications are due by 5pm CST on February 1, 2016. Teams will be notified of the USCA's selection by February 16, 2015. Please note:

- A Selection Committee, consisting of curlers drawn from multiple U.S. curling regions with experience working with juniors, will consider the following when making team selections: past curling history, including league, bonspiel, championship play, participation in camps and other training programs; history of playing together as a team; and willingness to grow and improve in the sport.
- When applicants are deemed of equal strength, preference will be given to teams who have not previously participated in this program in order to expand the pool of teams that have the opportunity to benefit from this experience.
- Unlike past years, there will be no playdowns in the regions historically fielding multiple applicants. This change was driven by requests from both parents and regions involved in these playdowns, which often required additional travel costs and time away from school.

- All members of the teams selected, except in cases of major injury, illness, or other exceptional circumstance, are expected to participate in the Optimist U18 International Curling Championships. If it becomes known that a player on a team that is selected submitted his or her name as part of the application process with no intention of moving on to the championship, the team may be disqualified.

Teams are responsible for travel costs and some meals. Hotel costs are paid by the Optimist International Club for four players and a coach. If the team elects to bring a fifth player, that player's expenses must be paid in full by the team.

Applications for the 2016 Optimist U18 International Curling Championships are due by 5:00pm CST on February 1, 2016. All teams must complete the following forms:

- The Optimist U18 Team Application Form, which should be completed by a coach or parent, can be found at the link below:
<https://usacurling.wufoo.com/forms/optimist-u18-international-curling-championships-rztn7xe0njch3k/>
- The Optimist U18 Individual Achievement Form, which must be completed by each team member, can be accessed by clicking on the link below:
<https://usacurling.wufoo.com/forms/optimist-u18-international-curling-championships>

Applications are also available on the USA Curling web site at:

<http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Curling/Sport-Education/Youth-Curling/U18-Optimist-International>

All teams missing school to compete in this prestigious event will be provided letters from USA Curling to submit to the school to help explain their absence while participating. Contact Kim Nawyn at kim.nawyn@usacurl.org with questions.