



## **STATEMENT BY THE BOARD DIRECTORS OF ATLANTA CURLING CLUB ON THE CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT OF JEFF PLUSH AS CEO OF USA CURLING**

On October 3, 2022, the Report of the Independent Investigation to the U.S. Soccer Federation Concerning Allegations of Abusive behavior and Sexual Misconduct in Women’s Professional Soccer was publicly released. The Report cited numerous instances of sexual assault, verbal assault, sexual harassment and other inappropriate conduct within the National Women’s Soccer League (“NWSL”). Atlanta Curling Club stands with the women of the NWSL. **Such conduct directed at any person must not be tolerated or excused.**

It appears from the reporting that then-NWSL commissioner and current CEO of USA Curling, Jeff Plush, fostered a permissive culture which allowed this behavior to persist. It has also been reported that during much, if not all, of Plush’s tenure, “there was no anti-harassment policy, no anti-retaliation policy and no anti-fraternization policy. Nor were there independent reporting lines, coaching codes of conduct, or any guidance regarding the due diligence necessary to hire a coach.”<sup>1</sup> Of greater concern is NWSL leadership’s failure to address the complaints of sexual harassment and coercion against Coach Paul Riley, of which, it has been reported, Plush was personally aware.

The reported conduct runs counter to USA Curling’s core value of providing “[a] culture that is safe, inclusive, inspiring, timeless, and all that we as curlers strive to be.”<sup>2</sup> Every year, curling instructors, club board members, and other designated personnel are required to undergo SafeSport training on preventing, recognizing, and reporting misconduct to advance these goals. We believe that the continued employment of Plush belies USA Curling leadership’s dedication to these values and suggests a double standard for what is expected of clubs and what is expected of leadership.

**Accordingly, Atlanta Curling Club joins with other members of the American curling community in demanding the immediate removal of Jeff Plush as CEO of USA Curling.** Additionally, Atlanta Curling Club calls for the following actions:

- An independent review of the hiring of Eric Gleason (who served as CFO of the NWSL during Plush’s tenure) as CFO for USA Curling.
- An independent review of all reports submitted to Plush and Gleason as designated SafeSport coordinators for USA Curling.
- The release of USA Curling’s independent review of Jeff Plush’s actions during his time as commissioner of the NWSL as well as a statement from USA Curling regarding the finding that Plush “prioritized the safety of athletes” as opposed to the findings of the Report.
- All other actions required to ensure that all individuals participating in USA Curling events, including club play and learn to curl, feel safe and that reports of such conduct will be given the due diligence they deserve.

The Atlanta Curling Club remains committed to fostering a community where all current, former, and potential athletes feel safe, respected, and welcome. We recognize the courage that these athletes took to come forward and we commit to being a part of the solution.

### **Board of Directors, Atlanta Curling Club**

*Member, Grand National Curling Club*

*At-large Member, USA Curling*

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<sup>1</sup> Report, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> USA Curling: About Us, <https://www.usacurling.org/about-usa-curling>