

Primus Business Services

CANADIAN CURLING ASSOCIATION

Primus Managed Services a “Heavy Hit” with Canadian Curling Association.

Overview

The Canadian Curling Association (CCA) is recognized as the national governing body for curling in Canada by Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee and the World Curling Federation. The CCA is governed by a 10-member board of directors, nominated and elected by the organization’s provincial and territorial member associations. The mission of the Canadian Curling Association is to encourage and facilitate the growth and development of the sport of curling in cooperation with its network of affiliates.

Each year, the CCA is responsible for organizing and staging the *Season of Champions* which is comprised of the Tim Hortons Brier, Scotties Tournament of Hearts, M&M Meat Shops Canadian Juniors, Continental Cup of Curling, Strauss Canada Cup of Curling and the Ford World Men’s and Women’s Curling Championships, which is staged in Canada. Additionally, the CCA operates the Canadian Mixed and Seniors Championships as well as the Canadian Wheelchair Championships.

In February of 1998, curling made its first appearance as a medal sport at the Olympic Winter Games and the CCA places a high emphasis on the involvement of curling in the Olympics. In addition to the responsibility of selecting and training teams for the Olympics, those responsible for high performance also deal with national team programs and the development of Level 4 and Level 5 coaches. The CCA also operates a National Training Centre in Calgary and a network of seven Development Centres across Canada.

The CCA’s development area creates and provides a series of programs aimed at effective curling facility operations, retaining curlers and recruiting new ones. It is through the development programs that direct contact is maintained with the 1,100 affiliated curling clubs, 14 provincial and territorial associations and 1.1 million Canadians who play the sport each year.

Situation

Prior to 2004, the Canadian Curling Association relied on internal staff and third-party technology consultants to provide IT related services. Hardware and software needs had never been assessed, downtime was a consistent weekly occurrence and, more often than not, technical support was provided by the Chief Financial Officer, who had limited knowledge of technology. Furthermore, the CCA wanted to begin developing and supporting curling club and athlete-directed programs and services which would depend heavily on a reliable, robust and secure IT infrastructure.

Technology challenges

Glenn van Gulik, the CCA’s Manager of Information Technology, began working with the organization in February 2004.

“I was solely responsible for maintaining systems, providing technical support and creating a roadmap that would see the organization take advantage of all the benefits that Information Technology has to offer,” said Glenn. “There was a rudimentary networking infrastructure, internal email servers without the necessary connectivity to support them, and no form of interconnectivity between our event offices. It was obvious that we would need a partner in technology.”

Solution

In March 2004, Glenn contacted Primus to investigate the process of outsourcing the CCA's IT needs from dedicated and co-located servers, centralized backup, Internet connectivity for all of its event offices, Managed Wide Area Network (WAN) and Managed Services. In May 2006 Glenn began developing an event volunteer management system (EVMS) in-house that would be better able to meet the CCA's needs. The program required a dedicated server which the CCA outsourced to Primus' Ottawa Internet Data Centre. The server supported the development of the system over a ten month period and EVMS was launched live to users in February 2007. The CCA now has three servers at the Ottawa IDC: email, remote access service and EVMS.

"When we outsourced our services to Primus we went from a primitive network to an enterprise grade system," said Glenn. "As the CCA grew we realized it was critical to move to a more sophisticated system to support our needs. The CCA went from a one-man IT department to an IT partnership with Primus."

Primus' Managed WAN is a fully-secure, dedicated and scalable high-speed private network that enables the CCA to connect their remote operations using a variety of access technologies. Through the servers that are hosted at Primus' Ottawa IDC, the CCA has effectively deployed email services and Virtual Private Networking (VPN) for mobile users.

Primus Managed Services performs daily tasks such as server patching, updates, and monitoring, tasks that had previously consumed much of Glenn's time. Primus Managed Services provides continuous online back up, security and storage solutions so CCA's data is protected, archived and available when it is needed. Data and storage solutions for critical applications are leveraged by implementing Primus' world-class IDC. The IDC in Ottawa that houses the CCA servers are equipped with redundant battery systems, generator power systems, computer-grade environment controls, advanced Internet networking, sophisticated biometric access control systems, backed by 24/7 support technical teams and extensive server and network management expertise.

Expanding the use of the Primus data storage solutions was prompted by the CCA's development of the *Event and Volunteer Management System* program in May 2006. The CCA has a network of 3000 to 4000 annual volunteers that support the various curling events across Canada. Glenn realized that the outsourced volunteer software that they were using was not meeting their current needs to solve this problem the CCA took the program in-house and developed their own program: Event and Volunteer Management System (EVMS). EVMS now supports all volunteer registrations, accreditations, badging and photo identification for championship events.

"Our services and partnership with Primus continues to grow due to their solid commitment to customer service," says Glenn. "Primus' extremely high level of commitment to service and support is what set them apart from other providers and makes the relationship invaluable to us."

With help from Primus, the CCA's IT backbone supports the winning chances of our Canadian curling teams and unites disparate curling communities on the path to gold at the Olympics