



MEDIA RELEASE

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CURLING: 2010 WwhCQ top three teams begin to stand out

Before the start of the **2010 World Wheelchair Curling Qualification** some of the favourites to qualify included **Italy, Switzerland, Japan, China and France**. All of these teams, except for France who did not get a permission to play, were going strong on the 2nd and 3rd day of competition. At the end of the 4th, we are beginning to see some changes in the standings.

After 7 rounds of play, the only undefeated team is **Italy** with six wins, after they beat the hosts Finland clearly today in their evening game. They had a bye in the draw earlier in the week due to France not being able to compete, so tomorrow they will play the remaining two games in the Round Robin. Italy's performance has been particularly impressive after their skip had to leave unexpectedly on Sunday. The team has clearly decided to give it their best shot and it seems they simply refuse to lose any games. They have climbed their way back up from a difficult situation already in three games this week, against Russia, Denmark and Slovakia. However, as the week goes by, the team seems to become more and more comfortable with their new line-up and look even stronger than at the start of the competition.

Tied in the first spot with Italy is the **Russian team**, who currently has 6 wins and 1 loss. Russia came to Finland to train already 10 days before the start of the competition and their training camp seems to be paying off. After a great performance today, Russia took perhaps their most important win over China, who also was undefeated before their game against Russia. This win put Russia ahead of China in the standings and gives them a chance to be one of the top two teams this week. Russia will have their final game tomorrow morning against Japan, who is currently 4th in the standings and have a chance to make it to the playoffs.

Before today the **Chinese** team seemed almost invincible and their loss to Russia is perhaps one of the biggest surprises of the week. A major part of China's success is their incredibly accurate takeout game. Maintaining such a high takeout percentage without sweepers on swingy ice is no easy task and their precision gives them an advantage against the other teams. China is currently at 5 wins and 1 loss.

As a result, nothing has been decided between the top three teams before the final day of the Round Robin. Both Italy and China have still got two games to play tomorrow and anyone of these three countries could end up winning the Round Robin. The two highest ranked teams will enter the 1st playoff game, the winner of which will be awarded one of the two places in the World Wheelchair Curling Championship. China and Italy will both play what is probably their most important game tomorrow, when they meet each other in the morning draw at 9am. However, after a crucial win tonight, also Japan is at 4 wins and 2 losses with two more games to go, so nothing seems to be for certain before tomorrow's games are finished. Switzerland is not out of the equation either with their 3 wins and 3 losses. They still have a good chance to finish 4th in the



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standings.

The teams that are no longer able to advance are Slovakia, Finland, Denmark and Latvia. Even though Slovakia has not won a huge amount of games this week, they have definitely shown great improvement from their previous WwhCQ event in 2008. This is only the second time the Slovakian wheelchair curlers participate in this World Qualification event. In their first year in 2008, they lost all of their ten games. Even if they have not racked up a lot of wins this year, they have challenged every single one of the top teams in the competition. For example, against China, Slovakia managed an impressive 5 points from the 4th end, which is quite an achievement considering other teams taking only 1's and 2's from this talented Chinese squad. Even today, Slovakia had a very tight game against Japan and every chance of winning it. If the Slovakian team keeps up this kind of development, they are likely to be one of the playoff teams in a couple of years.

The ice crew for the WwhCQ is led by the experienced Jorgen Larsen from Denmark, who is assisted by Mika Ollikainen from Finland. The small crew has done a great job with the ice during the week. It has remained consistently swifty and since day two, after the rink warmed up a bit, it has been fast as well. Larsen has had no problem keeping up with the schedule despite only having a three man crew and he is very happy with the facility and the service at Kisakallio.

It will indeed be an interesting final day of the Round Robin at the 2010 WWhCQ. China, Italy and Russia all have a chance to win the Round Robin and Japan and Switzerland will be competing for the 4th spot in the playoffs.

Tomorrow's **first games start at 09.00am** local time.

The schedule, updated team line-ups and results can be found at:

<http://www.curling.fi/en/home>.

A LIVE Daily webcast will cover games scheduled on sheet B:

<http://www.curling.fi/fi/kilpailut/curlingkanava>

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