

Qatar Winter Sports Committee and Years of Culture Launch 2026 Winter Sports Development Programme

22 April 2026 - Doha, Qatar: The Qatar Winter Sports Committee (QWSC), in collaboration with Years of Culture, is set to launch a year-round programme of winter sports development initiatives as part of the Qatar Canada and Mexico 2026 Year of Culture partnership. This marks a major step in expanding winter sports participation and technical excellence in Qatar.

Running throughout the year, the programme is designed to grow winter sports in Qatar over the long term. It covers several disciplines, including ice hockey, curling, skating, and short track, with a focus on grassroots participation, youth engagement, coach development, and competitive opportunities. The initiative reflects Qatar's long-term commitment to making winter sports a stronger part of its sporting landscape.

Developed within the framework of the 2026 Year of Culture, the programme draws on Canada's globally recognised leadership in winter sports, creating opportunities for collaboration in coaching, athlete development, and programme design. By connecting sport with community engagement, the initiative reinforces the role of sport as a powerful platform for cultural exchange and legacy building.

His Excellency Mohammed bin Jassim Al Kuwari, Years of Culture Advisor on Latin America and Qatar's former Ambassador to Mexico, said: "This programme reflects the spirit at the heart of Years of Culture: building lasting connections through shared experiences that bring people and communities together. Through our partnership with the Qatar Winter Sports Committee, we are creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and collaboration while supporting Qatar's long-term vision for sport development and cultural engagement."

Mr. Hassan Hissam Al-Hebabi, General Secretary of Qatar Winter Sports Committee, said: "Our ambition is to build a sustainable winter sports pathway in Qatar that nurtures talent from the grassroots level through to high-performance competition. The year-round programme created for the Qatar Canada and Mexico 2026 Year of Culture is an important milestone in expanding access to winter sports and inspiring the next generation of athletes and families to engage with these disciplines."

Beginning in April 2026, the Qatar Winter Sports Committee and Years of Culture will host a monthly calendar of recurring events at venues around Doha. Designed to engage athletes, families, and the wider community, monthly events are free to the public and will include:

- Exhibition ice hockey matches between local Canadian and Qatari amateur teams
- Exhibition curling matches between local Canadian and Qatari amateur teams
- Family open houses introducing curling
- Family open houses introducing ice hockey
- Family open houses introducing speed skating

The first series of events will take place at the **Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena on Thursday, 30 April 2026**, featuring an exhibition curling match followed by an open house for attendees, as well an exhibition hockey match and accompanying family experience sessions.



Further details and exact event timings will be announced via the Years of Culture website and social media channels.

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About Years of Culture

The Years of Culture initiative, chaired by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, spearheads long-lasting cultural partnerships between Qatar and other nations. It exists to promote respect and understanding among diverse cultures and serves as a catalyst for bringing people together, nurturing connections, encouraging dialogue, and deepening understanding. At its core, Years of Culture is a portal for making connections across various sectors, including cultural heritage, creative industries, social and economic development, and innovation, which enriches Qatar's ties with partner countries beyond the dedicated year.

Each year is organised with support from Qatar and partner countries' cultural institutions, ministries, foundations, and private and public sector partners, with assistance from Embassies in Qatar and abroad. Programmes are tailored to explore the unique nature of each partner country.

Previous Years of Culture have included: Qatar-Japan 2012, Qatar-UK 2013, Qatar-Brazil 2014, Qatar-Türkiye 2015, Qatar-China 2016, Qatar-Germany 2017, Qatar-Russia 2018, Qatar-India 2019, Qatar-France 2020, Qatar-USA 2021, Qatar-MENASA 2022, Qatar-Indonesia 2023, Qatar-Morocco 2024, and Qatar Argentina and Chile 2025.

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