

Deep River Curling and Squash Club

Introduction to the Sport of Curling



What is Curling?

Seemingly simple. A granite rock, a sheet of ice, a target 42 yards away. Finish with your rocks closer to the target than your opponents', and your team of four wins a game in which keen competition mixes with a wonderful social atmosphere.

But wait: this is an Olympic sport, played by people across the world from ages 8 to 80. There must be more to it.

And there is. The rocks curl (or curve) down the sheet, travelling over an ice surface rife with nuances thanks to specially applied 'pebble' of frozen mist that lets the 42-pound rocks move with surprisingly little effort. Finesse and control of how hard rocks are thrown (the 'weight') become the important factors, not strength. The weight of a thrown rock affects the amount of curl, but a rock's progress can be altered by judicious sweeping to polish the ice in front of it, making a rock move both farther and straighter. Added complications are crafty opponents who place their stones in positions to block your access to the centre of the target (the 'house'). You have to think several rocks ahead to make sure that, at the completion of each end of 16 rocks, your rocks are closest to the button, the centre of the house.

So curling is a game of strategy, of finesse, and yes of fitness. A team's sweepers travel up to two miles in a game and, at the highest levels of the sport, expend the same energy as a sprinter in a 200 meter dash.

The Spirit of Curling

Curling is a game of skill and of traditions. A shot well executed is a delight to see and so, too, it is a fine thing to observe the time-honoured traditions of curling being applied

in the true spirit of the game. Curlers play to win but never to humble their opponents. A true curler would prefer to lose rather than win unfairly.

A good curler never attempts to distract an opponent or otherwise prevent him from playing his best. No curler ever deliberately breaks a rule of the game or any of its traditions. But, if he should do so inadvertently and be aware of it, he is the first to divulge the breach.

While the main object of the game of curling is to determine the relative skill of the players, the spirit of the game demands good sportsmanship, kindly feeling and honourable conduct. This spirit should influence both the interpretation and application of the rules of the game and also the conduct of all participants on and off the ice.

Basics of Curling

Two four-person rinks (teams) compete, with each rink throwing (sliding) 8 rocks per "end" of play. Teams alternate turns, and each player throws (slides) two stones. Each end starts with the leads (first players) alternating throws, followed by the seconds, then the thirds (also known as vice-skips) and finally the skips, who throw last, plot strategy, and study how the rocks move on the ice.

Scoring is simple. The team receives one point for each of their rocks that are within the house and are closer to the center than any of the opposition's stones. The team that scores throws first in the next end.

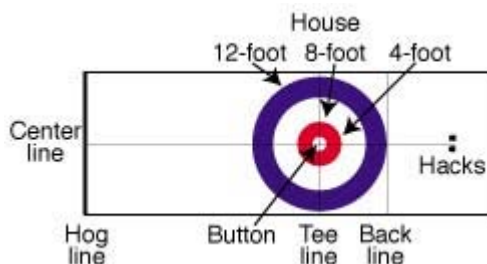
A game is typically 8 ends and last about 2 hours. The ice sheet is 15 feet wide and 138 feet long from hack to hack (rubber footrests where the curling delivery begins). The houses at each end are 12 feet in diameter, with rings of 8 feet, 4 feet and one foot (the 'button') painted into the ice. At the centre of the house is the



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button.



At the completion of each end, the thirds determine the score and using tags with the end number marked on them, hang the score up on the scoreboard. The score is read from the numbers on the centre row of the scoreboard.

In the example below, yellow scored one point in the first end. Red scored three points in the second end, Yellow one in the third and stole two in the fourth (It is called stealing a point when the other team has last rock). The score in the game 4-3 in favour of yellow.

			2												
SCORE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	1	3	4												

What Equipment Do I Need?

Items for you to bring:

- Warm, loose-fitting clothes (sweaters, gloves)
- Clean sneakers
- A good nature and sense of humour

Items we'll supply:

- Great ice
- Curling stones
- Sweeping brooms

Later, you can add:

- Brushes - synthetic or hogs-hair
- Curling shoes with slider attached. Sliders are hard plastic, teflon, or stainless steel in order of increasing

slipperiness. Curling shoes usually have soft rubber soles for traction.

- Removable sliders - full and half foot
- Rubber grippers - to protect slider
- Curling Gloves (baseball batting gloves work well too)
- Stop Watches - for timing rock speed
- Curling Pants - stretch material

Curling Safety

- **Warm up before the game.** Stretching before going out onto the ice can help prevent injury.
- **Step onto the ice gripper-foot first.** Never use your slider foot to step onto the ice.
- **Always be careful when stepping off the ice.** Always put your slider foot up first.
- **Never stop a rock with your hand.** Your fingers can be crushed, especially if the rock hits another rock while you're trying to stop it.
- **Never use your foot to stop a fast-moving rock.** You could lose your balance and fall. Use your broom to stop a rock.
- **Always carry your broom,** which you can use to avoid or break a fall in case you lose your balance.
- **Watch for stray rocks** and prevent rocks from going onto another sheet.
- **Keep the rocks on the ice at all times.** Slide the rocks-never lift them.
- **Keep your feet on the ice.** Walk or slide, never hop or run.
- **If you can't keep up with a fast-moving rock while sweeping, stop.**

Curling Links

- <http://www.curling.ca> - Canadian Curling Association
- <http://www.curlingbasics.com> - lots of neat animations
- <http://lachlan.bluehaze.com.au/drcsc/> - DRCS website

