

BASIC CURLING

As you can see, curlers are passionate about our sport: the skills, the competition, the code of conduct, and, just as important, our culture. What do we mean by "culture"?

- You will never hear negative comments on the ice.
- We try hard to stay positive.
- We compliment our teammates *and* our opponents on their successes.

Most new curlers play on the *front end* (the lead or second). As new curlers, what do you need to learn first to be an effective front end?

Delivery:

- Usually we begin with the physical skills for delivering a stone and sweeping for our teammates.
- It takes a long time to develop a consistent delivery, and no one is perfect!
- Focus on hitting the broom and throwing the correct distance.
- Remember that if you are "light" (throw for less distance than requested), your sweepers can help you out.
- If you are "heavy", there's nothing they can do.

Sweeping:

After you have thrown your two stones, your job is just beginning. Sweepers need to:

- Know what shot has been called.
- Judge the distance the rock will travel and communicate that to your skip.
- Begin by **standing at the tee line**, off to the side. Watch the skip's signals to learn what s/he wants to happen. Generally, skips tap the ice where they want to stone to stop, then move laterally and place the broom to indicate where to aim.
- Know what is supposed to happen. If you are not sure, ask the thrower.
- As the thrower slides out, walk with him, moving gradually toward the path of the stone.
- When the thrower releases the rock, continue walking with it.
- Try to judge whether it will go far enough by how fast you are walking.
- Discuss the speed with your co-sweeper, if that helps, and call out your best guess about how far it is going to go: guard weight, front ring, tee line, back line, etc. There is no penalty for being wrong!
- Adjust your estimate as you go along. If you think the rock will not travel as far as desired, begin to sweep.
- Don't wait for the skip to shout for you to sweep! You are in charge of weight; the skip is in charge of line.
- If the skip says "whoa", "up brooms", or something similar, stop sweeping. Chances are the rock is curling too much or not enough. and sweeping will not help.
- Remember that the skip always gets the last word!

Where to stand:

When the rock comes to rest, return immediately to the throwing end **by walking down the sidelines NOT in the middle of the sheet**, and wait on the inside of the hog line by the blue dash.

- Be sure to stand on your sheet not the sheet next to you.
- Try to be still while the other team's player is in their delivery
- Wait to walk until the other team's player has released their rock and the sweepers have walked past you.
- When your teammate gets ready to throw, take up your place at the tee line to be ready for the next shot.

- When all the rocks have been delivered stay out of the house while the thirds (aka the Vice) determine the score. This applies to all, including the skip!
- After the vices have determined the score, **if you are playing the lead position go get your first rock and be ready to deliver.** The other players will push the stones out of the way
- Seconds and vices need to push stones to where they belong. Everyone benefits from a quick pace of play.

Simple Strategy

- Skips are responsible for strategy. They plan a path for each rock and place the broom where they think it should be to account for the curl.
- Rocks curl less if they are travelling quickly (takeouts) and more if they are travelling slowly (draw shots or guards).
- Leads often will be asked to throw their stones into the *free guard zone*. That is the area between the hog line and the house.
- Stones placed in the free guard zone cannot be removed by the opposing lead, increasing the offensive possibilities.
- If your team does not have last rock (aka The Hammer), the lead stones are positioned along the center line, blocking the way to the four foot circle.
- If your team has last rock, the lead rocks go somewhat to the sides, hoping to leave the path to the four foot open for the skip's shots.
- Skips should always have a plan to keep the path open for themselves, which can be challenging as the end develops.
- Seconds may be asked to draw in behind the guard rocks placed by the leads, or they may have to remove opposition rocks (aka a Hit or a Take Out).
- Thirds have the same responsibilities, made even more difficult because there may be many rocks in their way.
- Skips generally take the last two shots themselves -- no pressure (ha!). They hope to rescue a bad situation or add points for their team if all is going well.

Communication:

- Why is everyone yelling?
- The skip has to know the speed of the rock to judge the line (aka how much is the rock curling?)
- This is why the sweepers call out information to the skip.
- The person in the house ALWAYS gets the last word on sweeping or not sweeping.
- Different stop sweeping calls can be: Off, Whoa, Stop, No, Up
- Different possible yes sweep calls can be: Yes, Hurry, Hard, Yup, Go, Sweep

How does the game end?

- Draws are for two hours. So evening draws are 6:45 - 8:45 or 9:00 - 11:00
- You should be able to play 8 ends in that time at 15 minutes per end.
- At the end of the game, all parties shake hands and retire to the warm room tables for a beverage or two (aka Broom Stacking).
- People may discuss the game or just enjoy each others' company.
- A curling club is a great place to meet people who enjoy some of the same things you do.

Welcome to our curling family. We will do everything we can to make you feel welcome, especially by teaching you what you need to know and asking you to help out "around the house". If you have questions or concerns, please approach a friendly face and ask.