

Learn to Curl Handouts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Etiquette
- Parts of a curling sheet
- Delivery
- Types of shots, rules for curling
- Brushing
- Members of a curling team, the target, the scoreboard
- Scoring, Zones, weight judgment
- Reading the Ice, communication
- Strategy – the basics
- FESRAIN
- Simple Strategy Summary
- Coach Dave's Basic Laws
- 15 Seconds – How to speed up the game

Etiquette

Clean, appropriate footwear: The curler should have a proper gripper on the hack foot, and a slider on the sliding foot for delivery purposes which is then changed to a second gripper for brushing purposes. Many clubs have shoe cleaning devices at the door to the ice, which should be used to ensure no dirt or debris is taken out to the ice area.

Club ice rules: Generally speaking most clubs dictate that food, beverages and smoking are not allowed the ice surface.

Handshake before and after: In curling players from each team shake hands with all members of the opposing team both before and after the game.

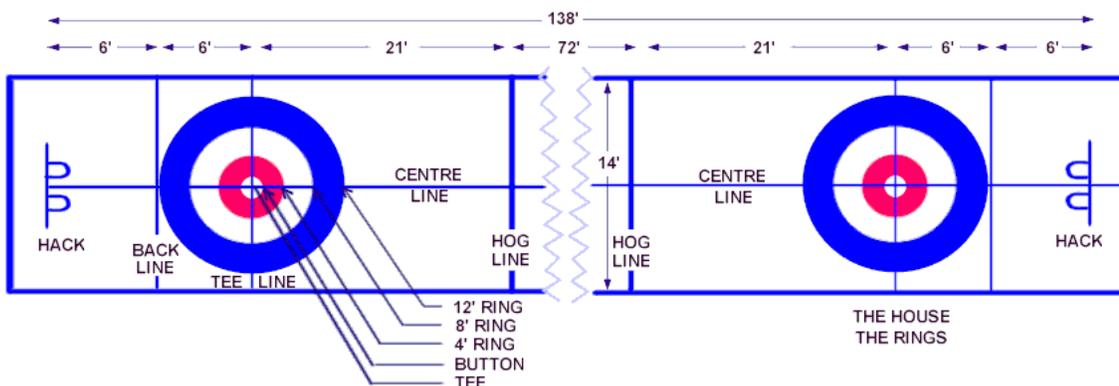
Coin toss for last rock advantage: It is an advantage to have last rock in an end, because, theoretically, the team with last rock should score. At the beginning of the game the two thirds or vice-skips toss a coin. The winner chooses between last rock in the first end or the colour of the rocks they will throw.

Positioning of the delivering team: Skip - in the house at the far end holding the broom. Two sweepers – on each side of the ice, near the sideline, and between the back line and the hog line ready to sweep the delivered stone. Thrower – in the hack, ready to deliver the stone.

Positioning of non-delivering team: Skip – Behind the back line, standing motionless, with broom off the ice. Two sweepers – standing still, in single file close to the side lines and between the hog lines. Thrower – standing quietly, behind, and to the side of the person in the hack.

Hand and Knees on the Ice: Avoid resting hands and knees on the ice; this will prevent the ice/pebble from melting. Melted spots are referred to as “flat spots” and they will usually adversely affect the path of a delivered stone.

Parts of a curling sheet



Hog line – delivered stones must be completely over this line to remain in play unless they have come in contact with a stone which is in play

Back line – the line across the sheet at the back of the house. Stones which come to rest completely over this line are out of play.

Tee-line – this is the line which goes across the sheet in the middle of the house.

Side lines – once a stone touches a side line it is out of play.

Centre line – this line runs down the centre of the sheet

The 3- Point Delivery

The 3 Point Delivery is the base step in a progression towards building the complete curling delivery

Steps in 3 Point Delivery

1. Approach hack from back
2. Foot in the hack
3. Step forward
4. Squat (“Stance”)
5. Organize the broom/Stabilizer
6. Hip elevation
7. Slide

Three Point Delivery (Detailed Version)

1. Approach hack from behind with broom under arm furthest away from the hack (broom arm).
2. Place gripper foot in hack.
3. Step forward with sliding foot so that the heel is parallel to the gripper foot and adjacent to the toe of the gripper foot with only enough space between the feet for a broom handle to fit through.
4. Get into “stance”
 - a. Position knees, hips and thighs by squatting with knees bent. Upper body is erect.
 - b. Position delivery arm (the one that would hold the rock) and throwing arm. The delivery arm should be in front of the body, comfortably extended. The broom arm is stretched out with broom handle extending under the arm toward the back (approximately 45 degree angle from body). The broom head should be facing up (wooden/plastic part on the ice) and be positioned slightly ahead of the sliding foot.
5. Hip elevation.
6. Sliding foot forward.
7. Slide with back leg fully extended (or as extended as the curler is capable of).

The 5 Point Delivery + Release

1. Approach hack from back
2. Foot in the hack
3. Step forward
4. Squat (“Stance”)
5. Organize the broom/Stabilizer
6. Hip elevation
7. Rock back
8. Sliding foot back
9. “Park”
10. Rock forward
11. Sliding foot forward
12. Slide
13. **Release**

Five Point Delivery (Detailed Version)

1. Approach hack from behind with broom under arm furthest away from the hack (broom arm).
2. Place gripper foot in hack.
3. Step forward with sliding foot so that the heel is parallel to the gripper foot and adjacent to the toe of the gripper foot with only enough space between the feet for a broom handle to fit through.
4. Get into "stance"
5. Position knees, hips and thighs by squatting with knees bent. Upper body is erect.
6. Position delivery arm (the one that would hold the rock) and throwing arm. The delivery arm should be in front of the body, comfortably extended. The broom arm is stretched out with broom handle extending under the arm toward the back (approximately 45 degree angle from body). The broom head should be facing up (wooden/plastic part on the ice) and be positioned slightly ahead of the sliding foot.
7. Hip elevation.
8. Rock back
9. Sliding foot back. Foot is moved back in a straight line (not looping behind the hack or outwards)
10. "Park". Weight shift from hack foot to sliding foot.
11. Rock forward.
12. Sliding foot forward.
13. Slide with back leg fully extended (or as extended as the curler is capable of).

14. Release

The rock release has three components:

Grip -Turns (in-turn and out-turn), Release

Key points for the grip:

- Position on the handle (not too close to goose neck or not at bottom of handle)
- Rock handle on second joint of fingers
- V shape of thumb and index fingers.
- Firm grip. Fingers together

Key points for turns:

- In-turn is clockwise (for right hand curler)
- Out-turn is counter clockwise (for right hand curler)
- Follow hand signals of skip

Key points for release:

- Start at 10 or 2 o'clock positions
- Hand above the rock
- Finish with handshake
- Number of rotations for length of ice - 2.5 to 3.5 rotations
- Release point

Game Orientation Session – Part 1

Types of Shots - Draw Takeout Guard Freeze Bump

Skip's Signals

Basic Rules for Curling

A rock must clear the far hogline to remain in play, except if it hits another rock which is in play

A rock which stops completely across the back line is out of play

A rock which touches a sideline is automatically out of play

Rocks may not be measured during an end for comparison or to determine if it is counting by means of any physical device to aid the visual until the last rock of the end has come to rest, unless one of the following two situations occur:

If the two skips cannot determine whether a rock has crossed the backline, when in close vicinity to the centre line, the six foot measure stick can be used.

If after the delivery of any of the first three rocks of an end both skips cannot determine if a rock is in the Free Guard Zone or touching the rings, the six foot measure stick can be used.

After the first end, the winner of the end throws first in the following end. (Remember in the first end, a coin flip decides who throws first)

The skip has control of the game for his/her team and may deliver any position rocks they choose. However the order of play, once established, may not be changed for that game.

Right-handed players shall deliver, from the left hack, left-handed players from the right hack.

In delivery the rock must be clearly released before it reaches the near hog line. If it is not, it shall be removed from play by the delivering team.

If a running rock is touched **before** crossing the far hogline, it automatically comes off. If a running rock is touched **after** crossing the far hogline, it may be removed at the discretion of the non-offencing skip with all rocks returned to their original position

The 4-rock Free Guard Zone rule is in effect, which means that any opposition rock coming to rest in the Free Guard Zone may be moved, but may not be removed from play, until the fifth rock of the end (Free Guard Zone is the area between the hog line and the tee line, excluding the "house").

Between the tee lines a rock may be brushed by any one or more of the team members (although it is not good practice to try to brush your own rock!). It may not be brushed by any opposition player.

Behind the tee line the delivering team shall have first privilege of brushing their stone. A lead or second of the delivering team may brush behind the tee line. Only the skip or vice skip of the non-delivering team have the privilege of brushing behind the tee line.

No player may start to brush an opponent's rock until it reaches the tee line.

The brushing motion shall be from side to side across the running surface in front of the rock and clearly finish to either side of the rock.

A team may not play at any time with less than three players.

If a player delivers a rock of the wrong colour, a rock of the correct colour will be put in its place.

Brushing

The Open-Stance Brushing Technique is the preferred method of brushing as it provides the best opportunity for the brusher to view the playing end and the footwork is very simple.

Open-Stance Brushing Technique

Stance:

- Grippers must be worn on both feet.
- Feet are positioned parallel to the stone's path, shoulder width apart.
- Knees are bent with the weight on the balls of the feet, heels raised slightly off the ice.
- A clear line of vision will assist with weight judgment and communication.

Grip:

- Place the brush handle across the front of your body, grip the handle with both hands dividing the handle into thirds.
- Position your hand closest to the rock, 1/3 of the way up the handle from the brush head. Palm of the hand should be facing down.
- Place your other hand 2/3 of the way up the handle. Palm of hand should be facing up.
- Position the top part of the handle under your arm pit.
- Hold the handle against your rib cage with the upper part of your arm.
- Bottom arm should be straight as it applies weight on to the brush.
- Top arm guides the motion of the brush.

Foot Motion:

- Knees are bent so that upper body weight is placed on the brush.
- From there, use a cross-country ski shuffle to move down the ice.
- Remember to remain on the balls of the feet, keeping your feet in contact with the ice always.

Scrubbing Motion:

- Apply downward pressure onto the brush head through your lower arm.
- Using your top hand, implement a small push/pull motion onto the brush handle.
- Develop a series of short (6") rapid strokes to scrub the path of the stone.
- Clean a 45 degree path in front of the stone.

GAME ORIENTATION – PART 2

The members of a curling team

In curling, the team you play on is called a rink. The rink is made up of four players: the lead, the second, the third (also called the vice or vice skip) and the skip. Each player has specific duties:

Lead: the lead throws the first two rocks of the end and then sweeps the next six. The lead must be very good at throwing guards and be a strong sweeper.

Second: the second throws the third and fourth stones of the end and should be strong at playing takeouts. The second sweeps the first two stones and then the final four of the end. The second and lead need to be in sync when sweeping together.

Third: the third or vice, who throws the fifth and sixth rocks of the end, must be good at all shots but especially draws. It is the third's job to set up the shots that will be thrown by the skip and to help discuss the strategy of the final two stones of the end. The third also posts the score at the conclusion of the end.

Skip: the skip is the captain of the team and decides the strategy. It's the skip's job to tell the other players where to throw their shots and when to sweep. The skip also delivers the last two shots of the end. The skip must be good at all types of shots.

The target

The house looks like an oversized bull's eye. There are 3 large rings that encircle a center or button. These rings are referred to as the 12 foot, the 8 foot and the 4 foot. Players score points by getting their stones inside the house. Each team tries to get their stones closest to the button during each end.

The scoreboard

Curling has its own unique scoreboard. The scoreboard has 3 rows of numbers on it. The actual score is located in the center row. The top and bottom rows indicate the colour of stones for each team and are used to calculate how many points each team made in an end.

Ice 1																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

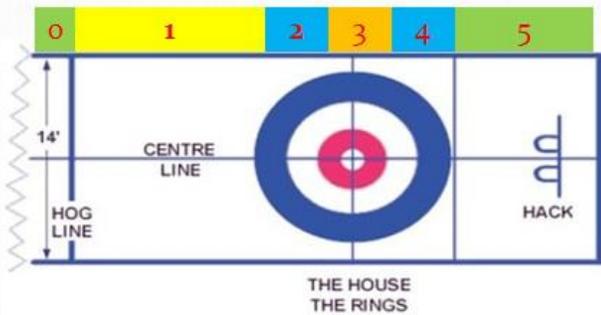
The scoring

Once all 16 rocks have been thrown down the sheet of ice, the vice skips of each team calculate the points for that end. The score is based on the final positions of the stones in the house. Only one team can score in an end. A team scores one point for every rock that is closer to the centre of the house than the other team. The best score in an end is 8-0, meaning one team got all eight stones in the house and closer to the button than the opposition. This is called an 'eight-ender' – and is very rare!

Can you track the scoring on the scoreboard below after 8 ends?

				1		3	6		7							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	4	5		8												2

Weight Zones



- Zone 0 - hogged rock
- Zone 1 - hogline to top of rings
- Zone 2 - 12 ft rings to top of 4 ft rings
- Zone 3 - 4 ft rings
- Zone 4 - 4 ft rings to back line
- Zone 5 - beyond the back line (through house)

Weight judgment when delivering a rock depends on:

- ice conditions – heavy vs. keen ice
- temperature of the ice
- path taken – have any rocks gone down this path?
- changing ice conditions

1. Reading the Ice

Reading the ice is not only the skip's responsibility but every team member. For example, players need to know where there may be falls or runs in the ice, where the ice is heavy or keen and areas on the sheet where the rock will curl more.

When reading a sheet of ice consider:

1. How much will a draw curl – outside in (counter clockwise) and inside out (clockwise)?
2. Where should the broom be positioned for a takeout of a rock in a given location?
3. Where are there any runs or straight spots or falls in the ice?

Question: What can influence the ice conditions?

Answer: Some of the variables are:

- Ice temperature; Humidity (causes frost)
- Outside temperature
- Pebble – size and amount
- Nipping or rocking the ice
- Scrapping the ice or number of games played on a sheet between scrapings
- Debris on the ice; Hand / knee prints on the ice

2. Communication

Communication on the ice is everyone's responsibility. Communication can be:

- a. Between players;
- b. Between the skip and the sweepers;
- c. Between the thrower and the sweepers;
- d. Between the thrower and the skip

Communication is not limited to voice but the use of hand signals can be employed. For example, the skip uses hand signals to communicate the type of shot and the weight.

One tool that can assist in the communication on ice is the use of zones. As previously identified in the weight judgement drills, there can be five zones:

The key points to communication are:

- ☑ Good communication uses both voice and body motions
- ☑ There is a need to communication many times as a rock is delivered down the sheet
- ☑ It is better to guess the weight instead of saying nothing
- ☑ You are allowed to change your guess

Curling Strategy – the basics

- a. Strength and weaknesses
- b. Styles of play
- c. Factors influencing shot selection
- d. Scoring concepts
- e. Tolerance
- f. Strategies when ahead on the scoreboard
- g. Strategies when behind on the scoreboard

a) Strength and Weakness

The team/player should identify their strengths and weaknesses in the areas of sweeping ability, sweeping judgement, takeout ability, draw ability and finesse shot ability (freezes, tap back, and raise takeout)

b) Styles of Play

Offensive - characterized as aggressive; lots of rocks in play; typically employs the use of guards, raises, freezes and come-around shots

Defensive – characterized as conservative; open; few rocks in play; takeout game

Balanced – can play the offensive and defensive styles of play

c) Factors Influencing Shot Selection

The following six factors will influence shot selection:

- a. Free guard zone – the first four shots in the end
- b. What end is being played
- c. Score
- d. Who has last rock
- e. Strength and weakness of own team and opponents
- f. Ice conditions

d) Scoring Concepts

Strategy with last rock.

Goal is to score 2 or more

Offense

Use of the corner guards

Use of sides of sheet and keep four foot path clear

Strategy without last rock.

Goal is to steal points or hold opposition to one point

Defence

Use of centreline guards

Play towards the centre of the sheet and block path to four foot

Play in the early ends:

Familiarization with ice

Play in the middle to late ends:

Should be confident in reading of the ice and shot execution

e) Tolerance

When you think about the tolerance for a called shot, you are thinking about what are the possible results of the shot. Both the skip and the thrower should be thinking of the tolerance. Tolerance changes for different situations. For example:

- a. The tolerance for a called guard may be a long guard or a draw into the rings.
- b. The tolerance for taking out a partial guarded rock may be to remove the guard.

f) **Strategies When Ahead on the Scoreboard:**

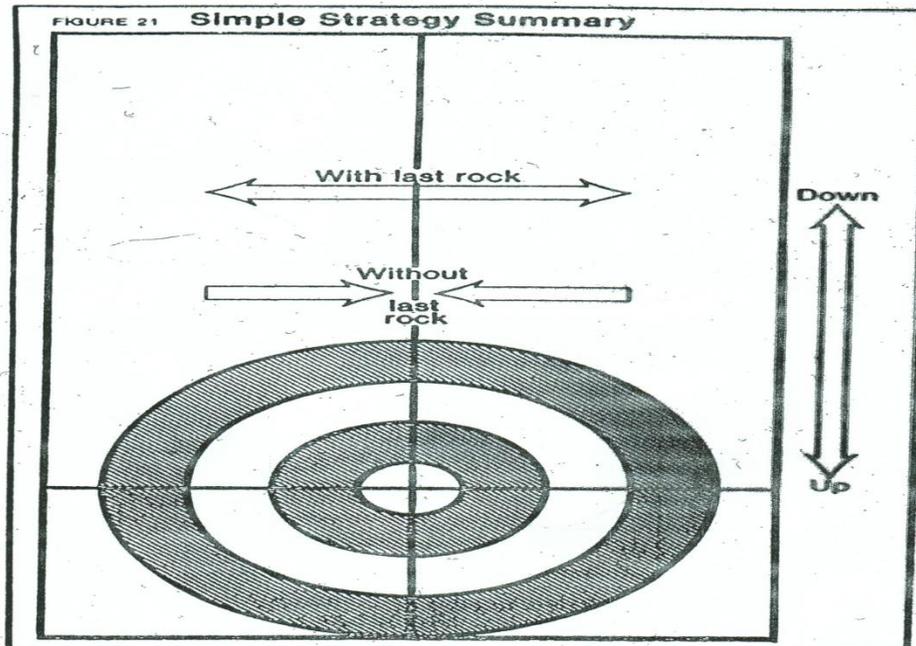
- a. Usually a takeout game
- b. Try to minimize the number of rocks in play
- c. Try to minimize the guards

g) **Strategies When Behind on the Scoreboard**

- a. More a draw game
- b. Tendency is to have more rocks in play
- c. Usually need guards to score multiple point ends
- d. If early in the game, do not try to get all the points back at once

FESRAIN

- **F**ree guard zone or **F**our rock rule.
- What **E**nd are you playing?
- What's the **S**core?
- Who has last **R**ock?
- What are the **A**bilities of both teams?
- What are the **I**ce conditions like?
- What's the **N**umber of rocks remaining in the end?



Coach Dave's Basic Laws

- You can't skip if you can't draw.
- In general, never be wide on a hit; never be tight on a draw.
- When you're up, the guard isn't.
- Don't miss half the game; watch every rock!
- Draws in front of the tee can be made better (and conversely).
- Almost everyone in the club can and should play faster; be ready; don't waste your time; lead rock one should be delivered within 30 seconds after an end finishes.
- Come-around-draws are usually trouble if behind the tee ("guard and a catcher").
- Think SHOT TOLERANCE (right way vs. wrong way to miss; when is short better than long and vice versa; when is a guard "sacred"; come around hits and taps ... almost always "okay" to spill guard).
- Try to leave lead rocks "all in or all out".
- Own the "control zone".
- Control your emotions; control the things you can control.
- Always remember ... it's only a game!

15 Seconds

What amount of time would be saved if each shot in an eight end game took 15 seconds less? Ans. 30 minutes

What if it were 10 seconds less? Approximately 20 minutes. Isn't it amazing how seconds add up?

Tips for speeding up the pace of the game

- 1) Clean your rock and be ready to throw before your skip has called your shot. If you have a routine prior to your delivery, don't wait for the skip to call your shot.
- 2) You can see how your opponent's rock is doing from the hack. Watching from the sidelines uses walking and preparation time.
- 3) Leads: If your team is scheduled to throw first in the next end, let the other players clear off the rocks at the conclusion of the end; get your rock and get into the hack, ready to start the next end. There is no need to have them set up 1-2, 3-4, etc. There is time to organize them after the first rock is thrown. Skips can do their part by organizing them during the playing of the end as rocks are removed from play.
- 4) When competitive games are timed there is 30 seconds from the time the final rock has come to rest and the count determined till the time is started again.
- 5) Skips: After an end has concluded, don't stand around chatting with your team, or the opposing skip. Get down the ice and be ready to start the next end. Want to chat with the opposing skip, or commiserate how the last end went? By all means, do but do so while calling the next shot. (It has been proven that one can chew gum and walk at the same time).
- 6) Leads and seconds can help by setting up the skips rocks. This ensures skips will throw the right colour.
- 7) If several members of both teams use crutches or delivery sticks try to have enough at either end so you don't have to keep shifting from end to end.
- 8) When measuring rocks clear out the rocks that do not matter, have a good look and if there is any question measure. Clubs should have measurement devices on both ends centered on the middle sheet. Not on the sides.
- 9) We recently curled a team where the skip would decide on a shot and then came down and explained the entire shot to the sweepers. Skips should keep their strategy descriptions brief but also mention the primary and secondary options.
- 10) Curling is built on friendship and courtesy, but putting your opponent's next rock near the hack before you throw yours is no longer considered a courtesy - not only does it use up time, it may not be the rock your opponent wants to throw. (Players often choose to throw rocks not in their numbered sequence.) 9