

POTOMAC CURLING CLUB

A Quick Guide to the Sport of Curling

Before the Match:

- ◆ Wipe your footwear thoroughly before stepping into the ice shed.
- ◆ Shake hands with your opponents, introduce yourself, and wish them Good Curling. Then shake hands with your teammates and wish them Good Curling as well.
- ◆ Determine who will play each of the four positions in curling: Lead, Second, Vice & Skip.
 - ◆ The Lead throws the first two stones and then sweeps the next six. Leads typically throw strong guards.
 - ◆ The Second throws the third and fourth stones and then sweeps the remaining six (the first two and last four). Seconds typically throw strong takeouts.
 - ◆ The Vice throws the fifth and sixth stones and sweeps the first four (as thrown by the Lead and Second). The Vice helps the Skip discuss strategy and holds the broom for the Skip's stones. Vices must be good at every type of shot.
 - ◆ The Skip is the leader of the team, and he/she determines the team's strategy. The Skip holds the broom for the other three players' stones and throws the last two stones of each end. Skips must be good at every type of shot, including, especially, draws.
- ◆ If you are the Lead, be ready to toss a coin to determine which team throws the first stone. The winner shall have the choice of last stone (the hammer) or stone color.

During the Match:

- ◆ Each player shall be ready to deliver his/her stone when his/her turn comes, and shall not take an unreasonable time to play.
- ◆ Stones are numbered and it is recommended they be played in order – this enables players to consistently throw the same stones and track their reaction to ice conditions. The order in which the stones are played may be altered by the team at any time.
- ◆ When delivering their stones, players must release the stone before the hog line.
- ◆ To be in play, the rock must cross the hog line at the playing end of the sheet. If it does not do so, a player has “hogged” the rock, and it is removed from play. In addition, a rock is deemed out of play if it completely crosses the back line or touches either of the sidelines.
- ◆ Be quiet and do not move when your opponent is about to deliver a rock.

- ◆ The players, other than the Skip and Acting Skip (Vice), shall not stand behind the house, but must stand along the side of the rink between the hog lines, except when sweeping or about to deliver a stone.
- ◆ The next player to throw should wait quietly off to the side behind the delivering hack area and be ready to throw as soon as the previous player has completed his/her delivery.
- ◆ Never walk across the sheet when a player is delivering a stone.
- ◆ Skips should stand still behind the end line and hold their broom off the ice during the opposing team's turn.
- ◆ Only the Skip or Acting Skip being may stand within or behind the house.
- ◆ The Skip or Acting Skip from the non-playing team may not start sweeping an opponent's stone until it reaches the tee line.
- ◆ The playing team shall have first choice to sweep their stone, but, if they choose not to do so, they shall not obstruct or prevent the opponent from sweeping the stone.
- ◆ Behind the tee line, only one player from each team may sweep at any one time. It may be any one player from the playing team, but only the "player in charge of the house" from the non-playing team.
- ◆ Touched Stones:
 - ◆ If you touch a moving stone while you are sweeping, tell your Skip immediately.
 - ◆ If it occurs between the tee line at the delivering end and the hog line at the playing end, immediately remove the stone from play.
 - ◆ If it occurs after a stone has reached the hog line at the playing end, allow it and all other stones to come to rest on their own. The other team then has the option of:
 - ◆ Removing the touched stone and replacing all of the displaced stones to their original positions,
 - ◆ Leaving all stones where they came to rest, or
 - ◆ Placing all stones where they reasonably believe the stones would have come to rest if the stone was never touched.
- ◆ Strategy discussions on the odd individual shot are necessary in curling, but excessive discussion on several shots can result in fewer ends completed. To avoid prolonged discussions, only the Skip and Vice should actively participate in strategic decision making. Also, think through several probable scenarios so the next shot is already determined.
- ◆ Compliment any player on a good shot. Do not show your frustration at an opponent's lucky shot or a teammate's poor shot.

- ◆ Pay attention to what is going on in your game. Use the opportunity to learn when a rock needs brushing or to learn game strategy.
- ◆ After the last stone has been delivered, the two Vices agree on the score, and it is the responsibility of the Vice from the scoring team to update his/her team's score on the score board. This should be done when it is convenient and doesn't interrupt the flow of the game.
- ◆ The etiquette of conceding a game: After the completion of any end, a team may concede a game by the conceding Skip offering to shake hands with the Skip of the winning team. If time is short, good etiquette is to concede a game when all chances of winning the game are gone.

Basic Types of Shots:

- ◆ Guard: A stone placed in front of the house to provide protection for stones in the house (or to prevent an opposing team's stone from reaching the house). The "free guard rule" prevents players from taking out guards using any of the first four stones thrown in an end (the Lead stones from both teams). If a team violates the free guard rule, that team's stone is removed and the opposing team's guard is replaced.
- ◆ Draw: A stone thrown into a designated portion of the house that comes to rest on its own without striking any other stones.
- ◆ Freeze: A draw that stops right in front of another rock such that they are touching or "frozen together."
- ◆ Takeout: A hit that removes one or more stones from play.
- ◆ Hit & Roll: A takeout shot in which the shooter stone rolls to a designated part of the sheet after the hit (often behind a guard or away from other stones in the house).
- ◆ Raise: A stone that bumps a stone to another position further down the sheet.

After the Match:

- ◆ Give each of your teammates and opponents a handshake and thank them for the game before leaving the ice.
- ◆ Assist the ice crew by helping to put the stones back in order at the end of the sheet. In addition, the winning team sweeps out both hacks, runs the mop over the sheet, and takes down the score.
- ◆ The members of the winning team buy drinks for their counterparts on the losing team.

NEW CURLERS ARE CAUTIONED TO BE VERY CAREFUL WHILE MOVING OR STANDING ON THE ICE!

- ◆ For newer curlers, sliders should only be worn when delivering or waiting to deliver a stone.
- ◆ Step on to the ice with your “gripper” shoe first and be careful! Never use your slider foot for your first step on the ice.
- ◆ Sliders should be removed (or covered with a gripper for curling shoes) after a player’s turn to deliver is over or when one is leaving the ice.
- ◆ 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 feet to stop a rock as you can lose your balance and fall. Use a broom or brush to stop a rock.
- ◆ Always carry a broom or brush with the broom head down, which you can use to avoid or break a fall in case you lose your balance.
- ◆ While sweeping, if you can’t keep up with a fast shot, back off. Don’t risk a fall on the ice.
- ◆ Before you step on the ice, take note of the ice conditions. Sometimes the ice is wet from the cleaning and will be more slippery than normal.
- ◆ Never go on the ice when your balance is impaired from sickness, medication or alcohol.

For More Information on Curling:

- ◆ Read a book on the basics of curling.
 - ◆ One good example: Curling for Dummies by Bob Weeks.
- ◆ Visit an Internet site designed to teach the basics of curling.
 - ◆ One good example: CurlTech’s The Curling School at <http://www.curlingschool.com/>. In particular, new curlers should review the following sections: “Overview of Curling,” “The Delivery by CurlTech,” “Sweeping,” and “Appendix A: Curling Terms & Lingo.”

GOOD CURLING!