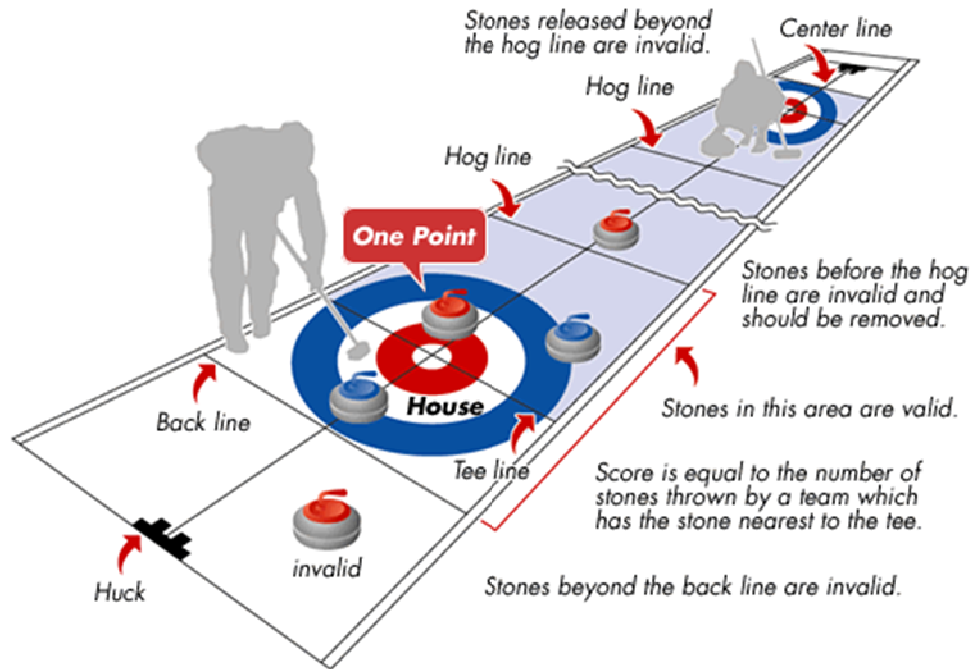


Stephen C. West Ice Arena

Beginners Guide To Curling



Curling Game Basics

What is this game of rocks and brooms all about? Curling is a sport in which two teams of four players each slide 40-pound granite *rocks* (also called *stones*) down a sheet of ice toward a target at the other end. Each team tries to get more of its stones closer to the center of the target than the other team. Read on for a complete breakdown of curling's basic elements.

- **Throwing rocks:** Each player on the team throws two stones in each end. (An end is similar to an inning in baseball.) Each team throws 8 stones in an end. The players alternate throwing with their *opposite number*, the player on the other team who plays the same position they do.
- **Curling rocks:** When you throw a rock down the ice, depending on its rotation -- which is applied intentionally -- it will *curl*, or *bend*, one way or another. How much (or little) a rock curls or bends, depends largely on the conditions of the playing surface.
- **Sweeping:** Sweeping makes a rock curl less and travel farther. The lead, second, and third all take turns sweeping the rocks. The skip, who is like the team's quarterback, is the only one who doesn't regularly sweep stones.
- **Keeping score:** Once all 16 rocks have been thrown down the narrow *sheet* of ice, the score for that end is counted based on the final positions of the stones in the *house*, (the group of circles on the ice that looks like a bull's eye). Only one team can score in an end. A team scores one point for every rock that it has closer to the center of the house than the other team.
- **Strategy:** Generally, the skip determines a rink's strategy. During the game, the skip stands at one end of the sheet and tells his or her other three players where they should place their shots. A team's

strategy doesn't always go according to plan! And that's part of what makes curling so much fun. No two games are alike; the unpredictability is always appealing.

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*, *vice-skip*, or *mate*), and the *skip*. Each player has specific duties:

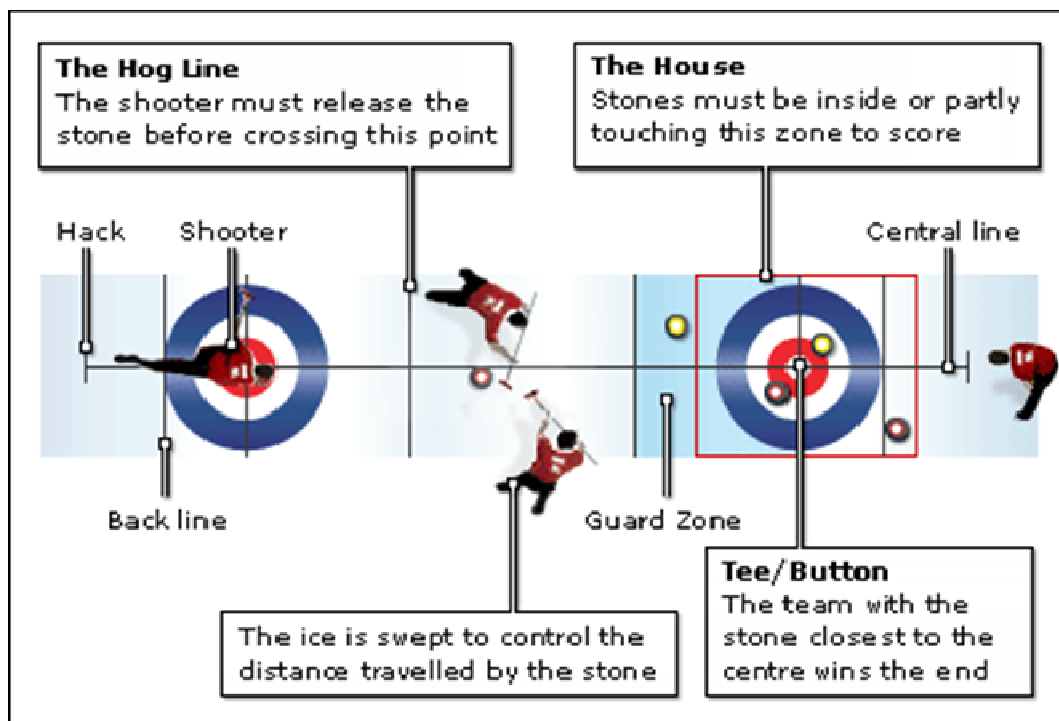
- **Lead:** The lead throws the first two rocks of the end and then sweeps the next six. The lead must be very good at throwing guards and a strong sweeper.
- **Second:** The second throws the third and fourth stones of the end and should be strong at playing takeouts. The second sweeps the first two stones and then the final four of the end. The second and the lead need to be in sync when sweeping together.
- **Third:** The third (or mate 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 the skip 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.

Curling Match Terminology

Curling, probably more than any other sport, has its own unique terminology (like hurry hard and burning a rock, among others). Here are the key curling words and phrases you need to know to blend in at your next bonspiel:

- **Blank end:** An end where no points are scored.
- **Bonspiel:** A tournament in which curlers compete.
- **Burning a rock:** A rules infraction that happens when a player touches a stone as it's traveling down the sheet.
- **Button:** The very center of the target rings or house.
- **Cashspiel:** A tournament in which curlers compete for money.
- **Delivery:** The action of throwing a stone to the other end of the playing surface.
- **Eight-ender:** A perfect end where every one of the team's stones scores a point.
- **End:** The way a curling game is divided. An end is like an inning in a baseball game. A curling game has either eight or ten ends.
- **Gripper:** The sole of one of your curling shoes. It helps you keep your footing on the ice. See *slider*.
- **Hammer:** The last rock of the end.
- **Hack:** The foothold in the ice you use to push off from when you deliver the stone.

- **House:** Also known as the *rings*, this is the name of the giant bull's eye at either end of the sheet of ice. It consists of a set of concentric circles, called the 12-foot, 8-foot, 4-foot, and the Button.
- **Hurry hard:** A directive given to sweepers by the skip or third, to begin sweeping.
- **Rink:** A curling team; also the name of a curling facility
- **Rock:** Also known as a stone, the granite playing utensil that a curler delivers. Regular-sized rocks weigh approximately 44 pounds.
- **Sheet:** The frozen playing surface on which the game is played.
- **Slider:** The sole of one of your curling shoes. It helps you move or slide along the ice.
- **Tee line:** The line on the playing surface that runs through the middle of the house.
- **Weight:** The amount of force used to deliver a stone.



Curling Fun Facts

- Canada is the world leader in curling and has won 27 of a possible 42 Men's World Championships.
- Curling has been an olympic sport since 1998.
- Curling player Paul Gowsell once ordered a pizza to ice level during a match, briefly earning him the nickname "Pizza Paul".
- A curling rink in Halifax, Canada, was used as a temporary morgue for bodies recovered from the Titanic disaster.
- Curling was founded by Scots in 1541.
- There is about 1,2 million registered curling players in the world.
- The first World Championship was held in 1958.
- The maximum weight of a curling stone is 44 pounds or 20 kilograms.
- The oldest know curling stone bears the date 1511.
- In Canada curling is as popular as ice hockey.