

# Curlers' Handbook

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A compilation of information primarily from the Canadian Curling Association and Curl BC.

October 2012

## **1. Glossary of Curling Terms**

### **BACKLINE:**

The line across the ice at the back of the house. Stones (or rocks) which are over this line are removed from play.

### **BITER:**

A stone that just touches the outer edge of the circles.

### **BLANK END:**

An end in which no points have been scored.

### **BONSPIEL:**

A curling competition or tournament.

### **BURNED STONE:**

A stone in motion touched by a member of either team or by any part of their equipment. Burned stones are immediately removed from play if touched by a member of the delivering team between the tee line and the hog line. Inside the hog line at the playing end, if a moving stone is touched by a member of the team to which it belongs, all stones are allowed to come to rest. The non-offending team has the option of: (a) removing the touched stone and replacing the all stones that were displaced to their original positions; or (b) leaving all stones where they came to rest; or (c) placing all stones where it considers the stones would have come to rest had the moving stone not been touched.

### **BUTTON:**

The circle at the centre of the house.

### **COUNTER:**

Any stone in the rings or touching the rings which is a potential point.

### **CURL:**

The amount a rock changes direction while travelling over the ice sheet.

#### DELIVERY:

Right handed deliveries are made with the right foot in the left handed hack. Left handed deliveries are made with the left foot in the right handed hack. The delivery and release of the stone is intended to occur in a reasonably straight line from the hack towards the target broom.

#### DRAW WEIGHT:

The momentum required for a stone to reach the house at the far end of the ice sheet.

#### END:

A portion of a curling game that is completed when each team has thrown eight stones and the score has been decided.

#### FREE GUARD ZONE (FGZ):

The FGZ is the area between the hog line and the tee line excluding the house. Any stationary stone(s) belonging to the opposition locate in the FGZ shall not be removed from play by the delivering team prior to the delivery of the 5<sup>th</sup> stone of the end. When an opposition stone is removed from play prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> stone of the end, the delivered stone must be removed from play and any other displaced stone(s) replaced as close as possible to its original position. You may remove your own stone from the FGZ with a hit providing you do not cause an opposition stone to be removed from play.

#### GUARD:

A stone that is placed in a position so that it may protect another stone.

#### HACKS:

The foot-holds at each end of the ice from which the stone is delivered.

#### HEAVY:

A rock delivered with a greater force than necessary.

#### HOG LINE:

A line 10 meters from the hack at each end of the ice.

#### HOGGED STONE:

A stone that does not reach the far hog line. It must be removed from play.

**HOUSE:**

The rings or circles toward which play is directed consisting of a 12-foot ring, 8-foot ring, 4-foot ring and a button.

**IN-TURN:**

The rotation applied to the handle of a stone that causes it to turn and curl in a clockwise direction for a right-handed curler. For a left-handed curler the rotation is counter-clockwise.

**LEAD:**

The first player on a team to deliver a pair of stones for his/her team in each end.

**LIGHT:**

A rock delivered with insufficient force.

**OUT-TURN:**

The rotation applied to the handle of a stone that causes it to turn and curl in a counter-clockwise direction for a right-handed curler. For a left-handed curler the rotation is clockwise.

**PEBBLE:**

A fine spray of water applied to a sheet of curling ice before commencing play.

**RAISE:**

When one stone is bumped ahead by another.

**ROLL:**

The movement of a curling stone after it has struck a stationary stone in play.

**SECOND:**

The curler who delivers the second pair of stones for his/her team in each end.

**SHEET:**

The specific playing surface upon which a curling game is played.

**SHOT ROCK:**

At any time during an end, the stone closest to the button.

**SKIP:**

The player who determines the strategy, and directs play for the team. The skip generally but not necessarily delivers the last pair of stones for his/her team in each end.

**SPARE:**

An alternate player or substitute.

**SLIDER:**

Slippery material placed on the sole of the shoe, to make it easier to slide on the ice during delivery.

**STICK:**

Device used for delivery of a stone. If the player starts a game with a delivery stick, that player shall use a delivery stick throughout the game. If the player starts a game without a delivery stick, that player may not use a delivery stick during that game. The delivery must start from the hack and the delivery and release of the stone is intended to occur in a reasonably straight line from the hack towards the target broom.

**SWEEPING:**

The action of moving a broom or brush back and forth in the path of a moving stone. This allows the stone to travel farther and curl less.

**TAKE OUT:**

Removal of a stone from the playing area by hitting it with another stone.

**TEE LINE:**

The line that passes through the centre of the house parallel to the hog line and backline.

**THIRD or VICE-SKIP:**

The third player on a team to throw two stones in each end. Generally this player acts as the skip when the skip is delivering his/her stones and assists with shot selection decisions.

**WEIGHT:**

The amount of force given to the stone during the delivery.

## 2 Safety on the Ice

Curling is not a dangerous sport but serious injuries can occur if you are not careful. The beginning of the season is when the majority of injuries happen. Ice is very hard and very slippery. It is easy to forget this as we get more comfortable. This is when mistakes happen and injuries can occur. Here are a few suggestions to make the season a safer one:

- Make sure your shoes have good grip. If not, invest in a gripper to ensure stability.
- Wear grippers at all times except when throwing rocks. Learning to sweep with two grippers is safe and easy.
- Ensure your grippers fit snugly and are not going to fall off.
- When you step on the ice to throw be sure to get on with your gripper foot first and not your slider. When you get off the ice after throwing the reverse is true, step off with your slider foot first.
- Look out for other players when moving rocks around on the ice. Also be aware if rocks are being moved near you and be ready to get out of the way if you need to.
- While it is important to stop rocks from running into the hacks do not put yourself at risk to do so.
- Take things slowly. While it is important to keep a game moving along at a nice clip, if everyone is where they're supposed to be, it doesn't have to be a race. Move on the ice at a safe pace.
- Never get rocks out for the opposition. It may seem like a polite and helpful thing to do but it is actually quite dangerous as it creates a tripping hazard.
- Be aware of emergency procedures at your club and where the first aid kit is, etc.

### **3. Curling Etiquette**

#### **Before Starting the Game**

- Clean shoes before going on the ice.
- Clean brooms over garbage cans so dirt etc. does not fall onto the carpet.
- Introduce yourself and shake hands with your opponents before the game & wish everyone 'good curling'.
- The Third from one team tosses a coin, while the other team's third makes the call. Whichever team wins the toss has the option of throwing the last rock, or choosing rock colour. The team that wins the toss will usually opt for the advantage of last rock, in which case the other team chooses the colour they want.

#### **During the Game**

- Be ready to throw when it is your turn.
- The leads who will be throwing the first rock of the end should prepare themselves and their first rock to throw and not assist in clearing the other rocks after the end is over.
- It is conventional but not necessary to throw the rocks in the order of the numbers on the rocks.
- Only the skip or third of the delivering team should be in the house.
- When your team mate is throwing their rock, sweepers should keep far enough back with their brooms against their bodies so they don't block the sightlines of the thrower.
- Similarly, when you have finished sweeping your team's rock and you're walking back down the sheet, keep to the edge of the curling sheet. Remember that the other team will be throwing their rock and that the sightlines down the sheet should be clear.
- Sweepers should be between the hog lines and to the side of the ice sheet when rocks are delivered so as not to block the view of the opposing player who is throwing.
- When an opposing player is in the hack and ready to throw, do not cross the ice or enter the house or in any way interfere with his or her concentration.

- It is okay for a Skip to stand behind the other Skip to watch the line, but the Skip behind should not place the broom vertically on the ice, since this may put the thrower off by seeing two brooms! It is a courtesy for the Skip standing behind to position the broom horizontally across the body.
- Sweepers should pay attention to their skip's call for the next curler on their team so they know what is expected for the next shot.
- When the final stone of an end comes to rest in the house, leads and seconds should remain well outside the house until the Thirds have measured (if necessary), determined the score, and agreed to move stones.
- Compliment your opponent for a good shot.
- Both teams shake hands after a game. If people are having a sociable drink after the game, it's considered good etiquette to sit with your opposition.
- Arrange rocks in numerical order once the game is complete.



#### **4. Role of the Skip:**

- Make your team aware of curling etiquette.
- If you observe a member of your team committing a violation of a rule or etiquette gently point out their error.
- Set an example; be courteous and respectful.
- Compliment a good shot by a member of your team.
- Tailor your expectations to the ability of your team members. Be considerate of those not quite so talented.
- While game strategy is the skip's responsibility, you should discuss strategy with the Third and be willing to explain your calls to your team members when asked. Strategy decisions should not be drawn out. Taking too much time is unfair on the opposition
- Know the rules so you can assist your team.
- Make sure your spares pay any necessary fees.

Note: The third is best positioned to act as a coach and mentor for any novices on the team. In that role he or she should give advice and answer questions on rules, technique, etiquette and strategy.

## **5. FACTORS INFLUENCING SHOT SELECTION**

### **1. Free Guard Zone (FGZ) Rule**

The Free Guard Zone Rule influences shot selection relative to the first four stones of an end and impacts strategy decisions throughout the course of a game. The FGZ Rule provides substantial opportunities for offense including comebacks in the middle and late ends of a game with or without last rock.

### **2. Score**

The score in relation to the end you are playing will greatly influence shot election decisions.

### **3. Last Rock**

Last rock advantage plays a key role in shot selection decisions. Having last rock advantage may result in a more offensive approach. Not having last rock may dictate a defensive approach.

### **4. Ability**

The skills of opponents and teammates required to successfully play both offense and defense are critical to planning strategy and making appropriate shot selection. Knowing the position by position strengths and weaknesses of the team and the opposition will have a great impact on the game strategy. The strategy you design for your team and the shot selections you make during a game should be based on the abilities of the individual players and the team as a unit.

### **5. Ice**

Ice conditions will play a key factor in determining the strategy a team is able to apply. Fast, swingy ice will produce optimum playing conditions. Straight ice conditions will restrict the aggressive come around approach and may dictate a raise style game plan. It is important to note that, of these factors, last rock advantage and the relative skills of both the team and the opposing team are the main factors that influence shot selections for the developing curler.