



Courtesy On & Off the Ice

The spirit of the roaring game demands good sportsmanship, common courtesies, and honorable conduct. While not strictly in the rule books, curling courtesy goes a long way towards an enjoyable day of curling. By following these generally accepted courtesies you will be welcomed and accepted as a curler at clubs all over the world.

General:

Be honest. There are rarely referees or umpires in curling, so the game depends on players to police themselves and one another, especially during league play. If perchance you accidentally burn a stone, it is expected that you will be the first to announce it.

Be a good sport. Congratulate players, both teammates and opponents, when they make a good shot. By the same standard, do not embarrass a player who has missed a shot. Cheering a missed shot is considered in poor taste and poor sportsmanship. Also do not make light of any bad fortune that befalls your opponent.

Keep the game moving. A standard eight end game takes 2 full hours to play, so it's a courtesy to your team, your opponents, and anybody playing after you to be on time, prompt and mindful of the clock. If you start late or play slowly, do not assume that you will be able to play a complete, 8-end game. If you notice that you are a full end or two behind all the other sheets, pick up the pace. There are more hints below.

Before the game:

If you can't curl, please find your own spare. That's your job, not the skip's. Check the spares list for your league and give them as much notice as possible.

Arrive in plenty of time to change shoes and/or clothes. Be ready to hit the ice at the scheduled time. Seven other people are depending on you. If you perchance are going to be just a bit late, please call the club and let the rest of your fellow curlers know.

Clean shoes are a must. Ideally curling shoes, or soft soled shoes dedicated to curling. Try not to wear your street shoes on the ice as you may accidentally track in mud, sand, or salt, giving the icemakers ulcers.

The game traditionally starts with a coin toss for hammer, a handshake, and wishes for "Good Curling".

During the game:

If your team leads off on any particular end, the lead should gather his or her rock and get in the hack, clean the stone, and begin the pre-shot routine. Be ready to deliver the stone as soon as the skip asks for it. The remainder of the curlers will wrestle the rocks to their proper position along the sides. This keeps the game moving quickly.

When your turn comes to sweep, be in front of the hack, leaving the thrower a clear view of the skip, ready to go. If you can't be in position, tell your teammates to proceed with the shot without you.

Sweepers, not on the team delivering the stone, stand on the sides of the sheet, past the hog line. This positioning allows the curler delivering the stone an unobstructed view of the skip and the house and allows for easier and quicker communications.

If you are the next curler, put on your slider or remove your gripper and have your stone cleaned and in front of the hack while your opponent's shot is in motion. It's OK to watch your opponent's shot, but not so long that you can't be ready for your own.

You should never disturb a curler in the hack or during delivery. Until their thrown stone comes to rest, the sheet is theirs and you should not interrupt their view. Crossing behind them, preparing to throw your own stone is perfectly acceptable and expected.

Keep the ice clean! If you do discover something improper on the ice, such as mud, sand, sweater fuzz, pocket lint, broom bristles, etc., please remove it from the ice and deposit it in a trash can.

Take care not to walk down the middle of the sheet after your team's shot. You should walk on the sides to minimize wearing down the pebble, but more importantly to provide a clear view for the next curler to deliver the stone. They cannot determine what shot the skip calls for, nor can they deliver a stone if you are strolling down the middle of the sheet.

Let the vice-skips do his/her job (keep score). When the final stone of an end comes to rest in the house, leads and seconds should remain well outside the house until the vice-skips have measured (if necessary), determined the score, and agreed to move stones.

Let the skip do his/her job (call the game). Although every successful team depends on the input and expertise of each team member (curling is a team sport in every respect) the skip needs the support and respect of his/her teammates. Skips have the responsibility of determining strategy, calling shots and working with sweepers to make the most out of every shot of the game. So while discussion, communication and clarification are encouraged, be willing and able to defer to your skip's decisions even if you don't understand or agree with them.

Skips stand behind the hack, quiet and motionless, brooms horizontal or on the ground until their opponent has delivered the stone.

If you accidentally displace a stationary stone, please announce it immediately. It's the privilege of the opposing skip to replace the stone to their satisfaction.

Your enthusiasm and paying attention to your own game, and not the game on the adjoining sheet, has a direct bearing on the success of your team.

Do we really need to tell you not to answer the blankety blank cuss cuss dash dash cell phone while you are out on the ice? I thought not.

Speed of Play & Techniques:

If a rock appears to be heavy, do not shake your broom over it, even in jest. You never know what might fall off the broom and deflect your perfectly aimed stone.

Sweepers should follow the stone down to the house, ready to sweep at a moment's notice. If you hear the skip yelling "No, No, Never", be aware that the next thing you're likely to hear from that very same skip is "YES, Hurry, Hard!".

As another courtesy to keep the game moving, it is typically the lead's job to place the skip's rock in front of the hack when it is time for the skip to shoot.

Skips can do their part to keep the game moving by minimizing the delay while deciding upon a shot. Certainly take the time you need, but lengthy conferences should be avoided.

After the game:

The game end with handshakes all around and sincere congratulations to the winners
Return any loaner brooms and tidy up the rocks

It is expected that the winners will buy (or offer to buy) their counterparts the beverage of their choice after the game. Both rinks enjoy each others company and some lively conversation about your favorite topic(s) around the tables. The losing curlers invariably offer to buy the second round.