

Curling Etiquette Guide for New Curlers

**Vancouver Curling Club &
Marpole Curling Club**

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INTRODUCTION

The following etiquette guide is designed to help new curlers understand some more subtle aspects of curling etiquette and game play. Knowing them and applying them will help lead to a friendlier, faster, higher-quality game and a better experience for everyone.

While this guide represents a compilation of common points and current “best practices”, individual points of etiquette may vary from club to club and from league to league, so if in doubt, always ask senior club/league members for clarification on what is normal practice for the environment you are in.

PLAYER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Lead • Usually throws 1st & 2nd rocks • Sweep for all other players • Sweep rocks for weight, based on their judgment and for line/curl as directed by the skip • Communicates weight and where the rock will stop to the skip • Times rocks and communicates to skip (if required) • Puts teammates’ rocks in hack • Ensures the area around the hack is free from debris	Second • Usually throws 3rd & 4th rocks • Sweep for all other players • Sweep rocks for weight, based on their judgment and for line/curl as directed by the skip • Communicates weight and where the rock will stop to the skip • Times rocks and communicates to skip (if required) • Puts teammates’ rocks in hack • Ensures the area around the hack is free from debris
Third (Vice) • Usually throws 5th & 6th rocks • Sweeps for Lead and Second • Holds the broom and calls line for Skip shots • Sweep rocks for weight, based on their judgment and for line/curl as directed by the skip • Communicates weight and where the rock will stop to the skip • Times rocks and communicates to skip (if required) • Participates in coin toss for hammer/ stone colour • Determines the score at the end of each end with the opposing Third. Measure the rocks if in doubt • Updates the scoreboard • Records score for the league standings	Skip • Usually throws 7th & 8th rocks • Determines strategy and shots to be played • Communicates shots to team • Holds broom for players to indicate line • Calls line for sweepers • Final decision on calls

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GAME-PLAY ETIQUETTE

Before the Game

- Take time to learn the Curling Canada rules and any club or league-specific rules.
- Notify your team immediately if you cannot make the game. If possible, arrange for a spare to take your place and provide your team with the spare's contact information. Many leagues have a "spares" list that can be used to find a spare.
- Generally, spares will play Lead (or Lead and Second if there are two spares); however, you should familiarize yourself with your league's rules around the use of spares.
- If you know in advance that your team must forfeit, let your scheduled opponents and/or the league coordinator know ASAP, so the other team doesn't needlessly come to the rink.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time and be ready for the first rock to be thrown at the start time of league play.
- Prior to the scheduled start time:
 - Greet your opponents individually and wish them "good curling."
 - Thirds should complete the coin toss to determine hammer/rock colour.
 - Teams should get in position to throw the first rock of the game.
- As per Curling Canada rules, delaying the start of the game can result in point penalties for the offending team.

During the Game

- Rocks are usually thrown in numerical order. The exception to this is if a rock is unpredictable, in which case it should be played in the order as far away from the skip and third stones as possible.
- When opponents are preparing to throw and throwing:
 - Stand to the sides of the sheet, generally on the opposite side of the ice that the rock is being delivered.
 - Stand in a single file between the hog lines.
 - Keep brooms vertical while standing to prevent brooms from interfering with play or tripping sweepers.
 - Remain still until the rock leaves the thrower's hand. You should be standing still and quiet while your opponent is in the hack and delivering their rock.
 - Players should not cross the sheet in front of a moving stone or when a player is in the hack to throw.
- Skips and thirds are the only players allowed on the backboards at the scoring end. All other players should be at the sides of the sheet between the hog lines.
- While opponents prepare to deliver (or are delivering) their rock, skips/thirds
 - Must remain quiet and still, and
 - Cannot hold their broomheads on the ice or position them in a way that is distracting to the throwing team.
- When walking up and down the sheet, walk in a single file down the edge of the sheet. Do not walk down the middle of the sheet. Do not walk side by side, as this can hamper the line of sight from the hack, slow down throwing, and interfere with the other team's ability to sweep.

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- At the Delivering End, only the player next to deliver, should be behind the thrower. They may take a stationary position to the side of the sheet behind the hacks at the delivery end. The player shall remain silent and motionless while the other team prepares and delivers their rock.
- After sweeping, players should move away from the centre of the ice and to the sides so the other team can have a clear view of their skip's call and instructions.
- After all rocks have been thrown, only the thirds should be in the rings determining the scoring. All other players should remain outside the rings until the thirds have agreed upon the score.
- Sweepers waiting for a teammate to throw their rock should check and clean the ice in the sliding area and remove any debris.
- Sweeping should not leave any debris on the ice, especially not in front of a moving stone. The final sweeping motion should finish outside of the path of the rock. Also, players should not whack their brooms on the ice, especially in the path of moving rocks.
- Players should not be looking at their phones or electronic devices while playing the game or while on the ice surface. If it is necessary for a player to take a call, they should explain the situation to the other players and leave the ice area to address the situation. A reminder that phones should be in a zipped pocket while on the ice.

Speed of Play

- It is important that both teams maintain a good speed of play during the game to maximize the number of ends that can be played in the time period.
- A good speed of play is 12-16 minutes per end for regular leagues and 16-20 minutes per end for novice leagues.
- Ways to increase the speed of play:
 - During gameplay, the stones do not need to be put away in order.
 - The lead of the team throwing first will get their #1 rock, move to the hack and prepare to throw while the other players push the rocks to the back and the skips get in position.
 - Once the opposing thrower has released their rock, the next thrower should start to move into the hack. Aim to clean your rock before your skip gives the call.
 - Be ready to sweep when it is your team's turn to deliver a rock.
 - Sweepers can set up a teammate's stone in the hack (especially for skip stones) while their teammate gets ready to throw.
 - Skips should move from the backboard to the back line as the rock comes into the house (to prepare for sweeping) and move into the house to call their shot as soon as the opposition's rock has stopped.
 - Skips can quicken decision-making by thinking of their next shot ahead of time while the opponents are throwing their rocks.
 - While skips and thirds are discussing the skip shots, leads and seconds should be setting up the rock in the hack for the skip.
 - Strategy discussions should be kept to a minimum, unless asked by the skip, and usually only in critical situations late in the game (or end). Discuss shot selection after the game.
 - Other players should clear the rocks outside the rings and return them to the backboard while the thirds determine the final score for the end.

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- When nearing the end of your scheduled ice time, before starting a new end, skips should confer and look at the speed of play so far and the remaining time to determine if an extra end can be completed in time. An end is considered complete when the last stone comes to rest. Some clubs will also have a buzzer or bell that will ring near the end of a scheduled draw to remind players.

At the End of the Game

- Shake hands with your opponents and congratulate them on a “good game”.
- Return rocks to their original starting positions. Rocks should be left sequentially to be ready for the next game.
- Put away all club equipment (stabilizers, sliders, brushes, grippers, etc.) in the designated areas.
- Check the area around the sheet to ensure all items are removed and the area is clear for the next game.
- Put hack covers (bits of carpet) on the hacks if the ice tech is about to pebble before the next game (saves time for ice techs).
- Record scores on the league scoresheet.

Post Game / In the Lounge

- Teams are strongly encouraged to socialize with their opponents and other teams after the game.
- Teams will typically sit with the team they played against.
- Some clubs/leagues may have etiquette specific to their club/league (e.g. buying drinks for the other team).

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GENERAL ETIQUETTE

Safety

- Do not run on the ice.
- Always wear grippers on your shoes (except when sliding).
- Do not walk backward on the ice, especially when sweeping or moving around the house.
- Make sure you are always looking in the direction you are moving while you are sweeping.
- Pay attention to step-on slider pads and stabilizers when not in use. Do not leave them lying around on the ice or throw them down the ice. When not in use, they should be placed safely on the backboards.
- Leave your grippers, gloves, etc. on the backboards and off the ice when not in use.
- Keep the backboard areas free of tripping hazards (e.g. bags, stabilizers, sliders, gloves).
- Stop fast-moving rocks from hitting the hacks, the backboards, neighbouring sheets and other people
- In case of a player falling and remaining prone on the ice, all neighbouring sheets should stop play until the person who has fallen is up or taken off the ice.
- If a person has fallen on the ice and is not mobile, first aid should be summoned.

Fair Play / Spirit of the Game

- Players should complement good shots made by either team.
- Players should refrain from making negative comments about poor shots made by either team.
- Players who do not make the intended shot but instead have a fortunate outcome should not celebrate but apologize/be humble.
- Players should not cheer a shot made by the other team that results in a favorable situation for your team.
- Any celebration of a good shot by your team should be done respectfully and not in an over-the-top way.

Facility Equipment and Maintenance

- Ensure you have clean footwear that won't damage the ice (e.g. dedicated indoor gym shoes).
- Do not sit, kneel or rest a body part on the ice. This will melt divots into the ice and affect the playing surface.
- Rocks should not be lifted off the ice (except in the process of throwing your rock). Dropping rocks on the ice can severely damage the ice and the rock.
- Check equipment regularly to make sure it is safe, working correctly and not in a state which could damage the ice or add debris.
- Keep the ice free of debris
 - Always use a "boot boy" to clean shoes when entering the club and again before you go on the ice.
 - Check/clean the shoe's slider when the gripper comes off.
 - Check/clean the broom head after sweeping. Use a glove or brush to clean your broom.

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- Clean the bottom of the rock before throwing.
- Don't use your bare hands to clean your broom head or the bottom of the rock, as it can leave oil.
- When you see debris, pick it up (and discard it in the trash when you can).
- Do not wear clothing or items likely to result in debris falling on the ice. Keep pockets empty or zipped up. No glitter or sequins in costumes.
- If a rock "picks", check and clean the ice where the pick occurred. Also, check the bottom of the rock once it is off the sheet and out of play.
- Keep cell phones in a zipped pocket while on the ice.
- Do not put food or drink on the ice. If you spill anything on the backboards, clean it up immediately.
- Ensure ice technicians have completed all their tasks before starting any activities on your sheet. Keep clear and let them do their work. Ice is ready once the ice techs have pebbled, nipped and swept up the snow.
- Ice technicians need at least 15 minutes to prepare the ice and let it 'settle' for the next game.
- Do not go past your league's end time, even if there are no games scheduled after. The ice may be rented for practice or scheduled for maintenance. You usually can tell if your sheet is ready if the ice techs have reset the scoreboard.
- If the score differential for the game is 8 or greater, the leading team should avoid posting scores on the scoreboard until the differential falls below 8 (at which point the scoreboard can be updated).
- Players should avoid coaching other players unless they know the advice would be welcomed.
- Try to share borrowed equipment (e.g. Step-on sliders and club stabilizers) to leave more available for others.

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