



Instructor's Corner

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Curling Traditions and Etiquette

It is a fine thing to observe the time-honored traditions of curling being applied in the true spirit of the game. Curlers play to win, but never to humble their opponents. A true curler would prefer to lose, rather than win unfairly. New curlers, here's an introduction to our great sport. Returning curlers, a refresher never hurts!

Be on time. Get to the club in time to change and warm up before the game. If you know you'll be unavoidably late, inform your team in advance

Get a sub. On occasions when you're not able to curl, it's your responsibility to get a substitute of similar ability and experience. There are sub rules for some leagues, if you're new, call your skip for advice and let them know who's subbing for you. No shows are no-no's.

Keep the ice clean. Sand, grit, dust, and dirt are enemies of the ice and of good curling shots. Keep your curling shoes clean and change into them in the locker room or viewing area. Ideally, the shoes you wear should only be used for curling. Same goes for pants. And don't forget your broom. Start each season with a new brush head, brush it off over the garbage can regularly during the game, and clean it when it gets dirty and replace it when the fabric is worn.

Practice on a different sheet. If you arrive early and want to throw a few stones to practice or warm up, by all means do so. If possible, use a sheet that's not going to be played on, and don't use the sheet that you'll be playing on.

Start with a handshake. At the beginning of a game, greet all members of the opposing team with a handshake, introduce yourself, and wish them good curling.

Be ready. Keep the game moving: delays detract from the sport. Clean your rock and take your position behind the hack as soon as your opponent has delivered his/her stone. Don't wait for it to come to rest, and don't wait until your skip calls your shot.

Be courteous. Don't distract your opponents. Keep your distance, be silent and motionless. Don't walk across the ice once a player is in the hack. Don't gather around the back of the house when an opponent is throwing. Sweepers should stay on the sidelines between the hoglines when not sweeping, including when walking back from sweeping a shot. If you're leaving the ice shed while others are playing, don't walk behind players in the hack or behind the person in the house when a shot is about to be thrown. Wait until the rock has been delivered.

Call your own fouls. Read the rules. Curling is a self-officiated game. If you inadvertently violate a rule, declare it, even in mid sweep!

Compliment a good shot. One of the nicest curling traditions is that players and spectators compliment a good shot by either side and don't remark on a poor shot or a competitor's misfortune. New curlers: follow the lead of your more experienced team mates.

Be safe. Follow your rocks: continue down the sheet and catch any rocks that are headed out of bounds into neighboring sheets, and fence rocks that collide with side boards to prevent them from bouncing back into the field of play. Be careful: if you are uneasy stepping around rocks in front of the house to sweep your stone, please pull up and your teammates take over. Safety first.

Wait for the score. If your opponent has last rock, leads and seconds should wait above the far hogline (don't congregate on the boards behind the vice skips) until the last rock comes to a rest. When it does, leads go directly to the boards and get ready to throw. Seconds wait outside the house until the score has been agreed on by both vice skips and they begin to move rocks in the house. Only then should you move a rock. Vice skips are the only players in the house while the score for the end is being decided.

Finish with a handshake. When the game is over, offer each of the players a hearty handshake. During league play, if your team lost, you clean the ice. Then move to the appropriately numbered table in the warm room, where the winning curlers traditionally offer their counterparts some refreshment. In turn, you should reciprocate when a second round is desired.

Have questions? Follow the link on the title of this article for more about the Spirit of Curling, and ask a member of the club. We'll be glad to help.

*Good curling! Have a question or suggestion for Instructor's Corner?
Send an email to curlingschool@uticacurlingclub.org*