



Instructor's Corner

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Scoring three

Good things come in threes, not the least of which is a score of three in curling. The trouble is, your opponents are likely to vigorously object to your trying to do so. When you are down 2 or 3 in the last end, scoring three is highly desirable or perhaps imperative. So how do you set up a score of three?

First of all, you will realistically need to have last rock advantage to have a reasonable chance of scoring three. This is what we will focus on in this article. Second, you will need a little, but not much, help from your opponents in the way of misses or half-shots to generate your three. Finally, you have to make all your shots. This is a tall order, for sure, but quite possible. The following discussion assumes the 4-rock free guard zone rule. Beginning October 2018, the 5-rock free guard zone will go in effect, and setting up your three with last rock will become significantly easier.

Basic strategy

You will need two corner guards to set up a possible three-spot. If your opponent is up 3 without hammer in the last end, they are probably throwing through. The strategy doesn't change much if your opponents play in the rings, except you will have the additional opportunity to play a soft weight hit and roll behind one or the other corner instead of drawing around them. If your opponents try to draw around your corner guards, you can draw in front of them (if they are behind tee line), tap them back (if above tee-line), draw behind them (if they are very high in the rings), or run in your corner guard. Usually, having opponents stones in the house will make your job easier by providing catchers, backers, or things to hit and roll from.

The basic starting position is Figure 1, after your opponents have thrown through twice and you have set up your two corner guards. (You are red.) Your opponents should begin peeling your corner guards when seconds come up. (If not, then you can proceed to come around your corners right away to set up a multiple score without interference.) When your opponents peel one of your corner guards you will replace it. Be patient! When your opponents miss your corner guard, or nose hit it, this is the miss or half-shot you need to set up a potential score of three. The most common miss is a nose hit on your corner guard. In any case, as soon as you get the necessary miss or half-shot, you will come around one of the corner guards (Figure 2). Your opponents should peel the guard over shot rock (best), when you will then go around the other corner (Figure 3). At this point, your opponents should hit your open stone (best, Figure 4). If instead your opponents peel your corner guard, you will replace it and remain lying two until skip rocks. (You have last stone, so this defensive strategy will leave you drawing for three with your last rock. If the opponents continue to peel your corner guard until your first skip stone, then you will draw into the house and sit three spread with your first skip rock, forcing a three unless your opponents can throw a double or make an absolutely perfect nose freeze.) Once you reach

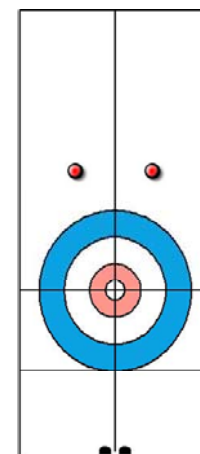


Figure 1

the position of Figure 4 you will now draw around your corner guard again to lie two potential counters (Figure 5). Once you reach this position, you should have a good chance to score three. If the opponents peel your corner guard, you will replace it. If they draw in another rock you will remove it or look for a double. Even if your opponents make all their shots after you reach the position of Figure 5, with your last shot, you should have a draw, open hit and stick, or double for three. If your opponents miss (draw not for shot or miss a hit) or throw a half-shot (e.g. hit and roll out) at any time, you will have a simple draw or hit-and-stick for three with your last shot.

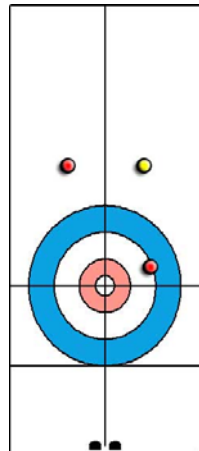


Figure 2

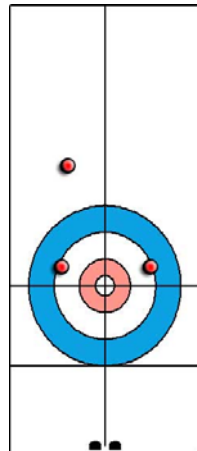


Figure 3

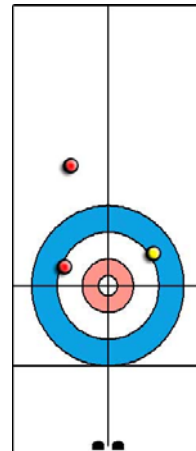


Figure 4

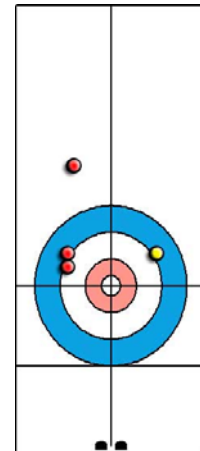


Figure 5

If you want to know more about these topics and more, check out the Instructor's Corner archive on the [Instruction Page](#) at the Utica Curling Club web site.

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Good curling! Have a question or suggestion for Instructor's Corner?

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