

For local information  
about the ice sport of curling,  
please contact:

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*Team USA skips Debbie McCormick & John Shuster*

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*2009 World Senior Silver Medalists*



# an international ice sport



Curling is an ice sport of fitness and finesse enjoyed by thousands of Americans and over 1.5 million people in 35 nations. Men, women, and youth curl for winter recreation and competitive satisfaction that can last a lifetime.

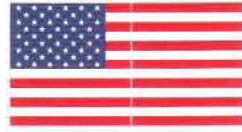
Curling was a full-medal sport at the 1924 Olympic Winter Games in Chamonix, France, but would not be again until the 1998 Olympic Winter Games at Nagano, Japan. The Pete Fenson rink made U.S. history by winning the nation's first Olympic medal in curling when they defeated Great Britain for the bronze at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Torino, Italy.

Curlers compete annually in events all over the world and also play host to these events to renew friendships. Local curling clubs and their members are the heart of curling. Each club sets up weekly leagues throughout the season, typically October through March. Many curlers also look forward to weekend tournaments—or *bonspiels*—where they often form lasting friendships with curlers from around their region. Camaraderie is also enjoyed off the ice, where curlers absorb the warmth of the clubroom, socializing and recounting their game. The sport is easily affordable and attracts Americans of varying economic backgrounds.

*The Spirit of Curling*—“Curlers play to win but never to humble their opponents. A true curler would rather lose than win unfairly...the spirit of the game demands good sportsmanship, kindly feeling, and honorable conduct.”

## History

It is generally agreed that curling's great tradition began in 16th century Scotland. The Scots added zest to their winter with a game originally



played outdoors on frozen lochs and marshes.

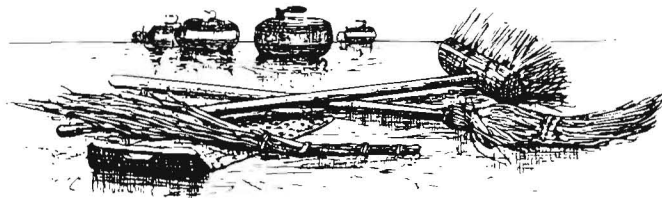
The principles of the game were similar to the modern game, although there were many differences in equipment.

Scottish farmers curled on the frozen marshes using “channel stones,” which were naturally smoothed by the water's action. Scottish immigrants brought the game with them to North America, first to Canada around 1759, then to the United States around 1832.

By 1855, curling clubs flourished in New York City, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Portage, Wis. Today, there are over 135 clubs in the U.S., which are located in over half of the states in the country. Curling is most popular in Canada, where it has become one of that country's top-rated television sports.

The modern game of curling is marked by a high degree of physical skill and mental toughness. Rocks, with the now-familiar round shape, were standardized at about 42 pounds. The consistency of the game was also advanced during the 20th century with refrigerated indoor ice, which helps ensure a fast, consistent, and predictable playing surface.

The World Curling Federation (WCF) governs international competition. The United States Curling Association (USCA), founded in 1958, is a member of the WCF and the U.S. Olympic Committee.



# curling is a team game

Each team has four players—a lead, a second, a third, and a skip (the strategist). All four players on each team shoot—or deliver—two rocks per end, alternating with the other team. Play begins with the leads, followed by the seconds, and the thirds (or vice-skips). The skip usually throws the last two rocks, and calls the team's shots from the opposite end of the ice while the others are shooting.

To deliver the stone, a player assumes a crouched position with one foot placed in a rubber foothold (the **hack**). One hand grips the rock handle, and the other hand holds the broom to provide balance, if needed. The player pushes off with the hack foot into an outstretched sliding position, with the other foot placed under the center of the chest and the rock out front along the line of delivery.

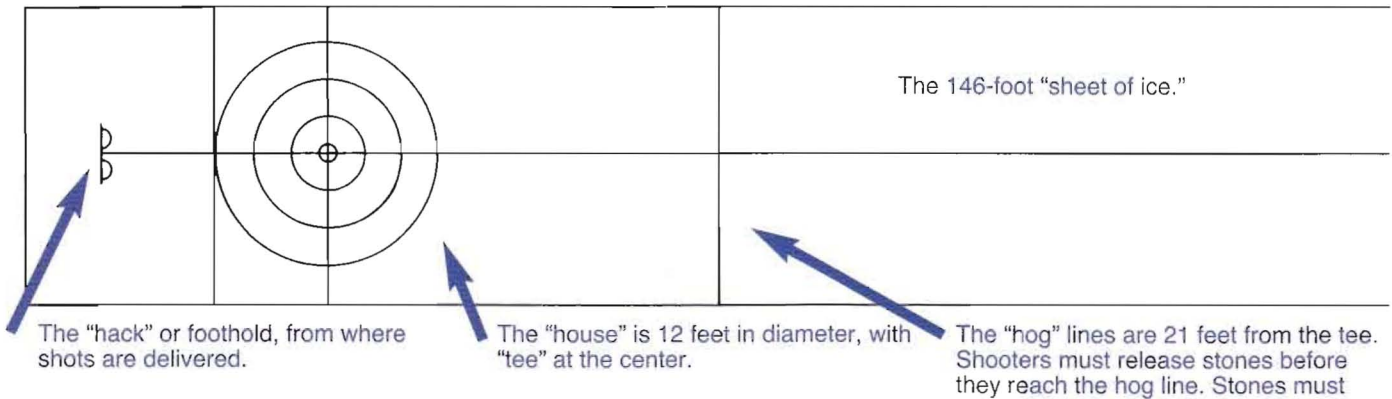
The delivery stick was introduced to allow curlers to deliver the rock without using a sliding delivery. Wheelchair curlers also utilize the delivery stick.

A turn of the handle during the release makes the rock curve—or **curl**—as it travels down the ice. The object of shooting is to get the rock to come to rest at the spot where the skip called for it (a **draw**), or to remove another stone (a **takeout**). Shooters must be accurate in three elements for a shot to be successful: they must deliver the rock toward the skip's target line (the **broom**), give the stone the proper velocity (**weight**), and impart the correct turn on the handle



so the rock curls in the intended direction.

It's the skip's job to "read the ice" to determine how much the rock will curl. The other two players are prepared to **sweep** the rock's path. The skip will call out if the rock needs to be kept "on-line." Sweepers use their brush heads to create friction, which warms the ice to help the rock travel straighter or farther. Sweepers play a key role on the team by judging the speed of the rock. Vigorous sweeping requires fitness—in a typical game, a curler covers almost two miles.

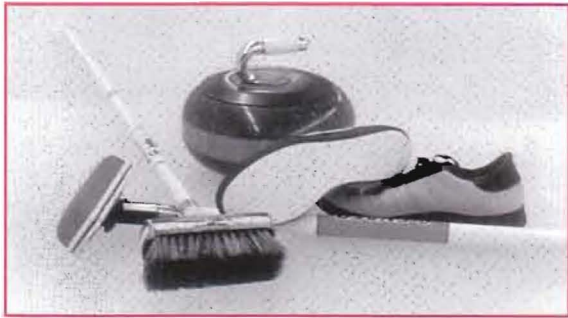


## Equipment

Curlers each have their own broom or brush to use for sweeping. They typically wear layered, loose-fitting clothing to allow flexibility and gloves to stay warm. Curling shoes are available, but not required. Any flat-soled, clean shoe that can grip the ice will do. A **slider** is typically worn on the sliding foot—it can be strapped on separately, or built into the shoe.



Curling rocks are made of special granite quarried in Scotland and Wales, which are purchased by the club for all curlers to use. Curling ice is noticeably different from skating ice. The ice is made as level as possible, then sprinkled with droplets of warm water (**pebble**) that freeze on contact. Pebbling creates small bumps on the ice surface that allow the running edge of the rock (about five inches in diameter) to easily slide—or glide—down the ice. The curling houses and boundary lines (see illustration) are embedded into the ice.



## Let's Play!

A league game is typically eight ends, lasting about two hours. Games that lead to World Championship and Olympic competition are 10 ends. One end is complete when all 16 rocks (eight rocks per team) have been delivered.

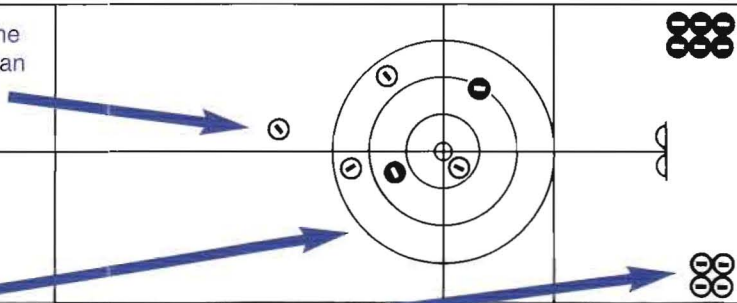
Determining the score is simple. Only one team can score per end. A rock is in the scoring area if it is in, or even touching, the **house** (the concentric circles). One point is scored for each rock closer to the middle of the house (the **tee**) than any of the opponent's. The team that scores last delivers the first rock in the next end, giving the opposing skip the last rock, also known as the **hammer**. See the illustration below for the layout of a sheet of ice. You can see the sheet is set up for play in both directions. Also see the scoring example in the bottom right house.

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### Photo credits:

- Debbie McCormick & John Shuster (cover, top), photo by Michael Burns Jr.
- Paul Pustovar rink (cover, bottom), photo by World Curling Federation
- Nina Spatola (inside), photo by World Curling Federation

Note the white rock in front of the house. It is not scoring, but it can serve as a "guard."



cross the far hog line or they will be removed from play.

White has scored one point this end. Only one white rock is closer to the tee than any black rocks.

These rocks ended up out of play and are stored here for use in the next "end," when they'll be delivered in the other direction.