Curling has a rich history with many traditions that continue to this day. Though the origins of curling are unclear, most people regard Scotland as curling’s birthplace. Today, curling is played around the world, largely thanks to its introduction into the Olympics in 1988.

Why should you curl?

CURLING FOR DUMMIES

Terminology

Blank End: An end where no points are scored

Bonspiel: A tournament in which curlers compete

Burning a rock: A rules infraction that happens when a player touches a stone as it’s traveling down the sheet.

Button: Very center of the target ring or house

Cashpiel: A tournament played for money

Delivery: Action of throwing the stone to the house

Eight-ender: A perfect end where everyone of the teams stones scores a point.

End: The way a curling game is divided. An end is like an inning in a baseball game. A curling game has either eight or ten ends.

Hammer: Last rock of the end

House: Also known as the rings, this is the name of the giant bull’s eye. It consists of a set of concentric circles, called the 12-foot, 8-foot, 4-foot, and the Button.

Hurry Hard: A directive given to the sweepers to begin sweeping.
What is this game of rocks and brooms all about?

Curling is a sport in which two teams of four players each slide *rocks* (also called *stones*) down a sheet of ice toward a target at the other end. Each team tries to get more of its stones closer to the center of the target than the other team.

- **Throwing rocks:** Each player on the team throws a stone in each end.
- **Curling rocks:** When you throw a rock down the ice, depending on its rotation -- which is applied intentionally -- it will curl, or bend, one way or another. How much (or little) a rock curls or bends, depends largely on the conditions of the playing surface.
- **Sweeping:** Sweeping makes a rock curl less and travel farther.
- **Keeping score:** Once all rocks have been thrown down the narrow sheet of ice, the score for that end is counted based on the final positions of the stones in the *house*. Only one team can score in an end. A team scores one point for every rock that it has closer to the center of the house than the other team.
- **Strategy:** Generally, the skip determines a rink's strategy. During the game, the skip stands at one end of the sheet and tells his or her other three players where they should place their shots. A team's strategy doesn't always go according to plan!

Members of a Curling Team

In curling, the team you play on is called a *rink*. The rink is made up of four players: the *lead*, the *second*, the *mate*, and the *skip*. Each player has specific duties:

- **Lead:** The lead throws the first rock of the end and then sweeps the rest. The lead must be very good at throwing guards and a strong sweeper.
- **Second:** The second throws and should be strong at playing takeouts. The second sweeps for the lead and then again for the mate and skip. The second and the lead need to be in sync when sweeping together.
- **Mate:** The mate, who throws the third rock of the end, must be good at all shots, but especially draws. It is the mate’s job to set up the shots that will be thrown by the skip, and to help the skip discuss the strategy of the final stone of the end. The mate also posts the score at the conclusion of the end.
- **Skip:** The skip is the captain of the team and decides the strategy. It’s the skip’s job to tell the other players where to throw their shots and when to sweep. The skip also delivers the last shot of the end. The skip must be good at all types of shots.