

Curling – Making it “Fun” On and Off the Ice !

The “Good Old Days” of curling, drinking and socializing all evening may no longer be enough to keep curlers happy, or the club financially solvent. Curlers are looking for more variety, excitement and the opportunity to do different things.

All curling leagues should have three basic objectives for all participants:

- a) To have fun
- b) To participate in a competition
- c) To develop curling skills

While all three objectives are important, that is not to say the emphasis on each has to be the same. The emphasis may also change over the course of the season or for a particular game. For instance a league may start the season emphasizing fun and skill development and move to being more competitive by the end of the season. Likewise, there may be games that are designated ‘fun’ games such as Christmas, or ‘competitive’ games such as event finals.

It is important that ALL participants in a league understand the objectives of the league.

A simple team win/loss/tie scoring system is usually sufficient for most competitive leagues where players have decided to play together. More variations are available to leagues where teams are ‘drawn from a hat’ and only play together for a few games. One-time events, such as bonspiels, jitneys and “bring-a-friend” events are only limited by your imagination!

The following are just a few ideas that can be used to ‘spice-up’ the game.

On the Ice

- **Variations in the team**
 - Include a non-curler
 - Include both adult and junior curlers
 - Use more than four players
 - Rotate players through each position, either end-to-end or game-to-game
 - Rotate skips through the teams, keeping the other players together

- **Variations in the play**
 - No take-outs
 - In-turns only or Out-turns only
 - Deliver using the “stick”
 - Short game – throw to the near house, no take-outs allowed
 - Skins competition – score two or steal one to win the end.
 - Singles or Scotch Doubles competition
 - “Hot Shots” competition: guard, draw, raise, split, freeze, hit & roll, take-out and peel.

- **Variations for scoring an end**
 - Point for each rock in the free-guard zone
 - Point for each rock in front/behind the tee line
 - Point for each rock in left/right of the center line
 - Point for each rock on the four/eight/twelve foot

- **Variations to scoring a win/loss**
 - Track points for each player which carry over with each team change.
 - Award points for attending or getting a spare for a game
 - Award points for each end on a graduating scale, the later ends being worth more points
 - Award points for the score, the ends and the win/loss
 - Award points for the score & ends of the first six ends, add ends seven and eight to decide the win

Off the Ice - Activities for the lounge

- Pot-Luck dinner before or after the game
- Games night (euchre, bridge, cribbage, poker, scrabble, trivia, etc.)
- Wine tasting or scotch nosing (remember to arrange “designated drivers”)
- Movie Night
- Dance night
- Karaoke, sing-a-long or talent contest
- Relay race or Curlolympics, teams compete in a series of off-ice challenges
- Golf putting, shuffle board or darts contest
- Hockey or baseball draft
- Auction or penny sale
- Displays by sponsors, local craftspeople or charitable organizations