

United States Curling Association

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CURLING

"power play" sweeping



sweeping



SWEEPING IS WHAT MAKES CURLING A TEAM SPORT

Curling ice is swept in front of a moving rock. This allows the rock to glide more easily down the ice. Strong, effective sweeping can significantly affect the distance a rock travels on a draw shot. Good sweeping can make a stone travel an extra ten feet or more. Sweeping can also keep a take-out traveling on a straighter path. Sweeping is what makes curling a team sport, and is often the difference between winning and losing.

Sweeping Rules

- Sweepers must keep clear of the rock at all times. A sweeper who touches a rock with the broom has "burned" the rock, and the sweeper must remove it from play.
- A team may sweep its rocks at any time.
- Behind the tee line, any one player from the playing team may sweep a rock.
- The opposing skip or acting skip may also sweep an opponent's rock behind the tee line.
- The sweeping motion is in a side-to-side direction (it need not cover the entire width of the stone), deposits no debris in front of a moving stone, and finishes to either side of the stone.

effectiveness

Sweeping effectiveness is a function of three elements: coverage, speed, and pressure.

BODY POSITION & COVERAGE

Sweepers should position themselves behind the back line and to the outside of the sheet before the shooter begins the delivery; ideally, one sweeper is on one side and one is on the other. This position promotes pre-shot communications with the shooter and minimizes contact between sweepers. It also puts sweepers in the position to sweep immediately, if necessary. Efficient sweepers pay attention to the rock's running path. Only a portion of the rock—the five-inch running edge—is actually in contact

with the ice. Any excessive movement of the broom outside of the rock's path is wasted energy. Visualize which area of the ice the rock will travel, then make sure your sweeping motion covers that area. A brush head that swivels into a position perpendicular to the rock is most effective.

SPEED AND PRESSURE

Broom speed and pressure create friction and warm the ice, thereby, affecting the ice surface. This change in ice condition impacts both the speed and the curl of a stone. Focus on putting as much pressure as possible on the broom and keep your body as erect as possible with all of our upper body weight being applied down the shaft of the broom and onto the ice. Combining this pressure with maximum side-to-side sweeping velocity will produce maximum friction and positive results.

judgment

Effectiveness is a crucial component of sweeping, but it is even more important to be able to judge when to sweep. After all, sweeping a draw shot right through the house does not make a person a capable sweeper. Those who know when to sweep are valuable members of a team. The skip is typically the person who calls for sweeping on takeouts since they are in the best position to read the line of the shot (wide or narrow) and the amount of curl that is taking place. Shooters may also assist in calling for sweeping for the line.

Sweepers are usually in the best position to judge the speed or weight of a draw and to know if a shot is too light and should, therefore, be swept. The shooter should communicate their "feel" of the shot upon release. As a rock nears the house, the skip's position as a judge of weight improves and they also become able to

call for sweeping on draw shots. Sweepers must be assertive and should not wait for sweeping instructions on draw shots.

Judge the weight (speed) of the rock as early as possible, in some cases before it is released. Study all shots—your team's and your opponent's—so you'll get a better "feel" for the ice.

A sweeper must observe the distance the rock needs to travel, the speed of the rock, and—most important—the rate at which the rock is slowing down. Sweepers have the best perspective on the weight of the stone. It is their responsibility to judge weight and sweep draws to the spot the skip called for.

TIMING ROCKS

An important aid in developing weight control is using a stopwatch during the game to time shots. A common method of timing rocks is to start the stopwatch at the moment the rock crosses the near hog-line and let it run until the rock comes to rest at the far tee-line. The longer it takes for the rock to reach its destination, the keener the ice is and less weight is needed. On the other hand, the less time it takes for the shot to get there, the heavier the ice, and the rock will have to be thrown harder. Timing shots gives all team members a shared idea of draw weight. Typical times range from 22 to 24 seconds.

An even better method for timing shots—called interval timing—gives feedback for a shot in progress. It measures the time from the rock passing over the near back-line and the near hog-line. The shorter the time interval, the faster the rock is traveling, and sweeping may not be required. Conversely, the longer the time interval, the slower the rock is traveling, and sweeping may be required. Typical times range from 3.3 to 3.6 seconds.

Timing take-outs during practice, typically from hog-line to hog-line, can also be beneficial. If all team members are able to throw similar take-out weights, a skip's job is much easier.

communication

Sweepers and the skip should maintain communication on every shot. Use a few routine words to cover the types of sweep calls (hurry, whoa, yes, no, line, room, light, heavy, etc.). Know what shot is called and where the broom is placed. Skips are usually very good at letting sweepers know if the rock needs to be swept for line. Likewise, sweepers should call out the weight of the shot upon release and as it progresses down the ice.

SWEEPING TIPS

- Look up when sweeping. Be aware of where you are and what the situation is at all times.
- Sweeping without a slider is safer and can be more effective since it promotes better balance and allows the sweeper to apply more pressure.
- Sweep constantly to keep the ice clean but only apply pressure when necessary to make the shot. Stop sweeping completely when the skip calls you off. Also clean the line of delivery before every shot, especially from the hack to just beyond the near hog line.
- Stay with the rock until it comes to a complete stop.
- Be prepared for alternate shot calls from the skip.



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