

CURLING

delivery "rock play"



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delivery



KEEPING YOUR EYE ON THE BROOM

Much of the enjoyment of curling comes from delivering a rock consistently well. Once good fundamentals are achieved, any curler will be able to enjoy club-level social games or top-level competitive play. The

degree of competition may change, but the fundamentals remain the same.

A sound curling delivery requires accomplishment in four technical areas: Alignment, Timing, Balance, and Release. The delivery must be straight, the movements properly coordinated, the body in balance, and the release controlled and consistent. As each skill improves, so does accuracy. In addition to the technical aspects, a sound curling delivery requires a delicate "feel" for weight and sound mental skills.



balance

Your sliding foot must be flat to the ice and centered under the chest to achieve a balanced slide. If possible, angle your sliding foot out to increase the sliding area and provide surer balance. The broom can provide momentary support, but should not be relied on for maintaining balance. A balanced delivery means you won't be leaning on the rock and will be able to impart a positive turn upon release.

Balance Tips

Some common symptoms of a balance problem are: putting a hand down immediately after releasing the rock, rising up on the sliding toe, unsteadiness during the slide, leaning heavily on the broom, or a circular drift toward the end of the slide. Typically, the sliding foot either does not come far enough under your chest, or it ends up more under the waist or hips than under

the chest. If your body weight is not centered over your sliding foot, other makeshift adjustments may have to be developed to steady your delivery: you may rely on the rock, the broom, or your trailing leg for balance. Such habits can be perfected, but do not produce a position as stable as the one created by centering weight over your sliding foot.

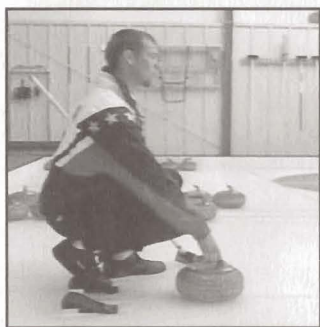


alignment

Alignment refers to how you set up in the hack. A successful rock will travel down a line of delivery that reaches from the middle of the rock at the delivering end all the way to the skip's broom at the far end. The simplest cause of missed shots is failure to set up properly in the hack.



● Grip your broom a foot or two from the brush head—place the ball of your foot at the back of the hack, and aim it at the broom.



● Square your body's shoulders and hips to the line of delivery.



● Crouch down, staying "square to the broom." Keep your back straight, but relaxed.



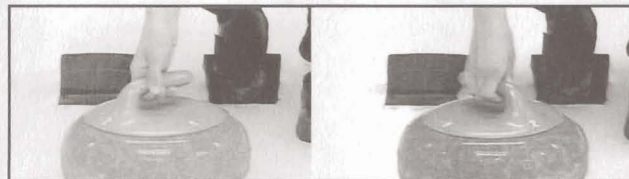
● Place your sliding foot flat. The heel of your sliding foot should be as far forward as the toe of your foot in the hack. Body weight is about evenly distributed on both feet.

● Place the broom comfortably under your arm and against your back, with the brush head (brush up) resting on the ice slightly ahead of the sliding foot.



● Place the rock slightly ahead of the sliding foot on the center line, perhaps slightly to the shooter's side.

● Grip the rock by placing the middle pads of your fingers under the handle. Your knuckles will be on one side of the handle and your thumb on the other side, touching your index finger. Be sure you are gripping the handle directly above the middle of the stone. Keep your palm off the handle and your wrist high.



● Turn the rock in toward your body for in-turns, and out away from your body for out-turns. The position should be at 10:00 or 2:00 depending on the turn.

Alignment Tips

Notice that your sliding foot does not start along the line of delivery in the hack position. Some curlers try to force the foot over quickly when coming out of the hack. What they do not realize is that they actually cause a drift problem by trying to correct a situation that would naturally correct itself. The best way for the sliding foot and body to end up along the line of delivery is to simply slide at the broom. By the time the body is extended into its slide position, the sliding foot will be along the line of delivery.

Unlike your sliding foot, the rock is always on the line of delivery. It is important to remember that the line of delivery runs from the skip's broom to the middle of the rock, not to the center of the curler's body. It is up to the curler to get the body in behind the rock during the slide. Some curlers' bodies and sliding feet are directly behind the rock; others are running along a line parallel to the stone's line of delivery.



timing

Timing refers to a finely tuned sequence of movements during the delivery. The separate parts are integrated into a continuous, fluid motion essential for accuracy and consistency. There are three major movements during the delivery: Press, Drawback, and Slide.

PRESS

Once you are comfortable with your setup in the hack, the delivery motion begins with a forward press. Simply move the rock ahead a few inches



down the line of delivery, basically to initiate motion and get the rock "unstuck" from the ice. Be sure to keep the rock's "turn" position during the press.

DRAWBACK

Pull the rock straight back on the line of delivery and draw back the sliding foot. Simultaneously elevate your hips and draw them back behind the hack. At the peak of the drawback, your body weight is



anchored and about evenly distributed on both feet. The toe of your sliding foot is now about as far back as the heel of your foot in the hack. Maintain the rock's "turn" position.

SLIDE

The transition from the drawback to the forward slide involves a significant weight transfer as your hack foot pushes out of the hack. Forward movement is initiated by the rock, followed closely by the sliding foot. Your hack foot thrusts you forward and your body weight shifts almost entirely onto your sliding foot during the slide. Your hack leg trails directly behind your body. By keeping the timing and movement controlled as the sliding foot gets centered, one fluid motion is created. Your sliding foot position is the key to balance.

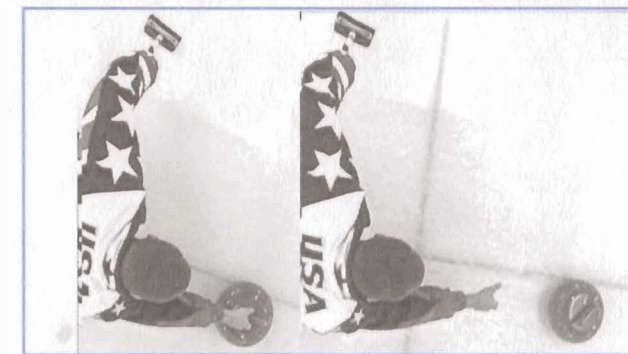


Timing Tips

Many curlers kick out of the hack as soon as the forward slide begins. Leg drive should begin after the rock and your sliding foot have started forward so that body weight can be shifted smoothly from hack leg to sliding foot. To improve leg drive timing, practice delivering without the rock. Allow the sliding foot to move in gradually. As body weight is shifted to the sliding foot, initiate leg drive. Delivering without a rock is also a good way to check to see if your delivery is balanced.

release

The rock is released during the last few feet of the delivery. Until that time, your throwing arm remains slightly bent and the position of the rock handle is still turned as it was during setup. Using the good



grip established at setup, turn the handle from the turned position to 12:00 as you simultaneously extend your arm. Release the rock cleanly and follow through so that your hand finishes in the "handshake" position. The rock should rotate about two-and-a-half times during a draw shot.

Release Tips

The point of release should follow completion of timing and balance. A release is too early if it occurs simultaneously with, or prior to, achieving a balanced position over the sliding foot. Too late of a release point will present more opportunities to inadvertently take the rock off line, or crowd the hog line. Establishing a comfortable release point greatly increases consistency.

Take-outs will generally be released earlier than draws. A draw shot released at the top of the house will travel a different path and will have more time to curl than a rock released near the hog line. If the release point varies too dramatically from one shot to the next—or one curler to the next—the skip will have a tougher job reading the ice. The same is true for rock rotation. A more rapidly rotating rock will travel a straighter path. A slow turning rock (if it doesn't "lose its handle") will tend to curl more. Consistent rotation makes it easier for the skip to read the ice.

weight control

Once you are into your slide and committed to a certain amount of leg drive and momentum, fine-tuning of weight may still be needed. A curler with a high upper body position and gradual lowering motion may have an advantage judging and correcting weight. During the slide, keep your upper body high, but relaxed, and gradually lower it as the rock is being released. This lowering motion is begun only when a balanced slide position is established. It is not a thrusting motion, but a steady movement. Leaving a slight bend in your throwing arm also allows you the chance to get a feel for the weight. Extending your arm is not a shoving motion, but a steady movement. A lowered upper body and extended throwing arm is the sign of a good follow through.