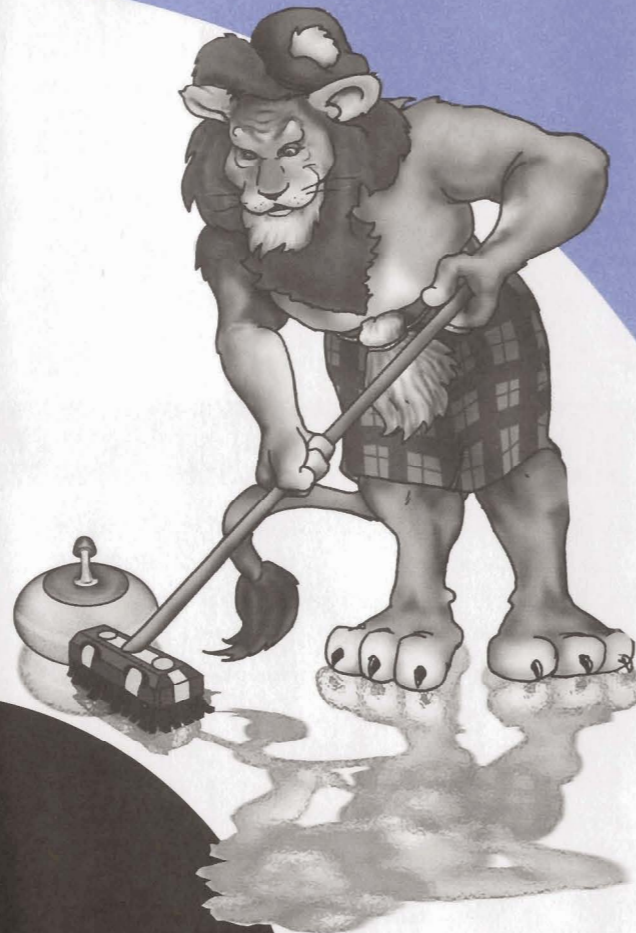


# CURLING

## "power play" sweeping



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# sweeping



## SWEEPING IS WHAT MAKES CURLING A TEAM SPORT

The reason we sweep is to polish the ice pebble 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 lengthen the distance of a draw by over ten feet. 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 between the tee lines.
- Behind the tee line, any one player from the playing team may sweep a rock.
- The opposing skip or sitting skip may also sweep a rock behind the tee line.
- The brush head must clearly move from side to side across the path of the rock during each stroke, and finish to one side.

# effectiveness

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

## COVERAGE

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

The more speed and pressure applied to the broom, the more friction is generated affecting the ice surface. But it's impossible to achieve maximum speed and pressure at the same time. When a rock is first released, most curlers cannot move the broom across the same spot on the ice more



than once because the rock is moving too quickly. The focus should be on putting as much pressure as possible on the broom. However, when a rock is coming into the house, rapid sweeping will allow the broom to be swept repeatedly across a given spot. So, as the rock slows down, increase the speed of the brush head and “finish” the rock.

# judgement

Effectiveness is the crucial physical component of sweeping, but it is even more important to be able to judge when to sweep. After all, if you're effectively sweeping a rock right through the house, you're not a very valuable member of the team. Those who know when to sweep are keepers. 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 faster the

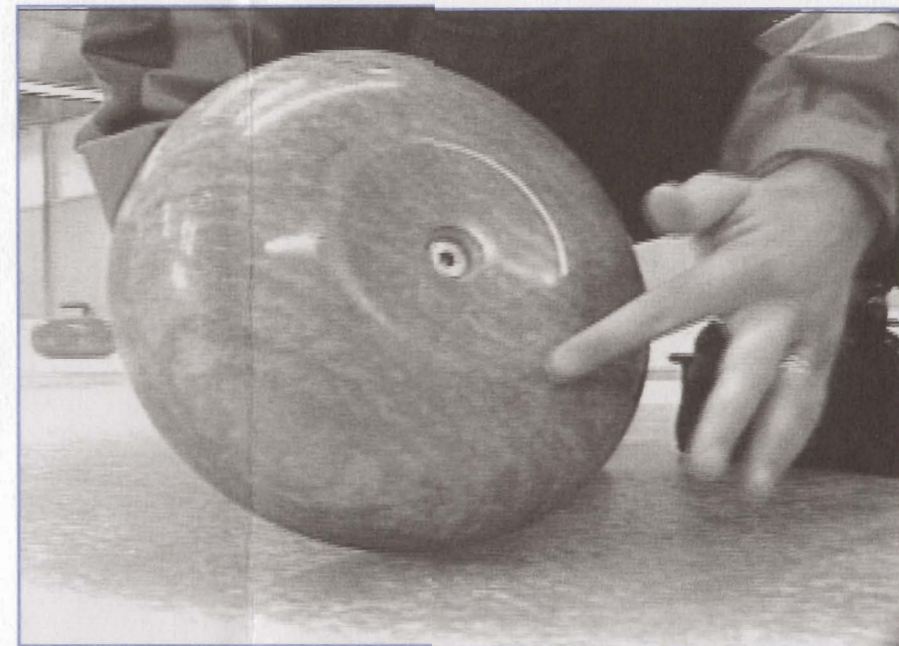
ice is and less weight is needed. On the other hand, the less time it takes for the shot to get there, the heavier the ice, and the rock will have to be thrown harder. Timing shots gives all team members a shared idea of draw weight.

An even better method for timing shots—called interval timing—gives feedback for a shot in progress. It measures the time between the rock passing over the near back-line (some curlers use the near tee-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.

Timing take-outs during practice, typically from hog-line to hog-line, can also be beneficial. Team members able to throw similar take-out weights make it easier for their skip to read the ice.

# 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 you 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 on can be more effective since it allows both feet to “dig in” to get the job done.
- Dust shots. Also clean the line of delivery before every shot.
- Stay with the rock until it comes to a complete stop.
- Be prepared for alternate shot calls from the skip.
- Watch rock placement. Stop sweeping if the rock is curling too much. A long guard is better than a close rock that is not guarding anything.