

ROCKtalk

The newsletter of the
London Curling Club

January 2021



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Canadian curling championships and Grand Slams head to a Calgary bubble

Due to the ongoing pandemic, in December 2020, Curling Canada announced that they're moving the 2021 Scotties Tournament of Hearts, Tim Hortons Brier, World Men's Curling Championship and Canadian Mixed Doubles Championship to the hub city of Calgary.

Shortly after, the Grand Slam of Curling announced their hope to add the Player's Championship and the Champions Cup to be played in the same bubble and at the same venue, Winsport's Canada Olympic Park.

Dates for all events have not been confirmed at this time, although it's assumed that the Scotties will be played in February, the Brier in March, the World Men's in early April, with the Grand Slams taking place later in April or possibly in May.

Also due to the pandemic, several provinces have cancelled their provincial championships, and instead, named the provincial champions from the previous year to represent the province at this year's national championships. At least one of those previous provincial champs, Krista McCarville of Northern Ontario, has declined the invitation, also due to pandemic concerns.

For those that do go and play, the bubble will mean they'll be away from their families for an extended period of time, especially because if they did go home, they'd have to quarantine for 14 days before seeing anyone, then quarantine for another 14 days to get back into the bubble and play again.

Photo of 1975 Brier courtesy of Curling Canada



Pace of play: helping you play six ends every time

Covid-19 has changed lots of things about how we're curling. But one of the biggest things is that currently we're only playing six ends.

The standard assumption is that one end will take 15 minutes. Strategy is often determined by expecting to play six ends and we want to ensure we get them all in before time runs out. Here are some ways to save time and keep the game moving:

- Do your best to start your game on time. Both teams should be prepared to go onto the ice as soon as it's ready. If your ice is still being prepped, get your greetings and last rock decision finished in the lounge so when you get the nod from the ice tech, you can step out, slide, and start the game.
- Sweepers should get out their own player's next rock if they are able to get to it faster than their player (using your foot or your broom and not your hands). Think about courtesy and efficiency. If your second has to get his slider on why not get his rock out for him while you're waiting.
- As soon as your opponent has released the rock, get down and set up your shot. Clean your rock and get your pre-shot routine done while your opposition rock glides to a halt. This means that once your skip has put the broom down you can square up and go. Saving 15 seconds every shot is four minutes an end, and that is the difference between five and six ends in 90 minutes!
- Lead players should be ready to play as soon as the ice is cleared, and should not be involved in clearing



the stones from the previous end. Seek out your number one rock and get set up while everyone else finishes clearing the house.

- Once the final rock has come to a stop in an end, seconds and thirds can start to clear away any and all rocks which are not affecting scoring.

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- Other than at the end of the game, rocks don't need to be put away in order. Simply putting the rocks neatly in the corners and not worrying about number order saves a lot of time. Throwers – know your rock number.
- While your skip and third debate the last skip stones of the end, the front end can grab the skip rock while they await the upcoming throw. It can save significant time and it makes your (emotionally fragile) skip feel special.
- Skips may make the calls, but everyone can think ahead on the shots. The further skips think ahead for strategy, the quicker decisions can be made. This is the single largest time eater on the ice. Save time on the easier decisions so you can think over the difficult ones. As the other players throw, you can mentally prep and line up your shot even before your skip has placed his broom down.
- Skips could call a simpler game. Simple strategy usually means simpler shots with a higher execution rate which is good for our confidence as club level curlers. Take-outs take less time than draw shots. Fewer rocks in play will usually result in a faster end.

Even elite level teams do this regularly to bank time for a more complex end.

- Practice non-democratic curling – Input about strategy at every turn is very rarely appreciated or productive. Ultimately the skip is in charge of skipping. If you're not pleased with your skip's strategy, on ice is not the place to discuss it. Not only does undermining the skip crush confidence, but it also slows down the game. The person skipping the team has to be empowered to call the shots whether they're new or not. Comments from the peanut gallery should be kept to a minimum. If you really feel overall strategy needs to be addressed, do it after the game.
- If you're a skip who needs extra time to get from one end of the ice to the other, you could decide to stay at the throwing end and let your vice call your second shot.
- Try and focus on one or all of these points and it will quickly become habit. Using your time wisely on the ice can make everyone's time more enjoyable — and it might even result in an extra win or two.

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Ask the icemaker

With Mark Flynn, Head Ice Technician, London Curling Club

Q: With no curling for more than a month, how does ice maintenance change, and when we're able to play again, what will you need to do to make the ice playable again?



A: An extended shut down where we're keeping the ice in is something new to me and pretty much every other ice technician I've talked to. The rocks have been pulled off the ice, the temperatures have been adjusted to save as much energy as possible and I've been scraping the ice every few days to help keep the frost to a minimum.

When we get the green light to play again, it will take about three days to get the ice and the arena back to where we need them to be. We'll bring the temperatures back, get a flood on the surface and the rocks back down. All the while we'll be keeping our fingers crossed everything goes smoothly.

Rule change for games in the last evening draw

In response to member request, the board of directors will allow games in the last evening draw to go past the allotted 90 minute draw time to complete six ends.

Women's Daytime Section event two results

- First place: Sylvia Leuszler, skip, Karen Jacobsen, Mary Lucas and Theresa Walsh
- Second place: Jan Murray, skip, Mary Blasl, Mary Stokley and Linda Howe
- Third place: Sue Turner, skip, Mardi McLachlan, Katy Farrow and Cheryle-Anne MacBelford

Got a story for Rock Talk?

Please send any story ideas or club happenings for the next issue to Brian Arnold (barnold439@gmail.com). Deadline for the February 2021 issue is Jan. 28.

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