

CURLING 101™



 **Rock Solid**
PRODUCTIONS INC.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Curling 101</i> Overview	2
One-Hour On-Ice Introduction	3
Tips For A Successful <i>Curling 101</i> Open House	12
Registration Spreadsheet	14
Email Registration Confirmation Template	15

HELPFUL EXTRAS



Look for this curling rock icon for helpful Instructor Tips located throughout the One-Hour On-Ice Introduction!

CURLING 101 OVERVIEW

Curling 101 is a family-focused open house getting both youth and adults on the ice to try curling.

How is it different from a regular open house?

The Curling 101 one-hour on-ice session provides enough instruction to get both kids and adults into a game in a short period of time. It will introduce the basics of curling and have them playing a two-end game in 60 minutes. After the one-hour lesson is over the participants can look at joining the club and seeing the various programs you run.

The one-hour session should not be extended. It is intended as a marketing-trial event. When participants are interested in more curling, be prepared to discuss the programs, leagues, or ice rentals that you can offer them.



Share #curling101 and your own social media sites with participants for them to use.



INTRODUCTION

The *Curling 101* lesson plan is a fast-paced, fun, interactive program that introduces families to the sport of curling in one-hour. The plan has been tested and tweaked to maximize your marketing potential for new members. It teaches participants everything they need to know to play a short game. We are not teaching them the major technical aspects of curling but giving them just enough information to have fun and play a few ends. When the one-hour lesson is over, you leave them wanting more and can provide them with information about leagues and programs your curling facility offers.



The program in this manual has been developed over many years and tested extensively. It is recommended you do not deviate from the outlined plan. The time frame has been allocated to maximize the marketing potential for your curling facility. This program is simply an introduction to the sport of curling. The goal is to leave participants wanting more – and to register for programs and leagues at your facility.



The key to a successful *Curling 101* open house is to have fun. The enthusiasm and energy your instructors give off during the program will create an exciting atmosphere for the participants.



Some of your best instructors will be the ones out there just having fun. So make it easy to enjoy the experience along with the first-timers.



Participant Welcome

3 minutes



Start by welcoming all the participants to the club. If they haven't already done so, have them put on their clean shoes. Introduce yourself as the head instructor and introduce the other instructors who will be on the ice with you. Wear name tags so people can call you by name. Do not mention any programs or activities you have at the club yet – get them playing and excited about the sport before you overwhelm them with club information and programs. This introduction is very short. If you are taking photos, mention this to participants. Tell them you will be posting to social media and ask them to speak to an instructor if they do not want their photo taken or used in a promotional manner.

As part of the welcome, the head instructor should go over safety rules and regulations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. If at any point you don't feel safe on the ice, please step off. This is for fun – we don't want anyone to get hurt.
2. Ice is slippery – please don't run and be aware of your surroundings.
3. Similar to swimming, you don't dive into a pool full of people. So we don't throw a rock up a sheet that is full of people. Please wait for others to move to the sidelines before throwing your rock.
4. Rocks should stay on the ice at all times. They are 42 pounds of granite and can not only injure somebody, but also damage the ice if not handled correctly. Please keep them on the ice surface at all times.
5. When your team is not throwing, you should be on the sidelines so the other team has control of the sheet of ice.
6. All children 12 years and under should be wearing a helmet before going on the ice.

You're ready to get out there! Ask participants to proceed to the playing area, pick up a broom, and line up on a side wall.



STEP 1: Learning to slide

5 minutes



Line all the participants along an end sheet between the hog lines, against one of the side walls. They will stand against the boards or wall facing the centre of the ice rink. Have your instructors spread out on the adjacent sheet of ice, facing the participants, about 15 feet in front of them.

The head instructor will teach them how to hold the broom. Teach participants how to hold the brush. Say, "If you are right-handed, hold the brush with your left hand and tuck it under your left arm. If you are left-handed, hold the brush with your right hand and tuck it under your right arm." All of the instructors will follow along with the head instructor and demonstrate the proper way to hold the brush.

You're ready to demonstrate how to get into position in the hack. Pretend there is a hack in the middle of the ice and put your hack foot there, and then put your sliding foot flat on the ice next to it, just like you would when you step in before you deliver a curling stone. Then ask the participants to crouch the same way, and suggest that they can think about it like a sprinter getting into starting blocks.



Now describe the slide process. Tell participants that right-handers will put their right foot in the hack and left-handers will put their left foot in the hack. A good way to explain it is, “With your right foot in the hack position, and your left foot flat on the ice next to it – opposite for lefties – imagine your right hand holding a curling rock. Ensure your brush head is on the ice and only the soles of your shoes – not your knees or hands – are touching the ice surface. Lift your hips, slide your left foot back slightly as you do, and then slide that foot forward again.” Do a slide from this spot to show participants the full movement in slow motion.



Now tell everyone to try the slide motion. Remind them to go slowly and that they won't go far because they're not using a slider yet. Instruct all the participants to try the slide in slow motion and then repeat 3-4 times. Other instructors should move among the participants, assisting with foot placements and slide movement, helping people get comfortable with the slide process.



Mix in with your guests and practice slide with them off the wall. Participate in each step and be part of their experience.

Once people have done 3-4 repetitions, move everyone back to the side wall. An assistant instructor should move to a hack on a middle sheet at the home end of the rink, as the head instructor begins to explain the process of a full slide from an actual hack. As an assistant demonstrates, the head instructor can say, “Step into the hack, crouch down, raise your hips, slide your foot back, then move it forward and go.” Tell the group which hack is for righthanders and which one is for left-handers, and remind them they won't slide as far as the instructor because they are not wearing a slider.



STEP 2: *Sliding from the hack*

3 minutes



Now the group is ready to use an actual hack. Divide participants evenly among the hacks throughout the rink – use as many sheets as necessary to make the numbers at each hack manageable. Ensure there is at least one instructor on each sheet – and more than that can make the process more efficient – while the head instructor moves among all the sheets. Each participant should try sliding out of the hack without a rock. Instructors should be working to get people ready and into the hack quickly, so each person can complete 1-2 slides.



STEP 3: *Sliding with a rock*

6 minutes



Now it's time to move on to sliding with a rock. The head instructor stops the activity of Step 2 – use a whistle or simply announce STOP – and begins to demonstrate Step 3.

It is important they slide without a rock first. We know it is easier to slide with a rock, so by sliding without one you will create the illusion that they are getting better at the sport faster. They will have instant success early on once you have added the rock.

The head instructor assumes a spot at the near hog line, facing the participants, and gets into the crouch position with a rock as if in an actual hack. The process is demonstrated and described. Try something like, “Lift the hips, slide your foot and the rock back, move forward with the rock and your sliding foot.” The head instructor should be sliding towards the participants during this demonstration so it's easy for everyone to watch. Once the demonstration is complete, participants return to the hacks to slide with a rock.



Remind participants to keep the line moving and be ready when it is their turn. This is a great opportunity for you to take pictures while they are throwing a rock.

STEP 4: Turns

6 minutes



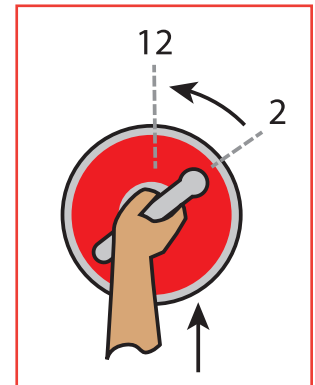
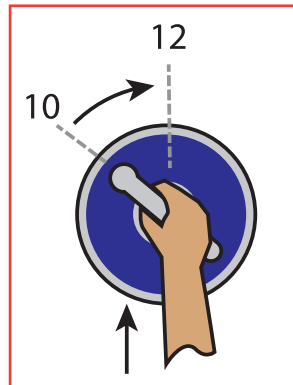
After participants have completed 1-2 slides with a rock, the head instructor stops the activity and begins to demonstrate how to put a turn on a rock. Explain that every thrown rock needs a turn or a “handle.”

The head instructor returns to the near hog line, facing the group, and explains that the handle is started at either 10 o’clock or 2 o’clock. Slide out towards the group and turn the handle to 12 o’clock as you do.

Demonstrate again, this time with an assistant facing the head instructor holding a broom – like a skip in the house during a game – with a hand out to indicate the proper turn. The head instructor explains how pointing the nose of the rock at the skip’s hand determines whether the handle is started at either 10 o’clock or 2 o’clock.

Have participants move back to the hacks they have been using and deliver stones with the proper turn while assistants help. After each person throws a stone, they hold the broom for the participant who follows them.

Try to have everyone throw at least two rocks. We do not recommend using sliders during this first lesson – they can be introduced when they join a league – but if you feel the need to add them in, this is the time to do it.



While participants are sliding from the hack, explain why they are aiming at the broom. Have them visualize a piece of string running from the rock to the skip’s broom.



STEP 5: Scoring & Components of the Sheet of Ice

5 minutes



After participants have thrown two stones with turns, move everyone back to the sidelines of a centre sheet, positioned between backline and the hog line, facing the house.

Demonstrate how to score by putting rocks in play. Explain which colour would score and how many points they would receive. Use three to four different setups to show various scenarios and illustrate how scoring happens. Point out that a rock on the button does not earn bonus points.

Explain that rocks must cross the near hog line to be in play but are only worth points if they are touching the rings. Describe the various lines and components of the sheet — sidelines, back line, tee line, hog line, Free Guard Zone.

Move on to explaining the four positions — lead, second, third, and skip. Be sure to let everyone know that each player throws two rocks and explain the throwing order. Choose two participants to use as examples, calling them **LEAD RED** and **LEAD BLUE**. Show how **LEAD RED** throws their first rock, then **LEAD BLUE** throws their first rock, then **LEAD RED** throws their second rock, followed by **LEAD BLUE** throwing their second rock. Explain how this process is repeated through all positions until all 16 stones have been delivered to the other end of the sheet. Explain that when the skip is throwing, third moves into the house and assumes the skip's role.



Make it fun by adding in some comments specific to our sport, like, "When you're at school or around the water cooler at the office tomorrow, tell people you were throwing rocks at houses." A bit of laughter goes a long way with new curlers.



STEP 6: Sweeping

5 minutes



Now it's time to discuss the role of sweeping. Explain that brushing is done to carry the rock farther. Show the group how to grip the brush, and then demonstrate the brushing motion. Note that the brush needs to be in front of the rock, and that the goal is to apply pressure to the ice in order to heat up the temperature of the surface so the rock travels farther. Explain if a player is not the skip and not throwing a rock, their job is sweeping or brushing.

Let the group practice sweeping by having them brush, without a traveling stone, from the home end of the rink to the far end. At the other end, ask how many people are out of breath and let them know that if they aren't, they probably weren't sweeping hard enough. Have the group sweep back to the home end of the rink. When they're done, remind them that when they are sweeping, they need to have the brush in front of the running stone. Be sure to point out that if they are struggling to stay up with the running stone, they should drop off for safety reasons.

Ask the group if they have any questions. Once that's complete, you're ready to get them into a short two-end game.



When demonstrating sweeping, emphasize the difference between applying pressure and simply "dusting" the ice. Show the difference in an exaggerated way.



STEP 7: Game Time

30 minutes



Break the participants into teams and establish games on each sheet. Try to group people appropriately — put parents on teams with their children, combine kids of similar ages. If it's parents and kids together, have the parent skip unless the child is adamant about playing that position. It's better for kids if they are active — throwing, sweeping, and more involved in the game. Have one instructor per sheet at the throwing end, with another instructor between sheets at the scoring end to help the skips.



Jump in and be part of the game. Help sweep a rock. Offer a high-five after a great shot. Kick a rock forward so a child gets their shot in play. It's about fun, not rules!



STEP 8: Wrap-Up

2 minutes



Once you've finished the second end — so you've completed the game — take photos of the group and share **#curling101** and your own social media sites with participants for them to use. Direct them off the ice and let them know if there are brochures or marketing materials inside. Do not let them play a third end. Remember that you're trying to introduce them to the sport and get them excited about it — leaving them wanting more is great. If the same head instructor is running back-to-back lessons, have that person off the ice before the first session is completed. That way, the introduction can be started early and the second group can be entering the ice surface as the first group is coming off.



Offer to take family photos and suggest they use it in social media. Help everyone leave with evidence they'll want to share with others.



TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CURLING 101 OPEN HOUSE

1. Select your instructors based on personality. Fun, nice, and outgoing members make people want to come back! Coaching and instruction certification are not crucial when participants are on the ice for the first time – curlers who are welcoming and friendly are.
2. Make sure your facility is showcase-ready. Encourage a realtor or stager to walk through the building. They will notice small things that members and staff who are in the club regularly would not. Remember that potential customers are looking at your facility with fresh eyes.
3. Have a variety of flyers and brochures ready. While some customers may want information on only one program, many will want details on everything you offer. Make sure you have sufficient quantities and get them professionally printed. To ensure that the major pieces have a long shelf life, use inserts or separate rate cards for prices. That way, if prices change, your more expensive promotional material can still be used.
4. Set up the dining room, lounge area, or reception space for a corporate event or wedding. Show that you are more than just a place to curl.
5. Maintain a social media presence before, during, and after your event. Take photos and post on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Encourage participants to tag your facility in their own social media posts by sharing #curling101 and your own social media sites/hash tags with them to use.
6. Find a member who will serve as the official photographer for your facility. Get photos you can use not only on social media, but also in future promotions. Just be sure to mention to all participants that you are taking photos. If someone has a phone out, offer to take a group photo for them and suggest they use it on their social media feeds. Always get a wrap-up photo at the end of the event, with participants on the ice and holding curling brooms with stones in front of them.



7. Group a series of open houses and events together. Maximize the use of volunteers and staff while the club is in pristine condition. When the club is busy and people of all abilities are on the ice, it's also a great time to offer a Bring-A-Friend program to your members.
8. Make sure your volunteers and staff are wearing name tags, and make name badge stickers available to everyone. When instructors know the names of participants, it's easier to talk to them individually and lead the entire group.
9. Consider offering a snack or beverage at the conclusion of the event. Donuts, popcorn, hot chocolate, coffee – whatever keeps them in the building for a longer period of time.
10. Run a slideshow in the lounge on a loop throughout the entire function. Choose photos that show all the best aspects of curling and your facility – game play, bonspiels, corporate functions, post-game gatherings in the lounge.
11. Get professionally printed banners that can be positioned throughout the facility, showcasing your club and specific programs. Glow curling, stag and doe rentals, bar and dining options, corporate outings – highlight your best! You can also re-use these at community festivals and community programs.
12. Send a follow-up email within a week of your *Curling 101* open house to all participants. Thank them for attending and, if they haven't already done so, encourage them to consider registering for leagues and programs at your club. Remind them that your facility is a great place for corporate events and family get-togethers. Not everyone who attends the open house will want to become a member but they may still bring business to your facility.



REGISTRATION SPREADSHEET

The spreadsheet below is a template you can use to collect information about participants in advance of your On-Ice Learn-to-Curl. This helps you manage staff and volunteers effectively because you'll know how many people to expect, and the data can provide valuable information for future events and programs. An electronic version of the spreadsheet is available.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1				Curling 101 Registration - Time Slot 1		
2						
3		Name	Age	Telephone 1	Email 1	Sent Confirmation
4	1	Joe Smith	42	555-555-5555	joesmith@santa.ca	yes
5	2	Jill Smith	12	555-555-5555	joesmith@santa.ca	yes
6	3	Dan Smith	6	555-555-5555	joesmith@santa.ca	yes
7	4	Teresa Jakes	36	777-777-7777	teresa@curling.ca	yes
8	5	Julie Jakes	7	777-777-7777	teresa@curling.ca	yes
9	6					
10	7					
11	8					
12	9					
13	10					
14	11					
15	12					
16	13					
17	14					
18	15					
19	16					
20	17					
	SESSION 1		SESSION 2			

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1				Curling 101 Registration - Time Slot 2		
2						
3		Name	Age	Telephone 1	Email 1	Sent Confirmation
4	1	Joe Smith	42	555-555-5555	joesmith@santa.ca	yes
5	2	Jill Smith	12	555-555-5555	joesmith@santa.ca	yes
6	3	Dan Smith	6	555-555-5555	joesmith@santa.ca	yes
7	4	Teresa Jakes	36	777-777-7777	teresa@curling.ca	yes
8	5	Julie Jakes	7	777-777-7777	teresa@curling.ca	yes
9	6					
10	7					
11	8					
12	9					
13	10					
14	11					
15	12					
16	13					
17	14					
18	15					
19	16					
20	17					
	SESSION 1		SESSION 2			



EMAIL REGISTRATION CONFIRMATION TEMPLATE:

This email template can be used to send registration confirmation to participant. It gives them instructions on items they need to bring and lets them know what they can expect at the event. Customize it for your facility and event.

Dear **INSERT PARTICIPANT NAME**,

Thank you for registering for our *Curling 101* session on **INSERT DATE/YEAR** at the **INSERT CURLING FACILITY NAME**. We look forward to teaching you more about the sport of curling.

Please note that a parent or guardian must be present and on the ice participating with children who are registered for *Curling 101*.

A few things you need to bring to the event:

1. A clean pair of shoes – sneakers you use only at the gym are a great option – that you bring to our facility and change into before you go on the ice. Street shoes are not allowed on the ice.
2. A warm sweater or a light jacket. Dress in layers and bring mitts or gloves if your hands get cold easily.
3. Pants that are either loose-fitting or have some stretch. Jeans are not recommended.
4. For children under 12, helmets (hockey or bike) are required.

Please arrive 15 minutes before the event begins so we can confirm your registration, welcome you to our facility, and get you organized for your **INSERT SESSION TIME** start.

We look forward to seeing you on the ice on **INSERT DATE** at the **INSERT CURLING FACILITY NAME**.

Sincerely,

INSERT NAME

NOTES



CURLING 101™



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