

// REPORTS FROM THE WARM ROOM

Rocking back-to-school

Successful Gym Curling Program introduces the sport, traditions to area youth

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The start of the school year is around the corner in most areas of the country. While kids are spending their last few days at the pool with friends or shopping with parents for school clothes and supplies, some curling clubs are preparing to introduce the sport to a new batch of students in their local districts.

Falmouth, Mass., a seaside town of about 30,000, has hosted a successful school curling initiative since 2007. The Gym Curling Program was the brainchild of Bernie Garrett, a member of the Cape Cod Curling Club. Garrett envisioned gym curling as a way to mentor students while introducing them to a lifelong sport. Curling traditions, such as starting each game with a handshake and greeting opponents with “good curling,” support the program’s focus on good sportsmanship, team spirit, and courtesy.

The Gym Curling Program began with the third and fourth grade classes in a single elementary school. With support of local physical education teachers, volunteers from the curling club, and donors providing funds to build the simulated “stones,” the program has expanded to four elementary schools and one middle school.

Teams of four students delivering one stone each compete against their classmates. Masking tape is applied to the gym floor to serve as the house when the basketball rings are not used, with a smaller taped off square serving as the button. Games consist of three or four ends, with students accumulating points. Following a few weeks of curling in gym classes, the grade champions for each school earn the honor of competing against the grade champions in other schools. The students on the winning team for each grade receive a trophy and have their school’s name engraved on a traveling plaque.

A local community member, who was not a curler, volunteered to construct the original 42 gym “stones” after Garrett raised funds from local businesses to pay for the materials. The cost of materials is approximately \$50 per stone, with eight, rather than 16, stones per group. More information about how the club constructed the stones can be found in the box at right. Following the Gym Curling Program, the Cape Cod Curling Club typically hosts a few hours of ice time during which students, parents, and teachers can try the sport on curling ice. The club has had student participants join their Little Rockers youth program, and several parents have also become members of the club.

The Gym Curling Program is just one example of how members of the curling community can use their ingenuity to make a difference in the lives of others through the sport. For more information on this program, please contact me at kim.nawyn@usacurl.org. ■



GYM CURLING STONES

Supply list:

- ¾” Medium-density fiberboard (MDF) cut into 12” diameter circles (two circles per stone)
- Steel plates (8” x 8” x ¼”) with hole drilled in center (to give stones some weight)
- Fabricated U-shaped steel handles with hole drilled in bottom (may also check hardware store for a suitable substitute)
- Ball caster wheels (2”x2”) that can be screwed into the wooden circles (four per stone)
- High gloss paint; optional spray lacquer
- Assorted screws, nuts, bolts and washers

Paint half of the wooden circles with one color of high gloss paint and the remaining with the contrasting color. Optional: spray with lacquer to finish. Attach the two wooden circles to the steel plate (in the middle) and U-shaped handle (on top) with a bolt (don’t forget the washers) and secure with a nut on the bottom. Attach the caster wheels with screws. ■



Cape Cod’s Gym Curling Program not only helps teach the basics of sport to Massachusetts youth, it teaches them the curling traditions – good sportsmanship, team spirit, and courtesy.