

Curling Discussion Prompts



What does curling have in common with shuffleboard, pool/billiards, or chess?

- The curling “sheet” looks similar to shuffleboard.

While the curling sheet has similarities to shuffleboard, it is much larger. It is approximately 150’ long and 16’ wide. There are large targets at each end of the sheet. These targets are called “houses.” Each house is 12’ in diameter.

- An understanding of physics and angles is commonly used to make shots in both pool/billiards and curling.

To master the game of pool, also known as billiards, players must study angles to determine how to sink a ball into a pocket. In curling, skips study angles to determine the best place to hit their opponent’s stone during a takeout, which is a shot designed to remove an opponent’s stone from play.

- The strategy of the game has been compared to chess.

Similar to chess, it is important for each team’s skip (the player who determines the strategy) to develop a plan which anticipates an opponent’s likely moves. Sometimes the best shot is not designed to score, but like a pawn in chess, can be used to create offense or defense depending on a team’s overall strategy. When trying to score (offense), skips tend to leave lots of stones in play. Skips use more hits or takeouts to remove stones when trying to keep their opponent from scoring (defense).

What household task is commonly associated with curling?

- *Sweeping. While there is some debate about the actual science behind sweeping, effective sweepers are able to extend the path of a curling stone by more than ten feet. It also can be used to delay the “curl” of a stone. Sweeping helps the team control where a stone ends up and is often used very strategically.*

Why do curlers use starting blocks similar to runners?

- *Starting blocks are used in the Olympic Summer Games by sprinters running shorter distances as an aid for them to accelerate quickly. Curlers use a similar device to push off from when sliding on the ice to deliver a stone. This device, which is called a hack, is made out of rubber.*

What does the surface of a curler's sliding shoe have in common with a frying pan?

- *Teflon, the non-stick surface commonly found on frying pans, is also used on the bottom of each curler's sliding shoe. This allows the curler to slide while delivering a stone. However, the bottom of the curler's sliding shoe does not look like the inside of a frying pan. Teflon for curling shoes is thick, white and either covers the entire sole of the shoe or comes in the form of round disks.*

Unlike ice skaters and hockey players who wear skates on each foot, curlers have this slippery surface only on the bottom of one shoe. The Teflon slider is often covered up with a rubber gripper when the curler is not sliding to keep them from falling on the ice.

What can a tea kettle and curling shoe have in common?

- *Often old fashioned tea kettles that are heated on the stove have a similar type and size handle as a modern curling stone. Handles on modern curling stones are made of plastic. However, in the past, curling stone handles were often made of metal.*

Curling stones weigh approximately 42 lbs. Other things that weigh approximately 42 lbs. include:

- *An average 5 year old child*
- *Five gallon bottle of water (used on top of water coolers)*
- *Four 10 lb bags of potatoes*
- *Large bag of dog food or medium-sized dog*
- *Two car tires*

Curling stones are made from granite. Other things made from granite include:

- *Kitchen countertops*
- *Floor tiles*
- *Grave stones*
- *Statues and monuments, including Mount Rushmore*

Are pebbles used on curling ice?

- *In curling, the playing field is called a "sheet" with the target, known as a "house" on each end. The sheet is covered in ice that is "pebbled." Pebbling is done by spraying small droplets of water onto the ice (similar to watering a garden using a watering can) to give it texture. The pebbled surface makes it possible for the stone to make an elliptical path down the ice. It also makes it so that the players can grip the ice with their shoes when sweeping in front of the stone.*