

# Open House Instructor Guide

Instruction at an open house is all about two things:

- Safety
- Having people throw a lot of rocks

If you can keep these two things in mind, you'll be a great open house instructor!

## Safety

The number one thing we worry about at open houses is slip and fall accidents. **As an instructor you are responsible for ensuring safe curling by the participants on your sheet.** This means:

- **No running on the ice**
  - This is especially common when people start sweeping. Remember to tell people that if they can't keep up with the rock, the sweeping won't help at all anyway.
  - No horseplay on the ice
  - Don't walk backwards, it's easy for them to trip on a rock they don't notice behind them.
- **No butt sweeping**
  - Watch for people walking backwards while they sweep with their butt heading toward their skip. They can't see what's near their feet and may trip over a rock.
- **Do not pick up the rocks off the ice**
  - Always slide the rocks along the sheet
- **Take great care with the step-on sliders**
  - No sliding around while standing up on a sole glider
  - Step in the hack, then step on the sole glider
  - When done sliding out, pick up the sole glider, then stand up
  - Don't leave sole gliders lying around on the ice where people can accidentally step on them
  - Maintain awareness at all times of where the sole gliders are on your sheet

If you see any of these things taking place it is your responsibility to tell the person to stop doing it. If they keep it up find the person running the open house and they will remove the participant from the sheet. If you have an injury on your sheet, have all other guests stop curling and stand to the side until the situation is resolved. Have someone notify the open house organizer. Do not hesitate to call 911 if necessary.

# Throwing Lots of Rocks

Nothing gets people excited about the sport of curling like throwing rocks. To ensure people get a lot of time to throw, here is the script to follow. For eight guests, it should take about an hour (The organizer will let you know what time you should finish by).

## ***Part 0: Introduction***

While you are inside, waiting for your sheet to be vacated:

1. Introduce yourself
2. Discuss safety and make sure our guests are aware of your expectations of their behavior. Stress that safety is our #1 priority and that injury is a possibility.
3. Do some simple stretches. Inform your group that curling uses muscles they may not be accustomed to using.

Once you head out onto the ice, start by having everyone step carefully onto the sheet, and then take a short walk past the near hog line and back. This lets everyone experience walking on ice.

## ***Part 1: Learning the basics of the delivery***

This part walks the participants through the mechanics of delivering a rock, from balance to sliding.

Remember, the goal is to give our participants as many opportunities to throw as possible. Get them throwing quickly, don't spend too much time demonstrating yourself. It's about them throwing, not having them watch you throw.

### **1. Practice Delivery Form**

- a. Have everyone line up along the side board of the sheet. Demonstrate putting your left foot against the board (right foot if they are left-handed), and then slowly lowering your body, stretching out the other leg behind you until you're balanced in a delivery stance.
- b. Have everyone try this themselves. Watching out that they don't have their knees on the ice and have their toes pointed downward. (For left handed people, just reverse the feet)

### **2. Throw Using Two Stabilizers**

- a. Demonstrate stepping into the hack. Points of emphasis:
  - Always step into the hack from behind
  - Point your hack toe towards where you are aiming
  - Get balanced with both feet before stepping on the sole glider
  - As you crouch, the heel of your sliding foot should be parallel to the toe of your hack foot

- You should feel balanced and your shoulders should be parallel when you're ready to slide
- b. Demonstrate sliding out with two stabilizers. Don't worry yet about emphasizing raising the hips, just push out with the hack foot and go a few feet. Points of emphasis:
    - Chin up! Folks will want to look down at their feet but this will make aiming and releasing a rock difficult.
    - The slider foot should move to a point right underneath the belly button as they slide.
  - c. Have each participant practice sliding out of the hack using the two stabilizers as balance.
- 3. Throw Using One Stabilizer and a Rock (Don't Release the Rock)**
- a. This time explain about raising your hips and coming back slightly, then pushing off into your slide.
  - b. Don't release the rock, just slide out. Have each participant practice sliding out of the hack with one stabilizer and a rock, but not letting go.
- 4. Throw Using One Stabilizer and a Rock (Release the Rock)**
- a. Have the assistant instructor hold the broom a little past the near hog line. Tell them that they should be aiming at the broom of the other instructor (who should be catching the rocks).
  - b. Don't worry about turn at this point, just stress the importance of "letting go" rather than "throwing" the rock. Have each participant try this.

Delivery sticks are available if you need one! If anyone has bad knees or just wants to try using one, just ask the organizer.

### ***Part 2: Turn***

1. Explain that the sport is called curling because we want the rocks to curl.
2. Have everyone gather around you and show them the "10" and "2" starting positions, and how you rotate your hand to "12" at release.
3. Have everyone line up in pairs along the slides of the sheet and practice gently throwing the rocks back and forth, with "10" and "2" curl. Watch out for people resting their knees on the ice.

### ***Part 3: Aim***

1. Explain that the skip will tell them which turn needs to be put on the rock.
2. Have the assistant instructor hold the broom on the 4 foot line near the hog line, and hold out one arm to tell them which turn to use.
3. Make sure they point their toe towards the broom before delivery.
4. Have everyone take a turn throwing.

## ***Part 4: Sweeping***

1. Explain the purpose of sweeping: makes the rock go farther, makes the rock curl less, and keeps crud out of the way.
2. Gently tip a rock up and show everyone the running surface of the rock. Explain that you only have to sweep across the running surface.
3. Explain that (for now) the skip will yell when it's time to sweep, and yell when it isn't. And that the skip will change his mind many times during a shot.
4. Demonstrate how to hold a broom and an open sweeping stance:
  - a. One hand about 1/3 of the way from the bottom of the broom, the other hand about 1/3 of the way from the top of the broom
  - b. Face towards the end of the sheet at about a 45 degree angle with both feet pointing down the sheet
  - c. Bend over and demonstrate how to sweep effectively (no need to sweep the whole sheet, just the surface of the rock)
  - d. Demonstrate how to move along with the rock (shuffle feet to always be balanced). Emphasize to always be looking down the sheet to see what's in the way.
5. Grab a rock, have participants line up on either side of the center line, then push the rock along while people sweep. Yell at them to start/stop several times so they get a good laugh out of it.
6. **WATCH FOR BUTT SWEEPING.** This is where everyone falls. Make sure that right-handers sweeping on the left side are walking looking down towards the far end of the sheet. **People get this wrong all the time. Correct them every time you see it.**
7. Remind guests that sweeping is the most likely time for them to get hurt. Reiterate sweeping safety tips.

## ***Part 5: Putting it all together***

1. Explain that they are now going to practice throwing and sweeping
2. Rotate having someone throw a rock, aiming at the broom and putting on a turn. Have two other people practice sweeping. Rotate through the group.

## ***Part 6: Scoring***

1. After all the rocks are thrown (if you were throwing at the far house), walk everyone down to the other end. Otherwise, just demonstrate at your end of the sheet how to score.
2. Explain the scoring system, then have someone try to call out the score. Move some rocks around to give different scenarios.

## ***Part 7: Practice Game***

1. Form teams and have a two-end practice game. You may be able to go for longer if there is nobody waiting. The organizer will come out and give you a guide to your remaining time on your sheet.
2. If you have just 8 people, form 2 teams and have folks figure out their positions. Explain the etiquette of curling (always start with a handshake and wish the other team good curling). Have one instructor with the skips helping them with strategy and where to stand. The other instructor should be keeping the game moving by encouraging people to get ready to throw, helping them with technique, and correcting any mistakes they may see.
3. Be very careful when the skips call sweeping. The sudden call often causes guests to be surprised, shift their weight, and fall down. Remind your guests of sweeping safety tips before you begin.
4. After the first end, encourage folks to change up positions so folks who played front end get to try back end, and vice versa.

## ***Part 8: Wrapping up***

1. Thank everyone for coming
2. Before they leave the sheets, make sure they all shake hands with each other and say good game
3. Invite them to go upstairs for drinks and nibbles
4. Let them know how to join the club and
5. Please sweep your sheet after your guests are all inside the warm area

## **Things to Remember**

- Safety, safety, safety! Always pay attention to the guests on your sheet and correct potentially unsafe behavior immediately. If a guest needs extra equipment to be safe just ask the open house organizer.
- Protect our ice. Guests do not realize how delicate our ice is and will sit and lay on it or bang things on it. It is your responsibility to watch out for this. In particular watch out for people leaving hands or knees on the ice after they throw, for brooms and other equipment being hit onto the ice, and for people posing for photos with large portions of their bodies on the ice. No part of the body other than the feet should ever be in contact with the ice.
- Keep your guests moving; do not stand around on the ice talking; you'll achieve happiest guests if you get them throwing rocks and playing some reasonable facsimile of a game. It's not imperative that they are exposed to all the rules and strategy at their first open house. Those who are really interested will stick around afterwards and that is the appropriate time to get into more detail.