

# League Guidelines

The Granite Curling Club provides the following guidelines for Managers of Open and Manager's choice leagues. These guidelines are a collection of best practices and recommendations from existing and past league managers. The goal of this document is to help new league managers define their league rules and policies in a consistent manner that addresses the needs of the league members with the least confusion and the most enjoyment.

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## Open League

An open league is any league that allows membership of any gender to play together or that allows teams to form using an open criteria. An open league may also be defined as “Manager’s Choice” under certain circumstances (see below).

Examples:

- The teams may be comprised of men and women of any age
- The teams may be formed by requests of the individuals on the team and not only at the skip’s request

## Manager’s Choice League

A league may be classified as “Manager’s Choice” when the League Manager has a role in forming the teams from the pool of registered members. In this case, the League Manager is expected to help form teams of equal skill utilizing the pool of registered members. Their goal is to balance the playing field such that many teams will be competitive against each other.

By no means is this task easy. It often requires the League Manager to have a reasonable estimation of the skill level and experience of all of the league’s members. The League Manager may also be asked to group teams together by personal preference. For example, a set of four brand new curlers may wish to curl together on a single team.

## Assigning Teams

It is recommended that when a league manager helps to form a team that they take the following advice into consideration. Members will have the best experience when they are on a team with at least a remote possibility of winning a game. In order to provide this chance, a team should not consist of all brand new curlers. Instead, an effort should be made to help new curlers to find members to play with that have some more experience.

It’s not uncommon that four new curlers write their league manager and ask to be assigned to the same team. However, suggesting that these curlers split up into two groups of two may provide them with a better experience overall. If they play with experienced people, they will learn the rules and etiquette. A suggestion could be made to them to play with other people for their first year and then, if they’d like to join together as a team, they may do so in their second year. This advice could make the difference between a team that learns to hate curling and a team that learns how to curl and enjoys winning a few games. A happy team is more likely to return the following season.

As previously mentioned, creating balanced teams in a MC league is always a challenge. It becomes

more complex when you have to deal with the various requests to play with/not play with certain. The league manager should strive to satisfy all such requests, within reason.

Reasonable requests include:

1. Requests to play with (or not play with) another curler (or curlers). Often teams will come into a MC league as complete units – this is alright within reason. Too many set teams in a MC league can impact the overall quality of the league
2. Request to have a particular draw time on a particular date or days. This also includes request for a bye on a particular week.

You should have a fair and balanced method to capture these requests. In the past, the Monday Night League has used the first night of curling to collect these requests. The curling for that night is adhoc and fun, with official league play starting the second scheduled week. If your league isn't full by the first draw, you may have walk-in curlers, which makes the whole exercise of creating teams and a schedule very frustrating, since you have to do it all over again to incorporate the new curlers. Plan accordingly and remember that the goal is to have fun – both the league members and the league manager.

## League Pools

League pools are useful in helping teams to play against teams that they are competitive against. When possible, the league structure could be defined such that the first half of the season is dedicated to earning rank. At the end of the first half, the draw schedule for the second half should have enough information to define an A and B pool (if not also a C pool).

Peer ranking (or ranking by knowledgeable individuals) may also be used to pre-seed the pools. This may make the first set of games more competitive and equally balanced.

## Ranking and Standings

Team records and rankings should be commensurate to the competition level of the league. Whereas a competitive league may see fit to base standings on points or quality of wins in addition to pure win/loss record, a novice or social league should generally avoid such methods. Adding in more complicated means such as a calculation of the number of points scored or ends won during a game only leads to frustration of newer curlers. For example, if a team is dominating another, they may feel compelled to continue playing in order to rack up points for their overall score. This is counter to the spirit of curling which says that a team never makes their opponent feel uncomfortable. A polite curler will not hang a score in a situation where they are obliterating their opponent.

As League Manager, you have a fair amount of flexibility in how you structure the standings and the awarding of Crystal. However, it is your responsibility to clearly communicate to the league members how you intend to do this. Please communicate this early in the season. As long as you're consistent and fair with how you handle ties and are awarding crystal, you'll have no problems.

In leagues where crystal is awarded at the end of the season, it is advisable that the league format is set up in a way such that all teams have a reasonable chance to win crystal if achieving high success towards the end of the season or in the playoffs. For example, if dividing the teams into two different pools at the end of the first half -- an advanced one, and a less-skilled one -- the available crystal should be roughly divided between all pools.

As a general guideline, end-of-season crystal is provided to leagues based on two (2) team sets per draw time. It is up to the league manager as to how this is distributed. A two-draw league would have four (4) total sets available, and could provide for a winner and runner-up in each half of the season, or a winner and runner-up in each of two pools at the end of the season, for example. More creative distributions are generally acceptable as well.

Ties should be broken in a fair manner, based on a predefined tie-breaking criteria. Possible methods include record in previous groupings, head-to-head results, record against common opponents, additional playoffs or draw-shot challenges, or random selection. When possible, tie-breaking procedures should be published to the league in advance of needing them.

The draw schedule and standings may be updated on the club's web site by using the interface at <http://curlingseattle.org/leagues/schedule/> and <http://curlingseattle.org/leagues/standings/>. The interface is simple and if you have logged in via the Member Login button at the bottom of the menu's, an Edit this Section icon will appear on the pages above. You may upload an excel spreadsheet to either of these pages (and your league members will thank you). To login, use the credentials: lmanager with the password herdcats

## Scheduling

Creating an effective schedule is one of the most difficult tasks a League Manager is asked to do. It is necessary to schedule games as far in advance as possible to allow the league members as much advanced notice as possible for resolving any personal scheduling conflicts and obtaining substitutes as necessary.

- For multiple-draw leagues, schedules should attempt to balance the number of early and late draws.
- If possible, avoid scheduling the same team's games on the same sheet week after week.

It is suggested, but not required, that any reasonable scheduling requests from the league members be accommodated. Though this can make scheduling far more difficult, it does allow for a much more pleasant experience for the league members.

Leagues managers with Junior curlers are encouraged to attempt to offer Junior curlers early draws, but the Juniors should also be made aware that this may not always be possible. As league members, they should expect equal treatment along with the other members and their request for all early draws may not be granted for all league nights.

## Substitutes

In the course of a season, it is unreasonable to expect that all league members will be able to attend every scheduled league game. Members should be encouraged to find their own substitutes in advance of their absence. It is important that the League Manager publish a substitute roster, as provided by the club bookkeeper, at the beginning of the season.

League Managers should create substitution rules as appropriate, and publish these guidelines at the beginning of the season. The general goal of substitution rules should be to not unreasonably penalize a team for utilizing a substitute player, but also to prevent a team from acquiring a significant advantage by using their substitute. Typical rules include the positions a substitute is allowed to play, and rules may be tightened for playoffs if necessary.

The generally accepted rule for most GCC leagues is that at least two (2) members of the original team must be present to avoid a forfeit (i.e. no more than two subs may play on a team). Though the league manager has the right to waive this rule as he/she sees fit.

Please remember that social members may only substitute three (3) times per season. If a situation arises that isn't accounted for, please contact the board.

## Ice and Pebbling

The GCC Ice Crew strives to provide all leagues with a quality playing surface for your league. A complete scrape is scheduled each league day (except Saturday). Depending on the schedule, your league may not be the first consumers of the ice after the scrape. Necessary between-scrape maintenance consists of pebbling, nipping, and post-game sweeping.

Leagues are responsible for pebbling and nipping the sheets prior to a draw. Most leagues contain members of the ice crew, but any interested club members are encouraged to learn how to pebble the ice properly. Poor pebbling can contribute to poor ice conditions, so it is important that those who do pebble are trained by a member of the ice crew in how to do it properly. [Note: just because someone has pebbled in the past, does NOT mean that they were ever properly trained.] The ice crew will provide training opportunities early in the season, but are also willing to assist in teaching throughout the season by request (and if you buy them a drink).

All members should be reminded of the club etiquette of the winning team sweeping the sheet following their match. Even so, it is important to minimize the amount of dirt and debris left on the sheet by having clean and well-maintained shoes and equipment.

The official club policy concerning grippers for members is detailed on the website at <http://curlingseattle.org/members/policy/>. Members should be directed to it if they have any questions. This policy states that only dedicated curling shoes may be worn on the ice. Members are expected to have clean grippers in good condition (no holes). The bottom line is that we require all members to make their best effort at keeping the ice clean and free of foreign debris.

## Speed of Play

League games are expected to be completed in the allotted time (2 hours). With reasonable speed, this should allow a full 8 ends to be completed. League members should be reminded of these expectations. Those teams playing excessively slow should realize that they will not be able to complete all 8 ends.

League managers are encouraged to implement a policy to handle slow games. The most common system involves sounding the buzzer at a set time (usually between 20-25 minutes prior to the end of 2 hours). Teams are then allowed to complete their current end, and play one final end.

Teams should also be informed how to handle ties at the completion of 8 ends (or the allotted time). This is usually either recording the game as a tie, or a draw to the button to decide the winner.

## Communication with Members

The League Manager is encouraged to use the club's email mailing lists to communicate with the league members. This list may also be used by league members to contact each other and substitutes. League standings and schedules may be sent to this email alias.

## Email Aliases

Each league has their own email alias. The mailing list aliases are:

- [mixeddoubles@curlingseattle.org](mailto:mixeddoubles@curlingseattle.org)
- [sundayopen@curlingseattle.org](mailto:sundayopen@curlingseattle.org)
- [sundaymixed@curlingseattle.org](mailto:sundaymixed@curlingseattle.org)
- [mondayopen@curlingseattle.org](mailto:mondayopen@curlingseattle.org)
- [tuesdayearly@curlingseattle.org](mailto:tuesdayearly@curlingseattle.org)
- [superleague@curlingseattle.org](mailto:superleague@curlingseattle.org)
- [wednesdaywomens@curlingseattle.org](mailto:wednesdaywomens@curlingseattle.org)
- [thursdaymorning@curlingseattle.org](mailto:thursdaymorning@curlingseattle.org)
- [thursdaymens@curlingseattle.org](mailto:thursdaymens@curlingseattle.org)
- [fridayjuniors@curlingseattle.org](mailto:fridayjuniors@curlingseattle.org)
- [fridayopen@curlingseattle.org](mailto:fridayopen@curlingseattle.org)

If you have sent a message to the members' list, you should be familiar with how this system works. If not, think of it as a pre-packaged collection of email addresses. The League Chair will assist at the start of the season with subscribing all of the curlers in your league to the mailing list.

The following sections are meant to help you with management of the list and to address any requests by other members to join or leave the list.

## List Subscription

To subscribe to the list, members should send an email to the list's name, for example, if it were for the Monday Open league, "mondayopen-subscribe@curlingseattle.org" ... Looking closely at that, the list's regular name has a "-subscribe" at the end of it.

To unsubscribe from the list, members should send an email to the list's name in a similar manner as before, but with a "-unsubscribe" after the name. Example: [mondayopen-unsubscribe@curlingseattle.org](mailto:mondayopen-unsubscribe@curlingseattle.org)

## Advanced Options

Technically savvy league managers may wish to contact the Leagues Chair to ask for moderator or administrator rights to their league. This will allow them to make changes to the list should the need arise and they feel comfortable with this.

## Food Leagues

Social leagues, and some competitive leagues, generally have an organized system for providing food during the social time following league games. The method of arranging for food varies greatly between leagues, but the following guidelines for use of the club facilities should be observed and discussed with your league members:

- Those providing food are responsible for cleanup of the kitchen and serving areas.
- The club kitchen has a large supply of serving utensils and silverware that you are encouraged to use. All should be washed and returned to its appropriate storage location at the end of the night.
- Any consumable paper products (plates, napkins, etc.) should be brought by those providing food.
- All trash and recycling should be taken down to the dumpsters on the side of the building at the end of the night.
- No left overs should remain and should be taken home or thrown out. The club's fridge is only to be used for short term storage such as on the day of the event.

## Junior Members

Junior's pay the same price as all other members to join any league (with two exceptions: Under 16, Juniors get free admission to the Friday Junior's League; Under 21, Juniors receive a discount for their first league). Therefore, Juniors are welcome to subscribe to any league they chose and should be treated as regular members.

When Juniors are registered in a league, the League Manager must note that if any alcohol is provided as a reward or trophy within the league, the Juniors are not eligible to receive this award. No other reward is expected as a substitute.

Juniors are expected to participate in "Food Leagues." The parents of the Juniors are expected to ensure that the Juniors comply with the policies set forth by the League Manager. At times, the parents may be expected to assist the juniors in complying with these policies.

## **Bar**

Curling is a social sport at all levels. League members should be encouraged to socialize upstairs following their draw in following the Spirit of Curling.

League Managers are responsible for contacting their assigned league bartender if there are any special schedule changes needing the bar to be opened earlier than normal. If not requested otherwise, the bartender will generally plan to have the bar open by the conclusion of the first draw through the social time following the last draw of the evening. Remember that all bartender labor is volunteer. Please remind league members that it is expected that you bus your own glasses and empty bottles back to the bar. Tips to your bartenders are encouraged.

## **Club Security**

All GCC Members are responsible for the security of the equipment and facilities. Club members should be reminded to be aware of any suspicious activity or unknown individuals. The club is open for public viewing during league nights. However, please be aware of unknown guests, and take the opportunity to welcome them and find out why they are visiting the club.

The league bartender is generally responsible for locking up the club at the end of the night, unless arrangements have been made with the league manager or another responsible party to do so.

When asking other members to lock up, please be certain that they have the tools necessary to lock the facility. General members should not know the alarm code. Therefore, if the League Manager, bartender and other key holding members are planning to leave, all other members must exit the building. The board manages access to physical keys and the alarm code and does not wish to share the code with general members. The board needs your help to keep the facility secure and to prevent break-ins.

Please be cautious in considering the safety of members especially at night. Please do not leave anyone to lock up on their own or to walk to their car on their own. We ask that someone is available to walk our female bartenders to their cars.

# History

Major contributions by Joe Roberts; contributions by Jeremy Dinsel ... September 2010  
Review and feedback provided by Jeff Wick ... September 2010  
Additional information added by Jim Sullivan ... October 2010