

# CURLING



## A BASIC GUIDE TO SKIPPING A CURLING TEAM

*(What every Skip should know but is afraid to ask)*



*Facts & Tactics are central to the outcome of every game.*

*This booklet will help with your decisions.*

This booklet is a companion to the  
**CURLING COACHING LIBRARY**



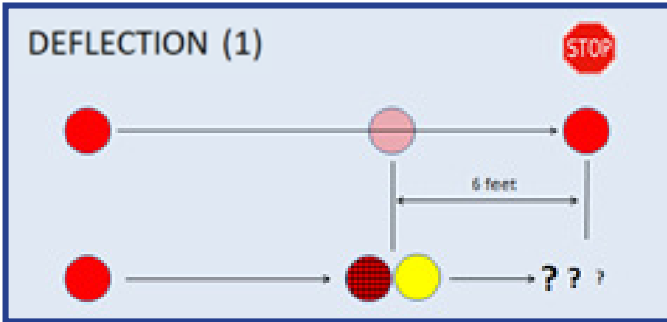
*"The Art of Curling"*

## **Curling Coaching Library**

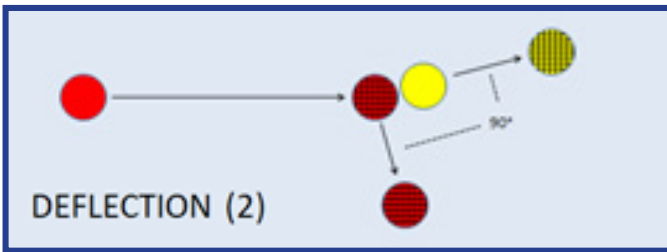
**Website:** <https://curlingcoachinglibrary.ca>



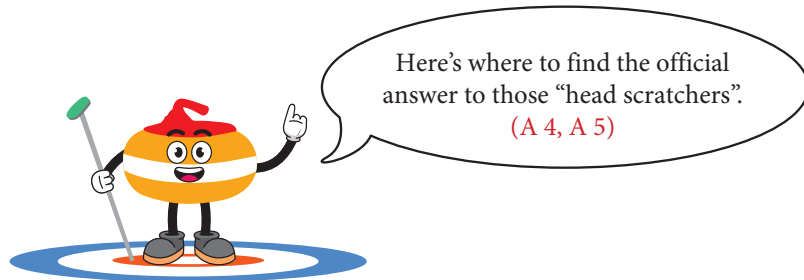
# DEFLECTION



- When rocks collide some, or all, of the energy from the delivered rock will transfer to the stationary rock.
- In this example, the delivered rock, having 6 feet of travel to go, will move the stationary rock almost 6 feet (allowing for inertia).



- In this example, the delivered rock will retain some of its energy while imparting the remainder to the object rock.
- The “deflecting angle” is always 90° (that’s physics).



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



**Jamie Ann Sinclair** is a world class curler. She is a three-time U.S. National Champion. She is also an accomplished videographer. Her website lists over 30 video clips related to curling. Twenty-three have been included in the **Curling Coaching Library**.



**Bob Reid** has been involved with curling as a slide / stick player for several decades. He is a curling coach and is the originator of numerous coaching programs. Bob is a keen student of the game of curling and has applied his expertise to the development of the **Curling Coaching Library** and this companion booklet. (Contact: reid@eagle.ca)



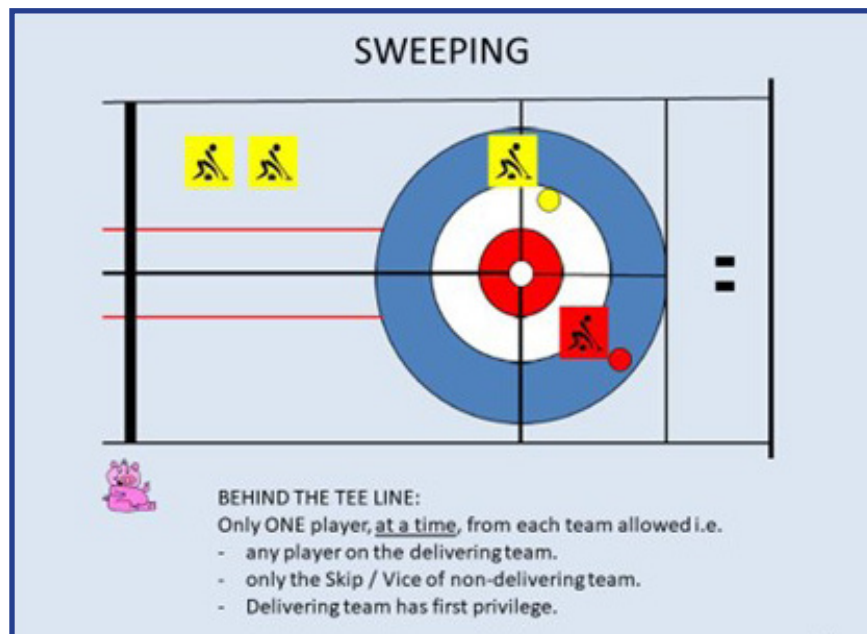


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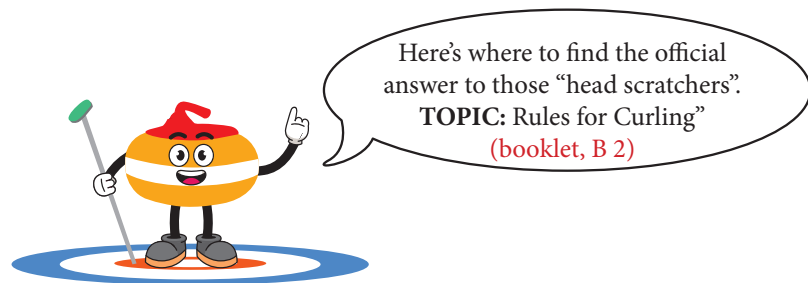
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# SWEEPING BEHIND THE TEE LINE

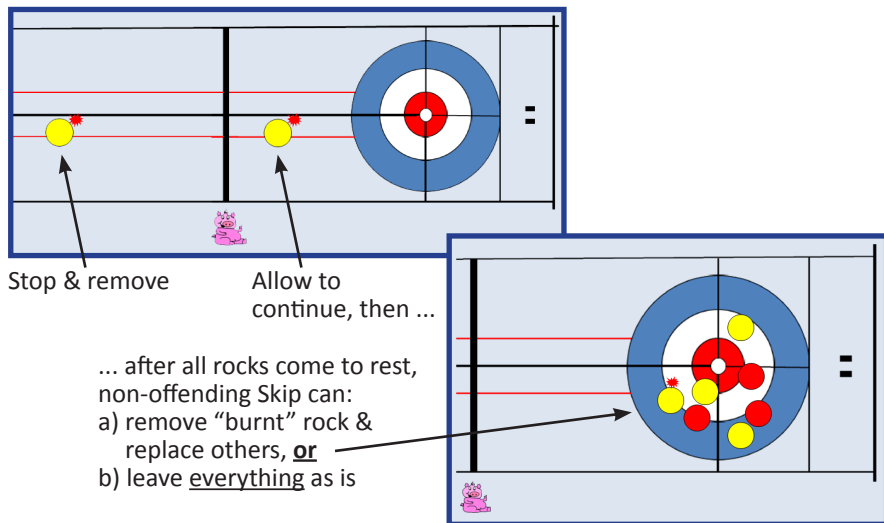


- **ANY** member of the **delivering team** may sweep rocks behind the tee line.
- **ONLY** one of either the skip or vice in the house, of the **non-delivering team** may sweep rocks.
- The delivering team must not be obstructed from sweeping their own stone.

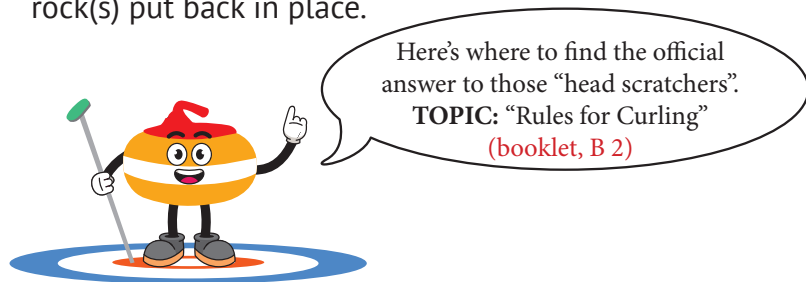




# TOUCHED (“BURNT”) ROCK



- If a delivered rock is contacted by a broom, a shoe or anything else, while in motion, a violation has taken place.
- If the violation takes place **BEFORE** the rock crosses the far hog line, it should be stopped & removed from play.
- If the violation takes place **AFTER** the rock crosses the far hog line it should be allowed to continue, then..
- The non-offending skip can choose to have the rock removed or left as is.
- Should the house be disturbed, the non-offending skip can:
  - i) leave everything as is, or
  - ii) have the touched rock removed & all other disturbed rock(s) put back in place.



# RULES OF CURLING



## Curling Canada

September 2022 - August 2026

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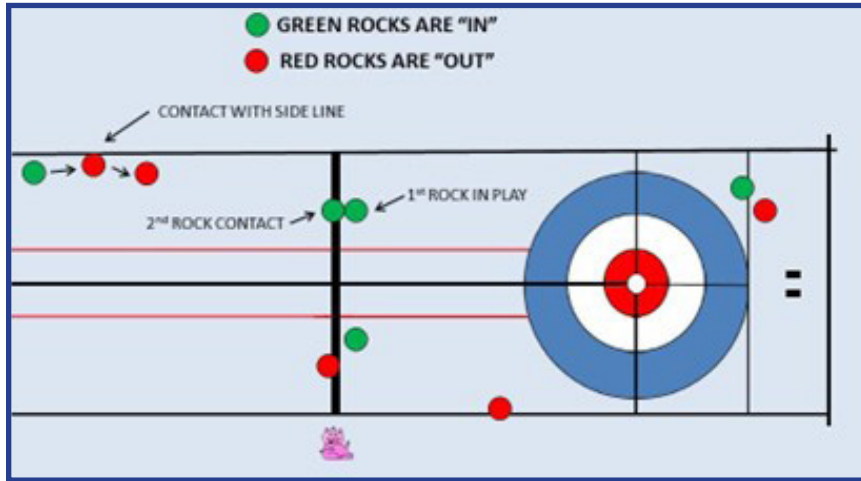
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# IN/OUT OF PLAY



- A rock that touches a side line is **OUT** of play & must be removed *even if it re-enters the sheet*.
- A rock that does not **completely** cross the hog line is **OUT** of play & must be removed.
- A rock not over the hog line, but is in touch with a rock that is over the hog line, is **IN**.
- A rock, not **completely** over the back line is **IN**.



# F.E.S.R.A.I.

## Considerations before calling a shot:

- F** - Free Guard Zone Rule
- E** - End
- S** - Score
- R** - Last Rock
- A** - Ability
- I** - Ice



**"Can I still use the *Free Guard Zone* rule?"**  
(TOPIC: "Playing WITH The Hammer") (video, A 7)

**"What *End* are we in?"**  
(TOPIC: "The Basics") (video, B 19)

**"What is the *Score*?"**  
(TOPIC: "Strategy - Tactics", intermediate) (leaflet, I 3)

**"Do I have the *Last Rock*?"**  
(TOPIC: "Strategy - Tactics", basic) (leaflet, I 3)

**"What is the *Ability* of the player in the hack?"**  
(TOPIC: "The Basics") (video, B 19)

**"What are the present *Ice* conditions?"**  
(TOPIC: "5 Factors in Decision Making") (video, A 8)



# OFFENSIVE vs DEFENSIVE SHOTS

## SHOTS TO:



gain points for (**OFFENSIVE**)



prevent points against (**DEFENSIVE**)



play when you are down in points (**OFFENSIVE**)



play when you are up in points (**DEFENSIVE**)

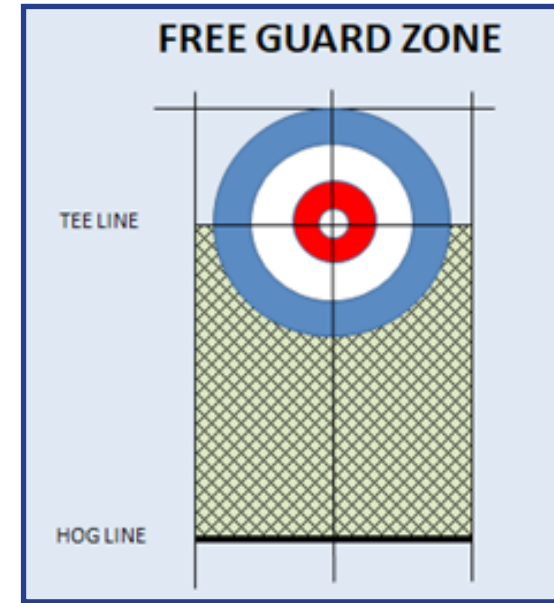
- This much misunderstood view point is *counter intuitive*. For example: A hit shot appears to be offensive when, in fact it is **DEFENSIVE**. A draw shot might appear to be defensive when, in fact, it is **OFFENSIVE**.
- **Every rock played** is either **OFFENSIVE** or **DEFENSIVE** (see BASIC TACTICS SUMMARY, p7).
- With the hammer, the skip should focus on **OFFENSIVE** shots to score points (i.e. draw shots).
- Without the hammer, the skip should focus on **DEFENSIVE** shots (hits) to prevent the opposing team from scoring.
  - So, when you have the hammer, why would you call **DEFENSIVE** shots (hits)? This is a common mistake.



Here's where to find the official answer to those "head scratchers".  
**TOPIC:** "Playing WITH The Hammer" (video, A 7)



# 5-ROCK RULE



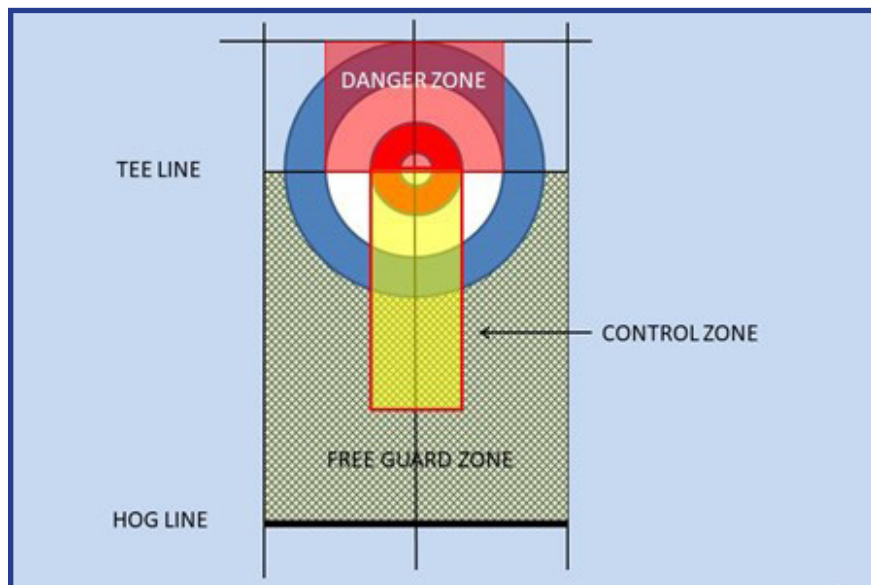
- The **5-Rock Rule** is described in the official "Rules of Curling", Rule 12 (Free Guard Zone).
- It is not until *after* the 5<sup>th</sup> rock in the end is played that an opponent's rock can be hit out of play. It can be moved (ticked) but **NOT** driven out.
- You may take any of your own team's rock(s) out of play.
- Any rock **NOT** in the Free Guard Zone (i.e. touching or in the house) may be driven out of play before the 6<sup>th</sup> rock.



Here's where to find the official answer to those "head scratchers".  
**TOPIC:** Five Rock Rule (booklet + video, I 4, B 18)



# THE 3 ZONES



- In the **DANGER ZONE** your rocks play to your opponent's advantage. Your opponent's rocks in this zone are to your advantage.
- The **CONTROL ZONE** is critical. When you have the hammer play *away* from this zone. When you don't have the hammer play centre guards to block your opponent.
- Take full advantage of the **FREE GUARD ZONE**. Position your rocks to score when you have the hammer (e.g. corner guards). Otherwise play centre guards when you don't have the hammer.



Here's where to find the official answer to those "head scratchers".  
**TOPIC:** The 3 Zones  
 (slide, I 5)



# BRUSHING EFFECT



- **BRUSHING** (or, sweeping) only has an effect if it is done close to the rock.
- The further away the brush is from the rock the less effect it has. Beyond approximately 18" the brushing has **NO** effect other than to clean the ice.
- Effective sweeping requires that the broom pad be new or kept very clean.
- **ONLY** top class, *extremely fit*, players with excellent equipment & technique, can achieve "directional" sweeping.
- Good sweeping can only *elongate* the direction the rock is already travelling. Skips need to anticipate when to call, or call off, sweeping. See: **WATCH THE LINE**, p10.

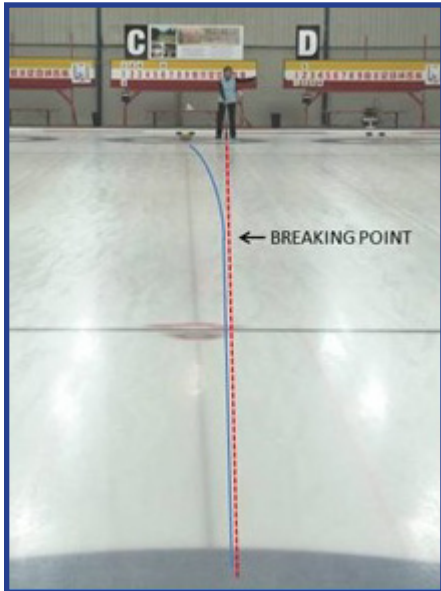


Here's where to find the official answer to those "head scratchers".  
**TOPIC:** "Sweeping Form"  
 (video, B 12)





# WATCH THE LINE



- Be aware of the path of every rock, including those of your opponent.
- Take note of the **BREAKING POINT** (i.e. the place on the ice where the rock leaves the line & begins to curl). This observation is **key** to your decision re. sweeping. (See “Brushing Effect”)



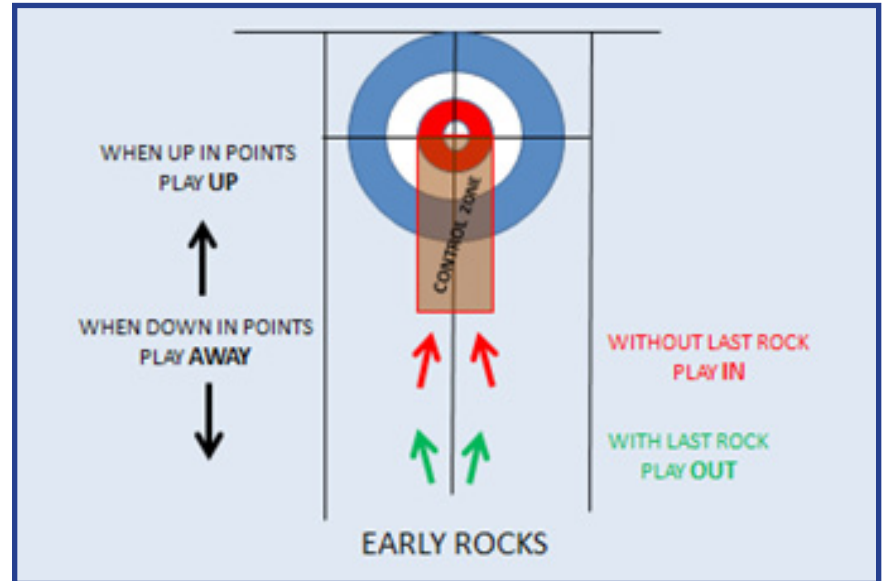
- **WATCH.**
- **Every rock** provides useful information, even those that are poorly delivered.
- Knowing, & remembering, what the rocks are doing allows you to “map out the ice”.



Here’s where to find the official answer to those “head scratchers”.  
**TOPIC:** “How To Call Line”  
 (video, A 2)



# BASIC TACTICS SUMMARY



- When you have the hammer, play **offensively** (i.e. corner guard draws). Try to score multiple points.
- Without the hammer, play **defensively** (i.e. corner guards). Prevent your opponent from scoring.
- When up in points, play **UP**. Force your opponent to play defensively (i.e. preventing them from scoring points).
- When down in points, play **AWAY**. Try to set up scoring opportunities.



Here’s where to find the official answer to those “head scratchers”.  
**TOPIC:** Opening Tactics  
 (slide, I 1)



## ACCURATE PLACEMENT OF THE BROOM



- For **DRAW** shots, place your broom on the Tee line. This provides you with a reference point for subsequent shots. Take note of the accuracy of the delivery line played. Adjust accordingly.
- For **HIT** shots, place the broom *alongside* the rock to be contacted. Allow line for the speed of the shot requested (i.e. close to the rock for “take-out” weight, away from the rock for lesser weights).



Here's where to find the official answer to those “head scratchers”.  
**TOPIC:** How to call a Shot  
 (video, B 20)



## BASIC SHOT SIGNALS



- There are no “official” signals that a skip must use. Whichever signals you use, make sure that your player understands the shot to be played.

### Above are a few signals in common use:

1. “This is where I want the rock to end up”.
2. “This is the line & rotation that I want you to play”.
3. Play “board weight” (i.e. only sufficient weight to barely reach the boards).
4. Play “tap weight” (i.e. sufficient weight to move the indicated rock the length indicated on the broom).



Here's where to find the official answer to those “head scratchers”.  
**TOPIC:** Skip's hand signals  
 (video, A 1)