

THE  
CURLER'S  
GUIDE

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# THE CURLER'S GUIDE.

PRICE TEN CENTS.

TORONTO.

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1880.

*Published by J. S. Russell, 30 Front Street East, and  
to be had of all Booksellers.*

The large and constantly increasing number of gentlemen in Ontario, who are being attracted to take part in the Ancient and Noble Game of Curling, and the frequent inquiries made after directions how to play the Game, furnish the reason why the Writer of this Guide has made an effort towards supplying the desideratum; and he hopes that it will be found useful, especially to those beginning to play, and in this way contribute to the promotion of this manly and invigorating recreation.

TORONTO, NOV. 1, 1880.


# The Curler's Guide

## THE CURLER'S GUIDE.

If you'd be a curler keen,  
Stand right, look even,  
Sole well; shoot straight, and sweep clean.

*The Old Curler "Word."*

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 The first duties of an intending Curler, are to connect himself with a Curling Club, and to equip himself with a pair of Curling Stones.

### STONES.

Among the many varieties of rock which have been used for Curling Stones, a very decided preference must be given to the Ailsa Craig Granite; it is not surpassed by any variety in durability or in beauty, and it far excels every other in "uniformity of running" in widely differing degrees of temperature.

The Dark Gray or Black Granites, variously named after the localities where found, while good to play with when the atmosphere is cold, and the ice is hard and keen, are not fit to be used when the ice is soft and "drug;" for the reason, that, being excellent conductors, they quickly become of the same temperature as the atmosphere, and adhere so closely to the ice, that they can be played only with the exercise of great force; and when played, and "at rest," are, from their adhesion to the ice, and immobility, very apt to break, or be broken, when struck by another stone; and, for these reasons, they are rapidly giving place to the more desirable Ailsa Craigs.

Of these, there are three distinct varieties: viz. the Common or Spotted; the Blue or Gray Honed; and the Red Honed; which differ from each other not only in colour, but in specific gravity and hardness, and to some extent in "running character." The "Spotted" is of the least specific gravity, and

consequently a given weight has a greater bulk than either of the others; and the Red Honed is the densest and hardest.

Opinions vary in regard to the beauty of the several kinds, and there is not much difference in their playing qualities, when new; the Honed are however growing in favour, notwithstanding their higher price, and for the following reasons, viz.—their heavier weight for a given size; their greater hardness and toughness, which renders them less liable to be broken, or to have the projecting “striking band” so quickly worn down, by the continual impact with other stones, or to have the sharp edge of the “dull” side worn off, so quickly, in the course of playing. It is also generally admitted, that the “Reds” are more easily played “up,” than either of the others, when the ice is soft; but, with any of the three kinds, a good curler can make fine play.

### **WEIGHT.**

The rules of the game limit the size to 36 inches in circumference, and the weight to 50lbs; and provide for the general shape, that the height shall not be less than one-eighth of the circumference; and, as a result of these regulations, the stones in use range from 36 to 48 lbs; the favourite weights, for men of ordinary strength, being from 39 to 41 lbs. A good guide to go by in selecting the proper weight of Curling Stones, is to bear in mind that it be such as the player may, with reasonable ease, continue to play, full up to the Tee, for four hours, even when the ice may be a little soft, or “drug.”

### **BUILD.**

While the rules of the game, already referred to, provide for the general shape, there is large room left for diversity in what may be called the “build” of the stone; some appearing “flat” and “broad,” and others “high” and “dumpy”; both extremes are to be avoided, as they interfere with the proper delivery of the stone, making it difficult and uncertain. A 40lb stone with a circumference of about  $35\frac{1}{4}$  inches, and a height of about  $5\frac{3}{8}$  inches, will be considered by most curlers a good build: other weights in proportion.

A build rather inclining, when new, to excess in breadth, is to be preferred to one “rather high,” as the constant striking and jarring against other stones tends to reduce the excess of breadth, and soon makes the “high” stone dumpy.

### **PATTERNS.**

All curling stones are now made reversible, having two sides or soles, called respectively the *keen* and the *dull*, the latter being that generally used in playing; the former being used only when, from softness of the ice, or from falling snow, it becomes too laborious a task, to play with the “dull” side, up to the Tee.

The “dull” side is made concave at the centre, rising to a narrow edge on which the stone glides, and which is called the “running” edge; and the sharpness of this edge, and the width of its diameter determine the running character of the stone. The sharper the edge is, the stone will grip the ice the more firmly, and hold its directed course the more certainly; while the width of the diameter, not only adds to the resistance of the stone, and demands more force to play it, but also determines the extent of the “side-ways” direction the stone will take during its course, and especially as it comes to “at rest,” in obedience to what are called the “in-turn” and the “out-turn,” communicated to it by a turn of the wrist as it leaves the hand in playing; the principle being, that the wider the diameter of the “running edge” of the stone is, it will take, in curling phrase, “a wider borrow,” or a greater sideways inclination from a straight course, in the direction of the “turn” it receives, at its delivery from the hand. It is very important, that in every pair of stones, the diameter and the sharpness of this running edge be, in both stones, exactly alike.

The “keen” side has also of late years been made slightly concave, and the running edge is not sharp, as on the “dull” side, but rounded; which enables the stone to glide over ice so soft that the sharp edge of the dull side would cut into it, and it is only on such ice that the keen side is intended to be used. These patterns, although only introduced into Canada a few years ago, have been received with universal approbation.

## HANDLES.

Handles are of two patterns, viz., the straight and the oval; the wood-part of the latter swelling out, at the centre, to fill the palm of the hand, while the former is of one thickness throughout. The one is as good as the other, custom mainly making either preferred. It may be laid down as a rule, that players who grip the handle with the full hand generally choose the oval; while those who grip with only two or three fingers usually prefer the straight. Of bolts, those with the square head are to be preferred to those with round head and side catch, because the latter are apt to become loose. Stones should never be played, without a washer between plate of handle and stone.

Having secured a pair of stones to his taste, and furnished himself with rubber overshoes and a broom, our young curler may now take his place on the rink. He will find the Tee surrounded by several circles marked in the ice, and, about five feet behind the outer circle, he will find the “Hack” or foot-hold used in playing. Standing by this Hack, and looking in the direction of the further Tee, he will place his left foot forward, about eighteen inches from the Hack and a little to the left of the centre of the Rink; he will then place his right foot in the Hack, pressing the sole of his boot against the perpendicular back of it, the ball of his great toe resting on the sloping part, and about its centre; he will then, bending forward, grasp the curling stone by the handle, look carefully to the broom held to direct his aim, and steadily lift the stone upwards and backwards, poise it behind, and then, swinging it forward and downward in an easy curve, he will deliver it from his hand just when the curve described by the stone makes a tangent with the ice. When lifting and poising the stone, the player rests mainly upon his right foot, but changes to the left when bringing the stone downwards and forwards to the point of delivery, when the entire weight rests upon the left foot, which at this stage will be moved by an involuntary muscular motion, if necessary to restore the equilibrium of the body disturbed by the act of playing.

The momentum and the general direction are given to the stone, between the point of poising it behind and the point of delivery on the ice, by a motion which may be described as “swinging it forward,”—the arc described by the arm being modified by the downward and forward bending of the body. The momentum can be greatly increased by raising the stone higher behind, and thus securing additional force from its own weight falling farther, and by the greater muscular contraction exerted over a larger space.

Before playing, every curler ought to make sure that the “sole” of his stone is perfectly clean,—free from pieces of brooms, from snow, ice and dust. The ice must be scraped off, the other matters can generally be taken off by the broom.

### **ERRORS TO BE GUARDED AGAINST.**

1st. Holding the stone in the hand, and swinging it backwards and forwards before playing, instead of as already described.

2nd. Dumping the forward edge of the stone on the ice, at the point of delivery. This is caused by letting go the stone too soon, or before the sole of



the stone has reached the plane of the ice.

3rd. Dumping the back edge of the stone on the ice, at the point of delivery; which is caused by holding on to the stone too long, or until after the sole has passed the plane of the ice.

4th. Dropping the stone on the ice at time of delivery from the hand. This is caused by maintaining the body in a too erect position, or by not bending low enough so that the stone may touch the ice at time of delivery.

In either of these four cases the stone is made to “wobble”, and its destination becomes very uncertain.

## THE TURNS.

After the player has learned to deliver the stone properly, he may begin to acquire the accomplishment of the “in” and “out” turns. The *in* turn gives a revolving motion to the stone towards the right, the *out* turn a similar motion towards the left, and deflect the course of the stone from a straight line in the direction of the revolving motion, especially when it is coming to “at rest”. The turn is communicated to the stone by a turn or twist of the wrist, made at the moment of delivering it on the ice; and such a twist as will cause the stone to make four or five revolutions, while passing down the rink, will accomplish any ordinary result: a wider lateral direction will necessarily be conveyed by a more powerful twist, producing more frequent revolutions of the stone during its course, and a wider sweep at the end; but this demands more momentum in a forward direction, and if this be given in too great measure, it will entirely overcome the influence of the twist, and carry the stone in a straight line, and too far; and in both ways disappoint the player.

In beginning to play with the turns, many players swing the stone towards the side indicated by the turn, instead of straight towards the mark, and with the proper twist of the wrist; this habit will disappear, as soon as the player has acquired the *knack* of using his arm for the one purpose, and his wrist for the other, and he will not be a Curler until he has acquired this art.

The turns have been named *in* and *out*, from the manner in which the handle is turned, when screwing it on the bolt passing through the stone.

In taking aim, players should fix their eye steadily on the point indicated, and lift and play their stone without taking their eye off the object aimed at, guiding the stone, in the proper direction, from the point of poising to the

point of delivery. Many good players bring their hand, grasping the handle of the stone, into a direct line between their eye and the point aimed at, and then lift the stone, and play it in the manner before described.

Young players should guard against the not uncommon practise, of turning their face downwards towards their feet, when in the act of playing; it is a bad habit, will make their aim very uncertain, and if, as it is often, caused by the too great weight of the stones, lighter ones should be got.

The practice of playing by shoving or pushing the stone, cannot be approved of. It was the only mode of playing before handles were invented, but is out of date now.

Every player should study with care the peculiarities of his stones:—the difference of their running on ice of differing degrees of keenness; the borrow they take; the difference between the force they require when played, 1st, without any turn, 2nd, with only a moderate degree of turn, 3rd, with a strong degree of turn, etc.

If the stones do not run alike, it is most probable that the running edge of the duller one is sharper than that of the keener, and a few minutes application of a close-grained scythe stone, or Water of Ayr whetstone, long enough to cover at once both sides of the sharp edge, will make it as keen as the other.

The “Points Game,” which is fully described, and illustrated by diagrams in the Annuals of the Ontario Branch, embraces every “shot” which a curler will be asked to make in playing; with this difference, in the Points Game the playing is mainly on centre ice, while in a regular Match Game it is more frequently to one side or other of the centre. But there is no better training for a young curler than the Game of Points, which includes all the elements of curling; and success in it will speedily lead to confidence and success in the more exciting Match Game, and convert the junior into a “grand” curler, able, like Tam Samson, of immortal fame,

To draw a port, or wick a bore,  
To lay a guard just o’er the score,  
Or up the rink like Jehu roar,  
In time o’ need.

J. S. RUSSELL,

*30 Front Street East, Toronto,*

MANUFACTURER OF

CURLING STONES

AND HANDLES.

I desire to remind Curlers that all my Stones are made specially to order, after my well known model, from select blocks; and would further inform them that by the invention of a self-adjusting grinder, (of which the manufacturer who makes for me alone, on this side the Atlantic, is the patentee) the Stones of this year's make are a long way ahead of anything that has been made heretofore, or that can be made without this new machine, in exactness and perfectness of running surface. A large supply expected about the 10th or 12th November, and a second lot early in December. Prices close as usual.

Handles, the strongest, best and finest finished in the trade, made under my own supervision, of the best materials.

J. S. RUSSELL.

THE END

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

Book name and author have been added to the original book cover. The resulting cover is placed in the public domain.

[The end of *The Curler's Guide* by Anonymous]