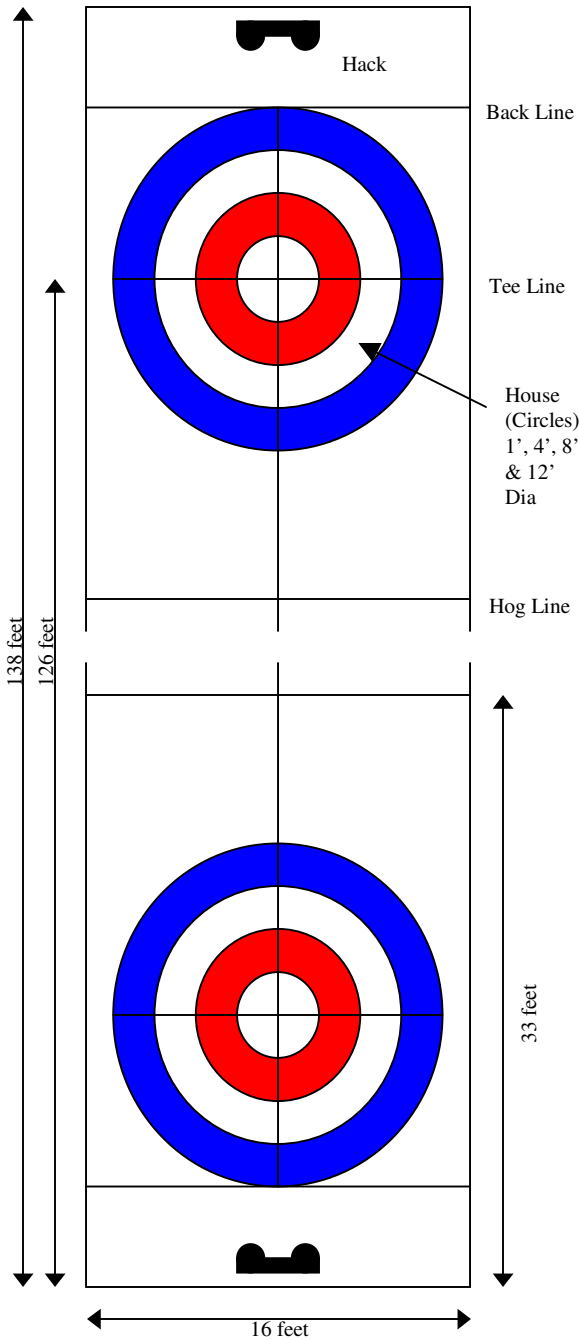


**THE PLAYING SURFACE**



If you would like to try curling or would like to know more about the sport, please contact us at the following:

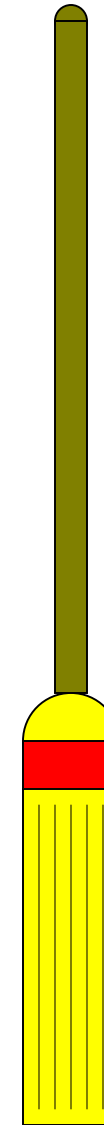
**The Curling Club of Houston**

*[www.houstoncurling.com](http://www.houstoncurling.com)*

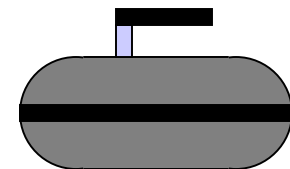
**USA Curling**

*[www.usacurl.org](http://www.usacurl.org)*

If you could invent a game that's a combination of shuffleboard, bowling, bocce bowls, billiards, golf and chess -- played on pebbled ice -- you'd probably invent



**CURLING!**



*[www.houstoncurling.com](http://www.houstoncurling.com)*

## THE SPORT OF CURLING

Curling is, at the same time, both a simple game and a challenging sport. A team (or rink) consists of four players: lead, second, third and skip. Alternating between teams, each player “throws” two rocks on each “end” (a segment of the game where each rock is played, like an inning in baseball). The object is to get your team’s rocks closer to the center of the “house” (the circles or target on the ice) than your opponents rocks.

The rocks are made of solid granite and weigh about 42 pounds. When a rock is thrown it is usually rotated, which causes the rock to “curl” or follow a curved path on the ice - hence the name curling. This allows for the strategy of the game to be employed. Types of shots typically used are:

- Draw - the rock is thrown just hard enough to stop in the house, sometimes curling behind another rock
- Take-out - a rock thrown hard to knock an opponent’s rock out of the house
- Guard - a rock thrown to a place on the ice where it will protect another rock from being taken out
- Raise - a rock thrown to bump a team mate’s rock closer to the center of the house

Sweeping the ice in front of a moving rock polishes the ice and makes the rock travel faster and further and follow a straighter line than it would without sweeping. Curling ice is “pebbled” (sprinkled with droplets of water prior to starting play) to help reduce friction and make the rocks slide more easily on the ice.

## THE HISTORY OF THE SPORT

Curling is old enough that its exact origins are not known. The current sport originated in Scotland in the 1600s. At first, it was a game of strength played on frozen lakes and ponds with natural, flat-bottomed river stones weighing up to 100 pounds. Smooth, circular rocks with handles and a game based more on skill and finesse became popular about 200 years ago.

Curling was first played in North America by Scottish soldiers serving with General Wolfe at Quebec in the 1700s. They used “iron stones” - actually melted cannon balls - and curled on the St. Lawrence River.

Curling is primarily played socially at the club level, but also competitively for both cash prizes and for both national and international recognition. More than a million curlers in 25 countries around the world participate in the sport, ranging in age from their pre-teens to their 90s. Curling is a rare sport where men and women compete with and against each other in mixed competition.

Curling has been an official sport of the Winter Olympic Games since 1998 in Nagano, Japan. There are also men’s, women’s and juniors (boys and girls under 21) World Championships held every year. The dominant countries in the sport are Canada, Scotland, Denmark and Sweden, though recent years have seen teams from several other countries win world titles. The USA has won four world titles.

## THE CURLING CLUB OF HOUSTON

Formed in the fall of 1973 at the Ice Haus in Town and Country Village, the Curling Club of Houston is a group of men and women who play the sport of curling once a week from October through March, at the Space City Ice Station. The Houston Club, along with the Dallas club, is one of the few places to curl outside the northern US. Most curlers in the US play in Minnesota, Wisconsin and other northern states.

Members of the Club periodically participate in regional and national competitions. In 2005, a Houston team qualified for the Men’s National Championship in Chicago, IL. In 2001 and 2002, Houston teams competed in the Mixed National Championships in Rice Lake, WI, and Seattle, WA, respectively.. A women’s team from the Curling Club of Houston won the 1991 US Women’s Championship and represented the USA at the World Championships.

Some of our members have curled extensively, mostly in Canada. Others took up the sport for the first time right here in Houston.

The competition can be very keen but is always friendly. We play in accordance with the spirit of curling: “Curlers always play to win, but never to humble their opponents. A curler would rather lose than win unfairly.”

Curling is a sport that must be played to be loved. Once you have tried it, you may find that curling is easy to like, difficult to master, and almost impossible to quit.