

# CURLING CLINIC STRATEGY SESSION

## January 18, 2025

### Strategy is about Planning

#### Key Points T.I.E.S

- Team ability (call what you can make)
  - Ice Conditions (fast, slow, curly, straight, fall, run) can change
  - End in the Game (patient, but go hard if you must score)
    - Nice to have hammer in even ends
  - Score of the Game (aggressive if down, safe if up)
1. YOU AND YOUR TEAM -- The Other Team
    - a. Understand your strengths -- don't play into the strength of the other team
    - b. Understand your weaknesses -- does the other team have a weakness
    - c. Don't call a shot you know you or your player can't make (be brutally honest)
    - d. Try to keep it simple – make the other team throw the hard shots
    - e. Be patient
  2. READ THE ICE (this is a lifelong exercise)
    - a. You have to learn to read the ice
      - i. Is the ice slow or fast
      - ii. Is the ice straight or swingy
      - iii. Are there unusual conditions – runs, frost, bumps, etc.
      - iv. How big is the curl
      - v. How much does speed impact on the curl
      - vi. Anticipate the break
      - vii. Watch the release
  3. TIMING
    - a. Early in the game you can be more aggressive
    - b. Try to control the even ends
    - c. If you are down – make sure you have enough ends left to win
  4. SCORING IS EVERYTHING
    - a. If you are losing you can take more risk – lose by 1 or 10
    - b. Risk versus Reward – do you have to multiple

## **General Approach**

Today's game is to the center – get in first – ahead of T and protect

- Everyone has an important role. Help each other, but do your job well
- The Skip is in charge of strategy – but should listen to advice
- Watch every shot – yours and the oppositions – and learn what the ice is doing. Reading the ice is critical.
- Look for speed and curl.
- Map in-turns and out-turns.
- Remember, conditions can change during the game.
- Use the T-Line as your reference point and adjust your broom along that line
- Remember the game is long. Be patient – watch for openings.
- Play each end as a game – Control the center of the sheet/rings.

## **Let's Begin:**

Think each shot thru – the PRO-SIDE MISS – can the shot be light, heavy

- When you are up --- hit
- When you are down --- draw
- When ice is straight --- hit
- When ice is curly --- draw
- When ice is fast --- hit
- When ice is slow --- draw
- Leads usually put up center guards, then come around them to the Top Button
- Straight ice usually favours a hitting game. Swingy ice favours a draw game
- Remember –you can't improve a rock behind the T-Line
- When you have Hammer you can be a little more aggressive.
- Without last rock you have to avoid giving up a multiple score. Don't let too many opposition rocks build up.
- If you are ahead – keep the pressure on but don't get too aggressive and give up a multiple score. If their rock is out of play it can't count
- Always try to leave yourself a “last shot” – have two shot options
- Try to guess what your opposition will do or wants you to do – and try to make them do something different
- If you are losing – keep rocks in play – they can/may help.

## Stages of a game

- Control the front of the house – between 4ft lines from 4 ft. out to top button
  - Without hammer – manage the Control Zone
  - With hammer – keep center available - get in and hide – above the T line
  - Early - get to know the ice – your team – their team
  - Late – if ahead – keep simple – if behind adjust your plan
  - First rock – control the front zone – tight center guard
  - Last rock – keep your rock aggressive – in, or tight corner
  - Down in game – take calculated risks – more rocks in play and above T
  - Ahead in game – keep it simple – clean – open
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- Taps and rolls are often good – weight control – back line
  - Avoid locking stones unless you need guard
  - Give yourself a second shot
  - Always look for a Plan B – if first shot is missed what else can happen
  - Avoid shots that can hurt if not made – reduce your risk – increase theirs
  - Take 2 – Steal 1 – Force is always good
  - A blank is usually better – but take one rather than miss and give up one (pro-side miss)
  - Take the sure point (safer point) over the risky shot for an extra point – unless you have to
  - Patience is good – you don't always have to chase shot rock – set up shots can be better
  - Play the ice you know --- going to new turn or new ice is tricky
  - Outside-in usually has more curl than inside-out. Avoid going too far out – always tricky
  - Try to always release the same way – easier for the skip and team to learn from (3 rotations) Slow or no rotation rocks REALLY CURL or lose handle

You can have the best strategy and still lose the game if you don't make the shots

If you are skipping your makes and misses usually dictate who wins or loses

REMEMBER– NOBODY TRIES TO THROW A MISS–THEY JUST HAPPEN

## Who Does What?

### Lead:

- You are the first to throw – BE READY
- Let others put rocks away – get your stone - get into the hack – get ready to throw
- Keep an eye on the clock – keep the others moving – 15 minutes per end (MAX)
  
- Mostly draw game
- Either just short of house (offensive) or top of 4ft (defensive)
- Tick or Tap – to quietly move rocks around
- Control weight hits
  
- 1. Reading the ice for weight and conditions
- 2. Always try to guess the weight and communicate with the Skip
- 3. **COMMUNICATIONS IS CRITICAL – EVEN IF WRONG – 3 TIMES ON THE WAY DOWN**
- 4. You have a partner – discuss – then tell – then adjust – and tell
- 5. Look for change – frost – damage

### Second:

- You are the set up guy – so you have to be able to hit and draw
- With the 5 rock rule you can be called on to draw around or hit
- If ahead you are hitting – if behind you are drawing
  
- 1. Like the Lead – you are reading the ice for weight and conditions
- 2. Weight is such a key factor in how a rock curls your help on weight calls are critical
- 3. Directional sweeping is becoming more important – for good sweepers
- 4. Closest to the rock is best for sweeping (90 %) – **let strongest sweeper close**
  
- You are the time keeper – keep everyone moving

### Vice:

- Best position on the team – lots of key shots – but no pressure
- Skips will often use Vice to try the challenging shots – if missed still time to recover
- You are the team communicator
  - Skip will ask you to bring information to the front end
  - Front end will ask you to bring info to the Skip
  - You have to help manage the Skip – give advice
- In addition to watching for weight, you have to know how to read the ice
  - You only get to see 4 rocks per end – Skip will help out
- You post the score
- You handle the measures

### Skip: (Treat with caution – moody, touchy, grouchy)

- It's a team sport but the Skip dictates the strategy for the game
- Team usually has a plan – but Skip implements the plan
- Use all of your resources – your team – the other team - adjust to circumstances
- Score, End, Ability. -- Offence? Defence?