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Some of the Curling Words Used in the Game of Curling

"Turned In and Out," "Narrow and Wide" "Wi' Besom and Stane." Third of the Series of Articles Written for The Advance by an Enthusiast on the Roarin' Game.

The following is the third in the series of articles written for The Advance by a Curling enthusiast.

Every game has its own curious terms and in this respect curling is not peculiar as its language contains many terms which are strange to those unused to them. In those games the curious terms seem to be just as necessary as the rules which govern the play. However to know something of the game of curling in so far as its language and vocabulary is concerned we shall endeavour in this article to set forth. If you play golf just ask yourself what the game would be without its vocabulary and of course in the question all thoughts of cusswords are put to one side.

Those who have bowled on the lawn will see a marked resemblance to curling for to all intents and purposes curling is bowling on the ice, the place of the 'jack' in bowls being taken by fixed mark called the 'tee' to which the player sends the stone. A rink is marked out on the ice which should be hard and clear, or in curling language 'keen and clear.' To keep the ice clean and polished each curler carries a broom, which on occasions he works with a dexterity only equalled by an aspirant for the presidency of the housemaid's union. Good sweeping, or 'sooping,' is part of the curler's art and the progress of a stone retarded by ice or snow dust may be assisted by sweeping in front of a running stone.

The implements of the curler then are the broom and curling stones, or "besom and tanes." If you will look up the word "besom" in the dictionary you will find that it is a brush of twigs for sweeping. The besom of other days has suffered from the refining influences of change without decay but the word still remains in curling language. The curling stone is simply a polished and flattened granite disk fitted with a handle. The stone has two flat sides so shaped that one gives better service on 'keen' ice, while the other is better on soft ice which in Scotland they call "baugh ice." The handle can be changed to either of the flat sides, spoken of as the "soles," but the side cannot be changed during a match unless by consent of the opponents' ship. Stones weigh from 38 to 47½ pounds each. A limit of 36 inches in circumference is generally adopted and the stone is never less in height than one eighth of the circumference.

Curling rinks are marked out in the following manner. Tees are 114 feet apart. With the tee as centre a circle having a radius of 6 feet is drawn. Inside this large or outer circle there are three others drawn with radii of 4, 2 and ½ feet respectively. From and in exact alignment with both tees, a line called the Centre Line is drawn to a point 12 feet behind each tee; at this point another line is drawn at right angles to the Centre Line and on which the "hack" is cut. It cannot exceed six inches in length, nor can the inner edge be more than three inches from the centre line. The "hack" is a hole cut in the ice to support the player's heel when he is delivering the stone. The distance between the two hacks of one rink is 138 feet.

At a distance of 21 feet from and ahead of each tee the "hog" score or "hog line" is marked across the rink. If a stone fails to cross the hog score nearer to the tee at which the player is aiming, the stone is called a "hog" and is removed from the rink, unless it has struck another stone in position.

In a game of curling each side has four players, each playing two stones. It is possible then to score eight points in a "head" or "end"—an innings in which both sides deliver all the stones. This however is such a rare occurrence that a person may see it once in a life-time. There is a term sometimes used in curling where the opponents do not score any points at all. A famous team of cobblers or souters of Lochmaben in Scotland often did that with their opponents and gave to the win the term "souter." One runs into the same thing in cribbage but comparisons are said to be "odorous."

Of the four players in the game, the "lead" or first is expected to play his stone close up to the front of the tee.—Many skips prefer lead stone just "biting" or touching the outer circle. The game begun the skips are heard calling for "in" or "out" turns and at the same time he places his broom on the ice either to the right or the left hand. The player is expected to aim at the broom and then with proper impetus called "weight" given to the stone and the

imparted twist of the "in" or "out" turn the stones moves first in a straight line and then losing speeds curls or curves into the position desired.

By an "In-turn" is meant that the stone is made to turn to the right or towards the body and by the "Out-turn" the stone is made to turn to the left or away from the body.

The Lead of the first side is followed by the lead of the other side, who directed by the skip or captain either tries to drive the opponent's rock if in good position, or to put his own in better position.

Then follows the "seconds" of each team and next the "vices" or third players and then to the "skips." The skip usually curls the last stones but he may take any of the four places but once started the place must be kept unless with consent of the opposing skip. The strategy of the play is entirely in the control of the skips; for the most part the tactics are in the control of the players. When the skip's turn to curl comes he is directed by the Vice who on most teams is a sort of an understudy to the skip and as well as taking a part in the direction of the play often assists the first and second players in sweeping.

With all sixteen stones played the score is counted—every stone that finally lies nearer than any of the opposing stones counting a point or "shot." The players then move to the other end of the rink and a new or head is begun with the lead of the team which has scored playing the first stone. Ten or twelve ends are usually played in club matches but at bonspiels as many as eighteen ends are played.

Should the reader some evening drop in to the Timmins Curling Rink as a visitor don't let yourself run away with any idea that because you hear unusual words from the skips that they are talking a foreign language or that because of the noise everyone is either crazy with activity or overcome with enthusiasm. Should you see the town clerk or the town solicitor, a high school principal, a mine manager or one of the best miners, a well-known contractor or the editor of the local newspaper, or any one of the many good citizens of Timmins talking as though they had a mouth full of burrs, blame it on curling. What a uniform is to a baseball player the vocabulary is to a curler.

If you hear the skip call "Hands Up" he has no intention whatever of going through your pockets. That simply means "Stop Sweeping." Or if to your ears comes the plaintive call "Soop, Soop" it is not a call for to lunch,—just a plea for broom and more broom. A "draw" shot is one played gently—a "cold draw" one right to the tee. A "rebut" is a shot delivered with great force so as to scatter the stones on the outer circle. This term is not greatly used in Canada. To "red the ice" is a sort of a Bolshevik shot in which one is expected to clear away the opponent's rocks. The "Thunderin cast" calls for a stone to be delivered vigorously to try and clear away the opponent's rocks which may be lying near the tee. To "spend a stone" is to play "wide" intentionally. (Playing wide is to send the stone away to the outside of where the broom was placed by the skip. Playing "narrow" is to send a stone inside of where the broom was placed).

The "spending of the stone" is done without any direction on the part of the skip and without noise except from the opposition. Good shots may sometimes be the results of "flukes" but in Scotland they call them "stugs."

To "break an egg on a stone" is a metaphorical adaption and means to touch another stone gently. "Chipping" is the striking of a stone only a small part of which can be seen by the player. "Fill the Port" has nothing to do with wines permitted for prohibitionist by the O.T.A. It merely signifies that the skip desires to block an interval between two stones to prevent an opponent from coming through. To "lie shot" signifies that a stone is resting nearest the tee and a "pat-lid" is one that lies on the tee.

A "raise" in curling has nothing in common with the same term used in mining. A "friendly stone" is, when raised, driven nearer the tee. To "mar" a stone is to interfere with it while it is running on to move it accidentally from its position while it is at rest.

And lastly if you should hear the skip calling "Ice, Ice, Ice" it

means nothing to any person except some one who is trying to block the view down the middle of the ice. So a rule reads "Players during the course of each end shall be arranged along the sides, etc."

In delivering a stone the player should take a firm stand with one foot in the back and the stone should be swung gently unless the call is for vigorous action. In either case care has to be taken to avoid striking the ice with the stone so as to crack or "star" the ice.

The rules of the game will be given in the next article.

There are few games in which there is more good fellowship than in curling and curlers claim to be a united brotherhood, "within which peer and peasant are equal on the ice." It is also the duty of every club to frame its laws with due regard to economy but conviviality should not be overlooked. Just how in these days with various restrictions one is to wash down the "beef and greens," the curler's traditional dish, is a matter which has not been decided by the Ontario legislature but in Scotland, Quebec, Manitoba and some other provinces it may be done with whiskey—perish the word. In Timmins the water is perfectly chlorinated so that the most fastidious connoisseur of soft drinks can, when the occasion presents itself, wash down the "beef and greens" at a curler's banquet with a delightful and sanitary water.

Lastly we may add that in working out the game of curling the canny Scots arranged things so that while the playing of the game should not cost a fortune, at the same time no money should be lost in its playing. To that end betting is discouraged in curling clubs and the only stakes ever played for are those for some charitable purpose.

Yes, curling has come to stay in Timmins and the time is not far distant when after the members of the club have had their "spiels"—matches between members of the same club—that they will be able to entertain visitors at "bonspiels"—matches between two clubs. This year the Bonspiel for Northern Ontario clubs is to be held some time in February at North Bay and it is expected that Timmins will be represented.

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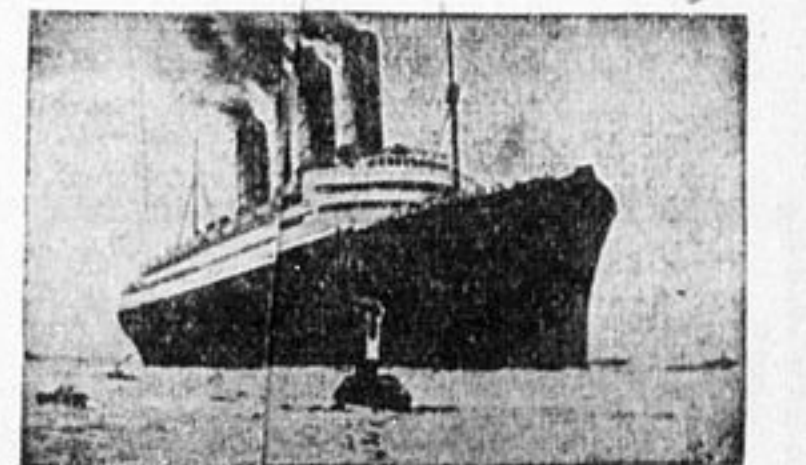
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