

Junior Curling Sessions for Beginners

WEEK 1

NEW CURLERS

Balanced Delivery Position

Call the kids by their first names.

Warmup/stretching-see handout (just a couple minutes each week helps get them ready)

Talk about clean shoes and keeping the ice clean.

Describe basic equipment: Hack, House, Hog line, Broom, Slider, Gripper foot, etc.

1. Have kids get in basic delivery position on the Carpet. Show them how the sliding foot is under the center of their body to be balanced and most of their weight is on the sliding foot. Hold the arms out like airplane wings to see if they have good balance.
2. Walk on ice with slider on. Push with gripper foot and glide on slider foot balancing with broom if necessary. Down to the other end and back.
3. Slide position on ice:
 - a. Stand facing the sideboard on sheet 1 without broom.
 - b. Step forward with sliding foot while lowering the body and extending the trailing leg behind them.
 - c. Grab hold of the sideboard and pull and push back and forth to get the feeling of a balanced delivery slide.
 - d. Hold arms out to the side to see how well balanced they are.
4. Towing: From delivery position have the curler hold on to the head of the instructor's broom (broom head on the ice) and tow them slowly to the other end.
5. Practice slides from the hack holding 2 rocks.
6. Practice slides with 1 rock and broom from the hack without releasing rock.
Show proper hack position:
 - a. Ball of hack foot in back of hack.
 - b. Toes pointed straight forward.
 - c. Sliding foot flat, parallel to hack foot and slightly ahead of hack foot.
 - d. Squat in hack resting on heel of hack foot.
 - e. Broom braced against small of back.
 - f. Broom head slightly ahead of sliding foot, fabric up.
 - g. Throwing arm and stone in front of hack foot.Delivery motion: Raise hips, pull sliding foot back slightly and push forward.
**Sliding foot must move slightly to the right as you push forward to be under the center of the body.
7. Have players release a rock without losing their balance. Repeat.
8. Play a mini game. Show grip and turn (next weeks' lesson) to make it a useful game.

WEEK 2
NEW CURLERS
Review Week 1-Balanced Delivery
New-Grip and Turn

REVIEW

1. Stretching/Warmup: Do a minimum of arm circles (shoulder warmup) and taking the delivery position on the carpet (hamstring stretch).
2. Walk on ice with slider on, pushing and gliding to get comfortable with the motion. Down to the far end of the ice and back.
3. Take practice slides with 2 rocks. Get trailing leg straight back with toe pointing back.
4. A. Describe proper set up position: Ball of hack foot in back of hack.
Thighs and feet pointed towards the skip's broom.
Sliding foot flat, parallel to hack foot and slightly ahead of hack foot.
Squat in hack resting on heel of hack foot.
Broom braced against small of back.
Broom head slightly ahead of sliding foot, fabric up.
Throwing arm extended slightly in front of hack leg.
Rock in front of hack foot.
B. Show delivery motion: Raise hips while pulling sliding foot and rock backwards. Push forward, dropping hips and moving sliding foot slightly to the right under center of body.
5. Practice slides with broom and rock using proper set up and delivery motion.

GRIP AND TURN

1. Describe what a turn on the rock does. Lack of curl results in a "knuckleball" that zig-zags unpredictably down the ice.
2. Demonstrate the 2 handles. 10 O'Clock and 2 O'Clock positions. Always start the delivery with either of those positions and end the release in the 'handshake' position for both.
3. Discuss the grip: Grip slightly back from the goose neck.
Handle should be in fingers, not palm.
Fingers and thumb are alongside, not on top, of handle.
Equal pressure applied with thumb and fingers.
Wrist is above the handle.
Look for a 'V' between the thumb and index finger above the handle.
4. Practice slides from hack to a short broom (at near hog line) releasing rock with proper grip and turn using both in-turn and out-turn. Its better to slide and release under control than get rock to other end.
5. Discuss skip's broom and extended arm. Tapped ice=final rock destination, broom=target, extended arm=turn to apply to stone.

WEEK 3
NEW CURLERS
Alignment and Slide Line

The 3 elements of a good delivery are a **BALANCED DELIVERY, PROPER GRIP AND TURN, AND SLIDING AT THE BROOM or ON THE SLIDE LINE**

1 Stretching/Warmup

2 Review-balanced

SET-UP: a. Thighs and feet pointed towards the target (broom).
b. Sliding foot flat and slightly ahead of hack foot.
c. Broom braced against small of back.
d. Rock in front of hack foot.

DELIVERY: a. Sliding foot must move under center of body on forward motion.
b. Ideally the rock, sliding foot and trailing foot should be in line.

3. Review grip and turn: a. Emphasize 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock handle positions.
b. Handle should be in fingers, not the palm.
c. Fingers and thumb are alongside, not on top, of handle.
d. Wrist is above handle.
e. Rock stays in 10 or 2 position until release where hand goes to handshake position. Continue holding hand at target after release.

4. Alignment/Slide Line: Stand behind hack until broom/target is put down.
Place rock in front of hack on imaginary slide line.
Turn body so shoulders and hips are perpendicular to target line.
Step into hack maintaining that proper body angle and keeping feet and thighs pointed at the target.
Make delivery slide along the imaginary line keeping the rock, sliding foot, and trailing foot as close to the line as possible.

5. Practice slides without a rock at a short broom by near hog line.

6. Practice slides with a rock at a short broom. Use plastic cups and hanging string device as other targets to slide at. Sliding foot should hit cups!

7. Make sure all curlers get to try some full length of the ice deliveries.

Other tips if kids are progressing:

Do not take sliding foot back farther than the heel of the hack foot.
Make sure the curlers' body shifts backwards on the pull back and hips raise up on the pull back.
Bring sliding foot back parallel to imaginary slide line.
Move sliding foot gradually to the right (for right handers) and under the body as the delivery begins.

8. Mini game using proper grip and turn.

WEEK 4
NEW CURLERS
Sweeping and Game Protocol/Etiquette

SWEEPING: Curlers will sweep more rocks than they will throw so this is a very big part of the game. Sweeping makes rocks go farther and delays their curl.

Hold the broom with the lower hand palm down (hand on top) low on the broom.
Have the upper hand palm up (hand under) and high on the handle.

Feet and broom head form a triangle and the curlers' head should be above the broom head.

Curler should side step as they move down the ice and not cross feet over.

Sweep directly in front of the rock but not so close that you burn the rock.

***Do not sweep with slider on!

Practice sweeping rocks, 2 sweepers per rock, and try sweeping on both sides.

Assemble 4 player teams for a practice game (any teams playing in the EB should be together).

Any new curlers that don't want to play a game should go to sheet 1 and review week's 1-3 lessons on Balance, Grip and Turn, and Slide Line.

THE GAME: Shake Hands-"Good Curling". Thirds flip coin for hammer, loser picks color.

Be ready to curl. Clean your rock and place it in front of the hack as soon as the previous player leaves the hack.

Sweepers of the delivering team should be ready at the hog line and off to the side so the shooter can see the skip.

Sweepers of the throwing team should return from the far end as soon as their rock comes to a stop. They should walk on the very side of the rink so they do not interfere with the other team.

Sweepers of the non-throwing team should always wait outside the hog line.

The only players in the house should be the skips unless the vice-skip (third) is helping strategize.

After the last rock is thrown in an end the Thirds agree on the score. Rocks are then pushed to the corners and all players return to the proper position.

At the conclusion of the game teams again shake hands. Losers congratulate winners. Winners thank opponents for a good game. Winners mop/sweep off the sheet.

** Instructors- 1 helping skips, 1 helping shooters and sweepers.

WEEK 5 NEW CURLERS

Review and Sweeping/Judging Weight

1. Review hack position: Ball of hack foot in back of hack.
Feet and thighs pointed towards skip's broom.
Sliding foot flat, parallel to and slightly ahead of hack foot.
Broom braced against small of back.
Broom head slightly ahead of sliding foot, fabric up.
Throwing arm extended slightly in front of hack leg.
2. Review alignment: Place rock in front of hack.
Stand behind hack and picture the line from the hack to the skip's broom (place solo cups on that line as guides).
Turn body so shoulders and hips are perpendicular to that imaginary line.
Step into hack maintaining that proper body angle and keeping feet and thighs pointed at the target.
3. Review proper grip and turn: 10 O'Clock and 2 O'Clock positions.
Grip slightly back from goose neck.
Handle in fingers, not palm.
Fingers and thumb alongside, not on top of handle.
Wrist above handle.

4. Practice deliveries at a short broom using good BALANCE, ALIGNMENT, GRIP and TURN

****For kids having trouble with a balanced slide try using the STABILIZER/CRUTCH. The sliding foot must be under the center of the body on the delivery if using the crutch too.

5. Sweeping: Curlers will sweep more rocks than they will throw so this is a big part of the game
Sweeping does 2 things: Make rocks go farther and delays their curl.

Position: One hand, palm up, higher on broom handle. The other hand, palm down, lower on broom handle. As they get more comfortable putting weight on the broom their hands should move farther down the handle.

Feet and broom head form a triangle.

Head of curler should be above broom head.

Curlers should shuffle feet/side step as they move down the ice and not cross feet over each other.

6. Practice sweeping while shuffling slowly down the ice and then have them try to sweep guard weight shots thrown by the Instructor.

7. Judging Weight: Curlers need to judge how far a rock will go and when to sweep them.
They also need to communicate that information to the skip.

Have a curler (Instructor) throw a rock and have the 2 sweepers "yell" out the weight using the simple system of "light", "in house" or "heavy".

*****On sheet 1 have kids throw rocks at the circles half way down the sheet!

WEEK 6
NEW CURLERS
(Review Sweeping/Judging Weights) and Rhythm

Continue monitoring for a proper hack set up, balanced delivery, good grip and turn and adjusting hack alignment for different slide lines.
(Mold these little lumps of clay into champions!)

Review sweeping and judging weight of rocks:

Proper position: High hand palm up, lower hand palm down.
Feet and broom head form a triangle.
Head of curler should be over broom head.
Side step (don't cross feet over each other) while moving down down the ice.

Judge Weights: Have one junior hold a broom at the far end. Have 2 sweepers try to judge the weight of each rock and "yell" out LIGHT, HOUSE or HEAVY to the skip as draw weight shots (thrown by an instructor with the littlest kids) travel down the ice.

***Rotate skip, sweepers and thrower (if not the instructor) with every rock thrown.

Rhythm: Even the smallest kids can begin to get a sense of rhythm on the 'forward press', 'pull back', 'park' and 'forward in the sliding motion'. Count ONE on the forward press, TWO on the pull back, THREE in the park position, and FOUR as they begin the delivery.

1. Start from proper hack position with sliding foot slightly ahead of hack foot!
2. Push rock and sliding foot forward. ONE
3. Lift hips up while moving body, rock and sliding foot back. TWO
Keep sliding foot flat and do not bring it back farther than the heel of the hack foot.
4. PAUSE-THREE
5. Push rock forward and sliding foot forward. FOUR
6. Sliding foot moves forward along the sideline while dropping hips.

Practice throws at a short broom using this 4 count rhythm. Then see how far kids can throw rocks down the sheet. Release rocks early for more weight.

***On sheet #1 have kids throw rocks at the circles half way down the sheet.

Play a mini game stressing proper handle/turn on throws.

Week 7
NEW CURLERS
Review and More Leg Drive

Run the new curlers through the first 4 weeks lessons: Proper Hack Position
Proper Grip and Turn
Alignment for different slide lines
Sweeping technique

Many new and smaller curlers cannot consistently get the rock to the other end. Show them how to get more power by:

- A. Hack foot in back of hack with ball of foot on sloped part of hack.
- B. Getting their hips up higher when bringing the rock back to the Park Position. Legs should be almost straight.
- C. Rocking back slightly on their hack foot so their weight shifts back behind the hack and is over their sliding foot when in the Park Position. Do not let them bring the sliding foot too far back on the pull back. Shifting the weight is the critical element.
- D. Dropping the hips as they push off. Kind of like going down a ski jump.
- E. Releasing the rock early while their body has the most momentum. Remind them that we don't want them 'pushing' the rocks.

Practice these steps without a rock first, then with a rock, and finally with a rock and releasing it.