

Etiquette plays a role in all sports and curling is no exception. Curlers begin each game with a lot of handshaking. Every team member shakes hands with their teammates and every member of the opposing team. "Good curling" accompanies the gesture.

Once a curler is in the hack, the courtesy continues. If you are not on the delivering team, you stand on the ice, as close to the sidelines as possible, between the hog lines. Stand quietly and still, out of the delivering curler's sight lines. If you're a sweeper, be on the ice, ready to get to the released stone, but still make sure not to block your teammate's view of your skip and his or her broom.

The delivering curler should always let the skip know that he understands the shot being requested. A "yes" shake of the head, or a quick hand gesture works just fine. Verbal acknowledgement can be tricky if you have the noise level where acoustics aren't the most cooperative.

Congratulate each other on well executed shots. Curling is competitive, but it's also a mutual admiration society. Trash talk just isn't a part of our sport.

At the completion of each end, a score is recorded. This is the sole responsibility of the vices. When the score is being decided, all other curlers stay outside of the house. Once the vices have agreed on the score, everyone else can enter the house and clear the stones so the next end can begin. Occasionally, competing stones may be too close to call visually. Again, it is up to the vices to measure and determine the winning stone.

When the game is finished, we all shake hands again, acknowledging a "Good game". Everyone participates in putting the stones away. Often, both teams will go out for an adult beverage. Traditionally, the winning team buys the first round. The winning lead buys for the losing lead, etc. If a second cocktail is on the menu, the losing team buys that one. After that, everyone is on their own!

Start with a handshake, cheerlead for everyone, end with a handshake, and a cocktail or two. What could be a lovelier way to spend your evening!