



Shaping the path of the curling stone:

After an interesting post-game conversation on the differences between right and left-hand curlers, there followed an informative discussion on how above-average golfers (present company excluded) are able to shape the trajectory of the ball down the fairway by modifying their stance, and more importantly by altering the interface with the club head.

Manipulating the path of a curling stone (curl profile) through line of delivery and release modification can as well produce dramatic results. The former will be addressed in a future communication. This article will help you “come to grips” with what can be done to alter the path of the stone, providing of course, you are proficient at the basic delivery and release mechanics.

- 1) The term “**positive release**” is used to ensure the stone will follow it’s intended course with a more predictable curl of the rock. It means making a move slightly toward the skip's broom by extending the arm from the flexed position and rotating the rock so that it performs 2-3 complete revolutions before it comes to rest.
- 2) The “**quick release**” provides more extension and more rotation resulting in a straighter rock path or profile. Instead of applying the turn over a 3-4 foot area, rotation should be applied over a 1 foot space. This will increase the rotation to 4-5 revolutions. Quick releases work well on ice with more curl (i.e. 4 to 6 feet). The more positive action or ‘spin’ at release changes the curl break point, making it happen later in the rock’s trajectory.
- 3) The “**spinner**” is the more radical version of the quick release. Spinning the rock (6+ revolutions) at release dramatically increases the rotation and virtually eliminates the friction differential under the rock. This results in a very straight curl profile. This approach allows the ability for the rock to glide thru a port and stay straight to finish i.e. to take the curl of a rock without the extra weight. This technique may also prove helpful when throwing a ‘cutter’. Rocks with pits will run truer if more rotation is applied. Additionally, spinners may be helpful on very swingy or flat ice (due to a warm or worn ice surface).
- 4) The “**square release**” is used on very straight ice. It means slightly over rotating the rock past 12 o'clock. This causes the opposite effect of the positive release. It changes the break to an earlier point.

Helpful terms of reference:

Free Run

The free run is the portion of the shot where the rock begins to decelerate but has not started to curl yet.

Break Point

The break point is the point where the rock noticeably begins to curl and leaves the line of delivery.

Finish

The finish is the portion of the shot between the break point and the where the rock stops. During this phase, the rock is actively curling.

From the Warm Side of the Glass Denis Faubert