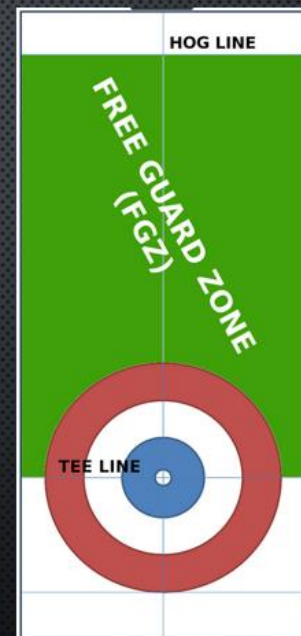


CURLING 101 STRATEGY OVERVIEW



Free Guard Zone (aka 4-rock or 5-rock rule)

- Opponent's rocks cannot be **removed from play** if they are in the free guard zone until after the 4th rock of the end has been delivered. (5th rock for the 5-rock rule)
- You can bump or tap opponent rocks in the zone as long as they remain in play.
- You can remove your own rocks in this zone if you want.
- The reason for this rule is to prevent teams from getting a lead and then taking out every single rock until the end of the game. It makes the game more exciting to watch as well since there are rocks in play



The Hammer!

Having the last rock in an end can be very advantageous.

Who gets the hammer?

- Coin flip for the first end
- During the game the team that scores points loses the hammer

Objectives when you have the hammer:

- Try to score 2 points or more
- Keep the center clear to give yourself access to the 4 foot



Without Hammer!

When you do not have hammer in an end, you are at a disadvantage.

Objectives when you **do not** have the hammer:

- Try to 'force' the opposition to one point so you get hammer back.
- Try to 'steal' points by playing guards to hide behind or protect points
- Play towards the center of the sheet to block the path to the 4 foot



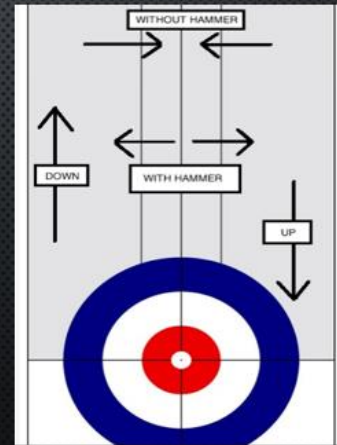
Aggressive vs Conservative

Aggressive play is characterized by playing guards, draw shots, and playing towards the center

Lots of rocks in play, taps, freezes, come-arounds

Conservative play is characterized by placing rocks in the house, playing takeouts, and playing towards the wings

Few rocks in play, center is open, takeout game



Factors affecting strategy

Score of the game – i.e. if you are winning or losing and by how much.

What end it is – for example, you may be more aggressive in early ends.

Whether you have the hammer or not.

The strengths and weaknesses of your team

The ice conditions (e.g. very straight or very swingy ice)

