

Tips for Pace of Play

One of the biggest challenges for leagues is speed of play. The standard assumption is that each end will take 15 minutes. Strategy is often determined by expecting to play 8 end games, and we want to ensure we get them all in before our time runs out. Here are some tips to save time and keep the game moving.

- Start your game on time. **Head out to the ice surface five minutes early.** If your ice is just being prepped, get your handshakes and coin toss finished in the lounge so when you get the nod from the Ice Technician, you can step out and start the game.
- **As soon as your opponent has released the rock, get down and set up your shot.** Clean your rock and get your pre-shot routine done while your opposition rock glides to a halt. This means that once your skip has put his/her broom down you can square up and go. Saving 15 seconds every shot is 4 minutes an end - and that is the difference between six and eight ends in two hours!
- **Lead players should be ready to play as soon as the ice is cleared, and should NOT become involved in clearing the stones from the previous end.** Seek out your number one rock and get it set up while everyone else finishes clearing the house.
- Once the final rock has come to a stop in an end, the **seconds and thirds can start to clear away any and all rocks which are not affecting scoring.**
- **Other than at the end of the game, rocks do not need to be put away in order** (this one is hard for many people to let go of). Simply putting the rocks neatly in the corners and not worrying about number order saves a lot of time. Throwers – know your rock number!
- **Rules dictate only the skip and third of the delivering team are to be inside the hog line of the rings before a shot.** Limit even these twosomes to the final two stones of the end and you can save an incredible amount of time.
- While your skip and third debate the last skip stones of the end, the front end can grab the skip rock and even clean it while they await the upcoming throw. It can save significant time and it makes your (emotionally fragile) skip feel special.
- **Practise Non-Democratic Curling – Input about strategy at every turn is very rarely appreciated or productive.** Ultimately the skip is in charge of skipping. If you're not pleased with your skip's strategy, on ice is not the place to discuss it. Not only does undermining the skip affect his/her confidence, but it also slows down the game. The person skipping the team has to be empowered to call the shots. Comments from the peanut gallery should be kept to a minimum. If you really feel overall strategy needs to be addressed, do it over a drink after the game or during a team practice session.

- Skips may make the calls, but everyone can think ahead on the shots. **The further skips think ahead for strategy, the quicker decisions can be made.** This is the single largest time eater on the ice. Save time on the easier decisions so you can think over the difficult ones. As the other players throw, you can mentally prep and line up your shot even before your skip has placed his/her broom down.

Try to focus on one or all of the points above and it will quickly become habit. Using your time wisely on the ice can make everyone's time more enjoyable. It might even result in an extra win or two!