

Statement of Principles Regarding Competition Equipment



Authority and Responsibility

As the governing body for the Sport of Curling within the Winter Olympic Programme, the World Curling Federation General Assembly has authority to determine the Rules of Curling, including rules for competition equipment.

Certain aspects of this authority may be delegated at the discretion of the WCF General Assembly to the WCF Board and further to WCF Commissions or Staff.

Responsibility for the groundwork on Rules and related equipment matters is assigned to the WCF Competition & Rules Commission, which is established as a Standing Commission under the terms of the WCF Constitution.

The purpose of this statement is to set out the collective view of the WCF and its Member Associations, together with the framework of key principles and the policies that guide their actions.

The World Curling Federation believes that the principles stated in this document will, when carefully applied, serve the best interests of the Sport of Curling.

These principles and all competition equipment Rules and Standards in existence now, and in the future, shall apply to all WCF Championships and events.

Balancing Competitiveness and Fair Play

In order to avoid an over-reliance on technological advancements in equipment, which diminish the importance of years of training, practice and refinement of athletic skills, the WCF monitors new equipment to ensure it is in the best interest of the sport.

As to be expected in a competitive environment, athletes continually look for competition equipment that can enhance their skill and improve their performance. Curling equipment manufacturers are equally eager to deliver new and innovative products to the market.

The WCF supports and encourages advancements in competition equipment and accepts responsibility for ensuring technological advancements or innovations have a positive impact on the sport and its traditions.

To ensure a level playing field, competition equipment used at WCF Championships and events must meet standards established by the WCF, be commercially available and other than aesthetic features, remain unaltered from the original manufactured design.

In the case where advancement in competition equipment has not been foreseen or innovative use of existing equipment evolves, the WCF may take unilateral action as it deems necessary, to preserve the integrity and best interest of curling, until such time as those advancements or innovations can be properly considered against these principles.

Definition and Principles

The term “competition equipment” applies to all items of equipment used by athletes in competitive curling, including clothing and implements that serve a technical function.

Competition equipment forms a functional unit, which whether considered separately or together, must respect the following principles:

- the principle of safety
- the principle of fairness
- the principle that athletic performance and mental skill remain the dominant elements for success, and
- the principle that the effective use of competition equipment should fairly reflect an athlete’s physical ability, mental capacity and acquired proficiency, not unduly compensate for deficiencies in any of these areas.

Competition Equipment

Apart from curling stones, which the WCF approves for its competitions to ensure consistency and quality, there are only three pieces of competition equipment designed to be in contact with the ice surface – sweeping device, balancing device and footwear.

Rule R.10.A (“No player shall cause damage to the ice surface by means of equipment, hand prints or body prints”) generally covers the balancing device, footwear, accessories (clothing, gloves, health and safety equipment) and auxiliary equipment (stopwatch) as these items aren’t designed to impact the ice surface.

Sweeping Device

Curling can be categorized as an “ice”, “target” or “throwing” sport but it is unique in this respect:

Curling is the only sport in the world where an athlete propels an object (the curling stone) towards a target (the skip’s broom) and on its way to the intended destination, the trajectory can be influenced by impacting the field of play (sweeping), rather than by touching the object itself.

The sweeping device is the only piece of equipment designed to impact the playing surface, and then only to enhance the outcome of a delivered stone within such a threshold that places the highest importance on the skill and performance of the person delivering the stone rather than an over-reliance on the effect of sweeping.

Because of this unique feature, sweeping is an integral part of the appeal of the sport to participants and enthusiasts.

Also because of this unique feature, it is of greatest importance to ensure sweeping equipment is not capable of providing excessive influence, causing undesirable deterioration of playing conditions, creating residual effects to the disadvantage of fellow competitors or diminishing the importance of the delivery compared to the sweeping.

Typically, the most effective sweepers have been those athletes who have a high level of fitness, utilize a sound technique and are consistently able to exert a great amount of force, combined with a high stroke rate, to the brush head.

This principle is fundamental to curling being accepted as a genuine athletic endeavour and one which athletes and sport leaders have worked hard to achieve.

The WCF, in consultation with its Members and the general curling community has determined the acceptable effects of sweeping on a curling stone are:

- To reduce the rate of deceleration of a stone (making it go further)
- To delay the curling action of a stone in the direction in which the “turn” was applied (making it go straighter)

The WCF has also determined the unacceptable effects of sweeping on a curling stone are:

- To increase the rate of deceleration of a stone (making it slow down)
- To cause a stone to move in the opposite direction in which the turn was applied (making it fall back)
- To deposit debris in the path of the stone (dumping)

WCF Specifications for Sweeping Devices are contained in a separate document.

Balancing Device

Sweeping devices often function as a balancing device. In the case where a separate balancing device is employed, it must not provide a significantly different stabilization function than a sweeping device would when used for that same purpose and is connected to the athlete only by the non-throwing hand.

Footwear

Rule R.10.A

TBD

Accessories

See WCF Rules for Competition

Rule R.10.A

TBD

Auxiliary Equipment

Rule R.10.A

TBD