



Return to Play FAQ - What to Expect

"The Ponoka Curling Centre is committed to the positive well-being of all members of the Ponoka community. The Ponoka Curling Centre will be aligning its COVID-19 Response with updated AHS Guidelines and recommendations from our sport partner associations, Curling Canada and Curling Alberta. We agree with our sport partner associations that "it is entirely possible for people to continue to curl in a manner that is physically distant and low-risk, while still enjoying the positive social and physical benefits of the sport.

~ FAQ as of September 29, 2020 ~

Will there be rule changes for the sport of curling because of COVID safety concerns?

Yes, following Curling Canada's recommendations the "Single Sweeper Rule" will be obeyed during all games at the Ponoka Curling Centre.

The Single-Sweeper Rule" means that:

- Only one sweeper maximum is permitted to sweep a stone (even if you are from the same household - no exceptions)
- No 'relaying' (no sweeper taking over for another sweeper at any time)
- No one aside from the dedicated sweeper for a shot can sweep any stone. The dedicated sweeper CAN sweep ticks, bumps and raises as well as sweep behind the t-line but the other players must give them room. Skips sweep nothing.

Will there be other changes to the on-ice experience this season?

Yes, following Curling Canada's recommendations, there will be a number of changes to the on ice experience. Some of these will include:

- No handshakes (consider a raise of the boom instead)
- No touching other curler's stones with your hand (use your broom or foot instead)
- No group congregating on the backboards
- Standing locations in the ice: all players should obey physical distancing recommendations during play.
- Scoreboards - designate one player on the sheet to keep score
- Manner of entering & exiting the ice area will be directional
- No benches on the ice

Will league fee refunds be issued if AHS reverts back towards Phase 1 or if the Ponoka Curling Centre is required to shut down for public health reasons?

Yes, a \$50 administration charge will be withheld per curler and the balance of fees will be refunded based on prorated per game.

Will playing at the Ponoka Curling Centre mean that I belong to a “Ponoka Curling cohort”?

No. Although AHS recommends that one be mindful of the scope of their associations, since curling is a non-contact activity that can be enjoyed while maintaining physical distancing it need not be considered as a part of a circumscribed cohort. This is unlike a contact sport such as basketball or volleyball that requires close contact as a necessary feature of its activity. This means that one can curl at other curling facilities as well (just as one can shop at multiple No Frills and Costco's), provided that those curling facilities likewise maintain physical distancing guidelines (e.g., the “Single-Sweeper Rule”). It may be helpful to recognize here that the “Single-Sweeper Rule” is what enables the sport of curling to maintain physical distancing requirements, and thus allows curling to be a low-risk activity that can be enjoyed under public health restrictions. It is also worth clarifying that you can consider your own team as part of your own cohort (thus you can sit together with your teammates after curling) but one need not consider the “Ponoka Curling Centre” or the “Regular League” in which you curl as a designated cohort for the reasons given above.

Are the members of my team also expected to distance from each other, meaning that there is no discussion of shots or strategy between the third and skip?

The distancing rule applies to those that are not one of your cohorts. If the teammates are, then yes, discuss less than 6 ft apart. The Ponoka Curling Centre will not know who is or is not within your cohort's bubble and will require teams to apply the distancing rule amongst themselves. The one person sweeping applies at all times.

Is there a new format that goes well with all these COVID changes?

Yes, we plan to run an Open Triples League this season on Thursday nights to go along side our Open Doubles League. Both of these formats have less players on the ice and less people in the lounge.

What is this Triples League you mentioned?

In a typical six end game of triples, everybody gets to call the shots, deliver the goods and sweep like crazy. Each member of a team will rotate through the three positions, playing two ends as lead, middle and skip. It's a new-age democracy on ice. Every player also delivers two rocks per end, so the action is fast. It's competitive too. Scores are doubled in the 5th & 6th ends, so no game should be too far out of reach for long. We don't want anybody shaking hands after four ends. In fact, we don't want anybody shaking hands at all! And since only one person can sweep a delivered rock, according to the new rules from Curling Canada, triples curling is the perfect game for such a changed sporting landscape. One player delivers the rock, one player sweeps the rock and one player holds the broom and calls the line from the house. Nobody will be left standing around, trying to look important as the stone glides onto the button

What is the Ponoka Curling Centre's protocol should a COVID case emerge at the Curling Club?

The Ponoka Curling Centre will have a COVID response plan that includes compiling an Incident Report Form for any known or reported cases. Following AHS Guidelines, any COVID related incidents at the Ponoka Curling Centre will be reported immediately to AHS for next-step guidance, including guidance on reporting to our curlers and our cleaning protocols.

Will Waivers and Declarations of Compliance be required?

Yes. Users of the Ponoka Curling facility will be expected to complete Waivers and Declarations of Compliance. The Declaration of Compliance will declare that one will not knowingly enter the Ponoka Curling facility if they are experiencing any COVID related symptoms.

How will registration work this year?

We will be launching our online registration soon! Scheduling, game times, waivers etc can all be navigated once you are signed in. Visit www.ponokacurlingclub.com for more information.

Will lockers be available?

Lockers will be available for the 2020-21 curling season. We ask you to social distance in the hallways, if you can not distance from another person please wear a mask while at your locker. Curlers however will be STRONGLY encouraged to always arrive dressed and ready to curl.

Will I be able to use Ponoka Curling Club Equipment?

There will be a rental/sanitizing charge to use Ponoka Curling Centre's equipment. A one time fee of \$25 per item. (sliders, brooms, stabilizers). This include Juniors.

What will the Junior Program look like this season?

We are moving away from the Learn to Curl Program for our juniors for this season. Curling Alberta wants only 4 curlers and 1 coach per sheet for learn to curl sessions with juniors. We have previously had more kids registered than the 24 kids that would allow. So for this season we will move to game play only. This will allow 48 kids on the ice with coaches. Juniors MUST follow all social distancing protocols on the ice - ice markers will be easily labelled in the ice as to where to stand (just like at the grocery store). The one sweeper rule is in effect as well as all other 'new COVID rules' listed above. We WILL require ALL juniors/parents/coaches to wear masks at all times (even in the lounge area). We know this isn't ideal but we also know kids forget to stand 6 ft apart when with their peers. When signing up your child please consider helping us enforce the new rules during the first few weeks of curling on and off the ice. We want your kids to curl but we need your help!

Will masks be mandatory for adult curlers?

Not at this time. We will continue to follow our local authorities on this topic. However you are welcome to wear a mask into the club and on the ice if you wish.

Will the Ponoka Curling Centre's Lounge be open? If so, under what conditions?

Yes, the Lounge will be open for service during similar operating hours as in recent seasons. The Lounge's operations will be aligned with AHS Guidelines for "Restaurants, Cafes, Pubs and Bars." Table arrangements and seating will be rearranged to ensure physical distancing and our priority will be to ensure a low-risk setting so that our curlers can continue to enjoy some of the important "social virtues" of curling.

Will water dispensers be available?

No, curlers will need to bring their own water bottle with water in it from home.

Will non-curling guests / spectators be permitted at the Ponoka Curling Centre?

Yes, at this time non-curling guests will be permitted at the Ponoka Curling Centre and measures will be in place to ensure that guests follow the same policies and protocols as our curlers. We may limit spectators numbers during bonspiels.

Will the Ponoka Curling Centre host bonspiels?

The Ponoka Curling Centre still hopes to be able to run bonspiel in a modified capacity. Further details will be provided as they become available.

Will sanitizer & sanitizing wipes be made available at the Ponoka Curling Centre?

Yes, sanitizer and sanitizing wipes will be made available throughout the facility, including the entrance/exit areas and in the ice-arena for wiping down equipment including rocks.

Will there be proper signage and directional traffic within the facility?

Yes, there will be proper signage and directional traffic within the facility.

Does COVID-19 suck?

Yes. COVID-19 still really sucks. But, fortunately, curling is a low-risk social activity that can be enjoyed while maintaining physical distancing guidelines. The Ponoka Curling Centre is committed to ensuring a positive, low-risk social activity and environment that will enable our community to benefit from the mental and physical virtues that make curling great.