

Benefits of Sturling

Allows the preferred delivery technique

Individual team members can choose the delivery they prefer, stick or slide, yet curl with the person they want. This includes friends, and even parents and grandparents teaming up with children and grandchildren.

Involves more people

With a choice of either the stick or slide delivery, more people are involved, increasing the number of bonspiel entries and the size of regular leagues compared to keeping them separate. Yet the competitive level is evened out. Because in sturling there is no advantage or disadvantage for either gender or any age group, participants form a more inclusive and vibrant group.

Promotes harmony between groups

Including both stick and slide deliveries removes the animosity that can develop between the two groups. Individuals can retain their opinion as to which is preferable, and compete together in a friendly, fun atmosphere.

Reduces physical requirements

Many people who, for whatever reason, cannot manage the complex, athletic slide delivery can sturl, using the stick delivery. Since there is no sweeping until the rock reaches the hog line at the destination end, the game is less physically demanding. Players are generally involved continuously in *moderate* activity throughout the whole game. For the more athletic, sturling is a faster moving, interesting game with plenty of challenge that they can enjoy.

Provides continuous action

In sturling there is less standing around waiting, because there is no movement of players up and down the ice. Players are continuously occupied with the most interesting aspects of the game – skipping or delivering rocks. Since players cannot go beyond center ice, time spent discussing shots is minimized. Each player delivers 18 rocks during each game, 2 more than in a regular 8-end game. On the alternate ends when they aren't skipping, each player delivers 6 rocks in a row (alternating with the opposition), which provides a great opportunity to develop their throwing skills.

Establishes a more even competitive level

Using a stick will *not* automatically make you a champion – it still requires skill. The best curlers usually don't improve (when they usually curl at 80 to 90+%, there's not much room for improvement). But it often *does* make the lower level player better, particularly those limited by performance of the slide delivery. It makes throwing more weight possible, but *only* for those individuals who are limited by the slide. The same basic skills are required, including alignment and weight judgment. Alignment may be easier because the rock is further in front of you, but it's more difficult because it's far below your line-of-sight. Throwing correct weight isn't easier or harder, but the sturler has the extra challenge of no sweepers for most of the rock's travel. Sturlers pay more attention to the run-of-the-ice while they are skipping. With concentration on the outcome rather than the delivery technique, the ability of sturlers tends to rise, leaving less variation in performance and better competition.

Presents opportunity as well as responsibility

On a sturling team, there are no 'positions' – both partners throw the same number of rocks -- *of the same importance* -- and skip half of each game. Each player has equal influence on the outcome of the game. This reduces dissention and increases variety and attraction for all. Players get an increased sense of 'ownership' of the ends they deliver. Many enjoy the chance to call at least part of each game, an experience they may have been previously denied.

Decreases game length

Because sturling games have less ends, use less rocks per end, and progress more rapidly, games are generally completed in less than half the time. Players are less likely to get bored or cold. The games fit more easily into busy schedules. There are less one-sided and defaulted games. Fans and players get more variety – they can move on to the next game.

Over the years, as curling has been reduced from 20 to 14 to 12 to 10, and recently to 8 ends, there has reportedly always been objections that it would kill the game – there just wasn't time to come back from a deficit. Well, that has never been true, and fewer ends has always soon been accepted, and preferred by most. The same is the case for sturling's 6 ends, particularly since the number of rocks thrown per player per game isn't reduced. Certainly, you don't want a big end scored against you early in the game, but that applies to both teams and becomes part of the strategy of winning teams.

Removes gender or age restrictions

Sturling has no gender or age restrictions, since men and women of all ages can do equally well at it. This provides a good mix of people and results in a superior social atmosphere. It's also makes sturling an excellent *family* activity. It also means that championships can be conducted without numerous different classifications and corresponding events. Two-person teams further reduce the number of players who must travel to competitions, and be subsidized.

Eases learning the game

With the delivery simplified, new curlers can become reasonably proficient much quicker. There's less tendency to become frustrated soon after starting. Players can concentrate on the objective, the strategy, and the basic skills of the game much sooner, rather than concentrating so much on technique.

Simplifies forming teams, decreases travel

Two-person teams mean you only have to find *one* compatible person, whose company you enjoy, to form a team. It's less complex to integrate competitions with hectic personal plans. Two different teams can conveniently travel to distant competitions together, and because competitions can be held in a much shorter time, there's less total travel required. Having three or four games in one day presents no problem.

Boosts camaraderie

Sturlers appreciate being able to have a good time in a short time. With four person teams, most of the socializing is with your own team, but with just two on a team, the whole group mixes. Sturlers meet and mingle with a broad range of personalities – it's not just the highly athletic types involved.

Contributes to health and well-being

The retired, in particular, are given an opportunity for moderate activity doing something they can enjoy. It gets them off the couch on a regular basis, providing both a physical and mental challenge they can easily manage. They can meet and mix with new people, a social stimulus.

Adds leagues and bonspiels

The introduction of the new game of sturling results in more leagues, and the opportunity for more bonspiels. That is, more *activity* in the club. While this may not be a priority for the larger city clubs, for most small town clubs it is a windfall.

Grows club membership

Sturling keeps members curling longer, and even attracts some who cannot or will not take up the regular game. Over the last few years, sturlers have grown to be nearly half of our local total small town club membership. A few curl both in regular and sturling leagues, and very few, if any, of the others would still be able to curl in regular leagues. So sturling has not diminished regular curling, it has definitely *added* to the club. Similar reports have been received from different areas across Canada.

The extra members provide fees, of course, but they also use the concession and attend club events like dinners, dances, auctions, spiels, etc. They are willing volunteers for the many tasks required in a curling club, like building maintenance, conducting fund raisers, and recruiting advertisers / sponsors.

Enhances the one day bonspiel

The one-day bonspiel is enjoyed by many people, and is especially good as a group or corporate event. The sturling game provides several advantages, besides those listed above. Consider the event involving 32 players – 16 stick teams as compared to 8 regular teams – with a split C/D 4-event draw.

- With more, smaller teams, the same entry fee can be distributed more widely as prizes.
- The only back-to-back games involve 4 of the 8 finalist teams, and only one time.
- Half of the sturlers have 3 hr ice time, half have 4 hr (compared to 6 hrs for all of the regular curlers). Times alternate 1 hr on the ice, 1 hr off, giving time to rest, watch the others, and socialize between games. There's also time to schedule a lunch break. The 1 hr on, 1 hr off scheme has proved to be very popular.
- Sturlers deliver 6 rocks x 3 ends x 3 games = 54 rocks, or 6 rocks x 3 ends x 4 games = 72 rocks, compared to the regular curlers 2 rocks x 8 ends x 3 games = 48 rocks.
- The sturling event provides 28 different games for fans to watch, the regular game provides 12.