03 / 2026-27 CLUB RULE UPDATES

Club rules for the 2026-27 season

Delivery, player positions and playing short handed

Scope: World Curling changes and their U.S. and Canadian adoption. Club leagues and championships can differ.

Effective date: 2026-27 season; World Curling rulebook dated September 1, 2026. Check local adoption.

Checked: October 10, 2026. World Curling rulebook dated September 1, 2026; current clean file revised October 6.

1 Deliver using the handle

The 2026 rules explicitly prohibit touching the granite after the stone passes the tee line at the delivery end. The stone is removed. The pre-hog-line double-touch exception is specifically for the **handle**; it does not permit a finger on the granite. Release requirements at the hog line still apply. [1,4]

Example: A finger brushes the granite during the slide after the near tee line. It is a touched moving stone even though it has not reached the hog line. [1]

2 Two players may wait behind the back line

In ordinary four-player play, any two players on the non-delivering team may stand still behind the back line at the playing end, without interfering with the delivering team. They no longer have to be the skip and vice-skip. [1]

That does **not** give every opponent permission to sweep: behind the tee line, the non-delivering team's sweeper must still be its skip or vice-skip. [2]

Example: A lead may wait behind the back line, but cannot sweep an opponent's stone unless also designated skip or vice-skip. [2]

3 Tighter limits on playing short handed

World Curling competition rules require four players at the start, with a limited exceptional-approval route. Under R3(c), a team can replace an unavailable player immediately, or play three-handed for the rest of that end and the next full end. It must then return to four. Only one such absence is allowed per game. This is not permission to play two additional full ends after the interrupted end. [5]

Example: A player cannot throw during the third end. The team can finish ends 3 and 4 with three players under R3(c), then must have four delivering in end 5. [5]

Mixed fours, wheelchair and doubles formats have their own team rules; do not apply that example universally. See R14-R17. [2]

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Confirm the rules for your league

What this means in the United States

USA Curling adopts the new R3/C2 requirements for its Men's, Women's, Junior Men's and Junior Women's Nationals. Its Arena, U18, Club, Five-and-Under, Mixed Fours and Senior Nationals retain three-player options for an excused absence. Mixed Fours has no alternates. Check the specific championship procedures. [3]

For ordinary club leagues and bonspiels, USA Curling says member clubs may select their own rules. Its new Recreational Rules are guidance, available to members in Our House. A club league is not the same as the Club National Championship. [3]

What this means in Canada

Curling Canada adopts the World Curling rulebook for 2026-27. Its announcement explicitly leaves clubs flexibility over matters such as three-player participation in social leagues. Check your provincial/territorial body and event regulations. [1]

Your preseason checklist

- ☐ Name the rulebook and version your league will use.
- ☐ Publish any local differences, especially minimum team size and substitutes.
- ☐ Explain who makes rulings when no umpire is present.
- ☐ Brief players on the separate sweeping and mixed-doubles updates.

Official sources

1. Curling Canada announcement of rulebook adoption. September 3, 2026.

2. World Curling Rules of Curling 2026. R3(c), R4, R5(d), R8(f), R9(a)(I), R14-R17 and C2(j).

3. USA Curling 2026-27 rules and qualification updates. September 17, 2026. National championship and club distinctions.

4. World Curling Rules of Curling 2025. R5(e), for the unchanged hog-line release requirement.

5. World Curling 2026 rules showing changes. R3(c) and C2(j), team size and temporary absence.

Educational summary. Your governing body and event rules control. Current rules: worldcurling.org/rules

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