01 / SAMPLE ROCK BOOK

Rock Matching and Sample Rock Book

A practical rock book for club teams and skips

Find useful pairs and keep honest notes

A rock book is a record of what your team has actually seen from identified stones. Use it to find stones that behave similarly, remember differences and decide what to check next. You can begin with the two stones already assigned to you.

This book includes a fictional filled-in example and three reusable record pages. It is written for club practice, where time is limited and deliveries vary.

What matching means

A useful pair has similar travel and a similar path under comparable conditions. Match both distance and curl behaviour. Two stones that reach the same depth can still take different routes. Coach Bill Tschirhart recommends repeated delivered-shot comparisons with similar speed, line and rotation; he stresses that matching gives a degree of reliability rather than certainty. [1]

Use “carried farther,” “finished shorter,” “bent earlier” or “finished farther right” before reaching for a label such as fast, slow or cutter. If you do use “faster stone,” define it as carrying farther under comparable delivered conditions, not necessarily moving faster at every point.

The narrow running band on the bottom contacts the ice. Its condition matters, but an unusual finish does not tell you exactly what is wrong with that surface. Controlled research has found relationships between running-band properties and curl; that does not let a club observer diagnose wear from one shot. [2], [3], [8]

Stay within the rules

Ask the club or event which stones you may test, select or pair, when changes are allowed and which practice equipment is permitted. Do not assume you can switch stones during a game or borrow from another sheet. World Curling's rules prohibit teams from altering their game stones; event procedures govern assignment and selection. [4]

Do not scrape, sand, paper, flip to a different running surface, replace handles or otherwise alter a stone yourself. Report repeated concerns or visible damage to the ice technician or official. Keep maintenance separate from player observation.

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.

02 / SAMPLE ROCK BOOK

Run a fair comparison

This is an original HouseCall practice routine. A careful two-stone comparison is more useful than hurried labels on all eight.

1. Identify the stones. Record club, sheet, date, handle colour and visible number. Ask staff how stones are identified if handles have been changed; never assume an old number still describes the same stone.
2. Choose a reference. Start with a familiar stone or provisional pair. “Reference” means your comparison point, not a certified good stone.
3. Write the setup. Use one direction, turn, starting line, brush position, intended weight and sweeping plan. Use the same player for a series when practical.
4. Deliver the stones as normal shots. Keep the release and rotation as similar as you can. Observe the whole path and the final position. After recording a stopped stone, safely move it clear before the next trial. [1]
5. Alternate the order. For two stones, try A, B, B, A, then repeat if useful. For a larger group, change the order between passes and revisit the reference. This helps you notice a path that changes while you test.
6. Flag the messy attempts. Keep the record, but exclude a clear missed line, added weight, unusual release, different sweep or possible pick from the direct comparison.
7. Look for repeatability. Three comparable attempts per stone is a practical starting plan, not a scientific proof or a guaranteed minimum. If results disagree, write “unclear” and recheck.
8. Test a proposed pair together. Later, check the other turn, return direction and relevant weights in separately labelled series. Do not mix unlike tests into one average.

A robot-based stone-measurement report also makes the important distinction between relative similarities and absolute numbers: the measured distance and curl change with conditions. You do not need a robot to keep that distinction in your notes. [5]

Optional timing

Write the interval name, not just seconds. Back-line-to-near-hog is a delivery interval; hog-to-hog is travel between the two hog lines. For your notebook, agree on the same stone edge and line edge every time.

A split does not guarantee identical release speed, and a hog-to-hog time does not explain the final result by itself. Record player, release, turn, rotation, path, sweeping and finish. Small manual differences can be timing error. There is no universal split that all curlers should copy. [6]

Never let timing distract you from safe movement or seeing the shot.

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.

03 / FICTIONAL TEACHING EXAMPLE

Sample session and first four stones

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE. All names, observations and results on pages 3-5 are invented for teaching. These are not recommended stone numbers or measured performance claims.

Club: Example Curling Club | Sheet: C | Session: practice A | Handle colour: red

Question: Which of these eight stones might make similar draw pairs?

Reference: red 1. Player: Alex, right-handed. Direction: scoreboard to windows. Turn: clockwise. Target: button. Brush: the same point on the left side of the house, marked on the team's paper sketch. Sweeping: none on all sample practice trials. Rotation: approximately four complete turns from release to stop on each comparable trial. This is a fictional observation, not a target rotation count. Stopwatch: not used.

Each pass includes one attempt with each stone. Pass 1 order: 1 through 8. Pass 2: 8 through 1. Pass 3: 1 through 8. Red 1's checks remain close together. The observer judged the listed valid deliveries reasonably similar; no instrument verified equal release speed.

How to read the results

Finish is the centre of the stone relative to the button. F = in front of the tee, B = behind it, L/R = left/right looking from the delivery end. Distances are visual estimates in stone-widths, rounded to the nearest half-width. “0” means close to the target, not a perfect measurement. Sideways finish alone is not a pure measurement of curl when distance also differs.

Stone	Pass 1 finish	Pass 2 finish	Pass 3 finish	Working observation
Red 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	Reference stayed near target
Red 2	0 / 0	0.5 B / 0	0 / 0	Similar to 1 in this series
Red 3	1 F / 0.5 R	1 F / 0.5 R	1 F / 0.5 R	Repeatedly shorter and right of reference
Red 4	1 F / 0.5 R	0.5 F / 0.5 R	1 F / 0.5 R	Similar to 3 in this series

Practical reading: Red 1/2 and red 3/4 are candidates for paired rechecks. The data suggest two different groups in this setup. They do not prove why the groups differ or that either pair will match in the other direction.

What to tell the team: “One and two look alike here. Three and four have repeatedly stopped a little shorter and farther right. Let's test those pairs together before relying on them.”

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.

04 / FICTIONAL TEACHING EXAMPLE

Sample session continued

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE. Same practice A setup, player, red handles, direction, clockwise turn, unswept draws and approximate rotation as page 3, except the flagged delivery below.

Stone	Pass 1 finish	Pass 2 finish	Pass 3 finish	Working observation
Red 5	1 B / 0.5 L	1 B / 0.5 L	1 B / 0.5 L	Repeatedly farther and left of reference
Red 6	1 B / 0.5 L	0.5 B / 0.5 L	1 B / 0.5 L	Similar to 5 in this series
Red 7	0.5 B / 0.5 R	0.5 B / 0.5 R	0.5 B / 0.5 R	Repeatable result; partner not established
Red 8	1 F / 1 R, exclude	0.5 B / 0.5 R	0 / 0.5 L	Mixed evidence from two usable attempts

Red 8, pass 1: Observer saw a narrow release; the thrower agreed. Mark the row unsuitable for comparison. Keep the recorded finish rather than quietly deleting the attempt. The remaining two results disagree enough that this example does not support a confident match with red 7.

Sample pair card

Candidate pair	Evidence from practice A	Next check
Red 1 and 2	Similar finishes near target	Throw together on the same setup, then test return direction
Red 3 and 4	Both generally short and right	Compare their paths as well as their stopping depth
Red 5 and 6	Both generally long and left	Recheck together; keep their weight reference separate
Red 7 and 8	Not established	More controlled repeats of 8 before deciding

These are provisional candidates, not a final allocation. No “best skip pair” has been established. A pair should make sense for the player and shots required, within the choices the event allows.

What the sample cannot tell you

- Whether a stone's running surface needs maintenance
- Whether the difference will repeat on another path, turn, weight or day
- Whether visually similar deliveries had identical release speed
- Whether red 8 is inconsistent, or the remaining deliveries still differed

The honest conclusion is useful: three candidate pairs and one unresolved comparison. Do not force a tidy answer to fill every box.

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.

05 / FICTIONAL TEACHING EXAMPLE

Sample later game updates

FICTIONAL EXAMPLE. Game observations below are separate from practice A. All shots were called as tee-line draws. Actual release speed was not measured. Players are observing their assigned stones, not switching them during play.

End / stone	Conditions and finish	What to write next
2 / red 5	Windows to scoreboard; counterclockwise; outside path; swept late; back eight-foot finish	Different direction, turn, path and sweeping. Not a clean test against practice A or red 6.
3 / red 8	Scoreboard to windows; clockwise; usual lane; unswept; short of house; much less rotation than usual observed at release	Mark unusual delivery. Do not strengthen a “slow stone” label.
5 / red 1	Scoreboard to windows; clockwise; practice-A lane; unswept; behind the tee; release looked usual	A possible change on that path. One new observation.
5 / red 2	Same setup as red 1 above; unswept; also behind the tee; release looked usual	Pair still appears similar here. Both carrying farther suggests checking the current path/weight reference.

Working update: “Our one/two pair still looks similar. Both carried farther on the familiar path in the fifth. We will make a small weight adjustment and watch the next comparable draw. We have not established the cause.”

Do not overwrite the practice notes with a new permanent label. Add the end, the new conditions and what remains uncertain. If the ice technician reports maintenance, start a fresh comparison record and date it. World Curling's competition policy explicitly provides for notifying teams when stone maintenance occurs. [7]

When practice time is short

For ordinary league play, focus on your own pair and the next useful shot. Watch both stones, share repeated differences with the skip and keep the game moving. A notebook should reduce confusion rather than create a debate after every miss.

For a later practice, choose one unresolved question. In this example: “Does red 8 match red 7 when the deliveries are truly comparable?” Use the blank trial record on page 7.

A helpful report to the ice technician

“On Sheet C, red 8 has shown mixed finishes. Here are the date, direction, turn, path and trial notes. One trial was clearly off line. Could you advise what to check?”

This requests expertise without claiming a fault the team has not established.

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.

06 / REUSABLE PRACTICE RECORD

Blank session and path map

Photocopy or print this page for each new setup. Use the matching trial log on page 7.

Date _____ Club _____ Sheet _____ Session ID _____

Team/recorder _____ Thrower _____

Delivery hand/style _____ Handle colour _____

Reference stone/pair _____ Other stones being compared _____

Direction of play _____

Turn: clockwise / counterclockwise | Called weight _____

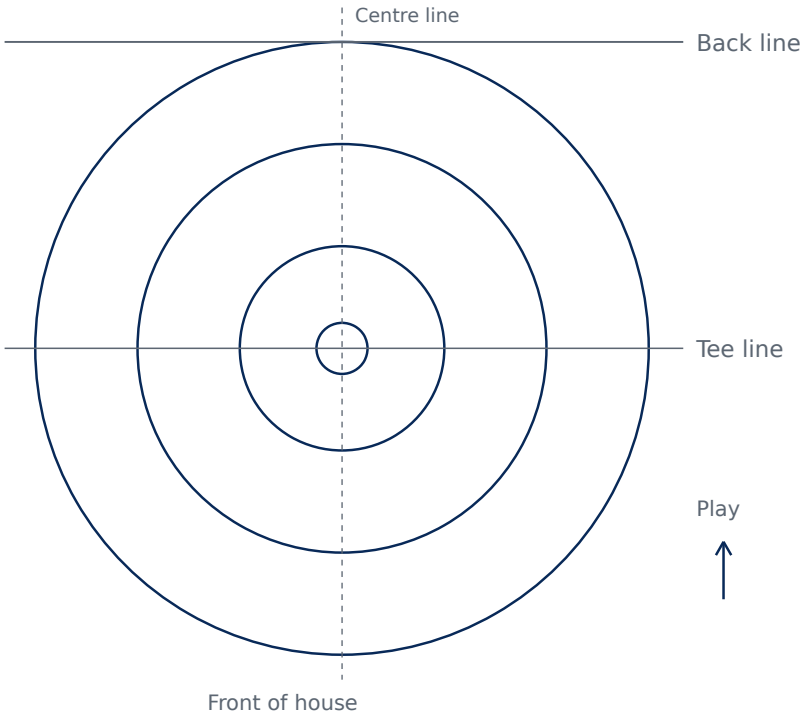
Brush position _____ Intended finish _____

Usual release/rotation note _____

Sweeping plan _____

Timing interval and edge convention, or none _____

Question we want to answer _____



DRAW YOUR SHOTS

Rings: 12, 8 and 4 feet across.

Target / path

Mark the brush, intended path and numbered finishes. Label left and right from the delivery end. Use the same viewpoint in the trial log.

Conditions or maintenance reported _____

Practice/stone-selection permissions checked with _____

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.

07 / REUSABLE PRACTICE RECORD

Blank comparison trial log

Date _____ Session ID _____ Club/sheet _____

Complete page 6 first. Its direction, turn, player, path and sweep plan apply unless a row says otherwise. Record stone number and handle colour together.

Timing interval, or none _____ Reference stone/pair _____

Finish notation: F/B = front/behind tee; L/R = from delivery end. Units _____

Trial / stone + colour	Time if used	Release / rotation / line	Actual sweeping	Finish / path note	Compare? Why?

Reference check at start _____

Reference check later _____

Repeated similarity or difference _____

Uncertain or excluded attempts and reason _____

Next single comparison _____

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.

08 / REUSABLE PRACTICE RECORD

Blank pair card and game updates

Date _____ Club/sheet _____ Handle colour _____

Based on session IDs _____ Direction/path/turn tested _____

Working pair card

Stone pair	Evidence and limits	Player, if allowed	Next check

Selection or change permitted by _____ When _____

No clear match yet _____

New observations during play

Keep observations from different directions, turns, paths and weights separate.

End / stone + colour	Direction / turn / path / weight	Release / rotation / sweeping	Finish and next check

What the team should know now _____

What needs a practice recheck _____

Concern reported to staff, if any _____

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.

09 / SAMPLE ROCK BOOK

A small rock book is enough

Start with one session sheet, one trial log and one working pair card. Keep dated observations. Mark uncertainty. Recheck when the conditions or stone identification change. You are building a useful team memory, not a permanent ranking of the stones.

Sources and further reading

The sample numbers, practice routine, forms and worked game updates are original HouseCall teaching materials. The following primary sources support the principles; they do not endorse this book.

1. Bill Tschirhart, Matching Stones 101 (10 February 2014). Comparable delivered shots, both speed and curl, repeated tests and limits of certainty. https://truenorthbill.blogspot.com/2014/02/matching-stones-101.html

2. Curling Canada, About Curling, section “Curling Stones.” The running surface and stone care. https://www.curling.ca/about-us/about-curling/

3. Takao Kameda and colleagues, The importance of the surface roughness and running band area on the bottom of a stone for the curling phenomenon, Scientific Reports (2020). Controlled surface measurements and experiments; not a player maintenance procedure. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-020-76660-8

4. World Curling, The Rules of Curling, effective 1 September 2026, October revision. R2(j), prohibition on alterations; C8, stone assignment; R11(c), electronic devices and time-only stopwatches. Check the rules adopted by your own club or event. https://worldcurling.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Rules-2026_Clean.pdf

5. Lightguide Systems, Rock Measurement with SweepTracker. First-party report of controlled stone comparisons and the distinction between relative similarity and condition-dependent numbers. Commercial equipment source, not a product recommendation. https://lightguidesystems.com/index.php/rock-measurement-with-sweeptracker/

6. CurlTech, Timing Rocks. Timing intervals, delivery differences and why the clock is only one input. This book does not adopt its example seconds as universal targets. https://www.curltech.com/curling-training/timing-rocks

7. World Curling, Competition Policy and Procedure Manual, September 2026, “Maintenance of Curling Stones during Competitions.” https://worldcurling.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Policy-Procedures-Manual-2026_Clean_20260901.pdf

8. Tony Zummack, Stones and Ice Part 1, Your Curler, May 2015, p. 8. Primary coaching explanation of running-band and striking-band differences. https://www.scottishcurling.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/YC-May-Final.pdf

Sources checked 10 October 2026. Independent club education, not official certification or event-specific rules advice.

© Mary Deuhs | Sample rock book
Free for noncommercial educational printing and sharing. Not for resale.