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THE GAME OF CURLING.

HOW A FORTY-POUND CURLING STONE SKIMS OVER THE ICE.

A Cold Weather Sport Which is Becoming National—A Scotch Game Originally. In Scotland 1,400 Players are Sometimes Engaged at Once.

Among the other amusements which have been brought into play to make the winter pass quickly is the fine old Scotch game of curling. Our people are finding that the more outdoor exercise they get the healthier and handsomer they are. And exercise in the shape of fun and amusement is better for the health than work, some people think.



CURLING STONE.

Curling is to be commended because it gives lay to the muscles at once of the chest, arms and legs. It is a game on ice. In brief, it consists in skimming a heavy stone along the ice till it arrives at a given target. It is played by members of clubs. There is something in this game which arouses all the enthusiasm of a Scotchman, and that is a good deal. The feeling is extremely infectious, too, judging by the way American boys are going into curling. The New York Sun has rather a clear explanation of how it is played, as follows:

The game to which it bears the greatest similarity is quoits. In each the object is to throw an article in such a way that it shall come to rest as near as possible to a given mark. There the resemblance ceases. The quoit is as unlike the curling stone as can be imagined. Instead of a pound and a half iron disc or ring, we have a stone that must weigh at least thirty pounds, but may not exceed fifty. The shape of the curling stone is similar to a much flattened orange. According to the rules, its height must be at least one-eighth of its circumference, and this must not be greater than thirty-six inches. Into one side of the stone is fastened a handle, which the player grasps when he throws his stone. A curler's outfit consists of two of these ponderous toys and a broom. The space required to play the game is forty-two yards long by seven wide. This is called a rink. Near the ends of which goals, or marks, are put down in the ice, so that they are thirty-eight yards apart. These are called the "tees." Four yards back of each one a circle, eighteen inches in diameter, is drawn, within which the player must place his right foot while throwing his stone. A circle seven feet in radius drawn about each tee indicates how close the stone must be left to the tee in order that it shall count at all as a shot.

The players wear plaid scarfs and caps to give themselves a more or less Scotch appearance. Four players are on a side. The captain on a side is called the "skip."



THE SKIP AND HIS MAN.

Of the way the game is played, the paper in The New York Sun gives this information: When the game is ready to begin the skips take their positions at one of the tees, one man from each side at the other tee, and the remaining four men arrange themselves along the intermediate space. The skips have absolute authority over their respective sides, directing the play of each individual. One of the men at the further tee, with his foot within the eighteen-inch ring, throws his stone along the ice, aiming for the tee where his skip stands. If the skip sees any snow or dust or other obstruction in the path of the oncoming stone, he can order his men on the middle line of the rink to sweep it away with his broom. No player has any right to touch the stone with his broom, but at the command of his skip he may remove any obstruction in its path.

When the first stone has been thrown and has come to rest near the tee, a player of the opposing side takes his turn. His object, of course, is to lay his stone nearer the tee than that of his opponent, but he waits for instructions from his skips as to how he shall try to throw. If his opponent has left his stone directly in his path the skip may command him to play against it, to knock it, if possible, beyond the seven-foot ring, or at all events further from the tee than it now is. The player may or may not succeed in fulfilling his skip's desires. The opponent then plays his second stone, and the second player likewise. One pair having played, they take up their brooms and go down to the middle of the rink while another pair take their places at the initial tee. The skips play last, one curler from each side assuming the directing authority at the critical tee. When all the stones have been cast, the umpire counts up the points scored by each side, deciding as in quoits by the proximity of the stones to the object tee. That constitutes an end; and sometimes a definite number of ends are played to constitute a game, and sometimes a definite time is played, in each case the scores of completed "ends" being aggregated to arrive at a result.

The excellence of the playing depends on the state of the ice, its smoothness and even surface. Canada ice is better for curling than that in the United States. Curlers always wear rubber shoes so that they may get over the ice quickly and not fall and break their noses.

In Canada, where it is so cold, curling is played in an inclosed rink. Great numbers of players participate in the same game by having eight players to a side at one time and many rinks running at once. At the close of the game the footings of all the rinks are run up to decide which side wins. In Scotland as many as 1,400 players have sometimes engaged in a single game. The sport is ex-

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