



**THE VALUE OF**  
**CURLING**  
**IN A COMMUNITY**



## History of the sport.

The first versions of curling date back to the 16th century in Scotland. A primitive, outdoor version of the sport grew in popularity throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, with the first official rules written in 1838.

Scottish immigrants brought the game to Canada and the United States in the 19th century. In the ensuing years, great strides were made to improve playing conditions—indoor facilities were built to produce quality ice and provide a comfortable playing environment.

In 1998, curling became an official medal sport in the Winter Olympics. The exposure provided by the Olympic movement fueled a rapid increase in participation.

**Curling is for everyone.**



## **Growth in the United States.**

Curling has been steadily growing in popularity and participation in the United States in recent decades.

- USA Curling, founded in 1958 as the United States Curling Association (USCA), has seen a significant increase in Member Clubs and participants over the past few decades.
- In the 1990s, there were around 5,000 registered curlers in the US. Today, that number has grown to over 20,000 registered curlers nationwide.
- The number of curling clubs in the US has also expanded significantly, growing from around 50 clubs in the 1990s to over 200 clubs today.
- The Men's gold medal captured by Team USA at the 2018 Olympics generated fresh interest and enthusiasm.
- While curling has been traditionally popular in the northern Midwest, it is now growing across the country. New curling facilities have opened in Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Portland, Denver, and the Bay Area. While it remains part of the culture in Minnesota, Wisconsin and other cold-weather states, it has proven to attract new participants whenever it is introduced in a new metro market.
- The efforts of USA Curling to promote the sport and develop youth and collegiate curling programs have also contributed to its growth across the country.
- Curling is also attracting a more diverse audience, with increasing numbers of women, minorities, and young people getting involved in the sport.

No longer a niche sport or restricted to northern parts of the United States, curling is a rapidly growing recreational activity.

*"Although the sport of curling has been associated with an older adult population, the majority of participants ranged between the ages of 25 and 54 (62.2%)." — Curling in America, A National Study Conducted by North Carolina State University*





# What is curling and why is its popularity increasing?

Curling is a sport played on ice by teams of four or two players. While it is on ice, competitors do not wear skates—special shoes allow players to slide as they deliver the stones from one end towards the target or “house” at the other. It is a medal sport in the Winter Olympics.

Here’s why the sport of curling is growing across the country.

1. It’s accessible. While elite players are between 25-40, curling is a true lifetime sport. It can be started at a very young age and players continue to enjoy it into their eighties and beyond. While the training to be an Olympic curler is extensive, most people can start to enjoy it at a recreational level quickly. As an adaptive sport, curling also brings in people who may be excluded from other activities.
2. It’s social. Teams gather with their opponents following a game to share a beverage and enjoy some conversation. Tournaments, called bonspiels, bring people together from different locations to compete and socialize over a weekend. For many, the bonds that are created off the ice are as important as anything that happens on it.
3. It’s Olympic. Curling has been an official Winter Olympic sport since 1998, which has increased its visibility and popularity worldwide. Television coverage of Olympic curling has created awareness and interest.
4. It’s strategic. Curling requires a combination of physical skill and strategic thinking. That’s an interesting combination for many people, as it means there are always new things to learn. Young adults who are introduced to the sport find these aspects very appealing.
5. It cuts across generations. Since curling can be enjoyed by people of all ages, from children to seniors, it is a sport that can be enjoyed as a family. It is not unusual to see three or even four generations competing on a team together.

*"62% of curlers have been playing for less than ten years, and 30% are quite new to the sport and have played for less than five years." — Curling in America, A National Study Conducted by North Carolina State University*

**Facilities across the country are filling with people new to the sport, often recent college graduates eager for a new sport that provides recreation, socialization, and competition.**



# Why build a curling facility now?

There are strong links between community health and recreation. Post-COVID, many public health experts are concerned about the lack of socialization and the impact that isolation has on the overall wellness of the population.

## A curling facility will:

1. Foster social interaction. In a survey, 72% of people who curl cite social connections as the driving factor in their participation. Social interaction, centered around an activity, is essential for the overall well-being and quality of life of a community.
2. Encourage fitness. Curling is an anaerobic activity that fits well in recreational facilities. The structure of league play and tournaments prompts consistent commitment and promotes healthy behaviors.
3. Provide an economic boost. A curling facility will attract visitors for tournament play, a key element of the sport. Events with large numbers of teams will bring people into the community who will book hotel rooms, dine, shop, and stimulate the local economy. What's more, people who fall in love with the sport will choose to live in an area that is convenient to a curling facility.
4. Fuel social equity and inclusivity. Few sports cut across ages, abilities, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds like curling. It brings together people who would never interact without their shared interest in the sport, and prompts valuable conversations that helps participants discover commonality.
5. Makes youth active. Today's young people have no shortage of distractions, but spending time on the curling ice requires focus and cognitive thinking. The sport can also be picked up at a later age than others, and a teenager will be able to pick up the necessary skills quickly. The four-person team structure also helps develop the ability to work with others.

With the increasing recognition of the importance of physical, mental, and social well-being, municipalities are prioritizing the development and maintenance of high-quality recreational centers to meet the diverse needs of their communities. A curling-specific facility offers a healthy outlet to a larger percentage of than just about any other activity.

*"72% of all participants cite the social connections as a key reason they curl." — Curling in America, A National Study Conducted by North Carolina State University*



**Public health experts cite a direct connection between social outlets and community well-being.**





**Curling makes  
communities  
stronger.**

## Will curling produce a positive community impact?

Quite simply, yes. Here's why:

1. It's not the same-old, same-old recreational facility. A curling facility is unique, and that generates the kind of excitement another pickle ball court or soccer field can't match.
2. It puts a community on the map. USA Curling hosts national championships and other competitions at curling facilities, producing media coverage and drawing visitors to a municipality.
3. It will provide year-round programming. The traditional curling season is October to April. Some new facilities are operate year-round but the facility can also accommodate other recreational activity during the warmer months.
4. It's a revenue generator. Curling facilities produce significant revenue through membership fees, league fees, corporate and private events, rental fees, and large tournaments or championships. Many people who don't play regularly will welcome the opportunity to try the sport once a year with a group, and these kinds of outings provide consistent revenue.

*"25% value the competition the sport provides over a lifetime." — Curling in America, A National Study  
Conducted by North Carolina State University*

# What else?

Curling has become appealing to a diverse range of demographics in the United States for several reasons:

- 1. Gender Inclusion.** Curling has a strong tradition of gender equality, with women's and men's events being equally prominent, and many competitions featuring teams comprised of men, women, and other gender identities. The sport actively promotes participation by women and girls.
- 2. Accessibility.** Curling is relatively easy to learn and play, making it accessible to people of all ages and athletic abilities. The social aspect of curling, with teams of four players, also appeals to recreational athletes.
- 3. Family-Friendly.** Curling is often seen as a family-friendly sport, with many clubs offering Learn-to-Curl programs and events for children and youth. Parents and their children will often compete on the same team.
- 4. Diversity Outreach.** Curling organizations have made concerted efforts to introduce the sport to minority communities and underrepresented groups.
- 5. College Involvement.** Collegiate curling programs have been growing, especially in the Northeast and the Midwest, drawing more young adults to the sport. This has helped introduce curling to a younger demographic.
- 6. Social Aspect.** The team-based nature and social atmosphere of curling, with post-game gatherings, appeals to many recreational athletes.

The accessibility, gender equality, family-friendly environment, diversity outreach, and social aspects of curling have all contributed to its growing appeal across different demographics in the United States.

*"55% believe their curling club is a place where they are free to be themselves." — Curling in America, A National Study Conducted by North Carolina State University*





## **A PROVEN FORMULA.**

New facilities have been successful in metro areas that did not offer curling previously, including:

**Golden CO**  
**Lafayette CO**  
**Durham NC**  
**Charlotte NC**  
**Chicagoland**  
**Chaska MN**  
**Las Vegas NV**  
**Columbus OH**  
**Nashville TN**  
**Phoenix AZ**  
**Portland OR**

[www.usacurling.org](http://www.usacurling.org)







## **SUMMARY.**

**Here's what a curling-specific facility will do:**

**Foster and strengthen social connections and community engagement**

**Provide a welcoming space that delivers physical and mental health benefits to all kinds of different people within a community**

**Stimulate local businesses and drive tourism**

**Provide opportunities for youth to learn valuable life lessons and build skills**

**Expand social circles and provide a venue for popular corporate team-building events**