

It's real easy to get swept up in curling

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on its indoor ice rink on Drake Road tournament, drew 36 teams, most of them Canadian.

The structure of the game is simple enough. Two four-man teams, called "rinks," stand at opposite ends of a 46-foot ice lane, or "sheet." Using small brooms, the players attempt to slide polished 42-pound "stones" along the rough ice surface to selected spots on a target, or "house," at the opposite end of the lane.

The stones move because the rapid

sweeping action of the brooms breaks down the rough ice surface and creates a thin film of water on which the heavy objects slide.

The sweeping, the only violent part of the sport, can also determine the direction the stone takes.

The game is divided into 10 "ends," which are like baseball innings.

Dress is usually informal, and gloves are a matter of choice. Rubber-soled shoes or boots are usually worn, and a more easily sliding sole is

sometimes worn on one foot.

No referees or officials are in evidence. If a player touches a stone with his broom, he's "burned his rock," and it's up to him to take it out of play.

"IT'S JUST A lot of fun," said David Sgriccia between mouthfuls of a steak dinner he was devouring at a table beside the big window which separates the ice from the barroom. Sgriccia, who lives in Commerce

Township, is a member of the Detroit Ford Rink, which was to take the ice in competition later that night.

"It's great exercise," he said. "It's not a real active game like racketball, but at least you're always standing up. You're never sitting around like in bowling."

"When you first start curling, you develop a very tender inner thigh muscle. Beginning curlers suffer from what we call curler's crotch."

"But it's kind of addictive," he added. "It kind of sneaks up on you. The more you do it, the more you want to do it."

And, long and always, there's that courtesy thing.

"You give your opponent every opportunity to make the best shot he can," said club president Don Richard, a Birmingham resident, "and then you try to make a better one."

At first glance, the curlers look like a sturdy, middle-class lot, some of them headed past middle age. But according to curling etiquette, that personal stuff isn't supposed to matter.

"What you do for a living is never discussed," Sgriccia said. "A curling club isn't a status thing like some golf and country clubs."

THE DETROIT Curling Club, for years a fixture in a crumbling Detroit neighborhood behind Wayne State, moved to its present location on Drake just south of Walnut Lake Road three years ago.

The building has a checkered past. It was an ice arena — failed and deserted — when the curling club moved in and found the walls covered with slime in the words of one member. Before that it was an arena where show horses were ridden.

The club, which has around 250 members, also sponsors curling competition for women. In fact, the 25th annual Women's Bonspiel is scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday.



Tom Baer

"You should come and see that bonspiel," said Nina Sgriccia, David's wife. "You'll see better-looking curlers, that's for sure."

That comment got a laugh.

"You might see a few bigger ends,"

quipped another woman curler, Isabelle MacKellar of Troy.

Still more laughter.

There seems to be a lot of that commodity at the Detroit Curling Club.



Two Windsor curlers, Don Moncur (left) and Dick Nosella, use their brooms to maneuver a stone at the Detroit Curling Club.

JOHN STANOR/staff photographer

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