

Sweeping Up

The Ocean State Curling Club brings a cold-weather European sport to local rinks. **By Tim Lehnert**

Known as “chess on ice” because of the intense strategy required, curling is derived from centuries-old northern European traditions of sliding rocks on frozen ponds. It’s a sport that uses a broom as equipment (the sweeping typically causes the curling “rock” to go farther and straighter than it would otherwise).

Curling stresses sportsmanship and prizes finesse over power, says Ocean State Curling Club (OSCC) president Larry Riccitelli. The club’s home is the “bubble” arena at the Cranston Veteran’s Memorial Ice Rink, and its some fifty

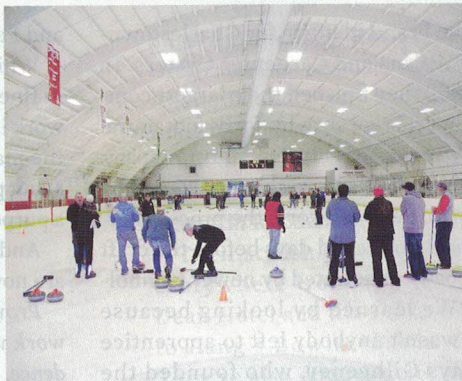
male and female members come from all over Southern New England, ranging in age from their twenties to seniors.

Some local curlers have roots in Canada where the game is very popular; others come to the sport by chance. “I saw it on the Olympics,” says Riccitelli, who joined OSCC when it formed in 2009, “and really became enamored.”

Friday matches at 8 p.m. are free and open to the public through mid-March, and there is a Learn to Curl event in January, before the new Sunday league launches. oceanstatecurling.org

Curling Lingo

- The “**rock**,” or “**stone**,” is granite and weighs around forty-two pounds. It is “**thrown**” (slid) the length of the “**sheet**” by a curler who pushes off from a “**hack**,” or foothold in the ice.
- The “**skip**” is the captain of the four-person curling team; he or she is the strategist, and calls the shots and instructs the “**sweepers**.”
- The “**button**” is at the center of the “**house**” (the four concentric rings painted on the ice). The goal: Get your rocks closer to the center of the button (and keep them there).
- An “**end**” in curling is like an inning in baseball, during which all sixteen stones are slid to the far end and a score is tallied. A typical curling session has eight “**ends**” and lasts about two hours.



Learn to Curl events at the Cranston Veteran's Memorial Ice Rink.

