

# Cheese Curling has become a popular event

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the sport played on ice. In curling, as seen on TV's coverage of the Olympics, the sweeper cannot touch the stone. Instead, he or she sweeps snow or loose debris from the ice in front of the stone as it advances toward the target.

Touching the stone in any manner disqualifies the curl in ice curling.

In the beginning, cheese curling had more stringent rules, including the "no touch rule." After a couple of years with low scores, the Committee on Rule Changes, a subcommittee of the International Cheese Curling Association, decided to incur the wrath of cheese curling purists everywhere and, gasp, elected to change the sacred rules and allow the sweeper to touch the "stone" (cheese wheel) as it slides, rolls, falls, or plummets toward the goal—but only with his or her broom and never, never after the "stone" comes to a complete stop.

The sweeper cannot touch the "stone" with any part of his or her body.

The reason for changing the rule was to give teams a chance to increase

their scores.

"It really didn't make much difference for most of the teams," commented George Fritz, who coordinates the cheese games. "Scores continue to be low, but the fun is in participating and watching how seriously these champion cheese curlers apply their craft."

The International Cheese Curling Association is known all over the world for its ingenuity and problem-solving finesse.

Take the playing surface for example. Obviously there is no ice on Vine Street on Labor Day weekend in Arthur.

Right away you have a problem if you're trying to devise a sport where you have to slide a cheese wheel toward a target.

The first problem facing the International Cheese Curling Association in developing the competition was to come up with a substitute for an ice rink playing surface.

A trip to the local canvas shop—Otto's Canvas—resulted in the solution: a nylon surface that is plenty smooth for sliding those four-pound cheese wheels, which, by the way, are

completely sealed and suitable for eating even after the punishment they take during the competition.

This is one competition you won't want to miss, and, more likely, you'll want to give it a try.

The competition starts at 12:30, so come to the curling area about 30 minutes early to sign up a team or connect with other individuals to form a team.

It's good, clean fun. It doesn't cost a penny, and you get to keep your "stone" (cheese wheel), which can be sliced at any store in town that sells cheese so everyone on your team gets some.



A "sweeper" guides the cheese "stone" into the 3-point ring of the target to help her team gain points in the International Cheese Curling Championships. The event is based on the curling competitions that are part of the Olympic Games, with a few rule modifications; after all, there is no ice rink here in late summer! Delivering the four-pound cheese wheel results in some strange situations.

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