

Mike's chronicles # 3 / The art of making curling ice

The ice you curl on is a result of many layers of ice, over a hundred hours of tedious work and approx. 6,000 gallons of water. It is also thanks to a team of 8 to 10 very dedicated volunteers.

Under the guidance of our head ice technician Claude Tousignant, along with our team of volunteers the process starts with freezing the cement slab to approx.- 08 degrees Celsius for about 24 hours. Then Claude uses his homemade boom with 8 spray nozzles to apply a very fine mist over the cement floor. This freezes within seconds and applies a thin layer of ice across the entire cement slab. We repeat this application several times. Then with a ¾" hose we do a mini flood of approximately 300 gallons of water. By now we have a layer of ice on all the low and high spots of the slab.

Next, we flood the entire slab with approx. 1/16" of water (500 gallons). We do this at about five or six hour intervals to allow each layer time to freeze solid. Once there is a minimum of ½" of ice (approx. 6 floods) to ensure the entire slab is covered we then paint the ice surface at least 5 times with an environmentally friendly biodegradable super white paint that dries upon contact. This requires approx. 250 gallons of water and 120 lbs of dry super white Jet-Ice paint. After this we apply several fine mists of water in order to seal the paint. (If we put too much water on the paint, it will become diluted) The mist will freeze on top of the paint and protect it.

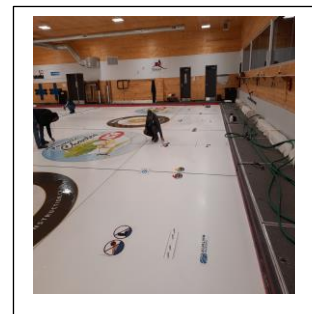
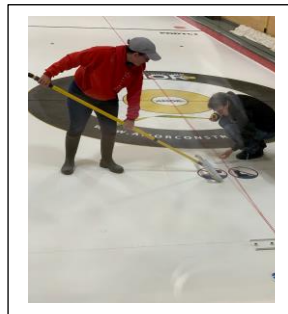
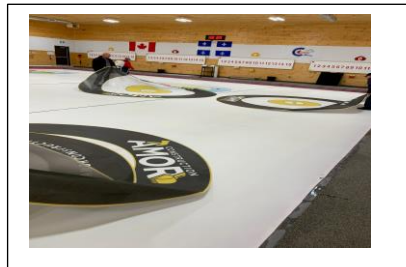
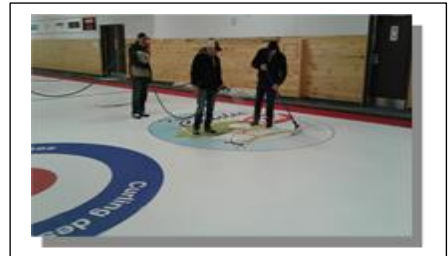
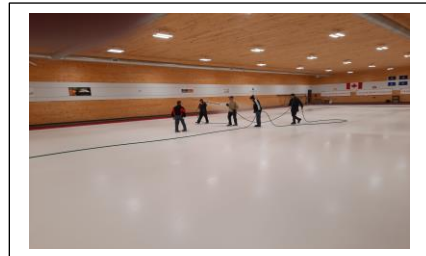
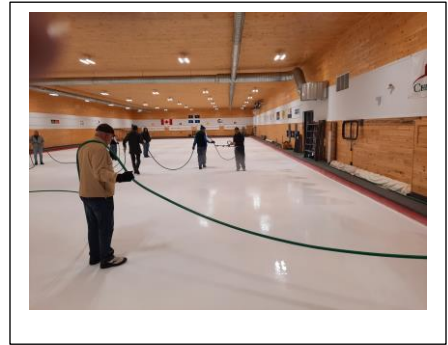
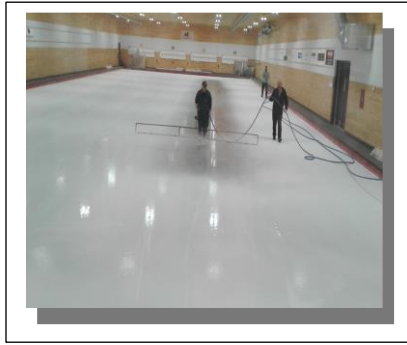
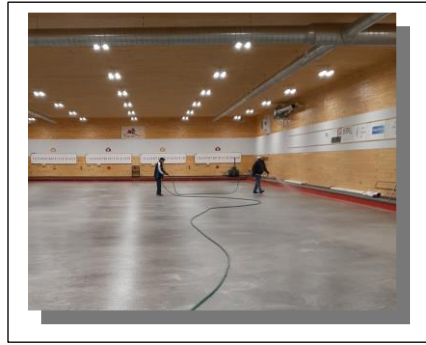
Once sealed and frozen we then divide the ice area into four equally distanced curling sheets using colored string (knitting wool) to mark where to install all the circles, logos and hacks. Then comes the very tedious operation of installing the houses, logos, hacks, hog lines, T-lines, training lines (those blue lines each side of the centre line) and stone markers that all need to be sealed to the ice with a fine mist so they don't move or float away when we apply the next flood of approximately 300 gallons of water.

Once this exercise is completed, we apply another 8 floods over 4 days to build up the ice surface to a minimum 1½" of ice to ensure the hack plates are well beneath the ice surface.

Now we shave and pebble the ice several times until we have a good pebble base. This is done by applying 2 coats of coarse pebble then shave the ice. We then reapply coarse or medium pebbles and scrape again. We may repeat three or four times applying fine and extra fine pebbles until we are satisfied the ice is true and level. After some final adjustments we can now install the hacks and put the rocks on the ice for 24 hours to cool down.

A final shave, extra fine pebbles and nip and the ice is ready for curling.

The overall process takes 8 to 10 days.



Your Ice Team

Mike Duern, Claude Tousignant, Mike Opsitnik, Robert Charron, Claude Vallieres, Clara Duern, Annie Royer, Pierre Lanteigne, Eddy Burke and Jacques Desharnais.

Be good to the ice and the ice will be good to you and don't forget to thank your ice technicians for their efforts.

Mike and the ice team