

Setting Up Curling Rings

There are many different ways to setup you lake, backyard or pond rink for curling, and there are many different ways to paint your rings. We like to keep it simple.

Set up the rings when it is cold enough outside for water to freeze. An ideal day is when the temperatures are about -5 to -10C.

First, is to get the rink scraped good and the initial floods done. The better the initial floods, the better the rocks will slide and the better the rings will come out. Locate on the arena where you want the center of the rings at each end, remembering that the rings are 12' across and you should allow another foot on each side, which means the width of the rink should be at least 14'.

You'll need an 8' long piece of wood, preferably a 2" x 3". Hammer a 3 1/2" spike (pivot) thru it 6" from one end (a screw is another alternative). On a normal curling ring or house, there is the button or center (12" in diameter), the 4', 8' and 12' rings. We want to color in the button solid red and place a 3" wide color rings at the 4', 8', and 12' diameters. To do this, measure and mark the 2"x3" starting at the pivot nail head outward making marks at the 6", 21", 24", 45", 48", 69" and 72".

Starting at one ring, drill a hole in the ice at the center of the rings a couple of inches deep and with a diameter wide enough to fit the pivot nail.

Drill 3" screws into each mark on the 2"x3" but not enough to protrude out the other side. Then, starting at the 6" mark, drill the screw so it extrudes about 1/2" thru the 2"x3". Place the 2"x3" on the ring with the pivot nail in the hole you drilled in the ice. Rotate the 2"x3" around the pivot nail twice, scribing a circular line in the ice.

Retract the 6" screw so it is not extruding, and drill the 21" screw thru the 2"x3" so it extrudes 1/2". Rotate the 2"x3" around the pivot nail twice. Repeat the same procedure for the 24", 45", 48", 69" and 72" lengths. Do the same process on the other ring.

Sweep the rings clear of the debris left from the scribing.

If you have a pair of rubber gloves, put them on now as the food coloring may stay on your hands for some time if you accidentally spill it. Fill two Gatorade (or equivalent) type bottles with water and add red food coloring to one and blue food coloring to the other. Fill in the buttons of each ring with the red coloring. Fill in the 21" to 24" scribed areas in each ring with the blue coloring. Next the 45" to 48" area with the red coloring and the 69" to 72" scribed areas with blue coloring. The scribed areas should stop the

leaching of the red and blue coloring from bleeding into the non-colored areas and provide crisp lines.

Let the lines freeze. Lightly spray water over the rings and I mean lightly as you don't want to smudge the lines you just put down. A good mist will do. Allow to freeze and then repeat a few more times. At that point you should be able to flood over the rings normally as you would the rest of your rink.

Depending on the number of times you flood the ring and the intensity/darkness of the coloring you originally painted the rings, you may have to re-color the rings. Over time, you can improve the process to make it easier but it's a start.