

Important Points - what do new players miss?

1. The Modified Free Guard Zone! (MFGZ). Most new players struggle with this - the FGZ in mixed doubles is modified to include the ENTIRE in-play area from the hog-line to the back line - yes it includes the house! This means that NO ROCK at all can be removed from play until the fourth delivered stone. You can kind of think of it as a "three-rock-rule", but modified. And yes that means you can't hit your own stones out either. So stay sharp! If your opponent draws heavy and accidentally taps one of your stones a little too hard, you can jump on it and try to sweep it out of play. If it does go out of play, your stone goes back to where it was, and their stone is removed. We see many teams that don't understand the advantage of trying to sweep their own rock out of play! Just make sure you are always aware if it is the fourth delivered stone or not...we find the easiest way to remember this is to think that the first stone that can hit is the first delivered stone by the second thrower of the team with hammer. I know that sounds complicated...but try it on the ice!

Another question we get about this MFGZ is teams wondering if they can sweep their opponents delivered stone out of play (in the case they are a little heavy on their draw). YES YOU CAN! Think about this...a removed stone does go back in its position if accidentally taken out...but in the case of the delivered stone...where would it go back to?? It doesn't get thrown again! It just stays out. So sweep those delivered stones by your opponents through the house (only behind the tee line of course)!

2. Blanked ends. In the case of a blanked end, choice of hammer goes to the team who didn't have hammer in the blanked end. So it is generally not an advantage to blank an end. Take your point! Although a blank end in mixed doubles is relatively rare.

3. Choice of hammer. If your opponent scores in an end, you have the *choice* to have the hammer or not in the next end. Technically, you could chose to throw first...although we don't often see teams not choosing hammer during game play. The only time we have even considered this is in the case where our opponents last-stone thrower is *really* struggling to the point where having last rock advantage isn't that useful for them...and we decide to get a rock in a good position on the first stone.

4. Switching positions during the game. Yes, each end you and your other player can change what position you are going to play - either throwing first and fifth stone or the middle three stones. Again, this doesn't happen often, but sometimes it is warranted if one player is struggling, or perhaps things aren't going your way and a change in position might shake things up. We have seen it in a case where a player was really struggling in a big game with the pressure of throwing the last stone. After a position switch, the pressure was removed and the player did better.

What about the Power Play?

Mixed Doubles Rules

[Click here](#) to view the latest official rules by Curling Canada

CMDR? What is that? Canadian Mixed Doubles Ranking.

Here are some key things sometimes misunderstood about the Power Play:

1. You can only choose the Power Play once per game, and you need to have hammer to be able to choose it.
2. You can choose which side you want the rocks on, so consider that carefully. For instance, if you have been feeling good about your in-turn, perhaps you want the rocks over on the right hand side (for right handed throwers).

Power play strategies

We find that most new players don't use the power play because they are unsure when to use it or what to do with it. We have found there are two times we have found it useful to employ the power play: when you want to protect a lead, or conversely you are down and need to catch up! Lets look at those two scenarios separately, from both teams perspectives.

Scenario one: You are leading the game by a few points, have hammer, and choose the Power Play to protect your lead. You get the rock in the house splitting the eight and twelve foot just in front of the tee line and your opponent has the corner guard. Your opponent throws first.

How to play this scenario as the opponent trying to catch up? First, your opponent needs to decide what outcome they are after - since they are down I would suggest they are going to try to steal one (or preferably more) points. They will thus need to hide behind a guard. There are a few ways to do this, the simplest being to just throw a centre guard and go behind it on their next shot. Alternatively, they could go right to the button and throw a centre guard on the next one. Another option would be to come around their own corner guard and sit just on tip of yours, corner frozen. However this is more of a strategy to keep the team with hammer to a single point than it is a strategy to steal. So both teams need to know what outcome they want at the start of the end before you start throwing rocks!

Now its your turn. Since you are up by a few points, one strategy suggestion is to keep the end clean and score a single point (or maybe two) with your final draw of the end. You don't want a bunch of junk in play here so consider drawing your first stone to the other (open) side, even with the tee line with your placed stone. You don't need another corner guard here as you aren't trying to take more than two. Many teams here get sucked in to drawing around the centre guard just thrown by the opposition. It's not an entirely bad call...but by going to the centre you have essentially negated the reason why you chose the Power Play in the first place - to keep

play to the outside and keep the centre open. You can peel the guard later. You could also draw behind their corner guard on top of your own, but you would need to be more precise. One of the worst mistakes you can make here is to try and come around the oppositions corner guard and be light and leave double corner guards for the opposition to hide behind. You would still have a good chance at your single, but getting two would be tougher.

Scenario two: You are down by a few points, have hammer, and choose the Power Play to try and catch up. You again have the rock in the house and your opponent has the corner guard. Your opponent throws first.

The best way we've seen for your opponent to play this is to throw about back eight-foot weight and try to tick their own guard into the house. A great place for that ticked guard to end up here is top four-foot on the centre line. This leaves your rock open and gives them an opportunity to take play back to the centre. They need to come at that guard from the *outside in*. The aim is likely going to be out past the edge of the twelve-foot. This shot does give two options - if it is made perfect, they have that nice tick on the guard into the house. Their thrown rock can hit the boards and roll out, that is ok. If they play the turn the other way however and you tick their guard into the boards...it gets replaced and the thrown rock comes out of play! The other option is that they miss the tick wide and their rock settles in on top of your stone in front of the tee line, behind the corner guard, maybe with a little tap. That's not so bad for them either.

Now it's your turn. You need to get some points! You will need a corner guard or two. Again, don't get sucked in to the play in the middle. Your options are to get a second corner guard up, replace the guard they may have ticked out of the way, or if your opponent never ticked their guard out of the way, you can also come around that corner and freeze one on top of your own. If your opponent was light on their tick and left you with double corner guards there, **DEFINITELY** come around those corners!