

The curling commitment continuum and goals

The purpose of this article is to share a perspective on the commitment that curlers give to their sport and to the goals that lead them.

The curling commitment continuum is a tool that you can use to determine at what level of sport commitment you are at. The level of commitment implies what the goals of participation are. Many curlers might seem themselves acting across the whole continuum but that would have to be questioned when attention is put on mastering skills and matching opponents. 'Playing to compete' means preparing, training and performing to match the best opponents. The time and type commitment shown is the typical for sport and often determines the goals an individual has.

Deciding what we are committed to in life as in curling is a tough task at the best of times. In my work in curling or in other sports like boxing I find that commitment is the foundation of achievement. But commitment without purpose and direction often leads to short term success but not long term performance and consistency. Talent alone will often win occasionally but commitment, persistence and talent tends to perform better and more consistently. Identifying what people are committed to and motivated for is very important to determining whether you want to play, coach or work with them.

When we ask "What is someone committed to?" we might also ask "What is someone motivated for?" These questions mean that we will be examining the behavior and goals of an individual. When you decide on team mates do you make the decision based on their commitment and their goals or do you focus on how well you get along? Think about that question as you look at the commitment continuum below and then consider your own commitment and goals and how they fit with your team mates.

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Curling Commitment Continuum

Recreational	Development	Competitive
Play for fun	Play to improve	Play to compete
About 1 per week	About 3 times per week	4-6 times per week
Little time commitment	Moderate time commitment	Heavy time commitment
Life goes on beyond sport	Life accommodates sport	Sport is life
Friendship oriented	Coach directed	Team/coach facilitated
Low \$ cost	Moderate \$ cost	High \$ cost
Low social cost	Moderate social cost	High social cost
Learn rules and play	Learn skills and play	Master skills and match opposition
“Window shop performance”	“Consider the price of success”	“Pay the cost of performance”

The recreational athlete plays for enjoyment, fellowship and friendship. The results of games are not important to them and their focus is on playing without the need to improve. They want to have benefits of playing without the pressure to improve performance. The Development athlete plans their life to accommodate their sport; they take a little bit of coaching, and like to improve but not at the cost of the benefits of the recreational athlete. The Competitive athlete is fully engaged in curling and their commitment and goals are focused on excelling in the sport, personal improvement, and doing what it takes to reach the summit of their personal capabilities.

Imagine being a curler that behaves competitively but you are surrounded by team mates that have talent but essentially are committed to the game at a recreational level. Alternatively, think about the person that just wants to play games, does not have goals to improve and believes that on any given day any team can come out on top. In both cases commitment and personal goals conflict and inevitably this means that team mates have to talk to each other and understand the commitment and goals of their team mates.

The next time you set personal or team goals use the curling commitment continuum to assess where your commitment is located. Once you identify your commitment and where it overlaps then you can get to work setting goals that everyone can put their energy into achieving.