

A Beginner's Guide to Gateway Clubs & Mother Clubs

What's a Gateway Club?

A gateway club is designed specifically for new curlers — especially those coming through Try Curling sessions or beginners' courses.

- It's a welcoming, social environment with coaching support and less competitive pressure.
- Gateway clubs help you build skills and confidence before you decide whether to stay, move to, or add a more competitive club.
- Often, your gateway club can be your mother club if you don't yet have another main club.

What's a Mother Club?

In curling, a mother club is your primary curling club — the one you are officially registered with through Scottish Curling.

- You can belong to more than one club, but you only have one mother club.
- Your mother club is responsible for:
 - Registering you with Scottish Curling.
 - Paying your annual Scottish Curling affiliation fee on your behalf.
 - Acting as your main point of contact for national competitions and member benefits.

How They Fit Together

You could:

- Join a gateway club first and make it your mother club while you learn.
- Later, move your mother club designation to a different club once you're ready for more competition.
- Or keep your gateway club membership alongside another club (but only one will be your mother club). You can only stay in a gateway club for a maximum of 4 years.



How to Find Out More About a Club

- Ask your rink: Most Scottish ice rinks have noticeboards or websites listing local clubs and their contact details.
- Scottish Curling's website: Use the Find a Club tool to see clubs by area.
- Talk to coaches after a Try Curling or beginners' course — they often know which clubs are looking for members.
- Visit club nights: Many welcome visitors to watch and meet members.

How to Join a Club

- Make contact — email or call the club secretary or membership contact.
- Attend a few sessions — some clubs let you try a couple of games before joining.
- Complete a membership form — online or paper, usually via the club.
- Pay club fees — these will include your Scottish Curling membership fee if you haven't already paid it via another club.
- Get added to the rota/fixtures — you'll start playing in club nights, leagues, or friendlies.

Why You Need a Mother Club

- To be an official Scottish Curling member (insurance, competitions, member benefits).
- To gain access to local and national competitions
- To ensure your affiliation fee is paid and your membership records are kept up-to-date.
- Without a mother club, you can't be a registered curler in Scotland — even if you train regularly.

Things to Consider When Picking Your Mother Club

- Location & Ice Times: Are the playing nights and rink location convenient for you?
- Club Size: Larger clubs have more variety in skill levels; smaller clubs can feel more close-knit.
- Competitive vs Social: Does the club mainly play for fun, or do they enter lots of competitions?
- Coaching Support: New curlers benefit from clubs with active coaches and practice sessions.
- Cost: Membership fees vary by club.
- Pathways: If you're ambitious, look for clubs with links to higher-level teams and competitions.
- Friendliness & Fit: Visit, chat with members, and see if you feel welcome.

Should you have any questions about which club to join, your ice rink will be able to support you in making an informed choice.

