Stone Replaces Puck

By STUART GLASS, Thresher Sports Editor

It is rapidly becoming manifestly obvious that curling, not hockey, is the nation's number one sport. In Canada, of course; not America. The natural reaction to most of us, not being Canadians, is "What is curling?"

Or perhaps, "What, indeed, is the essence of curling; what are the rules, the ethics of curling; what does one do when one indulges in the pastime of curling?" Or, more than likely, "What?"

Very simple. Curling, as a matter of fact, is a sport likened to shuffleboard on ice. It involves sliding a 42-pound "stone," which is a wad of granite one foot in diameter that looks like a gigantic Tum with a handle on it, toward a target across more than a hundred feet of ice. Since the average sized man can't be expected to shove the thing that far with any inordinate degree of accuracy, each team has a few guys called "sweepers," who scurry around on the ice in front of the stone with brooms, and sweep anything that happens to be close by into the stone's path.

This may include snow, dirt, gum, cigarette butts, or clotted blood, but whatever it is, it has the property of slowing the projectile down, inhibiting its deceleration, or making it curve.

At any rate, one team tries to get its stone into the target, while the other team tries to get its own stone there and knock the other team's out. Each team gets eight stones in an end, which we would refer to in baseball jargon as an inning, and there are ten ends to the match.

One might tend to scoff, never having seen a curling match (owing to the rather marked impracticality of trying the game in the Rice gym), at the seemingly interminable boredom of the game. But we must urge one to reserve judgment until he has actually seen curling at its best. Only we've never seen it either.