

[00:00:00]

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Welcome to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. This week, "Obstruction of Just Ice". Curtis and Andy are both passionate about the ice sport called curling. Andy quit their team last year, but he still watches Curtis play, and he offers his friend a lot of unsolicited advice. Curtis is annoyed. He asks the court to issue a gag order on backseat curling. Who's right? Who's wrong? Only one can decide. Please rise as Judge John Hodgman enters the courtroom and presents an obscure cultural reference.

(Chairs squeak, followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.)

John Hodgman: "It would be nice if someone noticed, though they've all been working hard—pushing these rocks around, trying to gain some ground, trying to keep the Canadians down."

Bailiff Jesse Thorn, please swear them in.

Jesse Thorn: Curtis, Andy. Please rise and raise your right hands.

(Chairs squeak.)

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God or Whatever?

(They swear.)

Do you swear to abide by Judge John Hodgman's ruling despite the fact that he does no curling, only epic curls?

(They swear.)

Judge Hodgman, you may proceed.

John Hodgman: Thank you, Bailiff Jesse. Curtis and Andy, *(chuckling)* you may be seated for an—I'm sorry. I was laughing at Jesse doing some epic curls there in the video conference. I do about—like, I'll do a little work with the 8 pounder, you know what I mean?

Jesse Thorn: All I know is that when my friend Jim was learning Jeet Kune Do, Bruce Lee's martial art, he told me that when Bruce Lee was making breakfast, he would do curls with his baby in one arm and a gallon of milk in the other arm.

John Hodgman: Hmm. That only works insofar as your baby weighs the exact weight of a gallon of milk.

Jesse Thorn: Or if you switch back and forth.

John Hodgman: I suppose that's true. Curtis and Andy, you may be seated for an immediate summary judgment in one of yours favors.

(Chairs squeak.)

Can either of you name the piece of culture that I referenced as I entered this courtroom? Weeell, I don't know. Let's start with you, Curtis.

Curtis: I anticipated you would be saying something about some curling related things, so I—

John Hodgman: Yeah, well that makes sense. That makes sense, because the case is about curling. It's a curling case.

Curtis: Exactly. So, I'm going to guess that it is the Beatles movie, *Help*.

(John "wow"s.)

It's a bad guess.

John Hodgman: Look, I'm writing it down. And for once, probably in the past five years, I actually wrote it down. I'll show you the picture on the video conference. I wrote it down, *Help*.

Curtis: *(Chuckling.)* It's what I need.

Jesse Thorn: Curtis just Googled "curling thing" before the show.

John Hodgman: Now, I'm going to admit that there's no way that you got this one right, because I've never seen *Help*, so I never would have thought of it. But I must ask, is there a curling scene in *Help*?

Curtis: Apparently, there is! According to Wikipedia.

John Hodgman: You've never seen it either?

Jesse Thorn: No, he just googled "curling thing"! We established that!

(They chuckle.)

John Hodgman: Alright, I'll put down *Help!* with an exclamation point. In any case, Andy, you got a curling thing for me?

Andy: I do. I have a prepared guess.

John Hodgman: Well done. 99.99% of curling is preparation. Isn't that right, Andy?

Andy: Uuuh, there's a little in-game adjustments but...

John Hodgman: Mostly, the skipper calls the shots and calls them right.

Andy: That is right.

John Hodgman: Based on their assessment of the ice.

Andy: Correct.

John Hodgman: So, your assessment of the ice is what?

Andy: Is the 2002 film *Men With Brooms* with Leslie Nielsen, the Canadian classic.

John Hodgman: This was a curling spoof film?

Andy: Eeeh, it's fairly spoofy. I think it has a 56% on Rotten Tomatoes.

Jesse Thorn: 2002, really the peak of Leslie Nielsen's career. (*Chuckles.*) When he was juuust starting to lose his grip on what was going on around him.

John Hodgman: But what a second and third act for Leslie Nielsen.

(*Jesse agrees.*)

I mean—I don't know. I was at the movies the other day, and they were playing a clip of *Forbidden Planet*. There's Leslie Nielsen in his original role as a space hunk. And then by the '70s, into the '80s, into the '90s, and into the early 2000s, he became Le Roi des Spoof—what they call in Canada the King of Spoofs. *Men with Brooms*; I'll have to look that one up. And brooms are, of course, a curling tool, correct?

(*Curtis confirms.*)

Yeah, we'll be getting into all of that. But before we do, I have to say, all guesses are wrong. The curling thing I was referring to is a song by my friend Jonathan Coulton released in 2006 on his *ThingAWeek2* compilation album, entitled “The Ballad of Curtis the Curler”.

Curtis: No way!

(*Andy “woah”s.*)

John Hodgman: Wouldn't that be fun if it were true? Of course, no way!

(They laugh.)

It's just, it's called "Curl". It's a very fun song. And by the way, depending on when you're listening, in your future, I will be on the Jonathan Coulton cruise this year. I haven't been on it for a number of years.

[00:05:00]

I'm gonna be cruising along with the Jonathan Coulton cruise, March 9th through 16th. So, if you're a *Judge John Hodgman* listener, then—you are, because you're listening to this—and you want to come on the cruise and hang out with me in a hot tub, it can be arranged.

Meanwhile, we have to hear this case. Before we get into it, let me just say my apologies to the Belfast Curling Club of Belfast, Maine. Carl Anderson, a listener, wrote to me encouraging me to visit the Belfast Curling Club in Belfast, Maine—that I drive by on my way to and from Maine every time we go there. And I'm always like, "I want to go in there," but there are never cars in the parking lot, and I'm always convinced it's a ghost curling club. But it is very active. I would have been able to bring a lot of first-hand and two-feet on-ice experience to this conversation. But as I didn't go—and I apologize; I will go in the future—but as I didn't go, I'm going to have to turn to you, the litigants, to help explain what the heck we're talking about here.

So, Curtis. You bring the case against Andy in this case, right?

(Curtis confirms.)

Before we get to your complaint, what is curling?

Curtis: Well, it's a sport that most people only are familiar with when it's in the Olympics that involves pushing a heavy—

John Hodgman: Woah, woah, woah! Way to erase the *Men with Brooms* fans!

(They laugh.)

Curtis: That is so true. And I'd like to apologize to all of them.

Andy: Or both of them.

John Hodgman: Curling is an ice sport practiced in Canada and in northern North America, particularly Minnesota, where you both are in St. Paul. Correct?

Curtis: That's correct. It is the—I believe that Minnesota is the epicenter of the US curling society.

John Hodgman: Got it. And you were saying something about a rock?

Curtis: Yes. You push this rock down the sheet of ice, and you're trying to get it closest to the center of this target—called the house—that's on the other end of the ice.

John Hodgman: This target—this house is not a house, not like a doghouse.

Curtis: No, it looks like a dartboard.

John Hodgman: Which, Andy, you have to admit, it would be pretty cool if you were trying to slide this stone into an actual little house. Right, Andy?

(Andy agrees.)

But that wouldn't be curling. You're trying to get it into—it looks like—it's a regular red, white, and blue dartboard target painted on the ice. And you're trying to get it closest to the middle, right?

Andy: An analogy would be bocce ball, where you're trying to get your ball closest to the jack.

John Hodgman: Right. And you've got several stones to throw. You call them a stone or a rock?

Andy: Both.

John Hodgman: I'm trying to keep it simple here. How heavy is the stone?

Andy: Roughly 42/44 pounds.

Jesse Thorn: I don't know what pounds are. Tell me how much that is in stone.

John Hodgman: That's a UK curling joke.

Jesse Thorn: *(Softly.)* Thank you.

John Hodgman: How heavy is the rock? The same?

(Andy confirms.)

And it's round, and it's got a handle on it.

Jesse Thorn: It's about 3.14 stone, John.

John Hodgman: 3.14. It's about pi stone?

Jesse Thorn: A stone, also called a rock, is 3.14 stone in weight. (*Chuckles.*)

John Hodgman: Also called a pi stone. And it's got a handle on it, and you slide it down. How many turns do you get, Curtis?

Curtis: I think the normal is four, but there's a whole finesse to this that I must admit I don't even really understand, where sometimes you would—if you're really good at curling, which I'm not, you would try to turn it more or less depending on what you want it to do as it slows to a stop at the other end of the ice.

John Hodgman: You would curl it.

Curtis: Yes, it will curl at the end of its trajectory.

John Hodgman: Based on how the deliverer slides the rock.

Curtis: That's correct. And what turn you put on it. You put a little English on it one way or the other as you release it.

John Hodgman: You mentioned an analogy, Andy, which was bocce ball. You might also say boule or pétanque or lawn bowling. Here's another analogy. Belfast Curling Club calls it chess on ice. Agree or disagree?

Andy: A lot of people say this is true. There's a lot of strategy in the game.

John Hodgman: You're sliding a rock on ice. How is it chess?

Andy: The strategy involved is what makes the game quite unique and fun. And that's what the skip is, determining the strategy and telling their players where they want that rock to end up.

John Hodgman: Aha! Now, the skip—short for skipper, boss of the team. Yes or no?

(Andy confirms.)

That's the person who throws the rock or slides it down, releases it.

Andy: All players throw the rock. So, there's four players on a team, and every player throws two rocks. The skipper determines the strategy and tells the first three throwers where to put the rocks, and the skip then goes down and throws the last two.

John Hodgman: And so, the skip is determining the strategy. And what are the other players doing? Why are there brooms, for people who don't know?

Andy: The broom is going to—you're going to sweep the rock to extend the length of the rock.

John Hodgman: Now, I'm going to stop you right there, Andy. You never sweep the rock. You sweep the ice in front of the rock.

Jesse Thorn: And the rock is super hard. It's not going to get extended with a broom.

[00:10:00]

(Andy laughs.)

You'd need some kind of hydraulic press.

John Hodgman: I mean, if the rock is dusty before play, you might wipe it off.

(Curtis and Andy confirm.)

Right. But the sweeping, you have—are they actual brooms now? They used to be actual brooms.

Andy: They used to be corn brooms, which you'd slap the ice with.

(Jesse laughs.)

And technology has evolved. There's a pad on it with a little piece of fabric. And that fabric then releases or lessens the friction between the rock and the ice and allows it to travel further and also allows it to delay its curl.

Jesse Thorn: The thing about this for me, John, is it's really hard for me personally to identify why I draw the line at slapping the ice with a corn broom. *(Chuckling.)* Because the rest of this is no less silly! But for some reason, I fell off a cliff of credulity when we got to the slapping the ice part.

John Hodgman: I think it is a representation of the Canadian dual love and hatred of winter. They will sport on the ice, but they hate the ice at the same time and want to swat it!

Andy: I will say that even though Canadians have been the masters of the game for quite some time, it was started in Scotland hundreds of years ago.

John Hodgman: Right. Hundreds of years ago. And still curled there, would you say?

(Andy confirms.)

Alright, I believe you. So, you have someone who kind of bends down and slides the stone forward. And then you have two people with these modern-day miracle techno brooms who are frantically sweeping the ice in front of the stone as it travels in order to, I guess, melt the ice and increase slipperiness, so that the stone travels even further and to affect its direction without touching it.

(Andy confirms.)

So, that's three people. Thrower, broomer 1, broomer 2, and then skipper? Is there another position?

Andy: Nope.

John Hodgman: And that is what they call curling.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

John Hodgman: So, Curtis, what specifically is your complaint against Andy? Now that we understand what curling is.

Curtis: My complaint against Andy is that he has been criticizing the way that my team curls.

John Hodgman: Critiquing your curling. Is he your curling coach?

Curtis: Not anymore.

John Hodgman: And Andy, when you're criticizing Curtis, what are you—hanging around? Hanging around—what's a curling club called? A curling club, right?

(Andy confirms.)

Yeah. You're in there watching them and yelling out.

Andy: There are times where I'll visit the club, but there's also a video feed that you can watch them play from the comfort of your couch.

(Jesse laughs.)

John Hodgman: So, you're watching them on video. And how are you getting your critiques to them? Are you calling them in? Are you sending—are you calling up the club?

Jesse Thorn: You banging on a trash can like the Houston Astros?

Andy: I would send a text to my wife at the time in question here.

John Hodgman: And your wife is on Curtis's team?

Andy: She took my place on Curtis's team.

John Hodgman: Wow! Okay. We're gonna get into all that in a second. But I have a question. What is Curtis doing wrong?

Andy: The entire team is playing too slow.

(John "woah"s.)

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughing.)* They're playing curling too slow?

John Hodgman: Too slow for you or too slow for curling? Like, are you bored?! Or is it—? Or is there something wrong with slow curling?

Andy: There is something very wrong with slow curling. Every club deals with this in trying to get their members to speed up the play. And so, now that I'm no longer with the team, they need a little bit more guidance to stay on task.

Jesse Thorn: John, I think I can clarify this for you. So, Curtis plays a stayed, old fashioned, egghead form of chess on ice. Andy plays speed curling, which he learned in the urban parks of Minneapolis.

(They laugh.)

Andy: St. Paul.

John Hodgman: How long should—you call it a curling match? What do you call a curling game? A match?

Andy: It is a draw is the true name for it.

John Hodgman: Not Bonspiel?

Andy: Well, that's a tournament. That's a weekend tournament.

John Hodgman: Okay. See, I looked up some things on Wikipedia too, Curtis.

Jesse Thorn: But if they're playing too slowly, it's probably a Malspiel.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: How long should a curling draw take?

Andy: Two hours.

John Hodgman: How long does it take for your wife and Curtis to curl together?

Andy: So, with the in-league play, you have two hours to complete a game. And a game is eight ends long. And an end is like an inning of baseball. And each end is to take 15 minutes. So, if playing properly—

[00:15:00]

John Hodgman: 8 times 15 is 2 hours. I got you.

Andy: There you go. And so, during league play, they will buzz the arena at 95 minutes.

Jesse Thorn: It's electrified like an electric fence?

Andy: Well! (*Laughs.*) Yes, there's a horn.

John Hodgman: Everyone goes into spasms and falls down.

Andy: On ice.

Jesse Thorn: It's like in *Andor*.

Andy: They will blow a buzzer at 95 minutes, and you will finish the end you are playing and complete one more. And if you are playing properly, that's a full eight ends of play. And I believe the game in question, they completed six ends in that period of time.

John Hodgman: Not enough curlings in two hours, is what you're saying. Gotcha. Andy, who curled first, you or Curtis?

Andy: Me.

John Hodgman: How long have you been curling?

Andy: Started in 2006.

John Hodgman: 2006. Did you grow up with it? No.

Andy: No, I didn't. No, I started—it was an Olympic year, and a friend of mine worked with the then president of the St. Paul Curling Club. And we were talking about it, and we got in a league. And I've been playing in a couple leagues since 2006.

John Hodgman: What about Curtis? How long have you been—how long have you been curling?

Curtis: This is my third season curling. Andy got me into it.

John Hodgman: He recruited you?

Curtis: Yes. Yeah, during the pandemic there were openings. Oftentimes there are no openings at the St. Paul Curling Club, but I think people, uh, dropped out during the pandemic.

John Hodgman: Yeah, it's like Club 33. You have to wait for a member to die. Then it's a \$30,000 initiation fee at \$10,000 a year just to get in.

Curtis: It's not as expensive as that, but it's not free. And so, it was—you know, we were bored. It was the, you know, second winter of the pandemic. And so, we formed a curling team, and Andy agreed to lead us. So, the three of us were brand new, and Andy was our experienced skip and sort of taught us to play.

John Hodgman: Got it. And did you have a good time?

Curtis: Oh, it's great. It's a gas. It's really fun!

John Hodgman: Yeah. You know what they say up there in Belfast, Maine. Curling? It's a gas. Very well-known saying.

(Curtis laughs.)

Curling's a gas! Sounds like fun. Curtis, you had fun.

Curtis: Yes. A lot of fun.

John Hodgman: Andy, did you not have fun? Did you not have fun playing with your friend Curtis?

Andy: I love playing with him.

John Hodgman: Right. You saw something in him too, if you wanted to recruit him. Did you know him before this, or you just heard about this natural curler around St. Paul? You had to get him on your team.

Andy: As neighbors, we would chat, and I would talk to them about the sport. And after the pandemic, there were some openings at the club. So, I said, "Hey, guys, if you want to do it, this is your chance." And they all wanted to do it, so we did it.

John Hodgman: So, you enjoyed playing with him. Was he playing too slow at the time?

(Andy confirms cheerfully.)

Is that why you left the team?

Andy: I added another team, and so I had to make a decision. So, there was a competitive league that I formed a team to join. And so, something had to give. And it was a difficult decision, but I thought that this team—they need to spread their wings, and we could get another person in the game to help guide them or for them to play with.

John Hodgman: You had a more professional—you had a more talented curling team that you wanted to play with and be more competitive with, is that correct?

(Andy confirms.)

So, that's when you told Curtis, "I'm out of here. Good luck." Yeah. The traditional end to every curling game. "I'm out of here. Good luck."

Andy: It took a while to decide but yes.

John Hodgman: Curtis, you mentioned in your initial petition to me—I don't know if you remember writing this—that after quitting the team, Andy, and here I quote from you, Andy quote, "then got on a four-wheeler driven by his ten-year-old son, who rolled it over, breaking Andy's scapula. The child was unharmed." End quote.

(Jesse cackles.)

Was this punishment by the curling gods for Andy abandoning your team?

Curtis: Well, our ongoing joke was that he could have just told us he didn't want to play with us. He didn't have to lay it on quite so thick. It was quite the injury. I think the doctors had never seen anyone who'd snapped their scapula in half before.

John Hodgman: You're saying that he quit the team and he's like, "I'm out of here. Good luck." Then hopped on a four-wheeler with his 10-year-old son and rolled it, two middle fingers in the air? Is that what happened?

Curtis: You know, there was a gap of time in there. But I think for narrative purposes, that felt accurate to me.

Jesse Thorn: Was there also like a dog with sunglasses and a scarf waving behind him?

John Hodgman: You were about to four-wheel off, Andy, into curling a competitive legend, and then you rolled over. How's your scapula, by the way?

Andy: It is healed. The doctors have signed off. I got back on the ice a few weeks ago.

John Hodgman: Just a few weeks ago?

Curtis: In a sling!

John Hodgman: Are you still the curler you once were? Are you still—? Or are you building back?

[00:20:00]

Andy: Building back. I'm close. I'm maybe 85%.

John Hodgman: I'm glad to hear it. But I don't know what the point of that detail was in Curtis's initial letter. But he also wrote that after you left the team, Curtis recruited a new player—your wife, Andy—to take your place. Is that correct?

(Andy confirms.)

Jesse Thorn: Wait. Curtis recruited your wife? Or you suggested to your wife that she join Curtis's team?

Andy: Curtis recruited my wife. So, I met my wife at the curling club. And she has hung up her broom. And once we had children, she hasn't really played for years. And it didn't cross my mind that she would be an option for my place until the boys suggested it. And she said sure.

John Hodgman: Who's the real skip now? I mean, this is chess on ice. You didn't see this other piece that was in play. Curtis saw the possibility to play this piece, your wife, and took her off the board and put him on his team. How does that make you feel, Andy?

Andy: I think it's great. It's good for her to get back out there. I've been waiting for her to get the game going again.

John Hodgman: And no more four-wheeling for you, I hope.

Andy: Mm. Maybe not with my son.

John Hodgman: So, are you still playing with this other, more competitive team?

(Andy confirms.)

Do these teams have names, Curtis?

Curtis: That's funny that you should raise that. Andy is very against them having any kind of silly, punny name. He's also dead set against any kind of costumes.

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughing.)* What?!

John Hodgman: Here's where Andy and I part ways on the sport of curling that I've never practiced.

(They laugh.)

Curtis: Andy feels strongly that—as you might be starting to gather, Andy takes this sport rather seriously. And he doesn't want us to have a silly name. Like, there's a team called They Might Be Giants, 'cause they're all so tall or whatever. Anyway. And so, we are—our team name was—and in a funny turn of events, still is—Andrew (*sensor beep*). Which is Andy's name.

John Hodgman: That's Andrew's name.

Curtis: Indeed, even though he no longer skips us.

John Hodgman: I thought you were going to give me some cringeworthy pun here in your curling name, but you just gave me this weird anti-comedy.

(Curtis laughs.)

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Is the third person on your team Norm MacDonald's ghost?

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: Yeah, you know what the name of this team is? Curling Team.

(Jesse laughs.)

Curtis: Okay, so you don't find that as funny as I do.

John Hodgman: I find it funny! It's just (*stammering*)—I mean, like this is some true skip stuff here. You curled left when I thought you were going to curl right.

Jesse Thorn: I thought it was so funny that it distracted me from the thing you said before about people wearing costumes! (*Laughs.*) Is it like—I immediately imagined everyone in a dolphin costume. Is that what it is?

John Hodgman: Are you all dressed up? Are you all wearing Andy masks or something? Is that why—?

Curtis: No, that was the team—that was the name that Andy gave us when he was our skip, and that name persists, even though he is no longer our skip.

Andy: Let's be clear here. The traditions of curling are the team is named after the skip. And so, the name was not given. That is how names are assigned.

Jesse Thorn: Curtis, are you now the skip?

Curtis: Oh, goodness, no. No, I'm the worst player on our team. So, basically the team is made up of players in descending order of—or ascending order of skill. So, the worst player goes first. The second worst goes second, and so forth. And the skip, who is always the best player on your team, goes last.

John Hodgman: So, who's that person? Not Andy's wife?

Curtis: No, she's just getting back into it.

John Hodgman: It would be really good if you renamed your team Andy's Wife.

(They chuckle.)

That would really drive the rock home, if you know what I mean. Do you want to dress up in costumes? I mean, you mentioned that Andy was against them. So, are you for them, Curtis?

Curtis: I was—I thought it would be funny if—after Andy dumped us, if we started doing all the things that Andy hates, like wearing costumes and having a silly name and that kind of thing.

John Hodgman: I think it would be funny too. I think I have a sense of what my ruling is going to be.

Andy: And to be clear, costumes might be the wrong word. Uniform might be a proper term of what teams might wear. A uniform, where they're all matchy-matchy.

Jesse Thorn: Curtis, what have you seen people wear on the curling ice?

Curtis: You know, like plaid pants. There's one team that their joke is that they are the official curling team of Sealand—which apparently is an old like oil platform out in the middle of the ocean that is a fake country or something.

John Hodgman: Yeah, I've been down this Wikipedia rabbit hole many a time.

(Jesse laughs.)

It's an old oil platform I believe off the coast of Ireland or Scotland or something.

[00:25:00]

And some eccentric purchased it and has—I think is still alive but created a currency and a constitution. And he is the sole—I believe the sole occupant of the fake nation of Sealand. Yeah.

Curtis: Right. Well, Sealand has an official curling team—or maybe unofficial curling team, and they hang their little flag at the end of the ice when they play. And Andy would not approve of that kind of approach.

John Hodgman: Andy, is it true that you don't want curling to be any fun at all?

Andy: I have been accused of this.

Jesse Thorn: What do you wear when you curl, Andy?

Andy: A sweatshirt.

John Hodgman: And nothing else!

(They laugh.)

Andy: Sweatshirt and curling pants. And curling shoes.

John Hodgman: What are curling pants and curling shoes like?

Andy: Well, you need flexible pants. Because you need flexibility.

John Hodgman: Believe me, I'm all over that since 2020. Flexible pants. That's my nickname.

Andy: Flexible pants, a little warm sweatshirt, and then you have a special shoe that you wear that has Teflon on one side and a grippy on the other side. And you're sliding down on that Teflon.

John Hodgman: So, you don't like curling teams to be matchy-matchy, even in the Olympics?

Andy: Oh no. Recreational curling. I'm not—I get—for Halloween, I don't dress up for Halloween. I'm not a dressy up kind of a guy.

Jesse Thorn: Andy, you're saying you don't feel worthy of matching pants.

Andy: I think it's a little... not—*(laughs)* matching pants and uniforms—

Jesse Thorn: Too professional.

Andy: Correct. It's presumptuous to be wearing a uniform in recreational curling.

Jesse Thorn: Wait, so all this talk about curling outfits—I think the only thing that I know about curling is curling sweaters. Curling sweaters are like a big, heavy, shawl-collared

cardigan with this kind of striped placket down the front—a little bit like the sweaters that old time baseball players used to wear or a Cowichan sweater from British Columbia. Do curlers not wear curling sweaters?! To me, that's the whole point of curling. Do you not wear these things when you're curling?

Andy: They are amazing. And there are those that wear them, especially some of the oldies. But no, sweatshirts have taken over. Again, the game is evolving.

Jesse Thorn: (*Grumbling.*) Yeah, it's past the oldies, John.

John Hodgman: So, Andy, you moved on. You left your team behind for this more competitive team. What are they called?

Andy: This is team (*cursor beep*).

John Hodgman: (*Cursor beep*) again? (*Cursor beep*) 2. Like *Men With Brooms 2*?

Jesse Thorn: You understand that sounds less like a sports team and more like a tractor company.

(*Andy laughs.*)

John Hodgman: You're with this new team now. You've left Curtis in the ice dust. Why are you still watching?

Andy: Curling is very interesting to watch. When you understand the sport, it's very fun to watch. And to be honest, would be nice to watch—it was their first game, first of all. You know, and continuing to watch is—it's an enjoyable game to watch people play when you know the game.

John Hodgman: I picture you, when you're watching your wife curl with your ex-friend on your old team, that you're watching this at two o'clock in the morning on replay alone in a garage somewhere, just crushing cans of Labatt's beer in rage as you then text with your left hand, "FASTER! FASTER!" Would that—does that set the tone properly?

Andy: I believe I was in the bedroom at seven o'clock, I believe was the game. And no, I was not drinking beer.

John Hodgman: Just in your bedroom alone without your spouse. She was off across St. Paul playing with the team that still bears your name. Is it the fact that this team still bears your name that you feel you have to watch and comment on Curtis's play? Do you feel it reflects on you?

Andy: I believe it does, to be honest.

John Hodgman: Would you feel better if Curtis changed the name of the team?

Andy: No. (*Chuckling.*) Well—no, actually, I'll take that back.

(*John cackles.*)

No, they should become their own team. And I think the reason it was my team is because it was a late decision of whether I was going to still curl. And so, the assumption was that it would still be my team. And so, the club still designated it as my team. But I do feel that they should make their own team, and they should wear funny uniforms and call it as they wish.

Jesse Thorn: Does your wife share your name?

Andy: She does. And that was the benefit of her playing in my spot.

John Hodgman: Yeah, but she's not the skip. Is it too late to change your name, Curtis?

Curtis: I mean, I honestly don't know. I'd have to go consult with the person—you know. There's not very many people who work at the curling club, but there are a few, and I guess I'd have to ask them.

John Hodgman: I don't think anyone cares except for Andy. Andy, does anyone at the St. Paul Curling Club care about curling as much as you?

Andy: Oh yes.

John Hodgman: Is anyone as preoccupied with the integrity and dignity of curling as much as you?

Andy: I'm up there.

[00:30:00]

But yes. It is the first thing that you learn when you join the sport is the etiquette and the history and the traditions of the game.

Jesse Thorn: You learn that from the oldies?

Andy: (*Chuckling.*) You do learn that from the oldies. The first time I came, there's learn to curl, and they laid it out saying, "Here's how this works. You shake hands. You—before the game; you shake hands after the game. And when you're done, you go upstairs, and you share some beer."

Jesse Thorn: At the Belfast Curling Club, they call that You Can Curl. The reason being that most people, when they see a curling club, think, "I just haven't got it in me."

(*They chuckle.*)

John Hodgman: I think there's a fairly intensive learning curve when you're watching someone slide a piece of stone across the ice. And the skip is yelling things at the broom-brushers or whatever. I could see how that would be intimidating. I mean, there's a reason that I haven't gone to the Belfast Curling Club. I'm a little intimidated to go.

Andy: I will say that all are welcome. It is a sport. One of the draws to the sport is you don't have to be overly athletic. And you can play it for fun. You can become—you can take it to the highest levels.

John Hodgman: Yeah, but my worry, Andy, would be that I would go into the Belfast Curling Club, right? And I'd start playing with a team, and eventually my skip would say to the team, "You all aren't good enough. I'm going to go with another team. See you later. Good luck. I'm out of here." And I'd be like, oh, I guess I'm not a good enough curler. And then I—oh, hey, wait, I just got a text! Oh yeah. It's my old skip telling me I'm not a good enough curler. I mean, that doesn't seem fun to me!

Andy, you sent in evidence. It's a poster from the club. Is that right?

(Andy confirms.)

It is specifically regarding the issue that you find most abhorrent in Curtis's play, which is speed of play. And we'll post this, of course, on our show page at MaximumFun.org and on our Instagram account. And I best not get a cease-and-desist letter from the St. Paul Curling Club! I'm going to tell them Andy sent it to me and gave me permission to post it!

Jesse Thorn: Yeah. Sorry, oldies.

John Hodgman: Yeah. Get out of here, oldies. Good luck. I'm out of here. Who decides the strategy? It says, "Goal: play each end in 15 minutes. Eight-end game in two hours. Most shots should be decided by the skip alone. Very rarely, the front end should join in—very rarely, on only the most crucial decisions." What was important to you about sending in this chart?

Andy: Again, Curtis's complaint is that I was complaining about them playing too slow. And this is a major problem at most curling clubs.

John Hodgman: I call this a chart, but it's really just an illustration of some people curling and then some captions yelling at you to not say or do things; let the skip call all the shots.

Jesse Thorn: Except very rarely, the front end can call the shots!

John Hodgman: This is a sport that you claim to be very fun for all, but it seems very bossy, honestly. What is Curtis and his teammates—were they doing and are they doing that's taking up so much time? Too much chit chat? Is their problem that it's too democratic for you? That the vice and the front end are offering ideas as to where to throw the rock more often than very rarely?

Andy: They're not necessarily offering up their suggestions, but they're not ready to throw once it's time to throw. Just like in golf. Ready, golf.

John Hodgman: But what's slowing them down? Chit chat? What's slowing them down? Socializing?

Andy: So, when the other team throws their rock, what you should be doing is you're getting ready to throw your rock while that rock is traveling down the ice.

John Hodgman: Oh, I thought what I should be doing is getting ready to take orders from my skip, unquestioningly.

(Andy affirms.)

Jesse Thorn: And in rare instance, the front end for the most crucial decisions.

John Hodgman: I thought I had to be a robot for my skip, an ice robot for my skipper. Okay, but you're telling me I should be watching the other team throw—what?

Andy: Once the other team releases their rock, you get in the hack, and you get ready. You're rock cleaned, and you get ready to throw. But what they tend to do is, as the other team throws, they're watching that rock get down, wait 'til it—to come to a stop, and then they get ready to throw their next rock.

John Hodgman: Doesn't it behoove them to know where the opposing team rock stops, so they can make a plan to either knock it out of there or get close to it or whatever they need to do?

Andy: The skip makes the plan and then tells them the plan. So, they should get in the rock. You could watch the travel of the rock from the hack, but you should be ready to go as you're watching the other team throw.

John Hodgman: So, their play is not robotic enough for you. Do you think curling would be benefited if the teams were one skip and three androids?

Jesse Thorn: Do you think it would help if, over the PA system, they played that *Cartoon Factory* music that goes (*sings a bar*), so things continue without stop throughout the course of the ends?

John Hodgman: Yeah, you got to throw those rocks with industrial timing.

Andy: Here's one of the things, though. It is the ultimate team sport.

[00:35:00]

John Hodgman: It doesn't sound like it!

Jesse Thorn: No, it sounds like the least of the team sports!

(They laugh.)

It just sounds—it sounds like one guy names the team after himself and then gets people to be bossed around by him!

John Hodgman: So, these three dummies of yours.

Jesse Thorn: *(Chuckles.)* Please, please, John! Servants. They're called servants.

John Hodgman: *(Laughs.)* How is this the ultimate team sport then, Andy? I'll let you explain.

Andy: In baseball, you have a pitcher throwing to a batter, and the other players are sitting around waiting for something to happen. In curling, the skip is—sure, they're calling the strategy. But the person throwing the rock needs to execute. The people sweeping the rock, they are communicating the weight of the rock, where they think it'll end up. They're sweeping if they think it's gonna be—

John Hodgman: No, we already know it's 3.14 stone. We know—how are they communicating the weight of the rock?

Andy: Weight is the speed of the rock.

John Hodgman: And you ask why people can't get into curling!

(Andy chuckles.)

Well, the weight of the rock means the speed of the rock. And the rock means the stone. And the skip means the underling. And up is down and night is day. We have different terms for everything.

(They laugh.)

By velocity, we mean the roundness of the rock, and the rock is perfectly round.

Andy: So, everybody's doing—everybody's involved in every single shot at all times.

Jesse Thorn: So, in that sense, it's the ultimate team sport—in that everyone is involved, doing something according to a plan, as in basically every sport except baseball.

(They laugh.)

John Hodgman: It's a natural part of growth in the game, as is receiving texts from your former teammate. What else do they do wrong? You said it's not—this isn't the only thing. What else do they do wrong? Where else do they need to improve? This could be your chance to get it out of your system once and for all.

Andy: It is—they are aware of their abilities, and they are improving on their shot making abilities.

John Hodgman: Is that the Minnesota nice way of saying they throw the rock bad? They're getting better, but they throw it bad?

Andy: (*Conceding.*) They're getting better. Yeah. Yeah.

John Hodgman: Yeah, they're getting better. Too slow, bad rock throwers. They don't have their eye on the weight of the rock.

Andy: Again, all of that improves. The first thing, again, is following the traditions and the etiquette of the game.

John Hodgman: The etiquette of the game is never leave the ice angry, always shake hands. There are no referees, so you police your own fouls and so forth. And God or Whatever dammit, pick up the pace.

(*They laugh.*)

Curtis, there is an issue, which is that if your team is taking too long, Andy has pointed out, you're inconveniencing the teams that are behind you, waiting to play.

Curtis: Or the other team.

(*John affirms.*)

I think he's outraged on behalf of our opponents. We'll get booted off the ice after two hours for the next game, no matter what.

John Hodgman: No matter what. So, you may be—by waiting out the clock, as it were, you may be denying your opponents scoring opportunities, because there isn't enough time to play all eight ends. Is this part of the new curling that you're coming up with? The new Machiavellian curling, where you slow-play it?

Curtis: (*Laughs.*) No! There's no strategy here. The ice is slippery, and it's hard, and I don't want to fall.

(*Jesse laughs.*)

I have fallen many times on the ice and luckily have not been concussed.

Jesse Thorn: I'm glad we're getting down to brass tacks, which is ice is slippery and hard, and you're wearing Teflon shoes!

(Curtis agrees.)

John Hodgman: Well, Teflon on one side, grip on the other. Curtis, how does it make you—how did it make you feel when you started getting texts from Andy during play?

Curtis: I felt like it was unwelcome feedback. I welcome feedback from Andy or from anyone on how to play better. How to, you know, get the rock to stop in just the right place and how I deliver it and my technique and all of those things. But like I feel like the idea of playing any faster than I am currently playing just adds danger to my personal safety!

(Laughs.)

Jesse Thorn: Andy, we know how you feel about riding four-wheelers with children driving. Is danger part of the appeal of curling for you?

(They laugh.)

Andy: I have fallen. I messed up my right side a couple of years ago falling, but I will say it—to counter Curtis, I was not criticizing Curtis. It was the other two members of the team that were dilly dallying more than Curtis.

Jesse Thorn: Got it. Husband focused on wife criticism. *(Laughs.)* Finally, we're getting into this on *Judge John Hodgman*.

John Hodgman: Let me just, let me just remind myself—the original team that goes too slow in your opinion, they were getting—

[00:40:00]

In two hours, they were getting off six ends?

Andy: I know—the game in question that I watched, I believe they only got six ends out of their eight end—

John Hodgman: Out of eight possible.

(Andy confirms.)

And Curtis, have you improved on that? Because Curtis, I don't know a lot about curling, but that's terrible.

Curtis: *(Laughing.)* Is it? Only getting six?

(John confirms.)

I think it's been—it's rare that we ever get in eight ends. I think eight ends is aspirational and fairly unrealistic.

John Hodgman: Aspirational in the traditional term, like it is an aspiration of mine? Or aspirational in the contemporary terms of like that's never gonna happen?

Curtis: Mm, more of the latter.

John Hodgman: Have there been any complaints from anyone else at the club other than Andy?

Curtis: *(Cheerfully.)* I am so glad you asked! No, only Andy has ever complained about this. The other teams that he is supposedly speaking on behalf of have never said anything about it. And I've also noticed that they don't always get right into position either. So.

Jesse Thorn: But to be fair, Curtis, do any of the other teams have someone at home in their bedroom that has Andy's wife's phone number?

Curtis: *(Chuckling.)* I really don't think they do. I think Andy is unusual.

John Hodgman: This has happened once or more than once, Curtis—that you've received these texts?

Curtis: The text was only once, but the text is emblematic of a line of critique that Andy has been employing since before he left our team even and has only been amplified after he left—that we play too slowly. So, he—in addition to the texts—went on long monologues about this afterwards. So, it's not just this one—

John Hodgman: But this is going back to when he was on your team.

Curtis: Well, he brought it up then. But no, even since he left, he's continued to criticize our speed of play.

John Hodgman: Are you here bringing him to my fake court of internet justice because of the criticism, or are you trying to punish him for abandoning your team?

Curtis: *(Chuckles.)* Well, I think—if I'm being honest, I think there's a little of both. I think, you know, it did hurt a little bit when he fired us as his team. That said, I accepted that. And it was when that abandonment was coupled with what I felt was unfair criticism that I thought I needed to seek justice.

John Hodgman: We had a little technical breakdown for a moment. We were off-mic for a little bit. And you revealed, Curtis, that you are a native of Anson, Maine.

(Curtis confirms.)

So, you are a person from Maine living in Minnesota. So, given that I have to applaud you for the barest amount of emotion that you let yourself acknowledge exists in you and sharing some of it.

(They laugh.)

Curtis: I'm working on it. I'm trying.

John Hodgman: Now, Andy, that you've heard Curtis's explosion of emotion that your leaving the team made him feel bad, how do you feel?

Andy: May I go back and rebut one of his points from earlier?

John Hodgman: What an incredible St. Paulian deflection of emotional content. “Uh, let's put a pin in the emotion question, and let me go back and talk about something completely different!”

(They laugh.)

Jesse Thorn: “Technical matters to address.”

John Hodgman: Go ahead. You may rebut.

Andy: So, the question was asked, “Has anybody told you you play slow?” And one of the fundamentals of curling is you do not criticize opponents. You do not—if somebody burns a rock, which is if you're sweeping and the other team hits the rock with their broom, it is upon that team, that player, to call their own foul. And if your opponent sees it, they don't say anything. They wait for you to acknowledge. And if you don't acknowledge it, they will hold it against you, but they will not bring it up. And the same thing as—

(They laugh; Andy tries not to.)

Another team—

Jesse Thorn: *(Laughing.)* This is a sport built for resentment! Specifically, as a resentment builder.

John Hodgman: It's incentivized purely by grudgery.

Andy: So, another team will probably not bring it to your face that you played too slow, but they know you played too slow.

John Hodgman: You're of the opinion, it sounds, Andy, that the other teams are seething for their speed of play.

(Andy confirms.)

And you are prohibited, both of you, from asking directly if this is a problem for anyone else, because it goes against the passive aggressive etiquette of curling.

(Andy confirms.)

Jesse Thorn: And Minnesota!

John Hodgman: True. Fair enough.

Andy: And if I may, one other point is I played yesterday, and we played an entire eight ends.

John Hodgman: Where does bragging fall on the etiquette of curling?!

(They laugh.)

Andy: No, no, no, no, no, no! No, the point is—I discussed this with the team and—

John Hodgman: Seems a little anti-curling to me.

Andy: I brought up this case. *(Laughing.)* I brought up this case—

John Hodgman: *(Teasingly.)* Ooh, alright, Eight Ends. Go ahead.

[00:45:00]

Could you pick it up a little bit, by the way, Andy? A little faster with this answer?

(Andy giggles.)

Jesse Thorn: I wasn't going to say anything; I was just going to know that he was going too slowly.

John Hodgman: And his punishment was him knowing that you knew.

(Jesse confirms.)

You brought up this case—?

Andy: This is a team I'm very friendly with. And we were discussing how nice it was to play eight ends. A lot of times you get seven ends. Six is ridiculous. You should get seven. Eight's pretty awesome. And so—and I did bring up this case and the accusations. And they claimed Curtis has—this is an open and shut case in their mind.

John Hodgman: You had a secret Congress with the other curlers in which Curtis was tried and found guilty of going too slow.

Andy: Instantly. Correct. That it is indefensible—

John Hodgman: (*Laughing.*) Indefensible!

Andy: —to knowingly play slow curling.

John Hodgman: Curtis, you ever think about establishing your own slow curling club?

Curtis: I think everyone would be a lot happier in my slow curling club. Not slow, just a little slower. I mean, yeah, I thought it was supposed to be fun. (*Laughs.*)

John Hodgman: Are you still having fun with curling, Curtis? Do you think you'll continue?

Curtis: Yes, I am! Yeah. And I want to get better. And as I'm able, I'm open to playing faster. But like, I just—if I start running back to the starting block where you push off to throw the rock, I just—I'd worry I'd hurt myself. And I'd rather work on—I would prefer to work on other parts of my game than the speed.

John Hodgman: So, you will continue to play then?

(*Curtis confirms.*)

I think I've heard everything I need to in order to make my decision. I am going to go into my house and my chambers and contemplate, and I'll be back in a moment with my decision.

Jesse Thorn: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

(*Chairs squeak, followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.*)

Andy, how do you feel about your chances in this case?

Andy: It's hard to say. I do feel that the speed of play is dictated by the game, and one should adhere to the rules and etiquette of the game.

Jesse Thorn: They're right there on that poster.

(*Andy confirms with a chuckle.*)

Curtis, how are you feeling?

Curtis: You know, I think I feel really good about the venue that this case is being tried in. I'm glad it's not being tried amongst a jury of my curling peers, because Andy apparently did that earlier this week.

(Jesse laughs.)

And I would have been instantly convicted and expelled from the curling club. But I think the fact that we have a—you know, a reasonable jurist presiding over this, a non-curler, someone who can be fair and objective, I'm feeling pretty confident.

Jesse Thorn: You appear before this tribunal to stand charges of defying the poster!

(Curtis laughs.)

Well, we'll see what Judge Hodgman has to say about all this when we come back in just a moment.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Judge John Hodgman, we're taking a break from the case. And San Francisco Sketch Fest is right around the corner. I hope that the whole Bay Area and all of Northern California is on alert!

John Hodgman: Get your tickets at bit.ly/JJHOSF24, or just google it—*Judge John Hodgman* San Francisco SketchFest. It's one of the highlights of our year. We've gone to the festival and done some of our finest and strangest shows there. And I cannot wait to get into that Palace of Fine Arts—the only venue with a lagoon that we will play in 2024, I guarantee you, for this sweet 4PM show. You'll get home at a reasonable hour. We'll all have a great time. It's going to be wonderful. So, get your tickets now and get your cases ready. Right, Jesse?

Jesse Thorn: Absolutely. If you live in the San Francisco Bay area, MaximumFun.org/jjho. Share your cases with us. We'll get you into the show. We'll get you on stage. We'll shake hands with you and thank you. We'll take pictures with you if you'd like. Whatever you need to submit those cases, MaximumFun.org/jjho. And I hope we'll see everybody out there. Bring your kids. It's a pretty safe-for-kids show on a, you know, Saturday afternoon. I hope we'll see everybody out there. I love to go home to San Francisco and do these shows. So, it's going to be a good time.

Will my childhood best friend, Jody, be there? Maybe Jody will come! I don't know. Will my friend from high school, John King, come? Will John show? Probably. He usually comes. Sometimes my mom brings him as her date.

John Hodgman: You'll get to see the many generations of Jesse Thorn's life right there at the Palace of Fine Arts, January 27th at 4PM in the afternoon. That's a Saturday. Tickets are available at SFSketchfest.com or wherever you Google your tickets up.

[00:50:00]

And remember to submit your San Francisco, Oakland, and other Bay Area disputes to MaximumFun.org/jjho. Ding, ding! Rice-A-Roni, the San Francisco treat.

Jesse Thorn: Let's get back to the case.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman reenters the courtroom and presents his verdict.

(Chairs squeak, followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.)

John Hodgman: First of all, I want to let the folks at the Belfast Curling Club in Belfast, Maine, know that even though I now understand that your fun-time sport on the ice is really just a game of recrimination and mutual passive aggression and automated responses to a skipper in which you are encouraged to have no opinion of your own or express it—actually, you can have an opinion of your own, but you're not allowed to say anything. It's really about self-suppression, this sport. Which, to me, sounds very much up my only child alley but to others might not sound exactly fun.

But I believe, in spite of all of Andy's descriptions of this sport and its etiquette, that this is probably fun. It's a fun oddball sport that everyone wants to do, and I'll credit Jennifer Marmor, our producer, with the off-mic joke that it's pickleball on ice. And I hope that it continues to be fun for you, Curtis. I have a number of rulings, though, that I think will help not only resolve your issue, Curtis and Andy, but also curling in general. First of all, Andy, you said that you don't dress up for Halloween.

(Andy confirms.)

That's going to change. Starting this October, you will dress up as Leslie Nielsen from the film *Men with Brooms*. 'Cause Andy, you gotta lighten up. I appreciate your belief in the dignity of curling. And I agree with you and the other members of the club who were too scared to say anything until you asked them that Curtis and *(censor beep)* Prime are moving too slow, and that they are inconveniencing the rest of the club. I think that your criticism is reasonable. And I think, Curtis—while it might be hard to hear—most notes are hard to take, whether you're writing a screenplay or you're participating in a sport or whatever it is, when someone comes to you with a note saying, “You know what? You curl too slow.” It hurts, especially if it's from a friend and former teammate. But sometimes you got to take those notes. You got to take them like a rock to the house. It hurts, but you just—sometimes you just got to take it and think about it and be mindful of the fact that for once someone in

Minnesota told the truth to your face. And even though he's no longer a teammate, that means that Andy is a true friend.

But Andy, you're not the skip of this team anymore. And while your note is a reasonable one, and it has been expressed, that must be the end of it. You have left them in the dust of the ice. They are but a few small, miniature waving people in the rearview window on a four-wheeler driven by your 10-year-old. You cannot give them notes anymore. The note has been conveyed. That's it! They know it. You know it now, Curtis. You play too slow. Even though it's just curling, kids, leaving one team for another because Curtis and his friends don't play well enough for you, that's painful. If you have not offered them an apology and a beer, you owe them that.

But I'm not sure that you have acknowledged the emotional component of what you've done in order to claw your way to the top of curling. You've literally left a friend and a spouse behind! And they no longer should carry your name. The break must be honored. (*Censor beep*) Prime must have a new name. And I say this, Curtis, for your own mental health. You can't let the ghost of Andy hover over you this way, even as an ironic joke. You have to forge a new path, and you have to forge a new identity. When I heard that these teams were coming up with funny names—ooh! I was like, yeah, this should totally get into roller derby territory for you. 'Cause, Curtis, you're curling a different way. You're not curling for the dignified, internal seething fun of traditional curling. You're curling for fun the Curtis way, which is also known as fun.

[00:55:00]

Like, taking it easy, having a good time, trying not to fall down on the ice. But you're playing for real fun. So, I think that it is fair that you should have a real fun name. Now, I'm not great at these puns. If you listen to the “Punderdome” episode that we did with Joe Firestone, I'm terrible at it. So, I'm going to go ahead and throw it to the Maximum Fun Reddit to come up with some good names for your team. So, everyone go over to [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.maximumfun.com) and start coming up with some good, fun, punny curling sports team names for Curtis's band of friends. And Curtis, you can go over there too, and you can pick one that you like or come up with one of your own. You absolutely will be wearing vintage '70s curling sweaters from now on. And it is going to be so matchy. It's going to be so matchy, it's going to make Andy's eyes cross.

Because this is the other part of the new curling game: the mental battle. You're going to be coming in there with your wild name and your cool sweaters. You're going to be playing a game that Andy doesn't even recognize. And you're going to get better at core curling, but you're also playing the big game—the mental battle with your old mentor. Soon you will become the teacher. And the way this movie ends *Men in Brooms 2*—I mean, I'm already writing the screenplay.

So, Curtis, I'm ruling in your favor in the sense that Andy owes you an apology for quitting the team, and you're going to accept it. That's life. That's life on the ice. And that Andy can no longer give you this note or any other note, because it's not his team anymore. He left you

behind. So, I am ruling in your favor, Curtis. But Curtis, Andy and I agree. You gotta curl faster. This is the sound of a gavel.

Sound Effects: Scattered screams of encouragement during a curling match.

John Hodgman: Judge John Hodgman rules. That is all.

Jesse Thorn: Please rise as Judge John Hodgman exits the courtroom.

(Chairs squeak, followed by heavy footsteps and a door closing.)

Andy, how are you feeling?

Andy: Disappointed that I lost, but I have always felt that they will go on their own at some point. And that was the point where they go on their own. And I will back off.

Jesse Thorn: Curtis, how are you feeling?

Curtis: I'm feeling, you know, a bit smug but also chastened. I know that Andy knows ten times more about curling than I do and more than I ever will, and he's obviously—for the good of the game, he's right. And I will try to curl even faster than I already am. I accept the ruling.

Jesse Thorn: Well, Curtis and Andy, we sure appreciate your time. Thanks for coming on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Curtis: Thanks for having me.

Andy: Thank you.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Jesse Thorn: Another *Judge John Hodgman* case is in the books. We're going to have Swift Justice in just a second. Our thanks to Redditor MKBecker for naming this week's episode, "Obstruction of Justice"—

John Hodgman: *(Correcting him.)* Just Ice!

Jesse Thorn: *(Chuckles.)* If you have thoughts about the verdict, go to [MaximumFun.Reddit.com](https://www.maximumfun.com) and chat with your fellow *Judge John Hodgman* listeners about what went down this week. We also ask for the title suggestions there. So, head over there and name next week's episode. You know, I also—even if, like John and me, you're not exactly a super pun generator, I always enjoy seeing the long list of puns.

John Hodgman: Oh, it's amazing. It's amazing.

Jesse Thorn: Evidence and photos from the show are both at MaximumFun.org on the episode page for this week's show and on our Instagram account, [@JudgeJohnHodgman](https://www.instagram.com/JudgeJohnHodgman). *Judge John Hodgman*, created by Jesse Thorn and John Hodgman. This episode, engineered by Derek Ramirez at Minnesota Public Radio. Our editor this week is AJ McKeon. Marie Bardi-Salinas runs our social media. Our producer is Jennifer Marmor.

Now, Swift Justice, where we answer your small disputes with quick judgment. The Redditor UmbrellaistRed says, “My partner and I went camping. He said he would bring, quote, ‘the bedding’, unquote. He brought sheets, blankets, a mattress, and a pillow for him. But no pillow for me. I think this is wrong.”

John Hodgman: Yeah, that's wrong! Bring a pillow for your partner, obviously.

Hey, we are now into the year 2024. And you know, all this sporty talk got me remembering this is an Olympic year. We just heard a dispute about a sport that people generally don't care about except during Olympic game times. Well, that's not true. They care about it in Belfast and in St. Paul and parts Canada and Scotland.

[01:00:00]

But yeah, a lot of people don't think about curling until it's up on their Olympic screen. And I know, or guess, that there are more cases out there about the so-called less common sports. Do you have a case surrounding modern pentathlon?

Jesse Thorn: Yeah, that means you, Donna Vakalis!

John Hodgman: Yeah. Do you have a beef with a fellow synchronized swimmer? Can't synchronize it properly? Bring that beef to us. Do you think indoor volleyball is better than beach volleyball? It's not in the Olympics yet, but I would love to get some cases about pickleball. Or any niche sports, or emerging sports, or newish sports, non-major league sports. Send us your niche sporty cases to MaximumFun.org/jjho.

Jesse Thorn: And it doesn't have to be sports cases. We take all sorts of cases. We're especially looking for cases in the Bay Area right now. MaximumFun.org/jjho is where you submit those beeves. No case is too small. And if you like the show, please tell somebody about it. Write a review, if you're listening on Apple Podcasts or have access to Apple Podcasts. It's a great way to share about the show. Or share something on Instagram. Why not post one of our Instagram videos to your stories? Share that on Instagram there. Or how about this? How about you use your mouth to tell someone in real life that you like listening to the show and they might too. I know that one's a mind bender, to recommend something to an actual human being through human interaction, but I think it might work.

John Hodgman: That sounds fun, Jesse, but I'm going to tell people, “Just share our stories on Instagram, won't you?” It really helps. It really helps make the show more visible, honestly. It's incredible. So, if you share and save those things, it really helps.

Jesse Thorn: We'll talk to you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

Sound Effect: Three gavel bangs.

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

Speaker 1: Maximum Fun.

Speaker 2: A worker-owned network.

Speaker 3: Of artist owned shows.

Speaker 4: Supported—

Speaker 5: —directly—

Speaker 6: —by you!