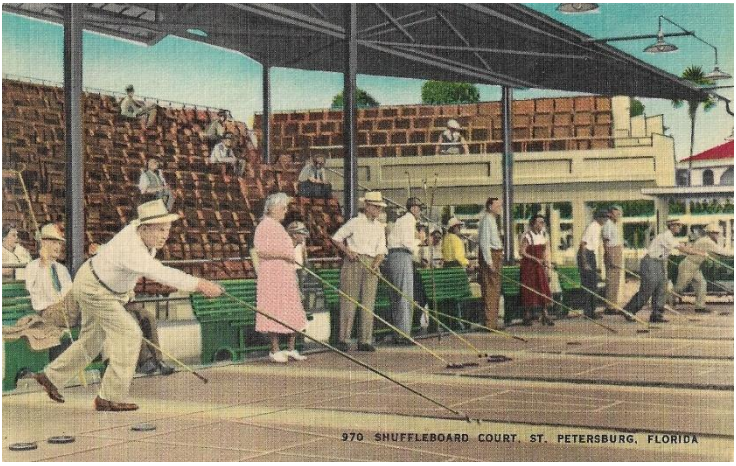
$1.00

WELCOME TO SHUFFLEBOARD!

A Manual of Shuffleboard in Florida



A Guide to Court Shuffleboard for the Novice Player

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Players Guides to Court Shuffleboard #1
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To order printed booklets or contact the author:
Martin.X.Social@gmail.com
Facebook.com/groups/shuffleboardfreaks
CourtShuffleboard.com

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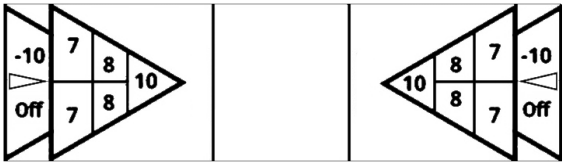
WHAT IS COURT SHUFFLEBOARD?

Court shuffleboard is a game where a total of two, three or four players attempt to outscore their opponents by sliding ("shooting") discs down a court (usually concrete) into the triangular scoring diagram painted at the opposite end. The discs that stay within the marked sections of this scoring diagram after all discs are shot count for scoring according to the point value of each section of the triangle: 10 at the tip, then 8's below the 10, then 7's below the 8's, and finally minus-10 in the bottom section (called "10-off" or "kitchen").



Shuffleboard is more than just a contest to see who can shoot more discs into scoring while knocking off their opponent's scoring discs. It is very much a game of strategy, involving careful thought and accuracy to make the best shot each turn in order to advance your score or prevent your opponent's advancement, on your way to victory.

Part of the charm of shuffleboard is that it can be played on equal footing by players of all ages, both male and female. Whole families can come to the courts together for quality time. It also can be successfully played by those with physical infirmities. Anyone can participate and learn, getting out to the games for socializing, light physical exercise, and mental exercise as well.

Most importantly, shuffleboard is meant to be fun. There are many different game and tournament formats. Usually novice players meet at the courts for an hour or two to play some fun games. As players advance in their knowledge and skill, many begin to participate in more competitive

games, leagues and tournaments. Eventually, any player with the desire can enter official tournaments to compete against other advanced players.

You will find other players are happy to see you succeed and willing to share their knowledge of the game with you. Your journey will be fun, challenging and rewarding, making many new friends along the way.

WELCOME TO THE SPORT OF SHUFFLEBOARD!

Fun Games

Cue Sticks and Discs

Tournament Competition

A SHORT HISTORY OF SHUFFLEBOARD

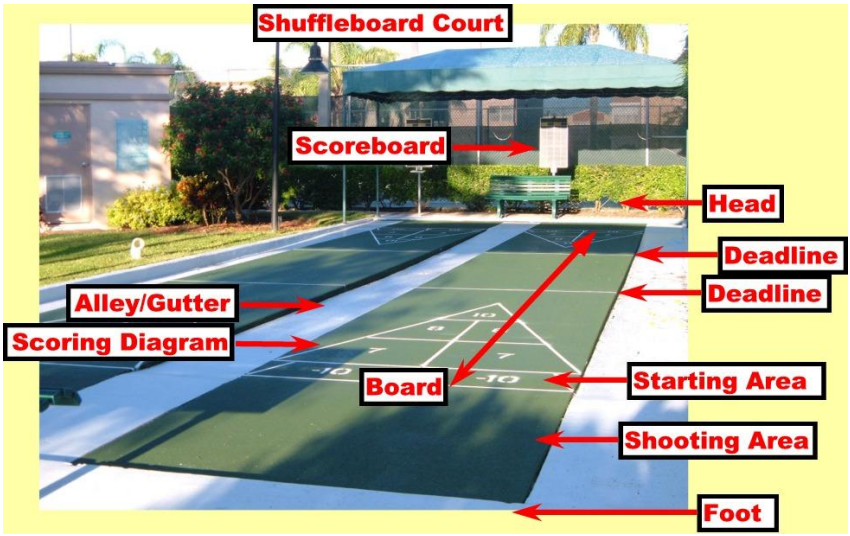
Shuffleboard developed centuries ago as an indoor game, sliding a large coin down a board, table or bar top as far as possible without falling off. The historical records of the game trace back to the 1400s in Great Britain. Originally the British groat (a coin of the time) was used, followed later by a silver penny, leading to the original names for the game: slide-groat, shovegroat, shove-penny and shovel-penny. The game came to be played as "shovel-board" by the British aristocracy, using metal weights instead of coins on highly decorated boards fashioned into long game tables. The shovel-penny version of the game became so popular that King Edward VIII outlawed it for commoners in the early 1500s, claiming the activity distracted his soldiers from their archery and combat training. This indoor table game spread throughout Europe as well as to the colonies in America, remaining popular through the centuries and evolving to modern table shuffleboard, played in bars and taverns as well as tournament competition worldwide.

A 23.5 foot long shovelboard table from the 1600s, in Astley Hall, a large country estate house in Lancashire, England.

In the 1840s, the game was brought aboard passenger cruise liners as a deck game, using wooden pronged sticks to slide wooden pucks down a board marked on the cruise deck, the first use of the moniker "shuffleboard" for the game. In 1913, an enterprising hotelier in Daytona Beach, Florida, brought shuffleboard to land by painting triangles for scoring on the sidewalk in front of his hotel and fashioning for his hotel guests the wooden sticks and discs. Soon hotels and resorts throughout Florida were painting their own outdoor courts. In 1915, the first concrete court was built at the Burgoyne Casino (a social hall, not a gambling venue) in Daytona Beach.

Outdoor court shuffleboard quickly spread, especially popular at resorts and retirement communities in Florida. The first two public courts were built in 1923 in St. Petersburg, Florida, leading to the formation of the St. Petersburg Mirror Lake Shuffleboard Club (later "St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Club") and the first organized competitive games. The modern court design and rules of shuffleboard were defined in St. Petersburg and standardized throughout Florida with the formation of the Florida Shuffleboard Association in 1928, and later adopted throughout the country with the formation of the National Shuffleboard Association in 1931.

BASIC TERMINOLOGY



ALLEY: -The channel to either side of the court that runs parallel along the whole length of the court.

BASELINE: -The horizontal line forming the bottom of the scoring diagram, as well as the imaginary extension of this line through the alleys on either side.

BEADS, GLASS, SAND: -Fine glass globules, often coated in silicone, that are sprinkled on a court to reduce the friction between the bottom of the discs and the court surface.

BOARD: -The portion of a court where discs are played, including the scoring diagrams at the two ends and the area between.

CLEAR: -Shoot to knock discs off the board.

CLOSE DISC: -A disc that may be scoring but needs closer inspection to determine whether or not it is touching a line.

COURT: -The complete area for play of a game including the board, alleys, benches, scoreboards and shooting areas.

CUE DISC: -The disc that is currently being shot.

CUE STICK, CUE, STICK, TANG: -The pole (up to 6'3" in length) with pronged ends used to push the discs down the court.

DEAD DISC: A disc that is out of or removed from play right after a shot because it didn't reach the further deadline, passed beyond the further baseline or touched a gutter.

DEADLINE: -The two horizontal painted lines between the scoring diagrams of a court.

DISCS, BLOCKS, BISCUITS: -The 6" diameter colored circular pucks used to shoot and score. They are in two contrasting colors, most commonly black and yellow.

DOUBLES: -A game played with a partnered pair of players playing against another partner pair.

FOOT: -The end of the court opposite the scoreboard.

FRAME: -The portion of a game when all discs are shot by the two players at one end of the court and the game scores are updated and recorded on the scoreboard.

FRAME GAME: -A game played for a pre-determined number of frames, the highest score at the end of the last frame is the winner.

FUN GAME: -A game played for fun or practice, as opposed to tournament competition.

GUARD, COVER, HIDE, BLOCK: -A disc shot into a position to protect another disc on the board from the opponent.

GUTTER: -The portion of the alley that runs from baseline to baseline, usually sloping downward to the center to catch shot discs that land in the alley and to channel away rainwater.

HAMMER: -The last of the eight discs shot in a frame.

HEAD: -The end of the court with the scoreboard.

HIDE: -Shoot to land the cue disc in scoring and protected by a guard, or a disc that is in that position.

KITCHEN: -The 10-off area of the scoring diagram.

LIVE DISC: -A disc that remains in play after a shot.

OUT: -The player or disc color that shoots first in a frame.

POINTS GAME: -A game played until a pre-determined number of points is reached at the end of any frame, the highest score then the winner.

ROUND-ROBIN: -A game played with three players, each keeping their own score to determine one winner.

SCORING DIAGRAM, SCORING TRIANGLE: -The set of painted lines on the board that define the areas where discs earn points for scoring.

SEPARATION TRIANGLE: -The small painted triangle in the middle of the 10-off which separates the two sides, one for each color of discs when shooting.

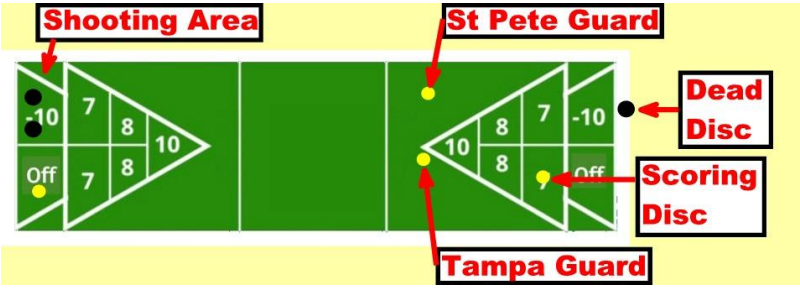
SHOOTING AREA, STANDING AREA: -The portion of the court below the baseline where players stand while shooting.

SINGLES: -A game played one-on-one against an opponent.

STARTING AREA: -The 10-off area where the shooters place all their discs before the beginning of a frame.

ST PETE: -A guard placed on the opponent's side of the board hallway between the tip of the scoring diagram and the edge of the court and about even with the tip.

TAMPA: -A guard placed on the shooter's side of the board about even with and right next to the tip of the scoring diagram.



HOW TO PLAY A FUN GAME

The court and the discs are prepared before play begins, starting with cleaning off the court with a dust mop, broom or leaf blower. Most courts are dressed with beads to make the discs travel easily and swiftly down the court. The beads are sprinkled across the playing area of the court before play begins. Sometimes the beads are permanently embedded in the top layer of the court. The beads make the court very slippery; players should not walk on any of the beaded portion of the court for safety (and to preserve embedded beads). The bottom surface of each disc is waxed before play begins to reduce friction. With a properly beaded court and waxed discs, only a slow, easy push is required to shoot the discs down the court.

Two opposing players start the game at the end of the court with the scoreboard (the "head" of the court). Each player has four colored discs, yellow (or white or red) for the player on the right and black (or blue) for the player on the left. All eight discs are placed within the 10-off area of the scoring diagram at the head before shooting begins. The small separation triangle within the middle of this starting area serves to separate the two color sides.

Beginning with yellow, the two players shoot their discs alternately, pushing the discs with the tong-end of their cue stick. For each shot a player may attempt to place a guard (a non-scoring disc that this player later hides a scoring disc behind), make a scoring disc, or hit their opponent's disc to either remove it from the board or push it into the kitchen. After all eight discs are shot (a "frame"), the players count their scores and record them on the scoreboard. The last disc of the frame (the "hammer") is the most powerful shot in shuffleboard because if it is placed scoring, the opponent has no shots left to remove it.

Play continues at the other end of the court (the “foot”) in the same manner, with the discs of the same color on the same side of the court (so at the foot, yellow is on the left and black is on the right). In singles play, either the same two players walk to the foot to play the next frame with the same color (called “walking singles”), or there are two other opposing players that shoot from the foot, keeping their own separate scoring for their own game (called “non-walking singles”). In doubles play, each player at the head has a partner that is playing the same color at the foot.

When there are just three players, two start at the head while one waits at the foot. After each frame, one player from the end that shot moves to the other end to shoot again against the player that was waiting (a “round-robin”): after a frame at the head, the player on yellow goes to the foot to play yellow; after a frame at the foot, the player on black goes to the head to play black.

For non-walking singles and for doubles, yellow plays first (is “out”) in the first frame at the head and yellow is out again for the second frame at the foot; then black is out for the third frame at the head and black again the fourth frame at the foot. This rotation of the color that is out continues throughout the game, so that the singles players or the doubles partner teams alternate the hammer shot. In walking singles, yellow is always out at the head and black is always out at the foot. In the three-player round robin, yellow is always out at both ends.

When shooting discs, the player must not touch any part of their body on or beyond the bottom line of the scoring diagram (“baseline”). The non-shooting player remains out of the way, holding their cue vertically with the handle end on the court. Players at the non-shooting end of the court remain seated, with their cues vertically. Any shot disc to remain in play (a “live disc”) must at least reach and touch

the further center horizontal line ("deadline") of the court, and must not fully cross beyond the baseline at the further end. A disc which does not reach the deadline is a "dead disc" and is removed immediately from the board. Discs which go fully beyond the further baseline are dead and are pulled back away from the board so that they don't interfere with other discs being played. Any disc which reaches an edge of the court and leans to the side, touching the gutter, is also a dead disc and removed immediately. A disc which leaves the board and rebounds back in is also dead and removed immediately from play.

To count for scoring, a disc must be wholly within one of the scoring spaces, not touching any of the lines. But a disc in the 10-off that is touching the middle separation triangle still counts as minus ten points as long as it doesn't also touch any of the outside lines of the 10-off.

During play, one of the players at the receiving end, usually the one playing yellow, signals to the shooting players after each shot disc whether or not there are any scoring discs. This player signals by holding up the same number of fingers as there are scoring discs and may also call out the number as well as how many of each color (ex. "two, one yellow, one black"). For clarification, this player can also point at each disc which is currently scoring. This player signals a disc counting in the kitchen by pointing one finger down at it and moving the finger in a circular motion, simulating the stirring of a spoon in a pot of soup (and can call out "in the kitchen"). Waving the whole hand back and forth, fingers and palm horizontal, signals that there are no scoring discs (and can call out "nothing").

At the end of the frame, this player calls out the total scores for the frame for the two colors, calling the yellow score first and then the black, including "zero" for a color without any scoring discs (ex. "zero, ten"), or calls simply "no score" if neither color scored any discs. A player at the

head then records the scores on the scoreboard by adding each score to the prior frame's cumulative scores. A running total is kept for each player in singles or each partner team in doubles. To retrieve all the discs at the end of a frame, after the score is called and recorded, use the handle end of the cue to move the discs, not the tongs, which are more easily damaged.

Occasionally a disc will stop very close to one of the lines, which may require a close examination. The player calling the score at the receiving end walks down the alley to a spot even with the disc, then steps very carefully onto the beaded court. This player stands behind the disc in relation to the line being checked, leans over the disc, lining up his eyes to look straight down the very edge of the disc to the line. If any of the color of the board can be seen between the edge of the disc and the line, then the player calls the disc scoring. Otherwise the disc is touching the line and therefore not scoring. In doubles the player of the other color at the receiving end, or in singles a player at the shooting end, can challenge this call. The player of the other color at the receiving end then takes a close look. If the two calling players disagree on the call, a third player is asked to take a close look to settle the call. (In tournaments there may be additional rules for settling the call.)

Sometimes games are played until a pre-determined number of frames ("frame game", ex. 16 frames); sometimes until a certain number of points is achieved at the end of any frame ("points game", ex. 75 points); and sometimes until either one or the other is reached, whichever comes first (ex. 16 frames or 75 points). Whoever has the most points at the end of the final frame or at the end of the frame where the points goal is reached is the winner of the game. For tie games, play continues two more frames for singles or four more frames for doubles (this gives each player one additional hammer). For the novice player, a frame game of 16 frames is suggested.

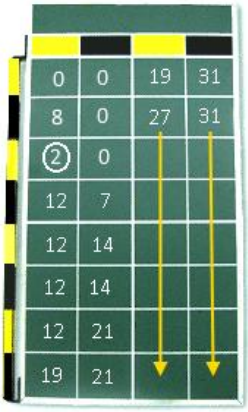
KEEPING SCORE – THE FUN GAME

The player at the head that is closest to the scoreboard records the scores at the end of every frame. Most standard scoreboards have spaces to record sixteen frames, in a grid eight down and four across. If the scoreboard has a grid with ten down, cross out the bottom two rows of the grid for the 16-frame game.

Scoreboard

Scores are recorded cumulatively down the scoreboard, adding the scores from any just-completed frame to the previous totals. Zeros are filled in on the scoreboard whenever a player's cumulative score is zero (as commonly occurs near the beginning of a game). Negative numbers (a player's score can go below zero when they end a frame with one or more discs in the kitchen) are recorded with a circle around the total score rather than a minus sign, for easier viewing from the far end of the court. Scores for the two colors are recorded in adjacent columns, yellow to the left, black to the right.

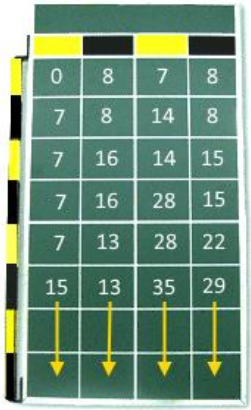
In walking singles, the scores are recorded going down the left half of the scoreboard for the first eight frames, until the two leftmost columns are filled. Then scoring continues down the right half for the next eight frames, until the two rightmost columns are also filled.



The rotating color bar on the left shows which player is out.

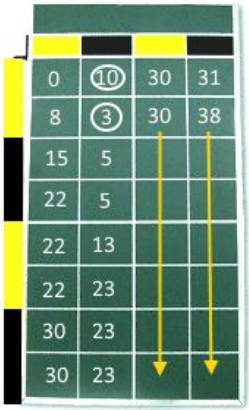
For safety, always wear closed-toe shoes to play.

In non-walking singles, with four players on the court, two competing at the head and two competing at the foot, use the two leftmost columns for the scores of the players at the head and the two rightmost columns for the scores of the players at the foot. Once the first eight rows of the grid are filled after eight frames are played at each end, erase the top four rows to continue scoring the next frames. After the top two rows are filled again, erase the bottom four rows so that there are six blank rows to fill going all the way down the board for the final six frames of the 16-frame game.



The left two columns are for the singles players at the head; the right two for the players at the foot.

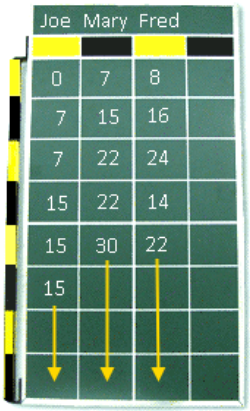
In doubles, the two leftmost columns are filled first for the first eight frames of the game, and then the two rightmost columns for the final eight frames of the game. Add the scores for the partner pairs cumulatively together on the scoreboard, scores for the two players playing yellow added to the yellow column and for the two players playing black added to the black column.



Doubles partners play the same color and add their scores together.

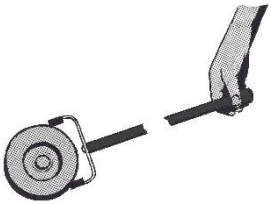
In a three-person round robin, the names of the players are written at the top of the scoreboard, one above each of the first three columns. For each frame, only the scores for the two players that shot the frame are recorded, adding each score to any prior cumulative score for each. Nothing is recorded for the third player that didn't shoot the frame. If a player shot but didn't score, their previous total (or zero if they haven't scored any discs yet) is written again as their new total in the next row down. Following this procedure, every frame two scores are recorded and there is often a blank

in a row for the third player that didn't play a frame. For instance, after the first frame of the game, the two players that shot at the head will each have a recorded score in the first row of the scoreboard (a zero if they didn't score any discs yet) and the third player will have a blank in the first row. That blank will be filled in after that player plays the next frame. Following this pattern, after every three frames all three players will have the same number of rows filled in on the scoreboard. After all eight rows of the scoreboard are filled for the three columns of scores, erase the top half of the scoreboard (the first four rows). Continue recording scores at the top, adding to the scores that are in the bottom eighth row. Once you have filled the two top rows again, erase the bottom half of the scoreboard. Now you can continue scoring down the board until the bottom eighth row is filled again for all three columns, at which point you have reached the end of the game. For the full game, you have filled the three columns for scoring twice. The three players have played twenty-four frames in all, twelve at the head and twelve at the foot, but each player has played just sixteen frames out of the twenty-four, making this a 16-frame game.



Ignore the color bar at the left – yellow is always out.

A "round" is the complete set of all eight discs shot at both ends of the court, one frame at the head and then one frame at the foot. In some locales, the term "frame" is used in doubles instead of "round" to mean all eight discs shot at both ends.



When shooting, hold the handle end of the cue stick with two or three fingers and the thumb, using a light grip.

HOW TO SHOOT

The Grip

Hold the cue at the very end of the handle, lightly, the handle lying on two or three fingers which are lightly curled around, with your thumb resting on the top or the side of the cue to steady it. The other fingers are in their natural curled position back behind the end of the cue.

Starting Stance

First place the prongs of the cue stick against the cue disc. The prongs should stay against the disc, never pulled back, through the end of the shot. Next move your body to a position so your hand is right next to your hip when your arm and hand are dangling loosely and freely, no muscle tension, no added bend in your elbow or distancing of your arm from your body in any direction. Place your feet together or just slightly apart, where you have comfortable balance, standing straight up, neither foot forward of the other, your weight equal on both feet.

Aiming At Your Target

Face your whole body, including feet, torso and shoulders, straight at the exact direction you want to send the cue disc. As you adjust your body to the correct aim, keep your arm, hand and cue handle it its loose dangle position along the side of your body. Adjust the aim by shifting your whole body and the cue left or right, turning slightly as you go to fully face the spot on the court you want to aim. Every part of your body is relaxed – no knee bend, no elbow bend, no leaning, neither of your arms, hands, legs or feet in front of the other, your weight balanced on your feet, your hand and the cue handle next to your hip.

Delivery

Take two steps straight forward towards the direction you are aiming for delivery, first a small step (up to about half of a normal step) with your right foot and then a full step with your left foot. If you are left-handed, do the opposite feet.

During the small step with your right foot, your hand, the cue and the disc do not move forward from original position. At the end of the small step, your hand and arm will now be behind your hip, poised for its pendulum swing forward, your weight is fully on your right foot.

As your left foot hits the court during the second-full step, your hand and arm swing straight forward like a pendulum, with a smooth controlled motion. As the left foot becomes completely planted flat on the court, continue through with the swing of your arm to a full extension forward of the arm, hand and cue, eyes looking at your target, but do not raise the cue from the surface of the court. Your right foot will end with the toes still touching the court for balance, the rest of the foot flexed upward. Your left foot will end with the whole foot flat on the court, bearing your full weight. Your left knee will end slightly bent and your torso bent somewhat forward from the hips to allow full extension of the shooting arm. Keep your eyes on your target until the cue disc is well down the court.

Your steps should be smooth and steady, like you are walking through your shot – do not rush them. For delivery of the shot, the motion of your arm, hand and cue is a smooth pendulum swing, starting from the position behind your hip at the end of the small step with your right foot and ending at the full extension of your arm at the end of your full step with your left foot. Do not bend your elbow, twist your wrist or push your arm and hand left or right. The speed of the disc is not determined by the amount of muscle strength you use but rather the speed at which you make the pendulum swing. If you want the disc to go faster or further down the court, make a faster swing; if you want the disc to go slower or a shorter distance, make a slower swing.

If you prefer a one-step delivery due to comfort or physical restrictions, change your Starting Stance to be a small step forward of the normal starting stance. This brings your arm and hand to the same position behind your hip that they would be after the first small-step of the two-step delivery. For the Delivery, take one full step with the left foot and follow the directions above as described for the second-full step of the two-step delivery.

BASIC STRATEGY

There are principles of strategy in court shuffleboard that will take any player from novice to winner in quick succession.

Core Strategy

The goal of the player who has the hammer in any frame is to at least score their hammer. The goal of the other player is to either stop the opponent from scoring the hammer or to score a disc of their own in the same frame.

If you have the hammer in the frame, the best strategy is usually to keep the board clear of any discs until you shoot your hammer for a score. The more discs there are on the board when it comes time to shoot your hammer, the harder it will be to find an open shot to score the hammer. Therefore, for your first three shots most of the time you are just making a fast shot at your opponent's disc to clear both their disc and your cue disc from the board.

If your opponent has the hammer in the frame, the best strategy is usually to use your shots to first put up a guard in front of the scoring diagram, either a Tampa or a St Pete (see the definitions in the Basic Terminology section on pages 5-7). Use a later shot to hide a scoring disc behind your guard if your opponent doesn't clear the guard. Or if your opponent's disc stays on the board in a position where you can use it as your guard, shoot a scoring disc to hide behind it. You can also take any opportunity in the frame to put up several guards that will make it hard for your opponent to score their hammer shot.

A Scoring Disc

If your opponent has a scoring disc on the board, clear it off right away. Sometimes you can also put it in the kitchen but be careful about leaving your own disc on the board in its place, such that your opponent can put your

disc in the kitchen. If you have a scoring disc that your opponent failed to clear and it isn't yet protected by a guard, use your shot to put up a guard to protect it.

Taking Advantage

Always be on the lookout for an opportunity to score an extra disc. There will be many times your opponent will leave a disc in a good position for you to use it as your guard, to place a well hidden scoring disc. It doesn't matter what color that guard disc is, either yours or theirs; use it when it is in the right position for you to hide behind it.

Clear Or Block?

When your opponent has a guard they can use for hiding a score, usually you have a choice – you can clear it off or you can place your own disc in the spot that blocks them from scoring a disc behind the guard. Generally, if you have the hammer it is better to clear the guard to keep the board open for your hammer shot. If you don't have the hammer, most of the time it is better to block up the board.

Watch The Scoreboard

Check the scores before every frame so you know who is in the lead and by how much. Best strategy will often change based on the score. When you fall significantly behind, you need to start shooting for scores without putting up a guard first, hoping that your opponent misses the clear or leaves their disc on the board so you can kitchen them. If you get a nice lead in scores, you no longer need to take risky opportunities to score an extra disc or to kitchen your opponent. Just stick to core strategy to preserve your lead all the way to the win.

Most courts have variations in the flat plane of the surface, causing the discs to to vary from traveling a straight line (called "drift"). Use your practice shots before a game to learn the drifts. Adjust the aim of your shots to account for the court drifts during play. You may also need to adjust your strategy as big court drifts may change the shots you would normally choose.

SHUFFLEBOARD TOURNAMENTS

Once you have learned to play and feel confident you can give your opponents a challenge, you may wish to advance to playing more competitively in leagues or tournaments. They are also a great way to learn by playing with a variety of more experienced players.

In tournaments, you will play matches to determine winners. The most common format for a match is best-two-out-of-three games. Players are assigned their starting color randomly for the first game of the match. For the second game, the players switch to playing the other color. If the match goes to a third game, the players compete for choice of color in a contest (called a "lag") to see who can shoot a disc closest to the further deadline (called the "lag-line"), two opposing players shooting four discs each alternately from the head, only the fourth disc counting.

There are many different tournament formats. Some of the most common are:

Singles: -Each player competes one-on-one.

Doubles: -Two players team up to compete against other partner pairs. You either sign up with your partner, or you pick an available partner when you arrive. The same two players play together as partners for all matches.

Draw Doubles: -All players are assigned a doubles partner by random draw before the start of the tournament.

Mingles: -All players are assigned a new court and color each game by random draw. Each match consists of only one game. Match winners record their game points for a tournament total. Tournament winners are determined first by total number of matches won and then by total tournament points. Can be played singles or doubles.

Brackets: -The winners of the first match of the tournament go on to compete for the top four spots in the tournament, called the "Main" bracket. The losers of the first match of the tournament go on to compete for the top four spots in the "Consolation" bracket. After the first match of the tournament, players who lose a match are eliminated from the tournament up until the final eight players compete for the top four spots in each bracket.

Round Robin: -Every player in the tournament or every player in a subgroup of players plays a match against every other player. Standings for the tournament are determined by the number of matches won. Final game scores may also be used for the final rankings when two or more players tie in the standings, or there may be a playoff game between tied players.

X/X Format: -Each match consists of just one frame game. Players switch colors after completing half of the frames. For example, in a "12/12 Format" tournament, the players play on one color for the first 12 frames and then switch to the other color for the last 12 frames.

In tournaments, the winner and loser of each game and of the match is recorded on a score sheet, turned in to the Tournament Director at the end of the match. The Tournament Director keeps track of the wins, losses, scores and standings in the tournament, and takes care of player and court assignments for each new match.

Your local shuffleboard club probably hosts some regular friendly club leagues or tournaments, which may be for members only or may be open to non-members as well. Many of the larger clubs in Florida also host official Florida Shuffleboard Association tournaments, the most competitive tournaments available, during each September to April season.

FLORIDA SHUFFLEBOARD ASSOCIATION (FSA)

The FSA sets official shuffleboard rules and sanctions tournaments throughout Florida. The state is divided into seven FSA Districts: Northern, West Coast, Central, Central East Coast, Southeast Coast, Southern, and Southwest Coast.

Each district has member clubs, including some that host sanctioned FSA tournaments. FSA "Area" and "District" tournaments are restricted to only players who live within the district (designated as "AR" and "D" on the district schedule of tournaments). "Amateur" and "Pro Open" statewide tournaments (designated as "A" and "P") are open to any player who belongs to any FSA member club in Florida. The first time you play an FSA tournament, you will be assigned a permanent FSA Number, which you will use to register for any FSA tournaments you wish to play.

The FSA also has a system of player statuses and rankings. You will automatically start out as a District Amateur the first time you play an FSA tournament. Each time you play a District, Amateur or Pro Open tournament, you can earn one "move-up" point by placing in the top four spots of the Main bracket or half a move-up point for the top three spots of the Consolation bracket. You move up to "State Amateur" status by earning a total of five points within a 3-season period (each new season starts in September). Once you achieve "State Amateur", you can move up to "Pro" status by earning another five points within a new 3-season period.

After you become a Pro, you are no longer eligible to play any FSA tournaments designated for Amateurs. Instead of move-up points, you will earn Roll of Champions (ROC) points for placing in Pro Open tournaments (between 1/2 and 8 points, depending on the tournament and your

ranking), which will accumulate over your lifetime. Reaching a total of 200 lifetime points qualifies you for induction into the FSA Hall of Fame, a noteworthy achievement! The top ROC points winners each year compete in a special FSA Pro "Masters" tournament for that year's trophy title.

Each FSA District runs their own District Masters Points race during the course of a season, awarding points for the top spots in FSA Area and District tournaments. The District gives special awards for their top DM Points earners for the season, and some Districts run a special playoff tournament for the top points earners each year.

The FSA keeps records for every FSA tournament player, including points, status and FSA tournament results, available on the FSA website (see back cover).

USA NATIONAL SHUFFLEBOARD ASSOCIATION (USA-NSA)

The USA-NSA hosts National shuffleboard tournaments across the USA, about two each month, including several in Florida. It also accepts player applications for TeamUSA each year, to represent the USA at the International Championship Tournaments. The National Hall of Fame is available for viewing on the USA-NSA website (see back cover).

INTERNATIONAL SHUFFLEBOARD ASSOCIATION (ISA)

In 1981, ISA began putting on one International Championship tournament each year. The tournament is hosted by a different club each time, rotating to various States and countries.

Induction into the International Hall of Fame is one of the most prestigious awards in shuffleboard, earned through player accomplishments and ambassadorial contributions to the sport.

RULES OF SHUFFLEBOARD

Below is an informal listing of some of the strict FSA tournament rules that apply during a game. It's good to apply these rules even when playing friendly club tournaments as they are a guide for good manners at any tournament.

1. Do not interfere with your opponent during shooting.

2. Do not coach your partner with remarks or motions.

3. In doubles, do not go to the other end of the court.

4. Remain seated when the other end is shooting except to check a disc for a call or remove a dead disc off the board.

5. No cell phones at the court during play unless you have permission ahead of time for urgent matters.

6. Do not shoot your cue disc until all other discs in play have come to a full stop.

7. A player who shoots a disc hard enough to injure a player or spectator at the other end can be penalized.

8. Do not touch or move any live discs.

9. Do not step onto an adjoining court (but onto the alley between courts is okay).

10. Do not leave the court without permission.

11. Do not touch on or beyond the baseline while shooting. Wait for all discs to stop if you need to retrieve your cue.

12. The Tournament Director's rulings are final.

Practice the three basic types of shuffleboard shots:

1. Place the disc where you want it on the board.
2. Hit another disc and send it and your cue disc off the board.
3. Hit another disc, send it where you want it (usually off the board) and keep your disc on the board where you want it.

MORE TERMINOLOGY

BACKSTOP: -A disc already on the board used as an aide to stop a moving disc in a desired location.

BUMP UP: -Hit a disc gently to move it further up to score.

CAROM: -Shoot to bounce the cue disc off another disc.

CENTERLINE: -The line down the center of the scoring diagram.

COMBINATION: -Shoot to hit a disc and push it into another disc.

DEEP, LOW: -A scoring disc that is close to the line behind it.

DOUBLE: -Shoot to tap a disc that is on a line into scoring and leave the cue disc scoring as well.

HIGH: -A scoring disc in a position that is close to the line in front of it.

KITCHEN BAIT: -A disc shot into scoring in the hopes that when the opponent shoots for it their cue disc stays on the board where it can be bumped into the kitchen.

LINER: -A disc that sits on the board, touching a line.

SIDELINES: -The lines that form the sides of the scoring diagram.

STICK: -A moving disc stopping at the point it hits another disc rather than bouncing away.

SUICIDE ALLEY: - The shooting path along the edge of the court on the same side as the shooting player.

MORE STRATEGY

In time you will learn more and more advanced strategy for shuffleboard. Usually shooting skills lag somewhat behind your strategy skills – you will be making the right choice of shots but errors in your aim or speed will give you the wrong result. Just be patient. Continue to always strive to choose the best strategy; eventually your shooting skills will catch up as you practice and play more.

Here are some more strategy tips to follow to make the best choice of shots. For more in-depth strategy discussions, see the Further Reading section on the outside back cover.

Shooting Positions

When you line up all four of your discs across your side of the starting area, the disc closest to the separation triangle is in the #1 shooting position; the next position over is #2; the next is #3; and the next position closest to the outside is #4. For best aim and control, always shoot from #1 if you can. If you need to get behind a disc on the board, such as one of your guards, shoot from the #4.

Scoring The Hammer

When it's time to shoot your hammer, consider carefully before taking the shot. It's easier to make an 8 or 7 score than a 10 as there is much less room in the 10 to score. Look for an open shot that is the easiest to make.

Doubling Discs

Often there will be a liner disc on the board which can be doubled. If it's your opponent's, clear it or block it. If it's your disc, double it. But try to wait until your last shot to double it unless your scoring discs will be hidden behind a guard that's already on the board. Without a guard in place, your opponent has a good chance to clear them both in one shot as they will be fairly close together.

Playing Kitchen

Being able to put your opponent's disc in the kitchen plays a very important role in advanced strategy, but there are several pitfalls. If shot too slowly, you may leave your opponent's disc scoring. If you are shooting to kitchen, you usually leave your cue disc out in the open on the board, giving your opponent a chance to kitchen you. If you miss when you try to kitchen, you may put yourself in the kitchen instead. The best time to try to kitchen is on your hammer shot, but only go for it if it will be easy to also leave your disc in scoring or it will take their disc out of scoring. If one of your discs is in the kitchen, you can either try to clear it with a fast shot or make a scoring disc behind a guard to offset the loss of points; on your hammer shot, it's almost always better to just score the hammer to avoid sticking in the kitchen with a clearing shot. When you are significantly behind in the scores, you need to abandon core strategy and put up kitchen bait.

Don't Chase

If your opponent has a scoring disc that is hidden behind a guard, clear the guard to force your opponent to use their next disc to try to put up another guard. They might miss and leave their scoring disc exposed. If it's your hammer shot, leave the hidden score alone instead of chasing after it. Just score your own disc instead (unless their scoring disc gives them the win). It's just as valuable to score your own disc than to clear theirs. But if you can make a fairly easy shot to both clear their disc and score your own, do it.

Don't Be A Sucker

When you have a significant lead in scores (ahead by the value of two or more discs), you can just stick to core strategy to get to the win. You don't need to take any extra risks to score extra points. Your opponent may even put up a poorly placed guard that tempts you to try to hide behind it (a "sucker's hide"). Whenever you put up a scoring disc

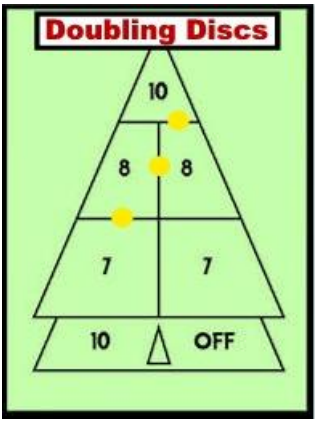
before the hammer, even if hidden behind a guard, there is almost always a way for your opponent to make a shot that puts you in the kitchen. Why take the chance?

Snuggle To The Win

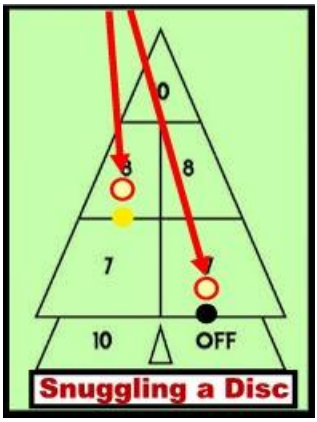
If you have a strong lead in the scores, you can take some extra risk for an extra score by shooting your cue disc to score close up against a disc on the board (called "snuggling"). Don't take the snuggle in front of your opponent's doubling disc as they can use your snuggle disc to double and possibly put your disc on a line at the same time. You can snuggle to your own doubling disc

Don't Commit Suicide

Hiding behind a Tampa is good strategy but hiding behind a St Pete that is on your own side of the court is very risky. To make it, you must send your disc down suicide alley, which is the shot with the highest chance of shooting your own disc into the kitchen. If you are behind in scores and it is your last disc of the frame when your opponent has the hammer, it's a chance you may need to take. Otherwise, find something better.



These liners on the inside lines of the scoring triangle can be doubled by yellow.



Yellow can snuggle up to the yellow doubling disc or the black liner.

Play The Percentages

Best strategy for any hammer is the shot with the greatest chance of success while advancing your score. If you shoot to clear your opponent without a good chance of scoring your own disc as well, there is no advantage over just taking an easier shot to score your disc (unless you must get rid of your opponent's scoring disc to keep them from advancing to the win). Don't go after a hidden scoring disc with your hammer even if it's in the ten. It is only two points better to clear that ten than to score your own eight, and it is harder to succeed in the attempt to clear their hidden ten. Also factor into the percentages of success that whenever you shoot to clear a disc deep in the 7 there is a chance that you will glance off into the kitchen.

Be A Team

Your doubles partner is your teammate. You must work together to win your games. It is up to you to check your teammate's close discs and challenge calls when necessary. Watch to see if your partner wants you to look at a disc to tell them how far it sits over a line or how far it is behind a line (that's allowed). Never admonish your partner or even give sour looks, rather give positive remarks when earned or encouragement when they need it. Just like you, your partner is there to enjoy the game. If your partner is open to it, you can point out errors in strategy between games to help them improve, but don't berate them for missing shots – everyone does it from time to time and everyone has off days. You want your partner to enjoy the day and keep coming back.

Breaking The Rules

None of these rules for strategy apply all the time. You should adjust your game for a variety of factors including the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent, the court conditions, and your partner's performance that day as well as your own. If your opponent is edging ahead of you, playing the same good strategy as you but shooting a little better, you may also need to change your usual game to try to offset their advantage.

MAIN POINTS OF BASIC STRATEGY

- If you have the hammer shot for the frame, keep the board as clear as you can to have an open board to score your hammer.
- If your opponent has the hammer, leave blocking discs on the board to make it harder for your opponent to score their hammer. Or score your own hidden disc.
- Instead of scoring in the open, first place a guard to later hide a scoring disc behind it.
- Sometimes your opponent's disc will stop in a position such that you can use it as your guard – watch for it.
- When shooting your hammer, take the easiest shot to make a score. Or clear your opponent's disc if it's easy to clear it off the board and score your own at the same time.
- If you have a scoring disc in the open, protect it with a guard.
- If your opponent has a scoring disc in the open, clear it right away.
- Check the scoreboard often as it will guide you for best strategy. When you are ahead, you need only to keep scoring your hammer and try to stop your opponent from scoring. If you are behind, you need to get more discs on the board to score, or kitchen your opponent.
- Don't vary your shots from the best strategy just because you are unsure of making an accurate shot. You will win more by following best strategy and having the occasional miss than by not following best strategy. Eventually your shooting skills will catch up to your strategy skills.

The St Pete and Tampa guard positions are the most useful because they give you a good guard for hiding but it's hard for your opponent to use it for their guard.

FURTHER READING

Here are recommended texts to learn more. They are in order of complexity – start at the top and work your way down as you advance in your skills. The ones notated with an asterisk are available for free download from:

CourtShuffleboard.com/library/

**Shuffleboard Basics, by Mary Eldridge*
A guide for the novice covering the basics of how to play.

**Ten Strategic Rules, by Bill Boyes*
An introductory guide to shuffleboard strategy.

Shuffleboard Strategy, by Glen Peltier
Go beyond the basics A must-read for novice players.

**The Do's and The Don'ts of Shuffleboard, by Earl Ball*
Shuffleboard tips in the strategy and techniques of the game.

**Mind Over Matter, by Bob Zaletel*
"The First Book Ever Written on the Mental and Emotional Side of the Game"

**Shuffleboard: Those Capricious Discs, by Floyd Swem*
A comprehensive treatment of shuffleboard for the advanced player.

**How to Play Shuffleboard, by Col. P.C. Bullard*
Perhaps the greatest shuffleboard book ever written. Covers every shot and strategy in great detail.

**Modular Shuffleboard, by Wilbur L. Estes*
The most advanced text for tournament players.

ONLINE RESOURCES

AllenShuffleboard.com : a store for court shuffleboard.

CourtShuffleboard.com : a comprehensive website.

Facebook.com/groups/shuffleboardfreaks

Florida Shuffleboard Assoc.: fsa-shuffleboard.org

International Shuffleboard Assoc.: world-shuffleboard.org

St. Petersburg Club: StPeteShuffle.com

USA National Shuffleboard Assoc.:
national-shuffleboard-association.us

Need a Doubles Partner for Tournament:
courtshuffleboard.com/find-a-partner/