

PLAY SHUFFLEBOARD AND STAY YOUNG

by C. H. THOMLINSON



***FUN IS THE
NAME OF
THE GAME***

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THIS BOOK HAS BEEN WRITTEN FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF HELPING BEGINNERS, NOVICES AND SOME AMATEURS TO BECOME BETTER SHUFFLERS AND THEREBY PROMOTE THE GREAT GAME OF SHUFFLING.

THESE COPIES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR TO BE ISSUED FREE OF CHARGE TO THE SHUFFLER WHO WISHES TO ACQUIRE A BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF SHUFFLING.

THIS IS NOT A MONEY MAKING PROMOTION. TO THE CONTRARY, I AM DONATING MY TIME, KNOWLEDGE AND MATERIAL FOR THE BETTERMENT OF SHUFFLING.

The information contained in this article has been acquired from tips of professionals, state amateurs, from watching the results of different shots during games and in most cases, just using plain common sense.

It is not meant as a guide for good players, but as a guide for new and average players to help them more clearly understand the game and become better players. I know there will be certain shufflers who will disagree with my strategy, and rightfully so, although some would disagree with their own strategy if they didn't recognize it.

Every shuffler has his own way of looking at a situation, but they all have the same basic moves of strategy. You will have to develop your own style according to your mechanical ability as you progress in the game. No shot looks the same to 2 players. What may appear to be a simple shot to me may seem difficult to someone else and vice versa. You have to play the shot that you feel you are able to make according to your own ability. Shuffling is mainly strategy, mechanical ability, concentration and proper delivery. Without these 4 ingredients you will never become a really good shuffler.

Every shuffler forms his own style and his own strategy according to his own ability, and of course your strategy will depend on the lie of the disc at the time. I can only suggest a possible solution to the problem. Experience is the only sure teacher, so play and practice as often as you can. But above all, remember - winning isn't everything. Play to the best of your ability, but have fun doing it. If you lose, lose gracefully, don't lose your temper. You'll spoil not only your game, but also that of your partner and also your opponents'. No one likes a sore loser.

Before reading these instructions, please let me point out that I make no pretense on being an authority on the game. If the information I have compiled here will assist only a few shufflers acquire a higher standard of play, then I feel that it has all been worthwhile. I am not a professional in the game of shuffling, nor do I have any desire to become one. I find pleasure playing with my friends, enjoying the game to its fullest. I like experimenting with different shots and trying out tips of strategy that I have seen or been told about. I also like teaching others to enjoy the game.

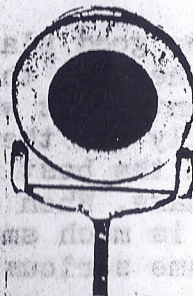
Some players have a natural talent for the game, while some of us have the God-given ability to put these facts on paper. That is the category that I find myself placed in.

I think the best tip I could give any beginner is, "watch some good players play a few games and have someone with you who can explain what they are doing and why." It is no good to know what they are doing unless you know why. Then get someone to play with you, showing you what to do and how. After you have tried a few shots for yourself, you will more readily understand what you are reading.

EQUIPMENT

Now it is time to learn about equipment and choosing your cue. The discs or blocks as they are more commonly called are usually supplied by the park or club. The cues are also supplied in some parks, but it is advisable to have your own cue. If you are to become a good shuffler, it is necessary to develop a feel for your cue. You should become accustomed to its weight, and flexibility. (the way it handles on a windy day or on a slow court) It is very important that you know your cue. It's like driving your own car compared to a different car; you know what you can do with it and how it handles. Choose a cue that feels comfortable in your hand. There are various cues; some have a larger grip than others. You must hold your cue lightly with your fingers when shooting, so take this into consideration when selecting your cue.

There are several different types of cues; fiberglass, bamboo and aluminum. There are riders, resort cues, playground and telescoping cues. Each are good, but the best on the market today, in my opinion, is the swivel tip. It comes in either fiberglass or aluminum shafts. The part that I like about it is the fact that it has a wider fork which embraces the disc more and therefore gives you better control.



Regular cue



Swivel tip

Notice that more of the disc is embraced by the swivel tip than on the regular cue, giving you more control over the disc.

Once you have selected your cue, learn the game properly from someone who knows how to play. I have seen so many people playing in trailer parks where there is no instructor and it is pitiful. They are just pushing blocks back and forth with no idea of what to do or how to count. This is mainly why I have written this booklet. I want to explain as clearly and simply as possible the game of shuffling so that anyone may understand and all may enjoy.

My advice is get out and watch a tournament and see how they play and how they score. Watch their strategy, and ask questions. Any player who is not playing at the time will be glad to explain what is happening. Then when you do start playing, play with someone better than yourself, someone who knows the game. You will never learn by playing with people who do not know anymore than you. Sure you will be beaten many times, but everytime you are, make sure you learn from your mistakes. Watch what the other fellow is doing to beat you. Set up a variety of shots, then watch closely how he copes with each situation. You will find that no two shots are exactly alike but there will be enough similarity that you will be able to adjust your shot and come out with much the same results.

Everytime I play or watch some good players, I get very inquisitive. I ask them why they made this or that shot and what advantage it was to them. (although you can generally see the advantage) But as in any sport, even the best don't make the shots they intend to make. When the pros miss, their average of missing is much smaller simply because they take the game seriously. If

they are not sure of a shot, they will practice that shot until they get it right. That is the main difference between a pro and an amateur.

Some people will tell you that its from 75% to 90% luck but don't you believe it. I would say maybe 30% to 35% luck, but you must know what you are doing and how to do it. There's luck in any sport, but if you don't know the shot to take or how to make it, then you are going to need 90% luck.

I think this would be a good time to point out to you that having the strategy and know-how are very important factors, but quite useless unless you have the mechanical ability to execute your shots properly. You can read instructions until you are blue in the face but it takes practice, practice and more practice to develop the mechanical skills necessary to put your strategy to use. One without the other will only produce an average player.

You also have to be flexible; be able to adjust your strategy and ability to play on slow or fast courts, windy days, courts with more drift than you are used to. Also, you have to adjust your strategy according to the score on the board. Many players are real experts when they are ahead but have no strategy for coming from behind.

LEARNING TO USE YOUR CUE

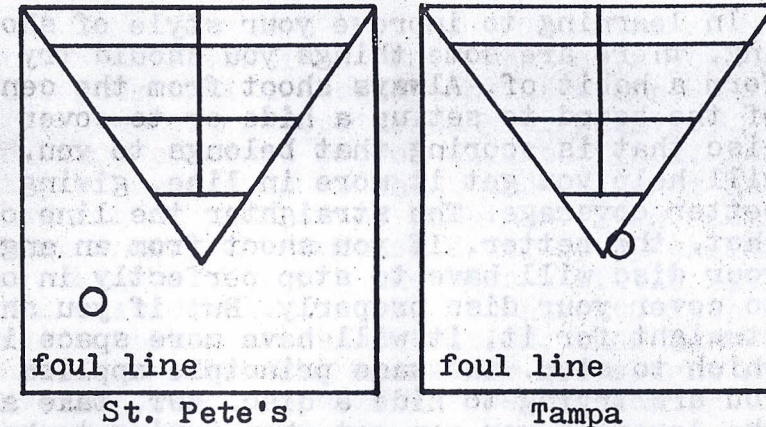
The most important thing for a beginner to learn is how to use your cue properly. Before playing a game, get a set of discs and practice. First of all, hold your cue lightly in your hand, just using the tips of your fingers to grasp the handle. A tight grip will tighten the muscles in your arm and cause a jerky delivery. Make your delivery a smooth and fluent stroke

with a straight follow through. Your follow through is going to determine the direction of your disc. Try to develop a rhythm or a smoothness in your delivery. If you watch a golfer or a bowler, you will notice how fluent their whole motion is; the back swing, the delivery, the follow through becomes one continuous smooth motion. It's the abrupt, jerky delivery that will start your disc off course. You may have shot it where you aimed, but that slight variation on the point of delivery will take it off course four to six inches in the length of the court. This type of delivery is generally caused by holding your cue too tightly.

When you are taking aim at the disc you wish to hit, square your body off with your intended target. Don't stand sideways to your target. Have your shoulders facing square with the court and your target. In practicing, try to set up a St. Pete's hide. This is placing your disc on your opponent's side of the court, not quite halfway between the point and the outside edge of the court and about halfway between the point and the hog line. Then practice the Tampa hide. This is on your side of the court, just past the point a bit and touching the side line as shown in the diagram.

When you are shooting the red discs, you would place your hides as shown, but when you are shooting the black discs, then you must reverse this procedure.

Then practice placing your discs on various points of the court such as; the seven, the eight, the ten, etc. Place your four discs on low sevens, then use the other four to take them off. Another good practice for aiming is to shoot from the center of the line and try to place all eight discs in a row on the center line at the far end.



One practice that is very popular is to try and place one disc in each of the kitchens, one in each of the sevens, one in each eight and one in the ten. This is good practice for control of distance shooting. It will help you acquire a good feel for the amount of weight that is needed to propel your disc to any given spot when trying for a score.

While you are doing this, practice your delivery with your cue. Line the shaft of your cue with the desired spot that you want your disc to go. Pick a spot on the board and aim at that spot. If you are cleaning board, then pick a spot on the disc, such as a chip off the edge of the disc, or one of the dots. They are generally painted, so they are not too hard to see or aim at. And like any good golfer, baseball batter or pitcher, you must follow through with your arm heading in the direction of the target and in order to get the proper direction a single fluent motion is needed. If you can't seem to do this, you will find that 90% of the time your shot will be propelled off target. This is a good exercise to practice until it becomes a habit. Remember, and I can't impress upon you enough, a smooth delivery and follow through will give you the proper control that is necessary to play competitively.

In learning to improve your style of shooting, there are some things you should try to form a habit of. Always shoot from the center of the board to set up a hide or to cover a disc that is scoring that belongs to you. This will help you get it more in line, giving you better coverage. The straighter the line of your shot, the better. If you shoot from an angle, your disc will have to stop perfectly in order to cover your disc properly. But if you shoot straight for it, it will have more space in which to stop. The same principle applies when you are trying to hide a disc. BUT, take all the leverage you can get when trying to knock out a disc. Don't look at the hide disc and just try to miss it, you will nick the edge of it nearly every time. Pick a spot beyond the hide disc (a dark or light spot on the board) and shoot for that spot.

If you want to become a good shuffler, you must get into tournaments, interchanges with other clubs, etc. and develop a competitive instinct.

For the shuffler who is not interested in trophies or tournaments, playing the board in a game with some friends can be a lot of fun and you can experiment with a lot of different shots. But if you are interested in playing in tournaments, you must play competitively every chance you get. You should take each shot, whether you are just setting up a hide or trying to dump your opponent in the kitchen, with the same amount of seriousness.

Never shoot a disc until you are ready both mentally and physically. If you are off balance, have a split decision in your mind, if there's a commotion on another court, or anything that will disrupt your concentration, step back and get your thoughts and your body

oriented. There is no rule that says you can't give your shot a second consideration, unless of course you have started your delivery. Then you must continue or you will be fined. Too many of us get up to shoot and we don't feel just right. Instead of backing off and starting over, we try to compensate for it by shifting our weight or moving the disc a little bit. This just does not work. You have to step back and regroup your concentration, then take a whole new approach, no matter how slightly you have adjusted yourself. Concentration in every shot is very vital to your accuracy.

If you have ever watched some of the great golfers putting or bowlers making their delivery you will know what I mean. They concentrate on every shot until it has reached its destination. Study your shot and know exactly what you want to do before you settle down to shoot. Then concentrate on where you want to hit before you make your delivery. In other words, don't have a split decision in your mind, you will end up doing a little of each and missing your intended shot.

If you have two shots in mind, decide which is the better shot for your particular type of play, then discard the other completely from your mind. Remember, slow down, never hurry your decision or your shot.

SHOOTING FOR COLOR AND CHOOSING COLOR

Now that you have mastered the art of using your cue and learned a bit about initial strategy, it is time to learn a few of the fundamentals of the game. First of all, practice lagging for color choice and choosing color. This pertains to tournaments. If you happen to know the court you have been assigned to and

and you know that it is not a good court, you have the privilege of asking the tournament director for another court. You may also request another referee if you have a valid reason to do so. This must be done before choice of color has been made. Next, the rules say that you have the privilege of shooting one disc of each color to try out the board, to see if it is fast or slow. Then if it is not to your liking, you may ask to have it swept, waxed or whatever the player wishes. This must be done before your practice round begins. You must ask the referee. He in turn will ask the other three players. Even if you are the only one that is dissatisfied, the referee is obliged to call the tournament director, who will try the court and you will have to go by his decision. However, don't be too easily satisfied. I have seen cases where the discs have run fine from one end but not from the other. The problem was once the disc hit the scoring triangle it started to slow down too fast, because of dampness or dirt on that end. This would not be noticed on the other end of the court as that would be the point of delivery and the disc is being pushed through that area. At the far end it has lost its peak of propulsion and it doesn't take too much to stop it completely. So, if you are having problems from the foot of the court, have the tournament director try from your end too. You are a part of the competition and this is your prerogative. As a rule, the tournament director will just try a few discs from the head of the board and you may be playing from the foot. So stick up for your rights, they can't do anymore than turn you down.

If everything is satisfactory, you will have 2 rounds of practice on each color. This is to acquaint you with the board and the discs. You will find that each board and each set of discs are a little different from the other. Generally the board is, but there is the odd occasion

where the discs are partly to blame. Some will run a little faster or slower, or have a drift to the right or left, but a drift is usually the fault of the board. Sometimes there will be a certain area on the board where the discs will run slow or fast. The discs will also run different depending on the usage they may have had; some will be worn more than others or some may be new and not broken in yet. But in all, District or State tournaments, the club running the tournament is supposed to have all discs broken in before they are put into use in a tournament. You may find though, some local tournaments or interchanges with other clubs, that this has not been done.

Once you have started playing, it is too late to alter either the court or the discs, unless one of the discs becomes defective during the game. Only the tournament director or his assistant may decide even then. As I have said before you do have the privilege of shooting one disc of each color before starting your practice rounds, but this is simply to let you get the feel of the court.

It is also important to know and remember that you and your partner may change ends after you have shot for color. But once the game starts, then you are stuck where you are. This works to an advantage in some cases but in others its a definite disadvantage. For instance, you may be the best man at the head of the court to lag for color and then change ends. The reason for changing ends is generally because one of you is better at playing the head of the board than the other. But don't get me wrong, you can get into a lot of controversy over that and I am not going to stick my neck out and say which player is more important because I don't think there is a difference. Granted, the person at the head of the board generally controls the play of the game simply because he shoots first.

So, it is up to him to recognize a situation first otherwise he leaves it all up to his partner. He is the one who will try to get the extra count when it is needed or keep the opponent from getting into a going out position and what have you. Then, if he fails, his partner still has a chance to try. Being first to play he must have the ability to figure out what is needed and when it is needed otherwise he would only have his partner's shot to try and do what both should have tried.

But don't get the idea that the player at the foot of the board is just there to shoot the discs back, or you're in for a lot of disappointments. He is every bit as important as the one at the head. It takes both of you to win a game. Sometimes your partner may have a bad day and you'll pull him out of it, but believe me, there will be days when the situation will be reversed. Don't ever get it into your head that because you are playing the head and therefore (more or less) are setting the trend of the game according to the score, that your partner has nothing to do. There will be many important decisions that he will have to make. You will not be allowed to help him decide, so he has to make them on his own. There will be lots of times when you blow your opportunity to finish the game, or get your count, and he will have to bail you out by getting an extra disc. Or, in the case where your opponent needs an eight count and you need a seven to go out and your opponent has the last shot. It is up to the player at the foot to recognize this fact and put his last disc on a seven, forcing him to take yours off and only count seven. You might say, "Yeh, but what if he dumps me in the kitchen?" So what? You have kept the game alive and you never know what might happen with your next 2 hammer shots. My partner, whom I have played with since I started shuffling prefers to play at the foot of the board. He has pulled me out of a tight spot many times, simply by knowing what to do and when to do it and by being able to execute the shot properly.

As I have continuously said, knowing what shot to make is of little use unless you have the mechanical ability to do it. And of course having the mechanical ability but not the knowledge is also of little use.

For instance, if the score is such that you need three counts to go out and you have the hammer, it is the duty of the person at the head of the board to try to get that extra count. If he does, then it is up to the one at the foot to protect that and only try for his one count to go out. If the player at the head does not get the extra count then his partner still has a chance to try for it. But if the player at the head doesn't try for it first, he is leaving everything on his partner's shoulders. Actually, in my opinion, the player at the foot should be the better kitchen player because quite often he will be left with the responsibility of having to gamble on putting the opposition in the kitchen to keep the game alive.

If one of the players is better at lagging than the other, then after shooting for color, you change ends because the other fellow has more strategy (can play the head of the board better), your practice rounds have been all in vain. You've practiced at one end and then you played from the other end. The board can vary enormously from one end to the other, that is one reason you should never criticize your partner's decision on a shot. His end of the board may not play the same as your end. Rely on his judgement. If you don't think he knows what he is doing, then you shouldn't have him for a partner. So again, I say it's not a good solution. The best solution to your problem is for the fellow who is normally going to play the head of the board to get out there and practice lagging for color, then you won't have to change ends.

When you go to the court to practice there are 2 ways of working it. You may be the type who likes to shoot first and make your opponent beat your lag. If you are, try to get to the court first and start out on the black so that you will end up on the red or yellow and will lag first. But if you are confident that you are better at shooting last, then definitely start on the red or yellow and end up on the black. This will let you shoot last. You should learn to shoot first or last because your opponent may have the same idea. He may get to the court first and have his choice of starting although most players like to shoot last. So it is a good idea to practice shooting both ways. Keep in mind that the center of any court is the most used and will more than likely be faster than the outsides. The sides however may be more dependable because they are a little slower - if you happen to get your weight a little heavy or a little light it won't make as much difference in the distance that your disc will travel. But you must have the same confidence in your ability and the same concentration in your shot when you are lagging for color as you would if you were making the winning shot of the game. It is every bit as important to get the choice of color, otherwise your practice has been to no avail.

Here's another little trick of the trade. If your opponent gets to the court before you and chooses to start on the red first, he will finish on black and have last shot for color choice. To offset his advantage of last shot; shoot your first 3 discs on your side forcing him to shoot on his side. Then with your last shot, shoot for the line on his side. This will force him to change his weight going across the board and will quite often throw him off enough to make him come up short or shoot too hard and miss.

When you are practicing, watch the other fellow's discs equally as much as you watch your own. You will learn a lot from where they go, therefore you have not only had the benefit of your own shots but also his. You can bet your boots if he is an experienced player, he will be watching yours. So don't give him an advantage that you are not taking yourself.

One other important thing; and I generally insist on it unless I know the court well, is to shoot your 4 discs at one time rather than alternating shots with your opponent. If you alternate shots you will find that you will be trying to counter his shots instead of picking up the data that you need. It doesn't matter which system you use in practicing; whether you line up 4 sevens a Tampa or a St. Pete's, 2 sevens and 2 eights, just remember that you only have 2 tries with each color and you had better discover what obstacles the court has. (drifts, sticky spots, etc.)

Remember also while using those 2 tries, once you have chosen color, or maybe the other fellow has chosen the color you wanted, that there is no turning back. So try to find out the pitfalls in both colors. You may not get the choice, and even if you do, it's nice to know what obstacles the other fellow has to overcome. This gives you a little extra edge on knowing the safe place to put your disc, whether he is able to get at it or not.

If you do get the color choice, discuss the color choice with your partner. Don't be afraid to tell him of any problems you may have at your end, it could make the difference in winning or losing the game. While you are practicing, he should be watching your discs while you are shooting and you should be watching his. They may be running altogether different from each end and although it shouldn't influence your

style, it will give you both an idea of what the other fellow has to contend with. Although you may think that the court is red from your end, the obstacles on red from his end may be much worse and therefore it may be to your advantage to choose black. So discuss it thoroughly before choosing color.

Always remember, you both have to rely on each other to win the game. No one does it by themselves. If there is no difference, I would suggest taking black, getting the hammer shot on the first rounds in both the first and third games. This gives you the opportunity to score first. If you are cleaning board (and you definitely should clean board if you are in competition), and both you and your partner score on your hammer shots, then black will reach a score of 75 points first and this is the object of the game, reaching 75 points before your opponent.

Don't under any circumstances take someone else's word that a court is black or red. Read it for yourself while practicing. A court will change not only from day to day, but from game to game. A hot day, a day that's very humid, many things will change a court. Other people's intentions are probably good and when they played on it, it could have been one or the other. So be courteous and thank them but make up your own mind while practicing. Mind you, there are some courts that always have a drift on one side or the other, because of the lay of the cement.

After the color has been determined, mark the discs that you are to play with, with chalk. Most discs are numbered I, II, III and blank, which should be referred to as No.4. Mark your discs for discrepancies such as; a slow disc, a fast disc, one that drifts more than the others, etc. Turn your discs upside down after

the color choice has been allotted and look at the bottoms. Sometimes there will be a good size chip out of the edge of one, Especially mark this one where the chip is out. When you go to shoot that particular disc, turn the edge with the chip to the front of your cue. If you have the chip on the side, your cue will come in contact with it and as you push forward it could result in shoving your disc off line. Always use these discs where it is not too important a shot; on your first shot in setting up a hide or to clean board where you shoot fairly hard and the chip (or drift) won't have as much chance to affect the flight of your disc. Don't use them, if you can help it, where you want to hide a disc or take one off that you don't have a full view of. Sometimes a disc that drifts to the left or right will come in handy for getting around another disc to let you hide, but always remember why you have marked them and use them to your best advantage.

If you happen to be playing where they use beads, then be especially careful with a chipped disc. The beads can collect under the chip and cause that disc to take some very erratic trips down the board.

The color you choose may determine the winner of the game so don't take lagging for color too lightly. And when you talk over the color choice with your partner, tell him which discs you intend to mark and why so that he will have the same information as you. However, he will also have to form his own opinion because the discs will probably run a little different at his end.

While you practice, acquaint yourself with the feel of the board and just how much push it takes to shoot your discs from one end to the other. In other words, get the feel of distance by the weight that you have to use. Watch for deviations of the course of the disc as it

travels down the court; whether it veers to the right or left, or at what point on the board it starts its drift.

Shoot your discs in order, I, II, III, and 4, then you will know which ones are going to cause you trouble. When you're practicing, have your partner set up four 7's and shoot each of your discs straight at one of them each time. Shoot at kitchen weight because that is the weight your discs will usually drift at. Don't be too concerned whether you put the disc in the kitchen or not, but watch closely to see if that disc is running true or not. That is how you will know if there is a drift in the board or if the disc is running true. Its not always the fault of the board; there could be a sticky spot on the disc. (the disc will turn slightly while going down the court) If that sticky spot should pick up a bit of dirt it will cause the disc to lose its "turn" by slowing it down each time it turns, like dragging one foot when you're going downhill on a toboggan it will gradually change your direction. This is the same principle as that and will cause your disc to change direction or drift. So always check the bottom of your discs and make sure that your court has been swept, there is no sense in waxing your discs then playing on a dirty court.

When you have finished practicing, the player at the head will shoot for color. The player at the foot can come up and shoot for color, or after you have shot for color you can change ends, but it is not advisable. Don't change boats in mid stream. Shooting for color is tricky and you must have a good judgement for distance. The red will shoot first and try to come as close to the foul line as possible. It doesn't matter if you are short or past the foul line, it's the one coming closest (if you can straddle the line) that is a good shot and will be hard to beat.

The first 3 shots are practice shots and are taken off the board by the referee when each player has shot. The fourth disc is the one that counts and the referee will not or should not remove these 2 discs. It will be your privilege to check them if you think they are close.

Before I leave lagging for color, I would like to repeat this so that you will not forget. Generally, a player will pick one spot that he will practice shooting for color. This gives him a chance to get the feel of the board in that particular area. If you have been forced into shooting first by your opponent starting out on the red, there is one little trick you can pull on him; watch where he shoots his first 3 discs, then when you shoot your last disc, shoot it to where he has placed his first 3. This will force him to shoot somewhere else on the board that he has not practiced on and will lessen his chance of beating your lag. He would not try to go too close to where he was shooting before in case he hit your disc and that would automatically give you choice of color.

CLEANING THE BOARD

Cleaning Board is a necessary way to play shuffleboard in today's type of game. It has become more popular than the old "Play the board" style of game, although not nearly as interesting. However, if you are going to play, then you must know how to clean board.

Try to develop the habit of not shooting too hard when cleaning board. It is not necessary and you are more likely to miss a disc by shooting too hard than if you used proper weight. If you aim correctly and shoot just hard enough to hit where you aim and therefore have less chance of missing or sticking. Also when you shoot hard, you are all pumped up and it is

harder for you to calm down to shoot your last or hammer shot. I like to try and hit my opponent's disc just hard enough to put his disc in the gutter and slide my disc over to his side of the board leaving myself a St. Pete's hide or a push in, forcing him to clean board and run the risk of missing or sticking.

When you are cleaning board, pick a chipped spot on the edge of the disc that you want to remove and shoot for that spot. The same thing applies if you are trying to place a disc on the board, whether it be hide or a counter. Pick a discoloration on the cement surface of the court, a light or dark spot, and aim for that. You will be surprised at how close you will come to it. Try to make every shot count—make every shot do what you intend it to do. You can never afford to miss, even if you are ahead. That is like giving your opponent one extra disc.

As I said before, when cleaning board on fast courts, it is not necessary to shoot hard. It is better to take your time, take aim and shoot just hard enough to get both discs to slide into the gutter. A slow court is a little harder, therefore you must push a little harder in order to knock the discs into the gutter. To do this without throwing your arm off of a straight delivery or without throwing yourself off balance, take a full, smooth swing just as you would ordinarily. Use your regular follow through but just as your arm reaches a perpendicular position with your body, then you give a little extra push. By this time in your delivery, you are past the stage where you will throw yourself off balance or spoil your follow through. Remember, the follow through directs your disc to its goal.

If you have last shot and you are having problems cleaning board, or you are sticking with

your third disc fairly consistently and you have last shot, then if your opponent puts out a hide block, instead of cleaning it off and taking a chance of sticking or missing, put out a choker block. (A choker block, in the case of a St. Pete's hide, means placing a block between his block and the point, cutting him off from using his hide. Or in the case of a Tampa hide which is along side of the point on his side of the board, you then place your disc between his disc and the outside, but not so far out that he would be able to go between the two blocks or he would still have a hide). This will force him to either push his disc in or go down the outside which is a pretty tricky shot. However, you want to know what you are doing when you use a choker block. They are very easy to get in the wrong place. But you must be careful that you do not let the front of the board get cluttered up with blocks (especially if you have the last shot) or you might find yourself with last shot and no place to go. If your opponent has last shot, then by all means let the board get cluttered if he will allow it, but I doubt very much he will. If your opponent pulls this trick on you when he has last shot and he puts out a choker block; retaliate by blocking off the board as much as possible. Rather than going on the board and taking a chance of being dumped in the kitchen, it will be hard to block him off completely, but you can make it harder for him to score.

Just remember, if you are going into competitive shuffling, you had better learn how to clean board. Make sure you have confidence in your ability to do so and are mentally and physically ready before shooting. Make sure you have taken proper aim and don't shoot too hard unless the board is slow. And always keep your arm straight with a true follow through.

PLAYING KITCHEN

To start with, DON'T BE A KITCHEN PLAYER. By that I mean, some players will play nothing but Kitchen. There are places during a game that it is logical to try a Kitchen shot and places where it is necessary, but to make Kitchen playing a habit is very foolish. For instance, if you have a good chance to push your opponent into the Kitchen and slide off yourself, he will have to use his next disc to get himself out of the Kitchen. This will give you an opportunity to set up a hide with your next disc and force him into cleaning board, taking a chance on sticking or missing. Quite often an opportunity like this will come up, so take advantage of it. If you watch the Pro's you will see that they don't play Kitchen unless they are behind or have a perfect opportunity with their last shot. No one wants to play with someone who only plays Kitchen, so you could end up becoming unpopular and may have a difficult time getting a partner.

But you must know how and when to play your opponent's disc for the Kitchen. For instance, never play your opponent's St. Pete's hide disc for the Kitchen unless he is so far ahead that you have to gamble desperately. But even then, play it on such an angle that his disc goes toward the Kitchen on his side of the board and your disc slides off into the gutter on your side. Play it hard enough that you won't drop him a seven. If he has last shot and he sets up a hide with his third disc, then with your last disc you might just as well try to dump him. Anyone foolish enough to put his third disc on the board when there is nothing else on the board and he has last shot deserves to be put into the Kitchen. So you won't find many opportunities like that.

If you play your opponent's St. Pete's hide

for the Kitchen, you are shooting your disc straight down the board and nine times out of ten you will stay right where his disc was. So what happens? If you don't get him in the Kitchen you have left him a perfect hide for his second shot. Then you will have to start cleaning the board of your own discs. If you do get him in the Kitchen it will be wide open for him to take off and again you will either have to take your own disc off or set up a choker block. If you drop him a seven, (and this quite often happens) it will be covered by your disc. All he has to do is cover it again with his next disc and you are going to end up with him making a seven on your hammer. So don't be foolish, even if you are behind, don't play that St. Pete's hide for the Kitchen.

If you clear it off and wait for your hammer or for him to make a mistake, you'll come out on top. If you are behind and you need to play Kitchen, rather than playing his St. Pete's for the Kitchen, IGNORE it. Set up a sucker block on the seven and make him clean the board hoping he will miss or stick. Then if you have last shot, play him for the Kitchen. But don't gamble with the Kitchen unless you have last shot or badly need to knock points off of his score. Always have respect for the other fellow's hammer. You'll find that in most cases he'll respect your hammer and not give you a chance to dump him.

If your opponent has last shot and you set out a hide, (either a St. Pete's or Tampa) some players will put in a choker block, cutting you off from going in and hide. In this case play their choker block for the Kitchen, making sure you do not leave them a score on the seven or eight. Hit hard enough that you are going to get it at least to the Kitchen line, otherwise you will be in big trouble because it will probably be covered by both of

your discs. If you do get him in the Kitchen it will be pretty well hid and if you push it right through, you will have an opportunity to score on your next shot if he doesn't take you off. If he does take you off, he will either leave you a hide or you will have the same shot to try and dump him in the Kitchen. Sound confusing? You may be forgetting your first disc should still be setting there, making two discs in play. But don't forget, when you have last shot he may try doing the same thing to you if you put in a choker block. So once again I say, "CLEAN BOARD AND WAIT FOR YOUR HAMMER".

If your score is good and he has the last shot, rather than going on the board, set up a disc keeping him from having an easy score. Or, if you want to try going on the board, then try for a high eight forcing him to knock it off or try to put you in the Kitchen. I like to try cross board; shooting to his side and aiming at the ten. If you do stop in the ten it will be on an angle to him. Or if you are a bit heavy and get a high eight he will have to clear your disc and try to slide onto an eight on your side. This means he is playing away from himself and that is much tougher. It is also a shot that could backfire and leave you on a seven. A word of caution however, I mentioned a ten across board because it is not a good idea to go for a ten straight down the board on your last shot when he has the hammer. Occasionally use it as a diversionary shot, just to keep him off guard, but don't do this too often. The extra points over a seven or eight just aren't worth the risk. Some of these fellows are cracker jacks at leaving themselves on the ten if you have given them enough room. Then they dump your disc in the Kitchen resulting in a twenty point deficit for you. I don't think it's worth the gamble, do you?

Now let's talk about strategy while playing a Kitchen player. First of all never let him

force you into playing his style of game. He'll beat you every time unless you are also a Kitchen player, then it serves you both right. You should never be afraid of a Kitchen player but you should definitely have a lot of respect for his ability to play Kitchen. Most players who are Kitchen players are very adept at finding just the right weight from almost any spot on the board. But unless you give them an opportunity to find that weight, they are just as lost as anyone else. So, never put a disc in any one spot too often. As I said earlier, spread your shots around. Put out a St. Pete's, then a Tampa, then back to a St. Pete's. Keep him as confused as possible. You can generally tell a Kitchen player as soon as you start your practice rounds, so be ready for him. Kitchen players are not very popular but it is necessary to know how. There will be many times when it will be necessary for you to play a few Kitchen shots. The trouble is, many players become so obsessed with the Kitchen that they lose a lot of points trying to put their opponents in when it's not really necessary. Kitchen playing can be useful and clever at times, but it should be played at the proper time. Consistent Kitchen players rarely become good players nor do they become very popular. You get to 75 points and win games by making a score, not by putting your opponent ten off. But if it is necessary to play Kitchen (and this does occur often), then you must know how.

The good players consider a deep seven to be the best Kitchen bait, but that should be clarified. If you have the hammer and need to Kitchen your opponent, then a deep seven is the proper place. But if your opponent has the hammer and you need a Kitchen, then your bait should be an eight and as high an eight as possible. If your opponent sticks when he tries to remove your disc and you Kitchen his disc, then he has a long and difficult combination shot to take out his disc with your disc. So, he either has to leave yours

and go after his or take yours off and leave his own in the Kitchen. Of course he can try to make a combination of yours onto his, but as I said it is a difficult shot. But if it is a deep seven that you put in the Kitchen, your opponent would have to be a very poor player not to be able to make a one or two foot combination shot taking his out of the Kitchen and leaving you in.

Let's suppose both you and your opponent are in the Kitchen. Should you try to knock your own disc out? Not necessarily. It would depend on how close they were. In trying to take yours out, you could leave your second disc in and maybe even take his out, so it would be a poor gamble. Why not try for an eight and take a loss of two to his minus ten? You have still gained eight points on him, which is what you would ordinarily try to do with your hammer shot. Why not try for a seven? I mentioned this earlier but it is worth repeating. No good player would ever try for a seven with his hammer shot. He would always try for an eight. Contrary to some amateur's belief, it's really easier to get an eight than a seven and with less pitfalls. Of course if he had last shot and was close to going out, I would try and block him from taking his out of the Kitchen, but stay well out so that he couldn't play a combination or count by playing yours. In other words, don't go on the scoring area of the board, just block him. If you go on the board he has something to shoot at.

TIPS ON STRATEGY

One thing I like to teach a new player is that shuffleboard is not only a great sport, it is also a form of friendly competition and a mild sort of exercise that most older people can handle. So let's keep it that way and be a good winner and a gracious loser.

Before I get into strategy, there is nothing more important strategy wise than the import-

ance of slowing down and taking your time. I cannot emphasize enough that all the strategy in the world will not make you a good shuffler unless you have concentration, and a smooth delivery with a follow through. Know what you want to do and take time to aim properly, otherwise you will just be an average player.

One of the main things in strategy is thinking out your shot first. Even if it looks like an ordinary everyday shot, stop and consider what advantage it has to you and what advantage it may have for your opposition. If you have ever played checkers or chess, put this knowledge into your thinking for shuffling. Always know what your next move is going to be. The Pros consider every shot, even if there's only one block on the board. You may have a choice of hiding, playing it for the Kitchen, or taking it off depending on the score at that particular time. The score at any time should determine what your strategy will be. If nothing else, stopping and considering your shot will allow you time to get your composure. Many a game has been lost by shooting in haste. Try and develop a habit of taking your time. Look the board over on every shot and if there's a chance for a hide, take it. If your opposition misses it, don't try for a second count, cover the one you have. Anytime you can get a counter on the other fellow's hammer or an extra disc on your hammer, just consider that Xmas has come early and hang onto it.

The difference between a fair shuffler and a good one is a matter of strategy and mechanical ability. With most players shuffling is 70% mechanical and 30% strategy. As you get into the top shufflers you will find that the strategy will play a more important part in their game, especially when they are more evenly matched in mechanical ability.

Most good players will play aggressively as

well as defensively. This does not mean that you should play recklessly, but there is a time when you should gamble and a time when you should play safe. Don't gamble when you are ahead, make sure you score at least one disc in every round when you have the hammer. If you gamble for two you could be in trouble. If you have the hammer shot and you have a disc hidden, protect it for all its worth and then try for the extra count with your last disc. But if your opponent has the last shot, try not to let him get an open shot at your disc if at all possible.

They tell you never try a double on your last shot, this should be clarified. If you are ahead don't gamble. It is too easy to miss and spoil both discs. But if you are behind, then you have to play aggressively and take a chance. However, don't try one that is almost hid from your view or sitting too close to the Kitchen. It is better to make sure of increasing your score a little than to end up with nothing or maybe ten off.

Never try dumping your opponent in the Kitchen with your last shot unless you are behind and desperate. Or if the counter he has on will put him out, or in a case where you are playing the head of the board and his score will enable his partner to go out with one disc. If it is their last hammer shot and you have two hammers coming up, you are wiser to try and hold them from scoring and wait for your own hammers.

Perhaps it is your hammer shot and his disc is on and you want to clear it and stay on. Hit it straight on, just hard enough to push him through, leaving your own disc on. If you strike it too hard and happen to be a little off center, you could go off too or even slide into the Kitchen. But if you are behind you must try to nudge him into the Kitchen.

If your opponent has last shot and you have a deep hide (especially in the corner), let him

see just a bit of the inside of your disc, never the outside. Most good players will leave it alone and go down and score, but some less experienced or more daring players will try to knock it off, especially if you are ahead. Quite often they will just touch it and move it an inch or two, miss it altogether or hit it and slide into the Kitchen. Remember this and don't let your opponent sucker you into the same situation.

If your opponent puts out a St. Pete's pilot, don't try going down on the outside unless he has made an error and has put it out narrow, even then it is not a good shot unless you have the last shot and need the score badly. He may have the room to hide two discs while you are hiding one. Your best bet is to clear the board and take a score on your hammer. It is better to take a score off one disc by yourself than share the points with your opposition and put him closer to going out. But always, your decision and strategy must be dictated by the score. Check the scoreboard on every shot and every round. It is the key in every game.

Learning to adjust your play according to the score is very important. There are certain shots you should play under certain scores and others you should not. If your opponent has first shot and you are ahead, clean the board, making sure your disc goes off with it and then shoot for a score with your last disc. If you keep the board clean your opponent can't score nor can he set up any proper strategy of his own. The only time you would ever let the board get cluttered would be if your opponent has last shot and he has elected to play the board by choking off your hides with choker blocks. Then you would try pushing your hide disc in for a score, leaving the disc you just shot as a cover for the one you just pushed in. Failing to do this, you would try to block him from scoring

by blocking off the front of the board. Then he would have no place to score. However, very few shufflers play this type of game, but you must know how in case you run into this type of situation.

Never let your opponent force you into playing his style of game, play your own style regardless. If you change to his style during a match it will be like changing boats in the middle of a stream. Some players will try to psyche you out by playing real fast or slowing the game down to get you off your normal stride, but don't fall for it, just continue on with your normal pace.

If you miss a shot or make a poor shot, it is a natural tendency to be provoked at yourself and try to make up for it on every shot after that. This could be your downfall. The harder you try to make up for that one bad shot the more tense you will get. This could result in your losing the game. A good player with good concentration will discard that shot completely from his mind and carry on with the game. Sometimes your partner will make a bad shot or a poor decision and you'll get mad. This can be just as destructive to you as if you had done it yourself. Don't get mad, it will only spoil your concentration. Forget it. It has happened and nothing can be done about it. Settle down and play the rest of the game in your regular fashion. Just remember neither one of you have made a bad shot or a bad decision intentionally, it just happens.

Have confidence in your partner and his ability, but never underestimate your opponent's skill. He may be tricky and be setting you up for the kill. Take a good look at the board and the score for any traps he might have set up for you before deciding what shot you are going to take. A good chess player sets up his strategy

3 or 4 moves in advance, this fellow may be a good chess player. Watch him try to figure out his strategy.

PILOT BLOCK

When it is your shot first and you have to set up a pilot block, always try a St. Pete's first only using a Tampa as a diversion. The reason for this is, unless it is accurately placed, a Tampa can set up a hide for your opponent. And if it is accurately placed it is fairly easy for your opponent to strike your disc slightly off center and slide over, leaving himself a St. Pete's. Then you will be left having to clean board. Always try to maneuver your opponent into having to clean board, let him make the mistake of missing or sticking. I always try to take my opponent's disc off and leave mine on, forcing him to clean board whenever the opportunity presents itself. But you have to make sure that you do not push your opponent's disc into the seven or eight area. This leaves your own disc as a partial cover for him where he can come in with his next disc and put a double cover on it. Make sure that you get him at least to the Kitchen area, but better yet, put him through where he won't be able to nudge you and leave you in the Kitchen.

TAMPA HIDE

Some players will tell you that a Tampa is not a good disc to set up as a hide. This depends, as a rule it is not the best, mainly because it is harder for the average player to get it in the right place. But there are times when it will work to your advantage. For instance, if you are playing red and your discs are fading to the right, it is almost impossible to hide behind a St. Pete's pilot. Your disc will fade to the right, leaving a good portion exposed. But hiding behind a Tampa and your disc fades to the right, it will be hidden. And the same

for playing the black, if they fade left. So this strategy depends on the court and your mechanical ability.

But before we leave that problem, there is a little trick that often works, not always but quite frequently. If you find that your disc is drifting out when you're shooting from the corner and you can't get it in behind the hide disc, try moving your disc in toward the center about the width of a disc, it will straighten out and go where you want it to. Mind you, this does not always happen, depending on what is causing it to drift, but quite often it will work and is worth trying before changing to a Tampa. I like to try this when I am practicing before color choice, then I know in advance.

Some claim that if you set up a Tampa, your opponent may leave it there and leave you a hide, instead of taking it off they will set up a St. Pete's. I have seen some do this but it is generally a novice. What they are actually doing is putting out a choker block that is too far out. I never seem to be lucky enough to run across these players. But I'll tell you, no self respecting shuffler is going to leave you a chance to get a score on first, especially when he has last shot. I have seen some players take advantage of the fact that the shuffler placing the Tampa hide has not succeeded in placing his disc in the right position and they have gone in for a hide and that is one of the pitfalls of using a Tampa unless you have pretty good control and place it properly. Many times you will see a player ignore a Tampa or a St. Pete's and go down on the board, but that is strictly to coax you into a setup for a Kitchen play.

Now in contradiction to what I have just said, I must point out that in some cases I will switch to using a Tampa. But then I have practiced placing them properly for just this reason, (and

I advise everyone to learn how to place a Tampa properly) and can place it properly in the majority of cases. The case I am speaking of is this, I set up a St. Pete's hide and my opponent quite easily knocks it off. So I set up a Tampa and he has a problem cleaning the board on that side. So I continue to use the Tampa on most shots, hoping that he will miss or stick and leave me a hide. You'll notice I said "on most shots". Never stick to one thing too long - your opponent will get the feel for that shot and it won't be of any value to you. Always mix your shots up when you are putting out a hide, never let him get accustomed to any one shot (especially if he happens to be a Kitchen player). Remember to always keep 'em guessing.

If you do use a Tampa and he misses, don't try to push your disc into the eight on your next shot, go in behind it. A push shot is one of the hardest shots on the board, although I have seen some novice players who just seem to be able to do it without any problem at all. If you go in behind and you happen to leave a piece of it sticking out chances are that he will just nick it and move it slightly to one side and you can use your next disc to cover it better. Or if he does take it off, he will undoubtedly go off too and you will still have your hide available. He will probably also take your covering disc off. So if the shoe is on the other foot and he slides one in partially hidden, remember what happened to him and play it smart. TAKE his cover off, don't fool around trying to get something that is almost impossible and end up leaving him a better hide than he had before.

Now suppose your opponent sets up a Tampa? There are two alternatives; first if you are ahead, I would say clean the board and wait for your last shot to score. If you are behind but only a block or two, hit his disc hard enough

to take it off slightly off center so that your disc will stay on as a St. Pete's. Mind you, it will probably not be a good St. Pete's because it will probably be in too far, but it will put the onus on him to either clean board or leave it and put in a choker block. Then you can always go down and try pushing yours in for a count, but don't count on it because very few good players would leave yours on. I should rephrase that; you have to be a good player to play the board successfully and usually it is board players who use a choker block because they are playing the board. If you hit up against a good board player, you hadn't better fool around with them because they generally know their way around a board. Like I said earlier, don't let them make you play their kind of game. If you run across a good player, one who plays board really well, CLEAN BOARD and stay out of their way.

CHOKER BLOCK

Before the days of cleaning board became the popular course of action, most everyone played the board and the choker block was a very popular shot. But in today's type of play where it is customary to clean board, it is very seldom used.

A choker block is as described here; your opponent sets his disc between your disc and the point when you have set out a St. Pete's hide, and it should be just a little further in than yours so that he cannot get in behind your disc. In the case of a Tampa, he will set his disc just off the outside of your disc to try and stop you from going down the outside. A choker block must be placed accurately to be of any benefit and your opponent can still go down and try shoving his disc ahead into the seven or eight and have it covered with the one he has just shot plus your choker block. A choker block is not always an easy shot to execute properly, so it is not really a good position

to get yourself into because you are starting to clutter up the board and with last shot, that is what you don't want to do.

If you have last shot, your opponent sets up a hide on his first disc, and you are quite a piece behind, you must ignore his hide and go down onto the board on a low seven if possible, trying to coax him into a position where you can dump him into the Kitchen. If HE has last shot, then stay on a high eight, hoping he will stick and give you a chance to dump him in the Kitchen. If you put him in the Kitchen from a high eight, he will have more of a problem reversing the discs from there than he would have from a low seven position. He would have to be a very poor player not to be able to reverse them from a low seven in comparison to a high eight.

If you have the last shot and you are behind, then go down on a low seven with each disc, hoping that he will stick and leave you an opportunity to dump him. If my opponent has last shot, my own strategy is to go down on a high eight with my first two discs and if he doesn't stick or miss then I use my third disc as a hide block. Sometimes this throws them off and they will miss or stick. This gives me a chance to hide, or if he stays on the board, then I have the opportunity to nudge him into the Kitchen. Either way if you can hide a counter or nudge him into the Kitchen, he is either going to have to dig himself out of the Kitchen and lose his hammer or go after yours with a possibility of both discs going off, (depending on how well your disc is hidden). He may ignore yours and try to score which would still leave him either counting a minus or only equalling your score on his hammer. Which ever way he goes, if you can get a counter on that is hidden or even just partially hidden, he is going to have to come up with a darn good shot to come out on top.

HIDING AND HAMMER SHOTS

If you can hide your last disc even partially, no good player will gamble his hammer shot trying to take it off unless it will put your score in a winning position. If he does try to take it off, he could miss or take yours and his own with it and he will not likely take that gamble unless it is absolutely necessary.

Take every opportunity to hide a disc on your opponent's hammer. He cannot afford to leave it. If he does, you have deprived him of the advantage of having last shot, even if he ends up with an eight and you with a seven, he has only gained one point. But, don't forget, this works the other way around too. Don't let him hide one on your hammer. If he takes off your pilot, put another one on. If you get a chance to hide one and he can see part of it and takes it off, hide another one. Keep him on the run. Confuse him with your ability. Make him get the impression that you know all the angles, whether you do or not. He will be forced to play aggressively and will have to take chances. But don't forget this works both ways. Don't let him get YOU in this predicament when you have the hammer, if you can possibly avoid it.

Never try to take a disc off that is hidden or partially hidden with your hammer shot unless it is going to put your opponent out or put his partner in a scoring position to go out. Go on the board and count. You have to score points to win. You can't just sit around waiting for the other guy to lose, this just does not happen. Even if you are behind, make that last disc count. Many strange things happen in shuffling; you may keep them scoreless on their hammers and if you have added to your score it will put you in a better position to go out. Many games have been lost when they only needed one or two discs and couldn't score because they hit a line or some other error.

If you don't count it will not increase your score and if you don't increase your score every opportunity you get, you will never reach 75 points. Your opponent can decrease your score by dumping you in the Kitchen, but he will never increase your score, except by accident, you must do that yourself.

Have confidence in your ability but don't get overconfident and let your defenses down. Sometimes you will get up against a player who you know is not as good as you are or someone you don't know but appears to be a poor player. Don't let that fool you. That is just the time when you will start getting overconfident and all of a sudden BOOM, you suddenly realize you took them too much for granted and they beat you. Don't let your ego carry you away to that extent. Play just as hard against a poor player as you would a good player, they are the ones that will beat you everytime. Or should I say, "you beat yourself with your overconfidence". I have seen many games lost this way and many lost at 74 points. The game is not over until one of you has reached 75 points. Never let that fact escape your mind, no matter how far you seem to be ahead. Many times a team will be way ahead and they start getting careless, taking chances, missing their hammer shots, leaving their shots open and ending up in the Kitchen. First thing they know, the opposing team is threatening to go out. Now they have you worried and when you are worried it is hard to concentrate properly. Don't let up until you have crossed that 75 point mark.

As I said earlier, you should take a look at the score before you start each round and each time you shoot (if there's been any change on the board). But, when your score is getting up around the 50 mark and you have last shot, watch the scoreboard very closely (both the head and foot players). Two counters may not put

you out, whereas three counters would. The player at the head of the board should try to steal a block so that his partner can go out with his normal count. If you cannot steal one, then the player at the foot of the board still has a chance to steal the extra count. But don't by any means take too great a risk, only steal if it is a safe hide. You could leave yourself open for a Kitchen shot and ruin everything. Better to wait then lose 10 points at that point of the game.

If the opposition has the hammer and you have succeeded in stealing a counter at any time during the game, even if it is the very first end, don't be hoggish by stealing another count in that round. Cover your disc with every shot, even if you have to put two discs in front of it. I have seen fellows have a counter hid and they have an opening so they try for a second count. What they do is leave a handle on their first disc and end up losing both counters. Or they leave their second disc out where their opponent dumps them in the Kitchen and they end with a loss of two or three instead of counting seven or eight. Don't try to make a hero of yourself. Be happy with that extra count and then you will still have your hammer to give you the extra points. The old saying goes, "If you make it, you're a hero, but if you miss, you're a bum for trying". So don't gamble, you'll give your partner far more help by playing a good steady game rather than a flashy game here and there.

Speaking of playing a steady game, there are many times you will go off your game. YOU can never see what you are doing wrong, even if you watched yourself in a mirror. Don't be ashamed to ask for help, ask someone to watch you. I would suggest your partner because he's been watching you make these errors from his end of the court and probably realizes that you are having problems but doesn't mention it in case he'd hurt your feelings. Respect his criticism.

He is only doing what you have asked him to do and he can easily pick out the flaw in your play just by watching you. It may only be some little thing such as bending your elbow, taking too long a stride (which will throw you off balance), standing too stiff, shooting too quick or too hard, or having a poor follow through. Any of these will throw you off your game and you won't notice that you are doing them. Don't be a prude, ask for help, it will pay you in the long run.

You may hear many amateurs say they would rather shoot for a seven than an eight on their last shot, that is ridiculous. Consider the odds; if you shoot for a seven and you get a little heavy you could land in the Kitchen and lose 10 points. If you shoot for an eight and you are a little heavy, you still have the seven area to stop in and the worst that could happen would be to hit the seven/eight line, which is better than losing 10 points. A good shuffler will always try for an eight unless it is blocked off. This is where practicing your placing of shots will help you place them on the various parts of the board where you want them. I hope you have noticed that I told you that before, I hope you're paying attention.

When the other fellow has last shot and the board is cleared, what should you do with your last shot? Many shufflers will try for a high ten and will invariably end up with a deep ten, leaving themselves wide open for a ten off, ten on situation. I like to shoot from the corner of the board, (the outside corner) across the court to the opposite side of the ten. If you land on the ten, you will be on an angle which makes it harder for your opponent to stay on when he is taking your disc off. If you miss the ten you have a good chance to get a high eight. At any rate you won't be a sitting duck for a ten off, ten on situation. The Pro's will never put their last disc on a high ten when they haven't

got the hammer, unless they are awfully sure of their mechanical ability. It is not a good gamb

If you don't want to go on the board as I suggested a moment ago, cover the ten or eight on your opponent's side making it harder for him to score. If a score will put them out, then you must try for a high ten or eight. You have no choice then. If you can get a high ten, he will undoubtedly take it off even if the score isn't too close. You can never afford to leave your opponent a ten in case you or your partner misses a shot. This would put them within one or two discs of going out and you can't afford that, especially if you are playing the foot of the board and they have two hammers coming up.

One thing you must remember, watch that score board, especially when it is getting near the end of the game. A seven may put you out whereas your opponent may need an eight. In this case you must go down onto a high seven if possible and make him come after you. Even if it means that he can score a seven off of your disc, it will leave him one point short. If he doesn't come down and take you off and scores an eight it would mean a tie game and if he happened to hit a line you would win. So he has to try to take you off and leave himself on. Now I say a high seven because you don't want to get too far in or he just might dump you ten off, still leaving himself a good seven. But if it is a high seven there is always the possibility of his disc staying on the seven/eight line.

Now suppose you have the last shot, your opponent has kept the board cleaned and you end up with your third disc to shoot with nothing on the board to shoot at? What should you do with that disc? It is no good as a hide because you have last shot and don't need a hide. If you put it on the board you might make a mistake and leave him a hide or maybe a chance to dump you in the Kitchen. And even if you don't, you

are cluttering up the board with your own disc and lessening your chances of scoring with your last disc. The best bet is to throw it away. By this I mean, put it well over on his side of the board as close to the edge as possible, just past the foul line so that he cannot get behind it or have a decent shot at the Kitchen. You could just deliberately shoot it off the board but that is not considered good sportsmanship. So just put it where it is impossible for him to score behind or dump you in the Kitchen. But to let you in on a little secret, if he does that to me, I play it for the Kitchen anyway. What have I got to lose? There is no sense in going on the board yourself, he may dump you, but make sure you hit it hard enough to get to the Kitchen. Don't leave him a score by shooting too easy.

If you are ahead, keep the board clean. Don't let the board get cluttered up whether you have the hammer or not. You never know what will happen when there are a lot of discs on the board and you don't want to accidentally end up in the Kitchen. However, if you do stick and your opponent hides one and you can just see a bit of it, instead of taking off the hide disc, (which your opponent will only replace), consider sitting one along side of his good disc but just a little short of it. If he doesn't cover it again, you can play your disc onto his, knocking his disc off to the side, sometimes leaving your own on, depending on the lie. If he does cover it you will have equalled his score. If he goes down and takes you off he is gambling on taking his own off at the same time. Either way it is he who is taking the gamble.

Now suppose your opponent has last shot but he has not been able to clean board and you end up with two discs counting and have your last disc still to shoot, what are you going to do with it? You can't cover both your other two discs unless they are directly in front of each other. So the logical play is to put on a third counter. If

they are well placed he will probably only get one off. But if he does take two, you still have one counter left. If he should happen to shoot one and dump it in the Kitchen you still come up counting something on his hammer and any time you can count on your opponent's hammer, keep him scoreless or cut his gain down, you are playing top shuffling.

When you are placing a hide block, hiding a block, or trying for an eight on your hammer shot, pick a spot on the board, dark or light and shoot at that spot. You will find that you will invariably land within a few inches of it. Remember, confidence is a big part of the game, you have to think positive when you are making these shots. Have confidence in your ability and in your partner's ability. I have seen a lot of good players and they have confidence - almost to the point of conceit, but they get the job done.

If you are going to be a tournament player, you are going to have to learn to clean board. When cleaning board, hit your opponent's disc on the outside or the closest side to the gutter. Unless you hit a quarter or less of his disc, your disc will slow down on impact, so the least distance it has to travel to reach the gutter the better. And if you hit your opponent's disc on the inside it could stop, leaving him a hide or somewhere on the triangle with an opportunity to dump you in the Kitchen. Some players have hard shots but occasionally even they will stay on the board. By practicing to clean board from the outside you cut down on the percentage of this possibility. If you can master this style of cleaning board, you don't have to shoot as hard and are therefore more accurate. Just make sure you shoot hard enough to push your opponent's disc completely off the board. If you are accurate and pretty sure of your mechanical skill, it is much better to clean board and count on your last shot.

If there is any doubt in your mind about a referee's call, whether it be your disc or your opponent's, it is your prerogative to ask the referee at the disc in question. However, it must be a player at the end of the court that is not playing at the time. But if your partner does not ask to check a close call, you may ask the referee if he would have your partner check it. You must not call down to your partner and ask him or you would receive a fine, but you can ask the referee to do so. When you do ask to check a disc, be careful you do not touch or move the disc when you examine it. If you do and the disc belongs to your opponent and if the referee has called it good, he will automatically be credited with those points and the disc removed from the playing surface. If it belongs to your partner and you touch or move it, it will be taken off the board as a dead block with no count.

A little earlier I told you what to do with your third and your last disc if the score was close. If you have last shot, put your third disc out of his reach. If he has last shot try to block him off from an easy score. Now that is impossible if the board is cleared of discs, but you can make it harder for him by putting it over on his side just a few inches from the point. This will make him stay away from the central part of the board where there is more room. It's not likely that you will stop him from scoring, but you can make it a little harder for him. That is, if you don't want to try for a ten or an eight like I explained earlier, going across the ten on an angle, remember? However, your shot should always depend on the score at the time. Consult the scoreboard and tally the points before each shot. I cannot stress enough the importance of checking the score before making any decisions, it should always be your guide as to what strategy you should use. Many games have been lost when the player has been too eager to take his opponent's disc off when one more counter or a possible double could have won him the

game. However, make sure it is a good double before trying it, you may lose both discs.

If you are at the head of the board, never forget that you have a partner at the other end who may finish the game if you put him within reach of it. Don't try making any grandstand plays and end up missing both counters. That is just false ego and could lose you the game. Of course if you need two counters to go out and are at the foot of the board, you may have to try a double if your opposition is in a scoring position to go out, with their two hammers coming up. The player at the foot of the board is the one who must take a gamble in a situation such as that. If the opposition has two hammers coming up and only needs two counters to go out, there is no other recourse, he has to gamble. And you must go along with his decision because he is the one that is on the spot and he can't ask you what your opinion is.

There is a lot more psychological maneuvering in shuffling than most people realize. When you use strategy you make your opponent aware that you are no pushover and this gives him something to worry about, which will help to confuse him. Every good chess player sets up a different line of strategy according to what moves his opponent makes. This should be your objective, to use the strategy that will confuse your opponent. Keep him off guard wherever and whenever you can. But as I said earlier, you cannot use strategy properly unless you have the mechanical ability to control your discs, and place them where you want them.

Awhile ago I told you what to do if your disc was drifting in too far, move it toward the center of the court about a half a block and shoot at the same angle. How about if you are hitting lines consistently? Try moving your disc back about two inches from where you normally shoot. Most people shoot up near the front line. If you

are in the habit of shooting near the line, move your disc forward about two inches, then shoot at the same speed as before. This should leave your disc about two inches past the line. Or in the case of a person who shoots near the front line and moves it back, it should leave his disc about two inches short of the line. However, this only works if you shoot at the same speed.

YOU AND YOUR PARTNER

Your partner is going to be a very important part of your game. So you must choose wisely. He or she must be someone whom you are compatible with. This is very important if you expect to win or even stay together as partners. Partners who cannot see eye to eye and are always disagreeing with each others' playing will not stay together long, let alone win tournaments. You must remember that if he is having a bad day and the breaks are going against him, it might be your turn the next day with these problems. Have an understanding between the two of you that you can talk over shots without arguing. It is much better than going home and sulking about it, nothing is ever solved that way. Bring it out into the open but only on a friendly basis. No one likes to be criticised, especially if its in front of others. But everyone loves a compliment. If your partner has played a good game, don't be afraid to tell him so. And if your partner made a bad decision in his strategy, you should also be able to talk it over with him. But don't query him with a "Why in the blazes did you make that stupid shot". Use a little diplomacy and when you are alone simply ask, "That shot you tried, I couldn't tell from my end just what you were trying, was it something we should experiment with or were you just out on your calculations?" This gives him an easy chance to explain his shot without being embarrassed. Maybe he did have something in mind and it just didn't turn out the way he expected. If you want to stay partners, never question his ability

in front of someone else. Put your self in his position and imagine how you would feel. He probably feels bad enough already about making the error. Once he has answered you, the question should be dropped. You have to remember, a shot from one end of the board quite often looks different from the other end. So don't be too quick to judge. He is going to try the shot that he feels he is capable of making according to his mechanical ability, not according to yours. And if he misses, before you criticise, just take a moment and think back to some of the errors you have made, and if you have never made any, then quit reading right now - you are way out of my class. If you want to be a winning team you have to work together in harmony.

Have faith that your partner is doing his best, he wants to win just as much as you do. Unfortunately none of us are perfect and we all have our good days and our bad days. Shots don't always do what you intended them to do which is unforeseeable, but if your judgement of what shot to try is correct, no one should complain. I much rather see my partner miss the proper shot than try the wrong shot, anything can happen to cause his disc to miss, but at least he has tried the proper shot. But if he is consistently shooting the wrong shot then I know that he is not thinking right. If you are not thinking right you not only choose the wrong shots, you are also executing the right shots poorly. Usually, not thinking properly is more prominent when you are behind or you have come up against a couple of players whom you know are good. This causes fear and fear will influence your muscular reactions. So dismiss all ideas of fear from your mind. It is foolish to be frightened by something that has not been proven yet. If you play your regular game, who knows? You could end up scaring them by the talent you exhibit. At least never let them know you are afraid of them, and above all, don't get mad, it will spoil your co-ordination.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Now that you know the fundamentals of the game, it is time to learn the rules. To be a good shuffler you should know the rules as well as any referee. I am not going to go into all of the rules, there are too many and they are too time consuming. However, there are some fundamental rules that unless they are explained are rather hard to understand. If there are any other rules you do not understand, ask your instructor. Or failing to have one, most clubs have a tournament director or any Pro or good player would be glad to explain your rules. Get ahold of a set of rules and study them so that you will not be penalized for some infraction that you are not aware of. I am going to list the ones that you are more apt to get caught at. Now don't misinterpret my meaning, all rules are important simply because they are rules. The referee is within his right to fine you if you break them, so it's important that you know them. A good referee will be watching for all infractions but these are the ones that are usually broken without thinking.

1. Getting up off the bench before the referee tells you to will cost you 5 points. This is a habit you get into while playing fun games and without thinking you do it when you have a referee. So try to remember this when you're in a tournament.
2. You must not leave the court during a game without permission. This costs you 10 points. There is no penalty for leaving between games provided you're gone no more than 10 minutes. It's not necessary but you should tell the referee where you're going. It makes him feel more important.
3. Stepping on or over the base line while in the act of shooting. 10 points.

4. Stepping onto the court next to you. 5 points. You are allowed to step into the gutter but not beyond the baseline or onto the adjoining court. There is really no advantage for you to do this, your shot is already on its way, but you have probably just lost your balance. But that is not the reason for the penalty. Put yourself in the position of the player next to you. He may just be making his shot and you might bump his arm. He misses his shot, maybe even spoils a counter he already has on. The referee can't give him the shot over, so he has lost a shot because of your carelessness. Personally I think anyone who swings their cue onto the next court should be fined. They also disturb and disrupt the other players shot and concentration.
5. An unplayed disc resting on a line while in the act of shooting another disc. 5 points.
6. The disc you are shooting touching any part of any line surrounding your playing area while in the process of shooting. 10 points plus having your disc removed and any displaced discs of your opponents' that were counting prior to your shot credited to his score and removed from the board. Once you have started your delivery, it may cross over the front line or the angled lines surrounding your playing area, but not the base line. Your disc must be inside these lines at the start of delivery. You may jockey your discs beyond the lines before shooting to get the feel of the disc and make sure there is no foreign material on the bottom of your disc.
7. Talking to or coaching your partner during the game. 10 points. You may talk things over between rounds.
8. As I said before there are many other infract-

tions but these are some of the more obvious that quite often cost you and your partner points and could lose you a match.

If you are going to play the game, play it according to the rules, they are really not that severe and they are no more a handicap to you than they are to your opponent. Let me point out one thing, every year new rules are being introduced or old rules are being altered, check with your tournament director periodically for any changes.

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF SHUFFLING

Now that you have read all about strategy I am going to pick out certain things that you should keep uppermost in your mind. Just remember, you are going to find players who are going to disagree with my point of view and many of them may be right according to their style of playing. No one person knows everything, I can only give you my version of the game and you will have to decide if it will work for your particular style of play.

THE DO'S

1. Think before you shoot. Clear your mind of any split decisions, then make your shot.
2. Be objective in every shot, try to make each shot do what you intended it to do.
3. Have confidence in your ability, but don't get overconfident and let your defense down.
4. Always make sure your court has been swept, it is a waste of money putting wax on the court or the discs then play on a dirty court.
5. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. It is the only way you will improve your ability.

6. Develop a smooth rhythm in your delivery, learn the ability to shoot straight with a follow through that is directed at the place you want it to hit.
7. Concentrate on every shot regardless of how insignificant the shot may be.
8. Always check the scoreboard before you start a new round. If you are ahead, keep the board cleared. If you are behind, play the board and try to put your opponent in the kitchen.
9. Try to keep your opponent from scoring two discs in any one end.
10. It is very important to read and know the rules.
11. Co-ordination, relaxation and concentration are the ingredients that make a good shuffleboard player. Develop these characteristics in your play.
12. Keep your opponent on the defense as much as possible.
13. Hide a scoring disc at every opportunity, whether the guarding disc is yours or your opponents'.
14. When you have an unprotected scoring disc on the board, place a guarding disc in front of it, usually 3 or 4 feet in front of it.
15. When the score is not too high, you're behind and have last shot, it is sometimes good strategy to clear the board with your third disc to score a deep eight out in the open as kitchen bait. This may give you an opportunity with your last shot to Kitchen your opponent and make a plus score of 17 to 18 points. This is a tricky game and the more tricks you have up your sleeve the

better, but be careful in doing this, you might be up against a good Kitchen player and you don't want to be digging yourself out of the Kitchen with your last shot.

16. It is most important for partners to play the same type of game. (the player at the head of the board should set the pace) When ahead in score, both players should consistently keep the board clear and avoid situations for Kitchen play. When behind, play to put your opponent in the Kitchen until the score is even. It is foolish to play a simple score if there is a desperate need to put your opponent in the Kitchen to save the game. This is one reason why you should keep your eye on the scoreboard at all times.
17. If your opponent has last shot, instead of putting your last disc on a high ten or high eight, (which often backfires), try putting your last disc on the center line just below the ten about two or three inches. This cuts down on your opponents' room to get in and score an eight and sometimes he will nudge you into an eight.

There are many more DO'S and little tricks to confuse your opponents. Always be on the lookout for them.

THE DON'TS

1. Don't try a double on your last shot unless there is a real need for it or a good opportunity presents itself.
2. Don't shoot too quickly. Stop and formulate your shot. Look the board over, you may be missing a shot.
3. Don't play sloppy then get mad at yourself because you missed a shot. Careless shoot

ing will get you in trouble. One careless shot may lose you the game. Take your time and make sure you are settled down before shooting.

4. Don't be in a hurry to shoot. Make sure that the shot you are taking is the shot you really want. Be sure you are aiming where you want your disc to go. Relax your wrist and arm, then follow through with your stroke, reaching a full arm's length.
5. Don't grab your cue as if it were a broom. Your power comes from a full swing of the arm from the shoulder, not your wrist or forearm. The same follow through stroke all the time is the only way you can perfect precision.
6. Don't hold your cue too tight. That will tense the muscles in your arm and will spoil your coordination and accuracy.
7. Always square yourself off with the direction of your shot, in other words stand facing the direction you want your disc to travel.
8. Don't be in too much a hurry. Always look at the scoreboard before you decide what to do on your next shot. The game is played from the scoreboard, not the clock.
9. Don't take unnecessary chances. If the score is close, play safe. If you are last out don't be too anxious to score until your last disc. It's better than ending up in the soup.
10. Don't expose your disc to a Kitchen shot, keep it covered at all costs. As the old saying goes, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush".

11. Don't play Kitchen unless you are two or three discs behind in the score.
12. Don't forget, have a lot of respect for the other fellow's hammer.
13. Don't leave the other fellow's hide block on the board, either knock it off the board or block off his chance to go in for a hide.
14. Don't shoot your disc until you have checked the score, looked around the board to see if you have missed a good hide, or see if your opponent hasn't got a disc on that is either good or a possible double.
15. Don't miss an opportunity to hide a disc, providing you are not leaving a good disc uncovered or an opponent's scoring disc on the board.
16. Don't leave a good disc of your opponent's on the board. However, if you have the last shot and your opponent has a disc that is more than half hidden, don't try to take it off, unless it gives him the game or puts his partner in a winning position. Score your last shot.
17. Don't miss scoring your last shot at any time in the game, (except as explained above). This is one of the most important musts of the game. If you have been hitting the 7 or 8 line with your hammer shot, remember what I told you earlier, about moving your disc forward or back an inch or two.
18. If your opponent's last disc is counting, shoot for his disc making sure that you stay on for a count and his disc is hit hard enough to go off, otherwise you may drop him a seven. Make sure there is no

possibility that his disc will stay on.

19. Don't forget the drift of a court. This is why you had your practice rounds, you must allow for it each time.
20. Don't be drift or wax happy. Learn to play on any court.
21. Don't look at the disc you want to pass when hiding a disc, pick a spot on the board beyond it and shoot for that.
22. Don't shoot so hard that you are losing your accuracy. Then if you are missing shots it because of 3 things. You are shooting without aiming correctly, you are careless, or you are not allowing for that drift.
23. Don't let yourself get off balance. If you don't feel just right, backoff and make a whole new approach.
24. Don't get in the habit of throwing your arm or cue over onto the next court. It bothers the players on that court and it means you are not following through properly.
25. Don't let your opponent keep you on the defense, keep him on the defense.
26. Don't let your opponent force you into playing his style of game.
27. Don't form the habit of playing the same shots every round, change them around and keep him guessing. Keep smiling, he'll wonder what you're up to.
28. Don't forget to watch that scoreboard, You can only win by getting to 75 points before your opponent, so don't lose the game in the last end or two when you have it in the bag by not knowing what the score is.

29. Don't read these tips just once then set them down and forget them. Read them over and over until you have them well implanted in your mind so that when the situation presents itself, the solution will automatically come to your mind. No one can help you as much as yourself.

THE POINT SYSTEM

Let me take a page or two and explain the point system which will determine your standing as a shuffler. First, you do not receive points for Park Tournaments or out of state tournaments.

There are Novices, Amateurs, District Amateurs, State Amateurs, and professionals. Being in any one of these classifications does not stop you from playing in the Amateur class in your own club tournaments unless your club has their own rules regarding this. In this case they generally have the players divided into classes such as A, B, and C groups. But as a rule it is not considered ethical for a Pro to enter.

You are a Novice until you have won your first trophy, whether it is a State trophy, a District trophy or a trophy of your own club or any other club. Once you have won your first trophy, you are considered a District Amateur and cannot play in any tournaments that are for Novices only. This does not mean that a Novice can't play in a higher bracket, any player in any bracket can play in a higher bracket but can't take part in a lower bracket.

A District Amateur will advance to a State Amateur when he has accumulated a total of 3 points or more in 3 consecutive years or less. To accumulate these points you must win any place in the main event of a District or State tournament or in the new classification "Open Tournament". This is where a Pro and one Amateur (whether he be a District, State or a

Novice), will count as one point. Any win in the consolation will count as a half point. If you place anywhere in the main event you will automatically advance to the Professional ranks.

A State Amateur may not play in a District Amateur tournament. But two amateurs of any status can team up and play in the open tournament if they so wish. A State Amateur will advance to the Professional ranks when he accumulates a total of 3 points in any 2 consecutive years or if he enters and wins in the main event of a Professional Tournament.

It is possible for a Pro to drop to a State Amateur or a State Amateur drop to a District Amateur level by means of playing in at least 2 Preview Scheduled Tournaments in one year and not winning in the main event, with the approval of the District Executive Board.

SCOREKEEPING HINTS

The scorekeeper has a very important job and it should not be taken lightly. If you are going to be a scorekeeper, do it to the best of your ability, you will be respected for the good job.

First of all you should try to keep score for a referee that you are compatible with, because you will have to work together. One thing many scorekeepers do not realize or maybe they just don't want to admit is that they are working directly under the supervision of the referee. You must always remember, he is in charge of the court and you are a part of his jurisdiction. You should help him by watching to make sure that the right color goes out and if he happens to call the wrong score, don't tell him he is a dummy, merely ask him if he would please repeat the score and he will probably notice that he has made an error. If he doesn't, then you can bring it to his attention but I imagine the player who is being gypped will certainly show him this

Make sure when you first go to a court that there are pencils, chalk, eraser, a card for the players' names and if their names are not on the cards it will be your responsibility to see that they are entered and also when they have chosen color, enter the color on the card.

Try not to distract or disturb the players on your court or any other court. There is nothing more disturbing to a player than having a yappy scorekeeper.

Make sure the color bar is in the proper position and post the scores as the referee gives them to you. He should call the red or yellow first to avoid any mixup. If he does not do this on the first round, call him to one side and ask him if he would mind calling the red or yellow first. He has probably just forgot.

Try to keep any undue noise down around your end of the board, that is from spectators. Sometimes they get a little over-excited and don't realize that they are disturbing the players. But do it in a nice way. Also keep your own voice down while they are playing.

While you are keeping score, it may be that a friend of yours is playing on your court. Please, don't show any indication that you are pulling for him to win. This is very downgrading to the other players and is very poor sportsmanship. Put yourself in their shoes.

If there is a penalty, mark the penalty points down immediately in small numerals along side the score so that there is no chance of a slip-up or dispute later when the final score is called. And when the referee calls the score, mark each score and add them up after. Leave the small numerals there until the next round is completed and above all, DON'T USE DASHES.

For a NO score, carry the score down whether it has changed or not, then step quickly to one side so that the referee can see that it has been recorded. Never stand in front of the score at any time except to add the new scores. The players are looking to the scoreboard to plan their strategy and if you are standing in front of it it will not be of much help to them.

If a game should end up in a tie and two more ends have to be played, (there is such a thing) both teams may end up with a score of under 75 points. In this case make a notation that they did indeed play 2 extra rounds so that the tournament director will not be confused and think the game had not been finished.

RULES FOR REFEREEING

Many of you will probably never referee a game but if you know what it takes to make a good referee, you may understand his position better. He is only human like you and I so don't be too quick to judge him. He not only has to control the game, he has to know all the rules and know them well enough that he doesn't have time to look them up in his book every time an infraction is made. They must also check the scores to see that it has been tallied properly, any referee who is simply a disc caller is not worth having on the court.

A good referee should stand about half way between the drain and the hog line, closest to the players who are shooting. He has the best advantage from there to see what the person shooting is doing. Occasionally he will have to walk down to the playing area to check a disc.

When you are calling the score back to the shooters, don't call; one black or two blacks etc., it can too easily be confused with one black, use the word disc, (e.g. one black disc or one red disc). It may save some arguments later.

Never ask a player if he wants to look at a disc. Make your decision, call it and walk back to your position. If he is not satisfied with your call, it is his duty to ask for an inspection. If you ask him if he wants to look at it, it makes you look as if you're not sure of your call. But if he wants to look at it, you should stand close to him when he is inspecting it, making sure he does not touch or move it. (either accidentally or on purpose). Although most shufflers are honest, there are some who are not above reproach.

Don't tap your referee stick on the court when indicating a good or bad disc. You could very easily touch the disc and cause the end to be played over. Don't wave your stick around when the players are in the act of shooting, this is very distracting to the player. Try to be as thoughtful of them as you would want them to be of you.

If for any reason you want to stop the game, lay your stick on the court across the middle. And if you want to check a disc, make sure the players know that you are going to step onto the court. I have seen players not realize that the referee was going to step onto the court and shoot their disc.

Occasionally you will find the odd person who will complain because you fined them for stepping onto the court, yet you step out onto the court to check a disc. The DO NOT WALK ON THE COURT sign does not refer to the referee. You must step onto the court in order to call a disc properly. There is no way you could see a close disc from the gutter.

I have given you a few of the DO'S and DON'TS for a referee, now I would like to give you a few tips on how to be a good referee. You must have confidence in your ability to handle the situation. You must be able to make as quick

and accurate a decision as soon after each shot as possible and when you have called your decision, walk away from the disc.

In order to make these split second decisions, you must have all the rules memorized, especially those that will be more prominent such as; stepping on the lines, stepping onto the next court shooting off the lines, etc. You must not only know the rules, but also the penalty. I have seen some referees hesitate or ask the shuffler if they want to look at the disc. Don't do this. Have confidence in your ability and show that you have confidence in yourself. They will have respect for your calls. But if you have doubts or show that you are unsure, they in turn are going to doubt your decisions and this is going to cause you grief. It will also slow down the game.

The first thing you should do after the color has been chosen is to introduce yourself. This will put them at ease. Instruct the players that you will be calling the game as laid down by the District rules and any stipulations that the Tournament Director has laid down. Remember, you are under the direct jurisdiction of the tournament director or the head divisional referee, if one has been appointed. In such cases, the divisional referee or the tournament director should call all of his referees together prior to the match and instruct them as to how he wants the tournament to run.

It is generally advisable to instruct the players; not to shoot off lines, not to have an unplayed disc on a line when shooting another disc, to stay seated until you call their name to play, not to communicate with their partner except through the referee, to ask if they want their partner to check a close disc, etc. Instruct them as to where and when they may pull a disc back without being asked to. And for heaven's sake, don't (like some referees I have seen),

instruct the head of the board and forget the foot. That can be very embarrassing.

Any infraction such as shooting off lines, hook shot, hesitation shot, stepping on lines, etc. can't be appealed because the Divisional or tournament director would not be able to see the infraction and therefore would not be in a position to tell whether the infraction had actually occurred or not. The referee's decision would therefore have to stand. Hook shots and hesitation shots are very hard to determine unless they are very flagrant, so be very sure you are not unjustly fining someone for something they did not commit. This is why it is very important that you know your rules and penalties.

Watch the player, don't stare at him, this will make him nervous, but keep your eye on him, not the disc going down the court. It is the shuffler who creates the error, not the disc. If you turn your head too soon and the player steps off the court, or on the line or shoots off the line, you will not see him. You will be watching the disc after it has sailed merrily down the court. You have lots of time to follow the course of the disc after it has passed you, if you are standing in the right place - unless they are playing a very fast shot, then you will have to turn a little quicker. I like to watch the player until I see the disc passing me, then I turn and watch it. I have seen some referees who are watching every court but their own and they are only block watchers. There is no way they can detect a penalty shot if they are watching play on some other court.

Your first job after they have finished their practice rounds is to watch them shoot for color. After they have chosen color you will give them their instructions.

In overseeing the shooting for color, the first 3 discs are removed from the playing surface, so that there is no danger of any other discs hitting them. The last 2 discs must never be removed by the referee, the players may want to inspect them and if moved, they would have to be shot over again. Now this may not seem very sporting but there are some people who would take advantage of this and ask to have them shot over (even though they knew they had lost the first time). So never move the last 2 discs, make your call and move away, let the players move them.

The measurement is taken from the center of the line to the disc unless the disc is straddling the line. Then it is taken from the center of the disc, but it doesn't matter whether the disc is short of the line or beyond the line it is still the closest to the line. The red disc shoots first leaving the black last shot. If by any chance it has happened, the black disc should touch or move the red disc, the color choice will automatically go to the red, but this is only on the last 2 discs.

Remember, there is a rule which allows them to shoot one disc of each color before their practice rounds to determine if the court and the discs are to their liking, any objection to either must come at that time. Once they have started their practice rounds it is too late to alter either the courts or the discs. Actually there are a lot of players who are not familiar with this rule and they should be informed of it prior to their practice.

Once they have chosen color, the players may if they wish, change ends. Sometimes one player is better at shooting for color than his partner, so he shoots for color then moves to the foot of the board. This is done for various reasons, such as, one player is better at controlling the game from the head of the board.

Sometimes one of them can't shoot on one side of the board so if they lose color choice, they change ends. This is permissible, but not after the match has started. They must stay in their positions for the remainder of the match.

There is one other point that many referees are not too sure of, that is an error in color lead. If the wrong color starts and is not discovered before the half round is finished, the score stands as is and the play continues in the order started at the beginning of the game. BUT if it is discovered BEFORE the half round is completed, the half round will be played over with correct color lead. So, it is always advisable for the referee to check the board after calling the score and then announce red out or black out, whichever is the case.

Make it easy on the scorekeeper by calling the red count first then the black and make sure he has heard you correctly. There is always a lot of noise during a tournament and it is quite easy for the scorekeeper to mistake someone else's score for yours. Remember they are volunteering their services and should receive respect and consideration as well as anyone.

There is no way I can explain and define all of the rules to you in a book this size. My advice to you, (if you are interested in refereeing or if you just want to know what your rights are while playing) is to get a set of rules. They are in every Preview and also companies such as Allens and Nidy put out a pamphlet giving you the official rules. You will probably have to get someone to explain some of them to you as some of them are rather complex.

But if you are going to be a referee, please, DON'T BE A BLOCK CALLER, know the rules and use them. It is your job and your duty as a referee to protect the legitimate player from someone taking advantage of him.

PLANNING AND LAYING OUT A DRAW

TOURNAMENT CHART

Maybe no one reading this book will ever run a draw tournament but it is nice to know what is going on and the amount of work and responsibility the tournament director has.

I have heard many players at tournaments complaining, "Why do we have to wait so long, why are there courts empty and we are not playing?" I have heard these and many other remarks that the tournament director is not doing too good a job. So I have decided to add this section just so that you will know what the person running the tournament has to do and maybe you will understand why these things happen and have a little more patience with them.

First, the tournament director has to make up his registration cards and his draw cards prior to the match. Then after every one has registered, he knows what size of a chart he has to use. The charts are made up in 32 and 64 lines, and a chart for a tournament is set up in 8 - 16 - 32 - 64 or 128 lines.

The registration cards will contain your registration number, your name, the club you belong to and a place for the chart number and the court. When all the entries are in, and the tournament director has the number of entries, he can then set up the number of byes or sub brackets according to the chart he will have to use. He can now determine how many draw cards he will need and you will then be notified to make your draw. The draw card will have the number of the chart and the court where you will be playing your first match. He will then transfer your name and court number that you have just drawn onto the registration card. While you are out enjoying your first match, the tournament director and his assistant will be transferring the information from your registra-

tion card and everyone else's onto the chart. So you see, if you are held up for awhile during the match, don't get the impression that the tournament director is sitting in the office on his fanny doing nothing. He is busy all through the tournament doing things for your benefit and pleasure. So, give him the benefit of the doubt when you are held up.

The chart must be set up so that there are byes or sub brackets ONLY in the first round, otherwise a player or team could end up in the finals and maybe only have played one game. Let's say there are 26 teams registered, you would have to use a chart of 32 and put in 6 byes. These must be put in back to back, E.G.;

Smith & Smith

Smith & Smith

BYE

BYE

Jones & Jones

Jones & Jones

This means that Smith & Smith have a bye and Jones & Jones have a bye which would advance them to the next bracket and they would be able to start out right away (if a court was available). But suppose you only had a bye for the Smiths and the Browns were entered where the other bye is? This means that the Jones would have to play the Browns and the Smiths would have to wait until the Jones and Browns played their match. This might cause dissention with the Smiths. Supposing you had 80 entries, if you used two 64 charts making 128 lines you would have 48 byes and this would not be any good. Or you could use a 64 line chart and put in 16 sub brackets, but you would get a lot of complaining about having to play an extra game. You could use a 64 and a 32 line chart and put all of your byes, which would be 16 on a 64 line chart. The reason for that is that on a 64 line

chart you have to play 6 matches to reach the winning circle, whereas on a 32 line chart, you only play five matches. So by putting them all on the 64, you would even it up a bit. However, which ever way you do it, it must be done prior to the draw. If you had byes, the card for that line would be taken out, If you had sub bracket you would have to have two cards rather than one

For instance, let's say you are putting in a sub bracket on line 5. The card for 5 would not be in the draw, but two cards would take it's place which would read 5A and 5B. The teams that draw these cards would be placed on the outside edge of the chart and would play to see who would be entered on the chart. The winner would be placed on line 5 of the chart and the loser would go into consolation. Drawing a sub bracket card or a bye card is simply the misfortune (in the case of a sub bracket) or the luck of the draw (in drawing a bye). This means just the opposite and you would be required to play one less game as your name would automatically be moved to the next bracket. At one time, charts were seeded by the tournament director and then it was not the luck of the draw. The tournament director would simply put you up against a better player if he didn't like you or put you up against a soft touch if you were a favorite of his. Thank heavens this system has been outlawed.

If you ever decide that you would like to become a tournament director, you must prepare yourself with all of the knowledge of the playing rules, violations and the penalties pertaining to the violations. You must also know what may be appealed, what to do in the case of a substitute, inclement weather, State and District tournament regulations, player eligibility, when a court maybe altered or an official replaced plus making up a chart and running a tournament.

Now you know why I said earlier, have patience

with a tournament director. He has a big job on his hands, and as a rule never receives the credit he deserves. At practically every tournament you hear players complaining because they are standing around not playing when there are courts not being used. Maybe if you knew the reason why it would be easier for you to understand.

Let's say Jones and Jones are playing Smith and Smith on lines one and two. They have a fast match and it only lasts two games. While on lines three and four, Blue and Blue are playing White and White. They are more evenly matched and are having slower games. Because they are more evenly matched they have to play three games to decide a winner. The winners of the Jones and Smiths match have to play the winners of the Blues and Whites. So, if they're finished quicker they have to wait and this happens all the way down the chart. There is nothing the tournament director can do to speed them up, nor is there anything you can do but sweat it out. So don't blame the tournament director for a holdup in play, blame the players who are creating the holdup.

If you are not too sure of what I mean, get your tournament director or someone who knows how to help you set up a chart. By making your own chart you can see how it works. It is much simpler explaining with a chart than trying to explain it this way. You will see that the winners of lines one and two play the winners of lines three and four and those winners play the winners of lines five and six, seven and eight and so on down the chart. Therefore each set has to wait until a winner in the next group has been declared.

I have enjoyed compiling and writing this article and my only wish is that someone, somewhere will derive some benefit from it

to help promote and improve the wonderful game of shuffling. I know there will be some shufflers who will not agree wholly with my ideas for everyone has their own style. This is my style and I hope that some of my ideas will help to improve your style.

E. H. Tomlinson

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THE GREAT GAME OF
SHUFFLEBOARD

FRIENDSHIP
SOCIABILITY
FELLOWSHIP
AND
SKILL

