

... KNOWLEDGE OF COURTS

Frank Advice

By PETER DUNHILL (condensed and paraphrased)

It is very important to read and memorize the Rule governing shuffleboard—both National and State. All of them can be found in this Preview.

Coordination, being relaxed, and concentration are the three ingredients found in all good players.

If you are ahead in the score (constantly watch the score) keep the board clear of all discs; if you are behind, put your discs down on the board, and try to put your opponent in the kitchen.

When you have an unprotected good disc on the board, be very careful to put up a guard in front of it, not too close. Better have one good disc than two exposed ones.

Never overlook a place to hide your disc; nor a chance to use a combination shot; that is, knocking one disc in as a counter, with another disc.

Never try to make a double play on your last shot unless you are far behind.

Do not let many discs accumulate on the board; it is very dangerous, for your opponent may make a very large score with them, especially if he has the last shot.

Take your time; never hurriedly shoot. Look the court over closely before deciding what shot to make.

It is most important to keep your eyes on the exact spot where you want to shoot; your body obeys when the eyes tell the brain what is desired.

In golf, the words "follow through" is very important. The same applies to shuffleboard. Never stop your cue until your arm has propelled it as far as you can reach without strain.

Your power must come from your shoulder, not your arm or wrist, if you would shoot accurately.

Never squeeze the end of your cue. Hold it delicately and lightly, generally with three fingers and the thumb, with your little finger on the end of the cue.

When you are ahead, try to clear the board of all discs, especially when you have the last shot.

Never expose one of your discs to the kitchen; always hide it, even if only partially.

When your opponent's pilot block is put up on your side of the board, he is intending to hide his second block behind it. Either knock this "pilot" block off, or block the path where his second block will travel.

Your shot must always score if you are the last to shoot and you expect to win the game; so do not try anything fancy or attempt to put your opponent in the kitchen; or to touch any of his blocks resting on lines. Pick out an opening and score an eight or a seven.

Never try to put your opponent's pilot (or hide) block in the kitchen; if you are behind, go down on the board and try to put his second block in the kitchen.

The drift in a court is what wins or loses games. If you are shooting black in practice, see if the black discs drift to your opponent's side of the board; this proves that you can take a disc easier than if it drifted toward your side—so, take the color that drifts away from your side of the court.

Never look at any block on the board that you want to pass, for if you do look at it, you will hit it—a law of nature built into every person. Rather, look at the path which you wish your disc to travel, and it will obey you.

Shooting real hard is unnecessary and dangerous to the other players. Learn accuracy, and shooting hard will never enter your mind.

Try to vary your technique. Learn to first put up a pilot block to hide behind; then learn to put up a Tampa block.

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(one very close to the ten position on your side of the board); then hide behind it. Then, learn the combination technique—knocking one block in with another block, etc., etc.

If your opponents are about to win the game, they have the last shot, and they need an eight to win, go into the seven position, and if he knocks you off and makes a seven, he will still be one point short of winning.

Always look at the scoreboard before making a shot in every round.

The score at the moment decides how you should plan your next play. If you are ahead in the score, keep the board clear. If you are behind, play the board and try to put the opponent in the kitchen at every good opportunity until you catch up in score.

Keep the opponent on the defensive as much as possible.

Hide a scoring disc at every opportunity, whether the guarding disc is yours or the opponents.

When you have an unprotected scoring disc on the board, place a guarding disc in front of it, usually five to six feet away.

Plan to prevent the opponent from scoring two discs in any round.

When the score is not critical and you are a little behind with the last shot, it is sometimes good tactics to clear the board with the first two discs. Then use your third disc to score a high seven or deep eight in the open as kitchen "bait." This may give you an opportunity with your last shot to kitchen the opponent and make a plus score of your own for a gain of 17 to 18 points.

It is most important for partners to play the same type of game against the opponents when you are ahead, and the same type of play when you are behind. When ahead in score, both partners should consistently keep the board clear and avoid situations for kitchen play by the opponents. When substantially behind, both partners must consistently play to put the opponents in the kitchen until the score is even. It is ridiculous for either partner when behind in score, such as 6 to 66, to continue with the usual routine of trying to make a simple score, when there is desperate need to put the opponent in the kitchen to SAVE the game.

Don't try a double on your last shot (depending on score).

Don't let a lot of discs accumulate on the board for large scores, neither yours nor the opponent.

Don't play sloppy and get mad at yourself because you miss a shot; mostly careless shooting gets you in trouble. One careless shot may lose you the game. Take your time.

Don't be in a hurry to shoot. Be sure you are aiming where you want your disc to go. Follow through with your stroke, reaching way out full arms length. Relax your wrist and arm.

Don't grab your cue as though 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 get precision.

Don't hold your cue too tightly. That will tense your muscles in your arm and spoil the coordination and accuracy. Always stand facing the direction you want your disc to travel.

Don't be in too much of a hurry. Always look at the scoreboard before you decide what to do on your next shot. The game is played from the scoreboard.

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.

Don't expose a disc to a kitchen shot.

Don't play kitchen unless you are two or three numbers behind in the score.

Don't forget the other fellow can put you in the kitchen too.

Don't leave your opponent's hide block on the board. Knock it off the board or block his chance to go in for the hide.

Don't shoot until you look around the board to see if you have a good place to hide your disc.

Don't miss an opportunity to hide a disc.