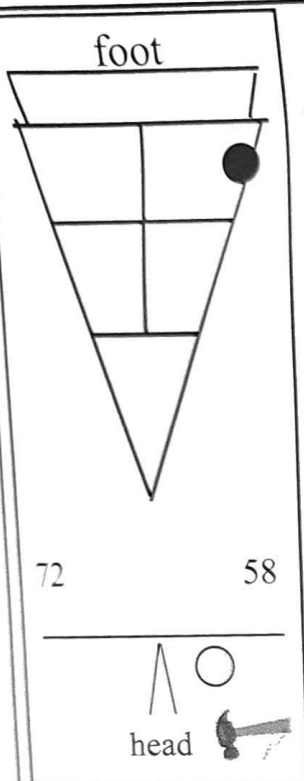


WHO SHOOTS THE TEN?



Here's the situation. The score is 58 to 72 in favor of black. Play is at the head of the court and yellow has the hammer. It's the third game in a match and the board is running true and well,

Play has progressed to tie hammer. The board is clear except for a black disc in the 7/outside line which was left from black's last clearing shot. All this is in the diagram.

What is yellow's correct shot choice? Shoot for a ten to move the score to 68, a seven for game and match? Or try for an eight, a surer shot but a score that would force partner to shoot a ten to win?

Those who argue for a try for the ten usually point out that the ten is open and the opportunity to get one should be utilized. Yellow can leave it up to her partner to make the ten, the ten may not be open when her partner shoots her hammer. This is a good point.

Those who argue for a try for an eight say that the likelihood of scoring an eight is much higher than for scoring a ten. They say to make the sure score. They further add that this gives the partner a chance to try for two scores and if she gets these the ten shot isn't necessary. This is a good argument.

Now for anyone who suggested a third alternative, trying to kitchen the black disc, you're out of the game. that's a no-no, a very bad choice. A poor shot will end the game and a good shot won't save it.

My choice and that of many experts is to try for the eight. Don't shoot the ten. An eight will move the score to 66 to 72. Now the partner has a chance to hide a score or maybe the opponent will out-and-out miss one on a clearing shot. Thus the partner has a chance to try for two scores, otherwise she can still try for the ten.

Now a key point. If the ten is blocked at the foot and the partner can't try for a ten, she can still make an eight. That will make the score 74-72 and even though black has the next two hammers, the two point lead gives yellow a good chance. Here again, a hide or a stolen score of some sort by yellow will have black over a barrel.

So I hope we'll all agree that the situation in the diagram calls for a try for an eight. (I heard someone say "Yes, but what if she misses the eight?" My answer is that if she can't make an eight, she sure can't make a ten.)

The second question involves the other end of the board, the foot, Say yellow does make her eight and the score goes to 66 to 72, From the foot yellow doesn't get a hide (can't make two scores) and faces an open board on her hammer. Should she shoot a ten or should she try for an eight?

I usually say, shoot the shot you're comfortable with. Shoot the one you think you can make on that day on that court, Then pray as your shot goes down the court.

(with permission from Larry Faris)