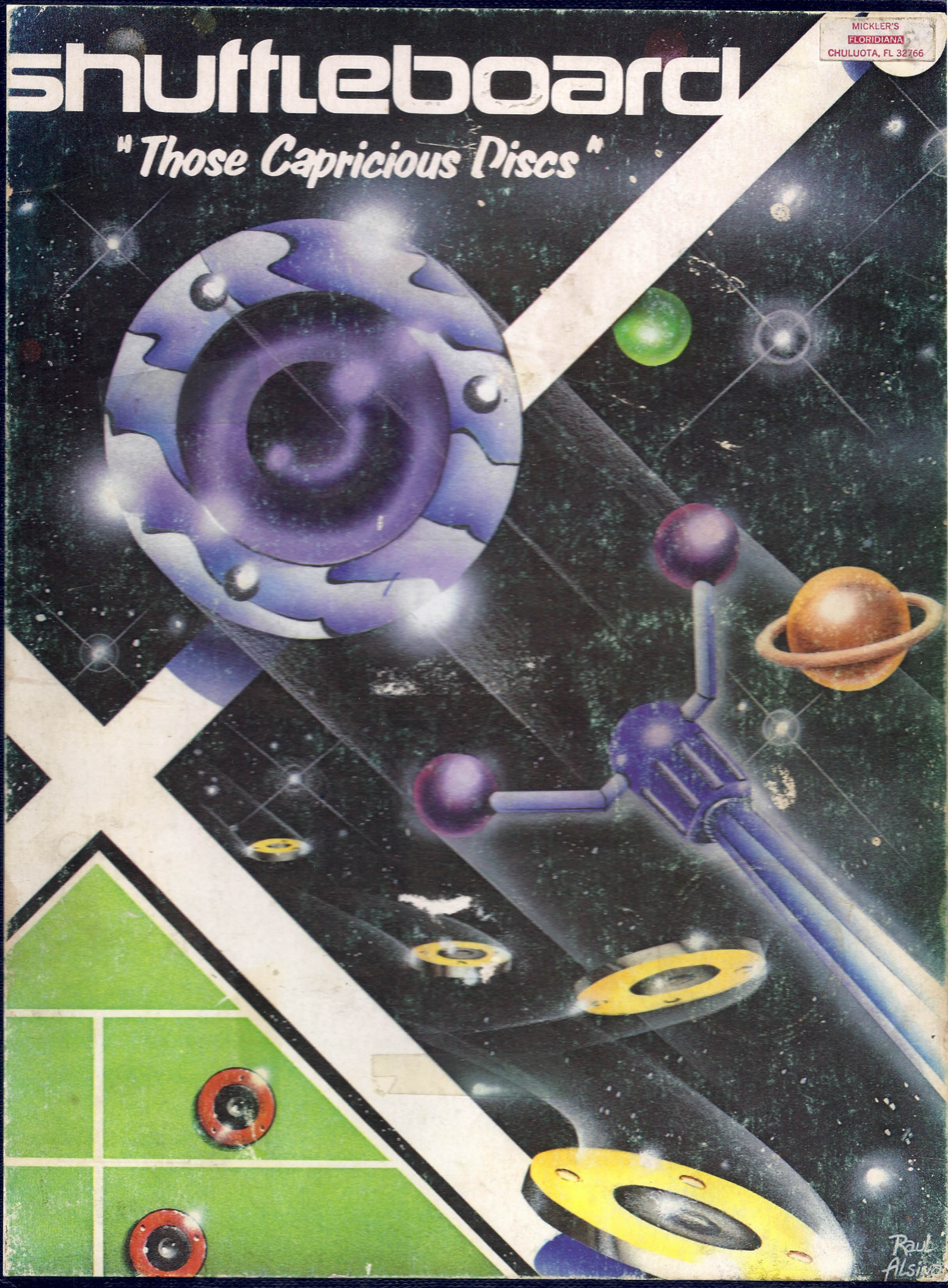
shuffleboard

"Those Capricious Discs"



The Great Outdoors
BOOK OF

shuffleboard

"Those Capricious Discs"

by

Floyd Swem

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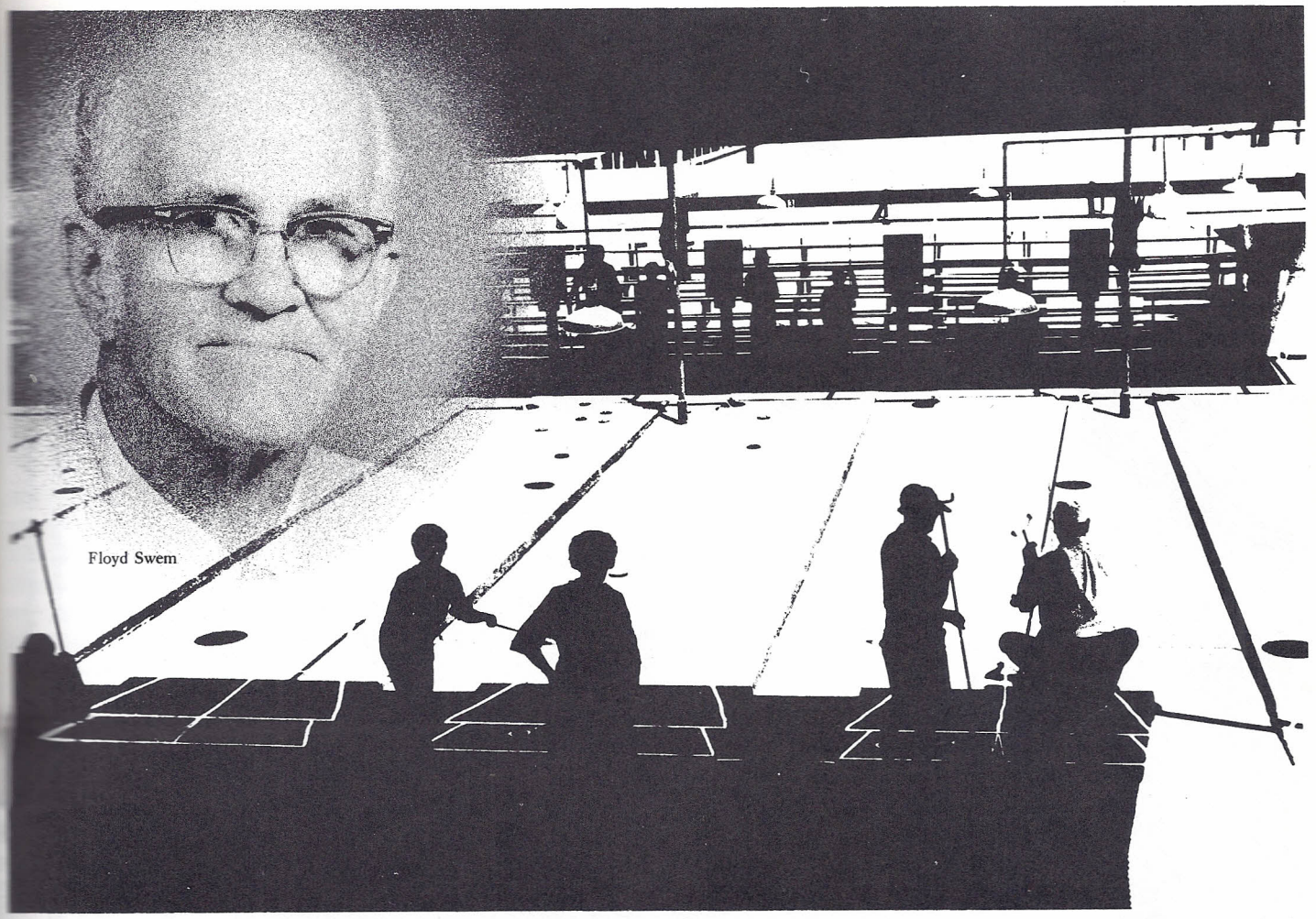


Floyd Swem

Born in 1907 in Aston, Michigan, and hailing from Mecosta County, Floyd Swem moved to Florida in the fall of 1974. Prior to his arrival on the St. Petersburg Shuffleboard Scene, Floyd taught physics and math in Evart, Michigan. This training brings a clarity to this book rarely found in other writings.

An interest in shuffling led Floyd to join the Lealman Shuffleboard Club (in St. Pete). First he became involved in team play, then competition play and finally he was captaining the Lealman Friendship Team. He won several trophies while trying to sharpen his game but was puzzled that there were practically no books in the local library on the finer points of the game. Since he needed a copy of such a book himself, he decided to write the book so others interested in the sport would have a more complete reference.

Floyd was helped greatly by the writings of the late Colonel P.C. Bullard, a St. Petersburg Times columnist. Bullard's columns were quietly gathering dust in the periodical room of the St. Pete Public Library. These columns became a great source of information and inspiration for this book. This information, coupled with Floyd's practical and reading whatever shuffleboard books were available, led to two years writing and research before a manuscript was delivered to the Great Outdoors Publishing Co.

The future of shuffleboard looks promising. In Florida alone, 5,000 new members a year are added to the rolls of shuffleboard clubs. Northern States are forming clubs for indoor play the year 'round. Ohio has one large club that rivals Florida's largest. The Japanese have discovered shuffleboard and are building elaborate courts atop Tokyo apartment complexes. It is no longer a sport for sunbelt retirees but truly an international sport.

Shuffleboard is a sport for everyone, young or old, it requires no great physical strength yet it is a game of skill and strategy. It is played in a spirit of fellowship that lies somewhere between the excitement found in an amateur volleyball game and the intense concentration and comraderie found among a golfing foursome. It is as sociable as bridge, requires a chess player's attention to strategy and a knowledge of Newton's laws of motion can be helpful when trying to understand those capricious discs.

Charles F Allyn

Shuffleboard came to the United States in 1913 at Daytona Beach, Florida where it was played on hard packed sand with wooden discs. The next courts—concrete ones—were built in 1923 in St. Petersburg, Florida. Shown above, these courts have been in constant use ever

Introduction

Few people outside the retirement communities of the United States have a first-hand knowledge of shuffleboard, and, consequently, there are several general misconceptions about the game.

To the uninitiated the game appears to be simply a matter of pushing some discs out upon a scoring diagram and counting the scores. But if shuffleboard consisted of no more strategy than a game of darts, it would never have received the enthusiastic support that it has enjoyed throughout the years.

Another mistaken notion is that shuffleboard is a game for only the retired group. Though it is an ideal recreation for many retired people, it is a game of strategy and skill that should appeal to anyone. It is also an aggressive game, and that should appeal to younger people. Because there is no premium on extraordinary strength and endurance, it is a game that all sizes and ages can enjoy together. And finally, it is a game in which two or many can participate and enjoy at the same time. It is, indeed, a game for everyone.

It is unfortunate that the game has become so closely associated in the public mind with retirement centers, as this attitude has caused the game to receive less than its deserved attention. The reaction of almost every person who discovers this game is "What a shame I didn't learn about it years ago!"

While a game of shuffleboard with several friends is a pleasant way to spend a few hours, much of the pure excitement of the game comes from league play. In the retirement communities there are highly organized groups who play at least once a week with outside teams, while during the remainder of the week, their schedules call for various kinds of local games. At the end of the shuffling season each spring, most of the local leagues sponsor a series of exciting tournaments; and on the district, state, and national levels, tournaments are played off at intervals throughout the year.

No doubt, somewhat the same kind of activity could be pursued in established communities, where groups in several near-by villages, or several groups within a city could organize shuffleboard clubs, which could then form a league. The chief requirement for success in a venture of this kind would be a few enthusiastic proponents who have a basic knowledge of the game. And a committee would be needed—a committee comprised of interested persons who are willing to keep the courts in playing condition, to recruit new players, and to help the players develop the skills that are needed to play the game. The more players there are, the more fun there will be; also, the more players, the greater is the need for organization.

One reason that many of the shuffleboard courts that have been constructed in public parks have been a disappointment is that the courts have not been properly maintained; another reason is that the well-meaning people who initiated the projects often lacked a real understanding of the game.

The first shuffleboard club in America was organized at St. Petersburg, Florida in 1924. League and tournament shuffleboard, as developed since that date in various sections of the United States, has produced a game of precision and skill, and something unique in sports. In one sense, the game has graduated from the simple fun and entertainment category and has entered a phase of serious competition.

The change has been good for everyone involved. While two, three, or four players can still engage in their fun games and laugh at the crazy things those capricious discs do, the field of competitive sports that has been opened to the shuffleboard set has brought a new dimension to the game.

Shuffleboard, today, is played under a variety of conditions. It is played indoors in soundproofed halls on terrazzo courts almost as fast

Shuffleboard came to the United States in 1913 at Daytona Beach, Florida where it was played on hard packed sand with wooden discs. The next courts—concrete ones—were built in 1923 in St. Petersburg, Florida. Shown above, these courts have been in constant use ever

as light. (Slight exaggeration.) It is played outdoors on well-maintained courts with waxed or beaded surfaces, which are also fast. It is played on well-maintained courts that drift and challenge a player's ingenuity and patience. It is also played on slow, poorly-maintained courts, which causes the game to become more work than play.

The player who understands the nature of the game realizes that, though his plays are affected by an uncertain amount of chance, a thorough understanding of the game will reduce substantially the adverse effects. A serious player, therefore, will grasp at any principle that will give him even a slight edge over his opponent. But the beginning player is seldom aware of the many fine points that the experienced players work into their games. The reasoning behind many of the plays is subtle and is not immediately discernible to a newcomer. Indeed, one might play the game for years without discovering the excellent thinking that underlies the strategies and the techniques. This happens all the time.

On the following pages the subject of shuffleboard is presented with the needs of the beginning player in mind, but this, by no means, suggests that the treatment of the material therein is superficial. Every person who becomes interested in the game will want to know the principles that the advanced players use. This work provides that information, and to make the work worth the reading, it had to be comprehensive. It is hoped that the many details of the game have been presented with sufficient clarity to hold the reader's interest.

CHAPTER I
MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THE GAME

The materials needed in this game are few: A court, a set of discs, a cue, and a scoreboard are the major items; but an eraser and some chalk will be helpful.

THE COURT

The game of shuffleboard is played on a concrete slab, 6 feet wide and 52 feet long. The actual playing area is 39 feet long, which is clearly marked off on the slab as shown in Figure 1. The additional length is divided into standing room for the players, which is 6 feet 6 inches in length at each end of the playing area. Beyond the standing area, at each end of the court, the slab should extend another 4 feet for the players' benches.

When two or more courts are constructed side by side, they are separated by a concrete alley, 2 feet wide. The alleys slope from each end of the court to a water drain at the center. Back of the baseline at each end of the court, the surface of the alleys are level with the court surface.

These characteristics of the alleys are important to the enjoyment of the game. The depressed surface of the alleys along the scoring areas stops the fast moving discs as they leave the courts, so that they do not disrupt a game on the adjacent courts. The surface-level ends of the alleys facilitate the sliding of the discs into their starting position with the rubber-tipped end of the cue, without the need of the players stooping to touch them with their hands. Back of the baselines, the alleys are regarded as legal standing room for the players of either adjacent court while they are making a shot.

The Shufflegram. In this work the scoring diagram will be designated as the shufflegram. This word, which is a contraction of the expression shuffleboard diagram, has been coined by the author. Since shuffleboard has undoubtedly

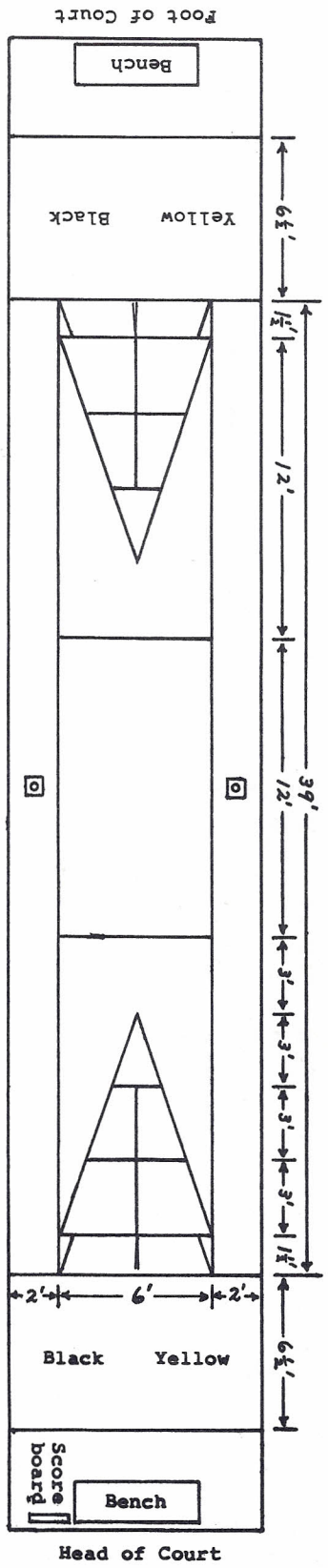


Figure 1

come of age, it is felt that the scoring diagram should bear the dignity of a name. The parts of the shufflegram are usually described as follows (Figure 2):

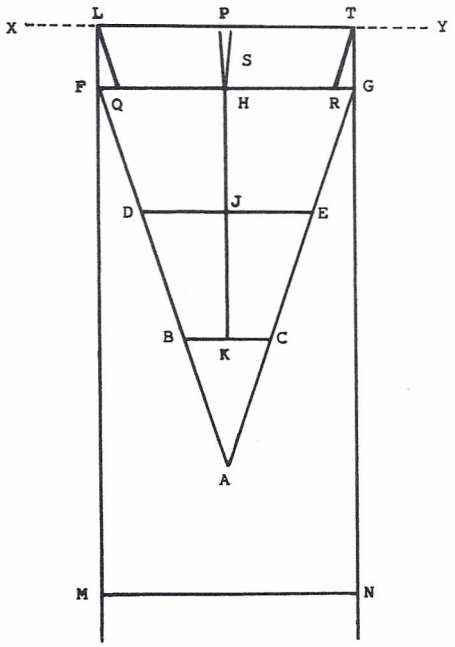


Figure 2

1. Deadline, MN
2. Apex, or point, A
3. 8/10 line, BC
4. 7/8 line, DE
5. K/7 line, FG
6. Baseline, LT
7. Centerline, KH
8. Separation triangle, 5
9. Sidelines, AF and AG
10. Corner 7, inside of the angles F and G.
11. Edges of the court, LM and TN
12. Baseline extensions, XL and TY (Imaginary lines across the alleys.)

The Shufflegram Areas. Figure 3 shows the shufflegram areas. The official names are 10-point area, 8-point area, 7-point area, and 10-off area. The 10-off area is commonly known as the kitchen. The numbers are never marked on a shuffleboard court.

To score, a disc must lie wholly within a scoring area and not touch a line. When judging a disc, the referee stands directly above the disc and looks straight down to avoid an error of parallax; that is, looking under the rounded edge of the disc. The best position to take when *judging a close disc is to stand with both eyes* over the line.

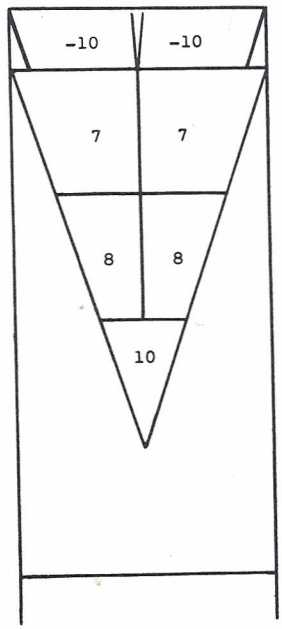


Figure 3

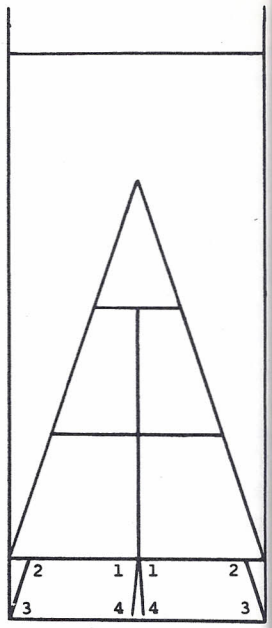


Figure 4

The referee judges the disc as scoring if he can see any amount of green court surface, however thin, between the white line and the disc. If there is no green, the disc is nonscoring.

Starting Area. Starting area and kitchen are two names for the same part of the shufflegram. When discs are shot from either end of the court, they are started in the 10-off area, or kitchen. The separation triangle, which is the division between the two opponents' starting areas, is not a part of the kitchen. A scoring disc in the kitchen gets 10 points off even when it is lying on the separation triangle. Notice that the separation triangle is a wedge-shaped figure with no base.

The discs may be placed in any arrangement in their respective starting areas as long as they do not touch any boundary line, including the separation triangle. The discs may be shot from any position within their own starting area although the starting of a shot from the correct position is often important to the success of the shot. The corners of the starting areas are numbered in this work as shown in Figure 4. These corners will be designated hereafter as position 1, position 2, and so forth.

Most shots are made from position 1; a few are made from position 2. Positions 3 and 4 are for special situations. A player uses position 3 *in preference to position 2 when he needs* the width of the entire starting area to shoot

close to another disc to strike a target beyond, or to hide a score. This tiny advantage is sometimes important. Sometimes, too, when the player seems to have a temporary problem of overshooting the aiming point, he may start a few shots from the back line, positions 3 or 4, to minimize the risk of his shooting his cue disc into the kitchen. Usually, however, shots that are made for the same purpose are started from the same position.

Court Construction. Before leaving the subject of the court, a few words of advice may be appropriate. The foregoing description of a shuffleboard court and the accompanying drawing (Figure 1), which are far from complete, have not been presented here as an aid for court construction. The reader is cautioned, at this point, against attempting the construction of a private court without detailed plans, because anything short of excellence would be almost worthless. Too many nonregulation courts have already been built that have been a disappointment to the owners. The National Shuffleboard Association has standardized the shuffleboard court dimensions and has prepared a set of detailed drawings that is available to any would-be court builder.

However, court construction is not a formidable job even for the amateur. Any workman with a good knowledge of cement work can build a court, but the builder should understand that correct dimensions, a level surface, and a good surface texture are all very important to the enjoyment of the game, while other details are important to the permanency of the structure.

A SET OF DISCS

The simplest description of the discs is found in the rules of the National Shuffleboard Association: "Discs shall be made of composition not less than 9/16 of an inch and not more than 1 inch in thickness, 6 inches in diameter, and not less than 11-1/2 ounces in weight. New discs shall weigh 15 ounces. Four discs shall be colored red, four colored black. These eight discs comprise a set. (Other colored combinations may be used, as white or yellow, in place of red.)"

Few courts today use red discs. Yellow is much preferred anytime that the lighting conditions are not the best. Hereafter, throughout the following chapters, the colors will be designated as yellow and black.

THE CUE

The national rules require nothing of the cue other than: "The cue shall not have an overall length of more than 6 feet 3 inches. No metal parts on the cue shall touch playing surface of court."

Originally, cues were simply forked sticks of rather crude design and made of wood, a fast-wearing material. Their use in a tournament today would still be legal, though hardly desirable.

Cues are of two basic designs: the rider, which is rather uncommon today, and the glider. Their differences are easily recognized. The forks of the rider cue are connected by a crosspiece that rests atop the disc. The cue does not touch the court; hence, the name rider. The forks of the glider cue straddle the disc and glide along on the surface of the court.

One cue cannot be recommended in preference to the other since the players who own each of them seem to be happy with their choice. And since it seems that most players do have a definite preference for one kind or the other, the only advice that can be given to the beginning player is to try out both kinds before buying an expensive cue.

Some of the characteristics of a good cue are: Straight shaft, light weight, not too small at the handle end, and low-friction glides. Low-friction, pivot-action glides slide more smoothly and do not produce an irritating sound on the concrete. In addition to the qualities listed above, one might add that, for comfort alone, the fiberglass shaft can be highly recommended. League games are sometimes played when the weather is cold enough to make a metal shaft feel uncomfortable in the hand. Fiberglass actually seems warm on a chilly day.

Everyone seems to prefer a light-weight cue; that is, until he attempts to play a game on a windy day. Snap-on weights can be obtained from shuffleboard supply stores that will stabilize the cue to some extent in a wind. Although the weights are quite common, few people seem to be using them. The problem seems to be that a player has to readjust to the court after snapping the weight on his cue.

One end of the cue shaft is rubber tipped, and discs should always be moved around and arranged with that end of the cue. The head, or working end, of the cue should be off the court when it is not performing its basic duty in a game because high-speed discs can damage the alignment of the cue head.

THE SCOREBOARD

At one end of the court, designated as the head, stands the scoreboard beside the players' bench where one of the players in a friendly game can tend the scorekeeping. Three designs of the scoreboard are in common use.

The traditional board (Figure 5) is a grid, marked off on a chalkboard to accommodate four columns of numerals, usually with eight or ten numerals in a column. The squares along the top are colored alternately yellow and black, showing that the scores of the players of the yellow and black discs are to be recorded in the columns as indicated. And along one side of the board, from top to bottom, the squares are colored alternately yellow and black, showing which player, Yellow or Black, has the first shot in each half round.

Another kind of board, which is smaller than the traditional board and which has no color indicator, looks like an ordinary chalkboard divided into halves by a horizontal line. When Yellow is out (plays first), the scores are posted in the upper half of the scoreboard; when Black is out, the lower half. The scores are erased as the space is needed for new scores. Since there are only a few scores on this board at one time, the numerals can be made large and will be clearly visible from a distance. This scoreboard is sometimes used in tournaments.

The universal scoreboard, designed by George Merz, has been adopted by the National Shuffleboard Association as the official national scoreboard. The outstanding feature of this scoreboard is the rotating color indicator. The four adjustable positions of the color indicator are adequate to adapt the scoreboard to all the variations in shuffleboard play. They are:

Position 1. Doubles, first game. Yellow out first at each end of the court.

Position 2. Doubles, second game. Black out first at each end of the court.

Position 3. Walking singles, first game. Yellow out first at the head of the court: Black out at the foot.

Position 4. Walking singles, second game. Black out first at the head of the court; Yellow out at the foot.

A nonwalking singles game is recorded on this board by posting the scores of the players at the head of the court in the two left-hand columns and the scores of the players at the foot of the court in the two right-hand columns.

The Importance of the Scoreboard. The scoreboard gives the players and the spectators three bits of information about the game in progress: 1. The score of each player at the moment. 2. Which player has the first shot in the half round or frame being played. 3. The number of the frame being played. (If the game is a point game, the number of the round is not important.)

Simple as this information seems to be, it is of the greatest importance. Experienced players analyze the postings on the scoreboard before every shot. Their strategy and choice of shot is determined by their analysis of this data.

The success of many games depends upon the selection of the correct shot. The beginning player should accept this principle although he will not fully comprehend it until he has had some experience with the game. The beginner should strive to improve the quality of his scoreboard analysis in order to make the choice of the correct shot a habit. This means that even in a casual, friendly game one should strive always to make the correct plays. Therefore, throughout the following chapters, whenever the merits of a play are discussed, the importance of first considering the score will be emphasized.

CHAPTER II
A VARIETY OF GAMES AND HOW THE SCORES ARE POSTED

The rules of the National Shuffleboard Association recognize two kinds of games classified as to the method of winning. They are known as the point game and the frame game.

THE POINT GAME

In this game there is a scoring level, set prior to the start of the game, that is called game point. The first player, or partners, to attain game point at the end of a half round is the winner. Officially, the games can be played with a game point of 50, 75, or 100 points.

When game point has been reached by one of the players before all eight discs have been shot, the play must continue until all of the discs have been shot in that half round. If both players happen to score at game point or above at the end of a half round, the player with the higher score is the winner even though both players' scores exceed the game point.

A shuffleboard game never ends in a draw. The tied score must be played off. "If a tie game results at game point or over, play is continued in regular rotation of play until one full round in singles or two full rounds in doubles are completed. At that time the side with the higher score wins, even if it has less than 75 points or the number of points specified as game point. If the score is tied again, play continues as above outlined."[1] This arrangement gives each player an equal number of hammers (last shots) in the play off.

Although it is not specifically stated in the national rules, this rule on drawn games is applied by general usage to frame games also.

THE FRAME GAME

The national rules authorize games of 8, 12, or 16 frames; but the rules do not offer a definition of the word frame. Although no one seems to have any difficulty determining when a frame game comes to an end, there are, nevertheless, diverse ideas as to the meaning of frame. The author of this work has attempted to formulate a definition of frame from the context of this word in shuffleboard literature, and believes that the following discussion is logical and in agreement with the use of the term as it is applied to the game in general.

In this work, the word frame will be used with two meanings: 1. One of the squares on the scoreboard in which a score is written will be designated as a frame. This is in agreement also with the use of the word in other sports as, for instance, in bowling. 2. It follows, then, that an 8-frame game must be a game in which each player will have eight entries on the scoreboard. At the end of an 8-frame singles game, there will be sixteen scores on the scoreboard; at the end of an 8-frame doubles game, there will be thirty-two scores on the scoreboard. Hence, the definition: A frame is that portion of a game of shuffleboard, begun at the head of the court, that gives each player one entry on the scoreboard. In other words, a frame is that part of a game in which each player has shot four discs.

OTHER FORMS OF THE GAME

Four different games, classified as to the number of players, are regularly played. They are:

1. Doubles: Four players in the game and four players on the court;
2. Nonwalking singles: Two players in the game and four players on the court;
3. Walking singles: Two players in the game and two players on the court;
4. Round robin: Three players in the game and three players on the court.

The first three of these games can be played either as a point game or a frame game; round robin is a point game. Games 1 and 3 are the only ones that are recognized in the national shuffleboard rules.

SCORING A DOUBLES GAME

In a doubles game there are four players on the court, two opponents at each end. The part-

1 Rule E-4, National Shuffleboard Association.

ners play on the same side of the court at opposite ends and shoot the same discs back and forth.

In the first half round of play, Yellow and Black at the head of the court shoot alternately four discs each. Yellow shoots first. Assume their scores to be Yellow 0 and Black 8. Their scores are posted at the top of the first two columns. Notice these details in Figure 5:

	Y	B	Y	B
Y	0	8	7	16
B	14	24	22	24
Y				
B				
Y				
B				
Y				
B				

Figure 5

	Y	B	Y	B
Y	0	8	7	8
B	7	16	15	8
Y				
B				
Y				
B				
Y				
B				

Figure 6

1. The two yellow areas at the top of the scoreboard indicate that the scores of the players of the yellow discs will be posted in those columns.

2. The yellow areas at the left of the alternate rows of frames indicate that the players of the yellow discs will shoot first when playing those frames.

3. The black areas at the top and the left of the scoreboard give similar information about the players of the black discs.

Now at the foot of the court, Yellow and Black will play the next half round, also shooting alternately four discs each. Yellow shoots first at the foot also in the first round of play. Their scores, Yellow 7 and Black 8, are added to their partners' scores and the sums, 7 and 16, are posted in their respective columns as shown.

Since each player has scored once up to this point, it is correct to say, if this is a frame game, that one frame has been played. If this is a point game, it is correct to say at this time that one round has been played.

Now the players at the head will begin the second frame or round. Notice that the second row of frames on the scoreboard is beside a black area; therefore, Black plays first this time at both the head and the foot.

Assume that the scores at the head of the court are Yellow 7 and Black 8. These scores will be added to the total scores for the game; and the sums, 14 and 24, will be posted in the first two frames of the second row as shown. The scoreboard also shows that the partners at the foot of the court scored Yellow 8 and Black 0, giving a total of 22 to 24 at the end of the second round of play. The scoring of the game continues in this manner.

SCORING A NONWALKING SINGLES GAME

The nonwalking singles game consists of two different singles games on one court. One of these games is played at the head; the other, simultaneously, at the foot. This is the only form of shuffleboard in which a game can start at the foot of the court. This game is not recognized in the national rules; but, because it affords an efficient use of court space, it is a very popular form of the game, especially in league play. League tournaments for both men and women are often held in which nonwalking singles games are played. In the nonwalking singles, all the applicable rules for doubles as well as singles are enforced.

Since there are four players on the court when nonwalking singles are being played, a spectator cannot distinguish these games from a game of doubles, unless he follows the postings on the scoreboard. The sequence of plays and the scores might be exactly the same in two nonwalking singles games as those in the doubles game that was discussed above, and in these particular games we shall assume that they are the same. Compare figures 5 and 6. The difference is that in the nonwalking singles games the players at each end of the court are playing independently of each other, and their scores are not added together. Although each player's scores are kept in the same set of frames on the scoreboard as before, each score is added to the score directly above rather than to the partner's score.

There is a difference, too, in the numbering of frames and rounds. The scoreboard shown in Figure 5 shows two frames or two rounds of play in a doubles game. In Figure 6 the scoreboard shows two frames or one round of play for each of the singles games. If this seems confusing, compare with the following game, walking singles.

SCORING A WALKING SINGLES GAME

We shall use Figure 6 to illustrate the scoring in this kind of game also. In this game only two players are on the court; consequently, there are only two columns of scores. The scores will be posted in the two left-hand columns.

The players shoot their first frame or half round from the head of the court, Yellow shooting first. The score is Yellow 0, Black 8, as shown. Then the players walk to the foot of the court and shoot the discs back, Black shooting first. Assume that their scores are Yellow 7 and Black 8. These scores are added to the previous scores, and the sums are posted as Yellow 7, Black 16. And now, two frames or one round has been played, depending on whether it has been a frame game or a point game.

This may clear up any confusion that may seem to exist in the numbering of the rounds of a nonwalking singles game. One simply remembers that, as far as the scoreboard is concerned, the nonwalking singles game is identical to the walking singles game.

THE ROUND ROBIN GAME

Round robin (not to be confused with a form of tournament by the same name) is an interesting fun game for three players. This game is not so competitive as the doubles or singles games, but it gives the odd player a chance to participate when a foursome is not available. The scores are kept individually in three columns with the player's initials at the head of each column. It is a point game, with game point usually set at 75.

The game begins with two players at the head and one at the foot of the court. Yellow always plays first at both ends of the court. After eight discs have been shot from the head of the court, Black posts the scores while Yellow walks to the foot where he will shoot the yellow discs again against the player at the foot.

After eight discs have been shot from the foot of the court, the lone player at the head posts the scores while Black walks to the head of the court where he will shoot the black discs again. The players continue to change positions in a counterclockwise direction until the score of one of the players reaches game point.

CHAPTER III
THE TECHNIQUE OF SHOOTING A DISC

In connection with this chapter the reader may refer to Chapter XV for some suggestions on practicing the principles discussed herein.

The most important habit to be cultivated in the game of shuffleboard is correct delivery; that is, the act of shooting a disc. A newcomer to the game is seldom aware of the importance of a good delivery, and probably he would not give it a thought if his attention were not turned toward it. But we know that a person's achievement in many activities can be limited by poor habits that he acquires early in his training. In this respect, shuffleboard is no exception.

It is doubtful whether anyone could produce a complete analysis of a good delivery that would be acceptable to every experienced player. Styles of delivery are quite individualistic. If one were to ask a randomly chosen player to explain the correct way to shoot a disc, the answer very likely would be a description of the player's own delivery offered as the perfect model. For this reason the following discussion on correct delivery is not presented here as the only way, but only as a logical and acceptable way, a way for beginning players to consider and for others to compare with their own style.

One would not expect an experienced player to change his delivery unless he is having serious problems with it. The changing of one's delivery, like the changing of any other entrenched habit, can create new problems in times of stress. Often, when the player finds himself in a tense situation in a game, he will unconsciously forsake his newly acquired style of delivery and will revert to his earlier one. The result is usually unfortunate because the player, being comfortable with either form, seldom realizes that he has changed. Because of this quirk in human nature, it is important that a new player adopt a sound technique at the beginning and practice until it becomes a thoroughly fixed habit.

THE DELIVERY

The following discussion is related to the right-handed player. A left-handed player should be able to adapt these principles to his own style of play.

Precision shooting involves five things: Posture, mental preparation for the shot, aim, body movement, and arm movement.

Posture. A delivery of two steps requires that the player stand with feet together, back bent, and eyes in line with the cue shaft. The right hand, which is holding the cue, will be from eight to twelve inches in front of the right knee. The left hand will be where it is most comfortable, perhaps on the left leg just above the knee, or hanging freely at the player's side; but, for reasons which are quite obvious, the player should not shoot his discs with his left hand in the pocket of his slacks or his jacket.

The cue is held with a light grip between the thumb and the first two fingers, with the third finger curled behind the rubber cue tip. Evidence of the very light grip on the cue is seen when even the best players occasionally drop their cue on the court after making a shot.

The disc should be positioned and the cue placed snugly against the disc. Then the player's eyes will leave the cue and become fixed on the target until the disc leaves the cue.

Mental Preparation. The key words describing mental preparation are relaxation and concentration. This formula may seem contradictory, but somehow it must be worked out because it is essential. One must approach the shooting of a disc in a relaxed manner, even though the winning of the game depends on that single shot. One must be able, mentally, to block out the spectators along the sidelines. One must forget the anxiety that comes from making a

poor shot in the previous round and losing the good lead he had a moment before. One must not allow himself to become the least bit irritated by the poor judgment of his partner at the opposite end of the court. Then, after all of this has been accomplished, one must concentrate. What a person is thinking about while he aims will, indeed, affect the shot.

Aim. It is not enough to look in the general direction toward which one intends to shoot, nor simply to look in a general way at the target. When placing a guard or shooting for a score, one must determine the exact spot on the court on which he wants his disc to stop, look directly at that spot, and concentrate on the length of the shot as well as the direction. When shooting at a disc, one must determine the exact spot, center, right edge, left edge, one inch from the edge, and so forth, toward which he wants the center of his cue disc to go.

Body Movement. The shot begins with a short step forward with the right foot. Although many players prefer to take one short step followed by a long one, the use of two short steps seems to have advantages. With two short steps the body can come virtually to a stop, and the delivery can be made chiefly with arm movement. When the arm alone is used to make the shot, there are fewer muscles to control, and the demands of coordination are less than when the body and the arm are working together. Since the precision adjustment must be made by arm muscles whichever way it is done, it should be easier for the arm muscles to adjust to the requirements of the shot when the variable of body motion is excluded. The key words describing the action in these two steps are balance and smoothness.

Arm Movement. Other body movements are performed just as smoothly. As the player takes his two steps, his cue does not move ahead. The moment his left foot is on the court and body movement has virtually stopped, he begins to move his right arm forward. There must be no pause in the shift from body movement to arm movement. The motion is continuous as the swing of the arm follows the second step so closely and smoothly that the body helps to give force to the shot. When a fast shot is needed, the disc is sent down the court with a zip; when a slow shot is used, the disc is placed with all the smoothness and the precision that the player can command. In either shot the upper part of the body, the shoulders, will not be moving ahead noticeably as the arm swings forward.

The hand that holds the cue swings directly below the shoulder, close to the body, like a pendulum. The player's eyes are fixed on the target point toward which he has been looking since the short moment of concentration. At the end of the shot, the hand follows through and continues to rise after the disc has left the cue, which remains in contact with the court. If the cue rises from the court at the end of a slow shot, the player's grip on the cue has been too tight; but after a fast shot, the momentum of the cue may sometimes cause it to rise from the court.

SOME COMMON PROBLEMS WITH DELIVERY

So many words are required to present a complete analysis of the delivery sequence that a beginning player may feel that the foregoing discussion is unduly complicated and drawn out. This criticism is not valid, however. The entire delivery sequence should be practiced until it becomes habitual, and despite the importance of concentration, the beginner should learn to do it quickly and easily because prolonged concentration seems to diminish accuracy.

Shufflers have many problems with their delivery, and each one can be analyzed in the light of the principles discussed above. The following problems are the most common ones.

Poor Aiming Technique. Notice sometime the delivery of the players at the opposite end of the court. Occasionally, one sees a player preparing to shoot, and no one at the other end of the court is sure of what he intends to shoot at. Although these players seem to get their discs approximately where they want them, their shooting would surely improve if they would begin their shots with their eyes over the cue.

If a player is conscious of a sideways movement at the end of his delivery and still he has made a good shot, the movement was probably a correction of poor aim. This might indicate that the player has a problem with his aiming, or it could mean trouble as described in the next paragraph.

Throwing Out the Arm. Forgetting the pendulum motion and raising the elbow away from the body as one shoots causes more trouble than any other problem. A player who fails to

notice this fault in his delivery may make mediocre shots day after day never realizing his potential ability. One should keep the pendulum in mind with every shot. Let the arm swing under the shoulder with the hand so close to the body that it brushes lightly against the clothing. A technique that is certain to help a player with this problem is to stoop and shoot with the cue close to the court. To do this, a player must use the pendulum delivery. Several shots made in this manner may be all that will be necessary to bring the player back into correct form.

Follow Through. Some players, after performing the shot smoothly right up to the end, will give their cue a final jerk, sometimes a complete circular twist. Observe, too, that these players are often shooting inaccurately.

The Fast Shot. Sometimes players, finding themselves in a situation where a fast shot is needed, forget to use the same delivery they have been using all along in their regular play. The result is usually a poor shot. Fast shots are noted for being less accurate than slow shots, but the unreliable nature of a fast shot can be minimized by exercising the usual care in the delivery. Really, a fast shot should not be less reliable, since the player needs to concentrate on only one thing, direction. Distance is not a consideration when one makes a fast shot.

Looking at the Cue. Occasionally one sees a player looking at his cue again just before he shoots. He does not realize that he does this, but he does it every time he shoots. This distracting habit should be avoided. While the player is looking at his cue, he is neither aiming nor concentrating.

Changing One's Mind. Another fault in delivery that must be mentioned, though it is not likely to become a habit, is the changing of one's mind in the middle of a shot. This kind of shot usually fails, and a player should guard against it. One should avoid changing his mind while shooting even in such little things as which side of the disc to strike or how far down the court to shoot a disc. When one simply must change his mind, he should stop and take the time to concentrate on the new shot.

Tension and Loss of Composure. In the case of some players whose normal delivery is smooth, there is a tendency for their cue to shake when they are trying hard on a difficult or an important shot. But the products of tension are not always visible, and, unfortunately, a very small amount of mental strain will impair a player's shooting.

Tension may result from no more than a losing attitude that a player has almost unconsciously developed toward a particular opponent. Other times it may arise from situations in a game that cause the player to have an undue concern for his success as a player. Tension may result from many things, but in its most pernicious form it is related to the player's personal background rather than to a definite situation in a game. A player must analyze these feelings and learn to take some positive step to control them. One should avoid negative thinking when wrestling with this problem because negative thinking usually contributes to the problem rather than to the solution.

Without a question the best remedy for tension is the acquiring of playing experience under pressure, and this is one of the important benefits to be gained from playing in leagues and tournaments. Skills that are developed under pressure will sustain a player the next time he is under pressure, while the skills that are developed in private practice will have to be tempered in fire to be dependable. Tensions require an inordinate amount of self-discipline to overcome, but the result is worth many times the effort.

Momentary loss of composure is something else. The failure to observe the principles of relaxation and concentration will cause a serious loss of composure in critical moments of play. This is a common fault, and one does not have play shuffleboard very long to observe some player ignoring these principles while immediately regretting his impulsiveness. When his disc has been glanced from a scoring position into the kitchen, a player may lose his composure for a moment, and shooting from the hip, as it were, he zips a disc down the court completely missing his disc in the kitchen. Such a loss of composure can last throughout the remainder of the game unless the player is able to ignore the irritations that result from the normal misfortunes of the game.

Distractions. External distractions, which have already been mentioned, can be blocked out without too much trouble, but certain dis-

tractions that are inherent to the shot may become real problems. They have been called mental hazards.

Certain shots seem to be difficult for no other reason than that they involve an element that diverts the player's attention from the main purpose of the shot. That is, something related to the shot interferes with the player's concentration on the exact spot at which he desires to shoot. Again, the prescription is self-discipline, but this remedy must be combined with solo practice (Chapter XV).

Mastery of these shots is essential if one is to become better than an average shuffleboard player. Some examples of shots that have a particular distraction, or mental hazard, are:

1. Shooting past a guard to spoil the opponent's score;
2. Shooting for a score when the opponent's disc lies nearby on a line;
3. Trying to spoil the opponent's score when the player's own disc lies in a scoring position nearby;
4. Shooting the hammer (last shot of a half round), especially when it is the winning score.

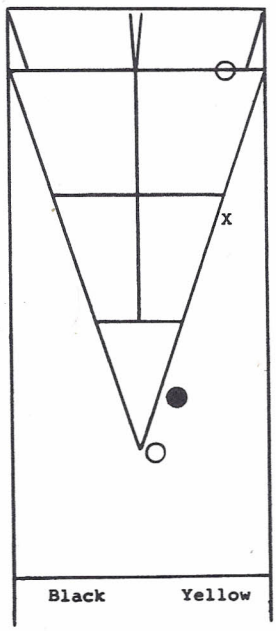


Figure 7

ANALYSIS PROBLEM (FIGURE 7)

The following problem illustrates the principle of the mental hazard. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this chapter.

Yellow wanted to score his last disc where it would be safely hidden from his opponent's last shot. The best place seemed to be in the 7-area behind his own liner. Yellow attempted this shot, but his cue disc stopped short of the 7-area at X. What happened?

FOULS AND PENALTIES [1]

All of the rules pertaining to the foul are observed even in fun games; but, of course, in fun games there are no penalties. The penalties should be rigorously enforced, however, whenever referees are used. In this way the new players will become acquainted with the game as it is played in tournaments.

Discs on the Line. No disc in the player's starting area may touch a line when one of the discs is being shot. The rule covering this situation is somewhat complicated and reads as follows: "Players shall place their four (4) discs within and not touching lines of their respective half of 10-Off area. PENALTY—5 off. Penalty not applied to a player until he has played a disc. Discs must be played from the clear from within the respective half of 10-Off area. If disc played touches front or back lines—PENALTY—5 off. If disc played touches side line, or triangle—PENALTY—10 off, offender's disc removed, and opponent credited with any of his discs displaced. All displaced discs shall be removed from the court immediately after scoring of opponent's displaced discs."

Stepping on the Baseline. The player must be careful, when shooting a disc, that he not step on or over the baseline. The penalty is 10 points off.

Where to Stand. The players may stand in the alley between the courts before and while shooting, but they may not stand on the adjoining court. While standing in the alley area, the player must not step over the extension of the baseline for any purpose other than to gather his discs (Figure 2). The penalty is 5 points off.

1 Rules of the National Shuffleboard Association.

What Constitutes a Shot? "A disc is played when it leaves the starting area, except for jockeying." Jockeying is the moving of a disc in a circular motion to insure that no particles of dirt lie under the disc.

Hesitation Shot. The player must not stop the motion of his cue once the disc has started forward. A variation in the speed of the shot is not a foul. A hesitation is a momentary stop. The penalty is 10 points off; the offender's disc will be removed and the opponent will be credited with the score of any of his discs which were displaced.

Hook Shot. A hook shot is a shot in which there is a noticeable change in the direction of the cue during the delivery. A shot must be delivered in a straight line with continuous forward motion of the cue. The penalty is 10 points off; the offender's disc will be removed and the opponent will be credited with the score of any of his discs which were displaced.

ANSWER TO THE ANALYSIS PROBLEM (FIGURE 7)

This is typical of what happens hundreds of times during a season on the shuffleboard courts. A shot that normally is easy to perform becomes quite difficult when it is complicated by a mental hazard. Yellow, of course, was afraid that he would bunt his liner into the kitchen. He overlooked the opportunity to backstop his cue disc against his disc on the K/7 line and, at the same time, shoot hard enough to drive the liner through the kitchen.

CHAPTER IV
SEVERAL BASIC SHOTS EXPLAINED

Several new shuffleboard expressions will be introduced in this chapter. Although the meaning of each word is clear enough from its use in the sentence, the new words are listed below to focus the reader's attention on these important terms.

Out
Hammer
Board, open board, clearing the board
Guard, cross guard, St. Pete, Tampa
Apex
Stick

A TYPICAL ROUND OF PLAY

Several important shots can be illustrated best by following a typical round of play. Such a demonstration round might be in any form of the game, but we shall consider this one to be a doubles game.

Our game begins at the head of the court. Normally, Yellow is out, meaning that the player of the yellow discs will shoot the first disc. If this were the second game in a match between the same teams, Black would be out.

Four yellow discs are placed in the right half of the starting area, and four black discs in the left half. This is always the arrangement at the head of the court; yellow discs on the right, black on the left. The players at the head and the foot, who stand on the same side of the court, are partners; and, of course, they will shoot the same set of discs. Therefore, the yellow discs and the black discs, when arranged at the foot, will be on the same side of the court as they were at the head.

Now, at the head of the court, the players are ready to begin the game. Since Yellow is out:

Yellow will shoot disc No. 1; Black, No. 2;
Yellow will shoot disc No. 3; Black, No. 4;
Yellow will shoot disc No. 5; Black, No. 6;
Yellow will shoot disc No. 7; Black, No. 8.

In this work, references to the shots will always be by number, and the reader will find it useful to keep the following things in mind: The odd-numbered discs (1, 3, 5, 7) will always belong to the player who has the first shot; the even-numbered discs (2, 4, 6, 8), to the person who has the last shot. It is important to keep in mind at all times in a game which player will shoot the last disc in the half round that is being played. The last shot (disc No. 8) is so important that it is given a special name. It is called the hammer.

The general object of the game is twofold: to accumulate scores, and to make it as difficult as possible for one's opponent to accumulate scores. Although shufflers may not agree in every detail as to how to accomplish these goals, nearly all do agree that it is poor practice to pursue the first goal by shooting unprotected discs out on the open board. Why? Two reasons: The discs will not stay there, and often they are bumped into the 10-off area, the kitchen.

The First Half Round. Therefore, Yellow starts off with a defensive shot. He puts up a guard. He will shoot disc No. 1 in approximately the position shown in Figure 8, halfway between the apex and the edge of the court, on his opponent's side of the board. This shot is so important that any disc in this position is given a special name. It is called a cross guard, and on many courts in the United States it is called a St. Pete.[1]

If Black does not knock Yellow's St. Pete off the board with disc No. 2, Yellow will hide disc No. 3 in a scoring area on his next shot, as shown in Figure 8. A disc that is well hidden by another disc is difficult to get off the board, so Black will not shoot disc No. 2 into a scoring area or set up a cross guard of his own. Instead,

1 Also called a cross pilot. See the glossary.

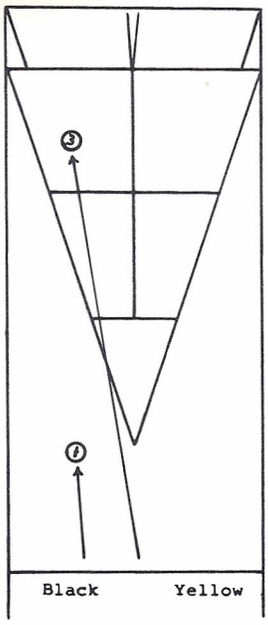


Figure 8

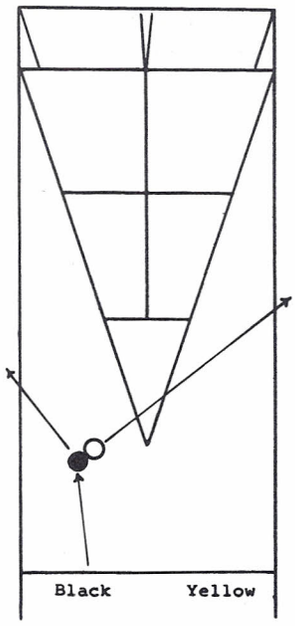


Figure 9

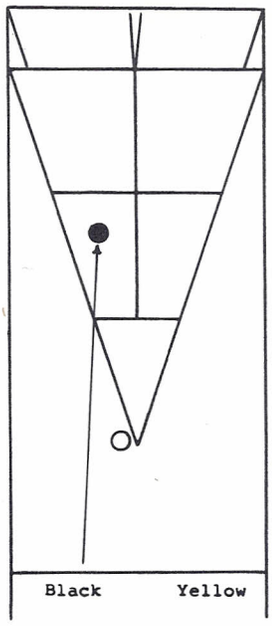


Figure 10

he uses No. 2 to bump No. 1 off the board. He bumps disc No. 1 on the side that is nearer to the edge of the board, so that his own disc is sure to go off the board, too. He attempts to bump disc No. 1 hard enough to drive it completely off the board, as shown in Figure 9. Black's shot is so important that it, too, deserves a special name. It is called clearing the board.

Now each player has shot one disc, and the court is empty again as it was at the beginning of the game. It is Yellow's turn to shoot again, and since the game situation has not changed, he shoots disc No. 3 just as he shot No. 1. Black replies in the same manner, too, clearing the board with No. 4. Yellow sets up a St. Pete the third time, with disc No. 5, and again Black clears the board, using No. 6.

Now the situation has, indeed, changed, and Yellow must shoot differently. He is about to shoot disc No. 7. It would be senseless to shoot a St. Pete again because he will have no occasion to use it, and it would be irresponsible to put his last disc in a scoring area where Black could put it into the kitchen and make a score for himself in the same shot. Yellow realizes that Black has a distinct advantage with his hammer shot. All Yellow can hope to do is to minimize Black's chances of scoring. Nevertheless, there are several things he can do. Yellow can try to block Black's last play by placing disc No. 7 somewhere near the apex, or he can try to score in some place on the board with the hope of complicating Black's last shot.

Yellow decides to block by placing his disc in Black's Tampa position, as shown in Figure 10. With his disc in this position, he blocks Black's shot to either side of the board as much as it is possible to block it with one disc. The block is not very effective, to be sure; it is only a mental hazard of sorts.

Black scores 8 points with disc No. 8 (Figure 10). The score is now Yellow 0, Black 8. In the game of shuffleboard, whenever the score is given, Yellow's score should be given first, so one may simply say that the score is 0 to 8.

At the head of the court, the player who is nearer to the scoreboard will post the scores at the end of each half round throughout the game. He will always do that immediately after disc No. 8 has been shot, while the score is fresh in his mind. Then, after the discs have been shot back to the head of the court again, the scorekeeper's opponent will collect as many of the discs as he can while the other player attends to his duties at the scoreboard.

Questions on the First Half Round. Consider these questions and see if you have answers for them. Then compare with the answers at the end of this chapter.

1. What other shot could Yellow have made with disc No. 7?

2. Why did Yellow continue to shoot St. Petes when he knew that Black's response would be to clear the board each time?

3. Should Yellow feel that he failed in the first half round because he let Black score 8 points while he scored nothing?

The Second Half Round. Now, at the foot of the court, the game continues as the players arrange their discs for the next half round. We notice that the partners of the first two players are named Yellow and Black, too. What a coincidence!

In a doubles game (4 players) Yellow is out at both the head and the foot in the first round; Black is out at the head and the foot in the second round; third round, Yellow again; fourth round, Black; and so on. If this were a singles game (2 players), Yellow would always be out at the head; and Black, at the foot.

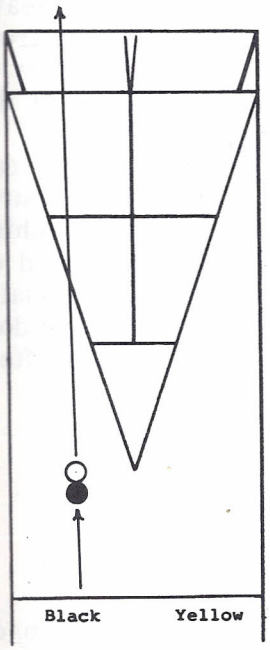


Figure 11

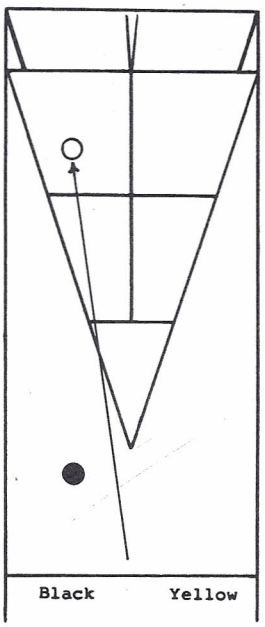


Figure 12

So Yellow is out again at the foot of the court. If all goes well, about the same shots will be used as in the first half round. Yellow will shoot St. Petes, hoping that his opponent's disc will strike the guard head-on and stick in its place. This often happens to a player who is trying to clear the board. The result is simply a change in the color of the guard disc, a wasted shot, and an opportunity for the opponent to hide a scoring disc. The player's disc makes as good a guard for the opponent as his own.

On the fourth shot it happens. Black's disc hits the target head-on and stops abruptly in an excellent guard position for Yellow (Figure 11). This is the opportunity that Yellow and his partner have been hoping to get. Yellow places disc No. 5 securely in the sheltered area beyond Black's disc and scores a safe 7 (Figure 12).

Black must go after this score, but most of Yellow's disc is hidden by the guard and Black decides that an attempt to knock the score off the board would result in another wasted shot. So with disc No. 6 Black attacks the guard, his own disc, instead of Yellow's score, using the accepted clearing-the-board technique.

Now Yellow's score is fully exposed; he must use his next shot to replace the guard. As Black had hoped when he knocked away Yellow's guard, Yellow fails to place his new guard, disc No. 7, with the same precision as the first. This time, Black can see more of Yellow's scoring disc projecting to the right of the guard. He feels a strong urge to shoot carefully past the guard to knock away Yellow's score. Perhaps he can do this and cause his own disc to stop in the 7-area for a score, too, he thinks. Pondering the situation for a moment, while a number of thoughts race through his mind, he estimates the negative aspects of this shot as well as the positive. What would be the result if this shot should fail? He sees three chances for a possible failure:

1. If he tries to knock out Yellow's score with a fast shot and nicks the guard, Yellow would score 7 points in a half round in which his opponent has the hammer. Black would score nothing. The final score would be 7 to 8.

2. Yellow's disc is far down the board near the kitchen. There would be a considerable risk in the slow shot that would be necessary to cause his own disc to score. Whether Black hits Yellow's disc or misses it completely, there is a real danger that his own disc would stop in the kitchen. So the final score could be as bad as 7 to -2.

3. Then there is the centerline. Black's disc could easily stop on this line and fail to score even though it did not reach the kitchen.

Black's analysis of the situation convinces him that though there is a chance to make an additional gain against his opponent by spoiling the 7 and scoring his own disc at the same time, the risk is too great to take unless the gain is urgently needed. He decides to let Yellow keep his score of 7, and to shoot his hammer for an 8, which he easily does. The score at the end of the round is 7 to 16.

A Fundamental Principle. The purpose of the above analysis is to emphasize a simple, but important, principle of good playing. One should not take unnecessary chances with the hammer shot. When the shooting of a simple score is almost a certain success, one should not gamble on spoiling a partially hidden score unless the opponent is so near to game point that he must be stopped at all costs.

A Question on the Second Half Round. An answer to this question, too, is at the end of this chapter.

4. Why didn't Black try to score a 10 with his hammer?

FOULS AND PENALTIES

Remain Seated. In doubles a player must remain seated when the play is to his end of the court until all the discs have been shot, the score has been announced, and the official has called "Play." The penalty is 5 points off.

Walking. In walking singles a player must not cross the baseline to go to the other end of the court until the official has called "Play" or has otherwise authorized him to do so. The penalty is 5 points off.

Leaving the Court. A player must not leave the court during a game without permission, except to gather his discs at the end of a half round. The penalty is 10 points off. There is no penalty if a player leaves the court between games. In a tournament a player may not leave the court, however, until after the scores have been recorded on the scoreboard and the score cards. A player must not be gone more than 10 minutes. The penalty is 10 points off.

Coaching. A player must not make any remark or motion to his partner for the purpose of coaching his play. The penalty is 10 points off.

Live Discs. A player must not touch live discs at any time. The penalty is 10 points off and that half round will be played over.

FOULS AND PENALTIES APPLIED TO A FRIENDLY GAME

The fouls and penalties in the national rules are there to provide a more enjoyable game for all. Some are simply formal statements of the courteous manner of play that most players would engage in anyway if there were no rules. Many of these rules can be translated into approved conduct for a friendly game. The following are worth noting.

Remain Seated. It is distracting to a player when the players at the opposite end of the court are walking around while he is trying to aim. Not only should the players on the receiving end of the court remain seated; they should avoid collecting discs, unless the discs are in someone's way on the adjacent court. They should remain alert and follow the game.

Walking. Sometimes thoughtless players in a friendly walking singles game will start walking toward the opposite end of the court immediately after shooting disc No. 7. Though this is always a thoughtless act, it is nonetheless discourteous. The hammer shot is the most important single shot in the game, and a player should be able to shoot it without unnecessary distractions.

Leaving the Court. Courtesy requires in a friendly game that a player consider the interests of the other players when it is necessary to quit a game, or a series of games. Most players, when finding it necessary to take leave of a game, would try to find a substitute from someone on the sidelines, or they would try to time their leaving to the convenience of the other three players.

Coaching. In friendly games coaching can become a serious problem, especially on courts where everyone is trying to excel. Coaching should be offered only when it is solicited or tacitly accepted. Unrequested coaching usually contributes to tension. A new player seldom shoots his best during, or immediately after, a session of gratuitous coaching.

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS IN CHAPTER IV

1. What other shot could Yellow have made with disc No. 7? Several other plays that are used with disc No. 7 will be discussed in the chapters that follow. For a summary of these plays see the section on the seventh disc in Chapter XII.

2. Why did Yellow continue to shoot St. Petes when he knew that Black's response would be to clear the board each time? Because, at this early stage of the game, a guard must precede a scoring disc. If shooting a St. Pete was the right play for disc No. 1, it was also the right play for discs No. 3 and No. 5 because the situation on the board was the same in each instance.

3. Should Yellow feel that he failed in the first half round because he let Black score 8 points while he scored nothing? No. Yellow's

chance will come when he has the hammer. A player does not feel that he has failed when his opponent scores with his hammer as long as the opponent had to work for it. On the other hand, a player would sense a degree of failure if he failed to score with his own hammer, and especially so if his opponent should manage to sneak in a score during the player's hammer half round.

4. Why didn't Black try to score a 10 with his hammer? The useful surface in the 10-area is about half as large as the useful surface in one of the 8-areas, and considering the pointed shape of the 10-area, which leaves very little latitude for the scoring disc, the 10 is more than twice as difficult to shoot as an 8. Experience has taught shufflers to shoot an 8 when shooting for a simple score on an open board unless some other score is urgently needed.

Every shuffler, however, should be able to shoot a 10 on an open board whenever he needs one, but he should go for a 10 only when he needs it. That is a fundamental principle of good conservative play.

CHAPTER V

SOME BASIC SHOTS

HOW TO MAKE THEM

The cross guard, or St. Pete, which was mentioned in Chapter IV, is by far the most common and most useful shot in the game. It is an easy shot, too. In this chapter the characteristics of the cross guard will be examined, and several other shots will be discussed.

SETTING UP A CROSS GUARD

The correct placement of the cross guard is on the side of the court opposite the player and midway between the edge of the court and the apex. The cross guard in Figure 12 is Yellow's guard, even though it is a black disc. It stands directly in front of Yellow's opponent, effectively blocking a portion of his side of the board.

Figure 13 is a scale drawing, which shows the shape and the comparative size of the hiding area beyond two cross guards—one, yellow, in the normal position; the other, black, barely across the deadline. Notice the characteristics of the hiding area:

1. Triangle ABC is the area that is inaccessible to Black's cue disc. This area, which is nowhere wider than a disc, tapers to a point beyond the guard. It is clear, then, that no disc can be 100 percent hidden beyond a cross guard.

2. If the guard is close to the deadline, the hiding area barely extends to the center of the 7-area.

One can see why a cross guard becomes less effective as the distance from it to the scoring disc increases, but this does not mean that the cross guard near the deadline is a poor guard. Consider for a moment disc X in Figure 13. X is completely visible to the opponent, yet Yellow must execute a careful and precise shot to get at it. Why? Because the cross guard, in this case, allows Yellow no margin of error whatever on one side of the target although the target is in full view. Picking off a scoring disc beyond a guard, such as X, is difficult. More will be said about this shot later.

The cross guard is not a difficult shot because it is still very effective when it is slightly misplaced. However, when it is placed too far from its normal position, problems are created

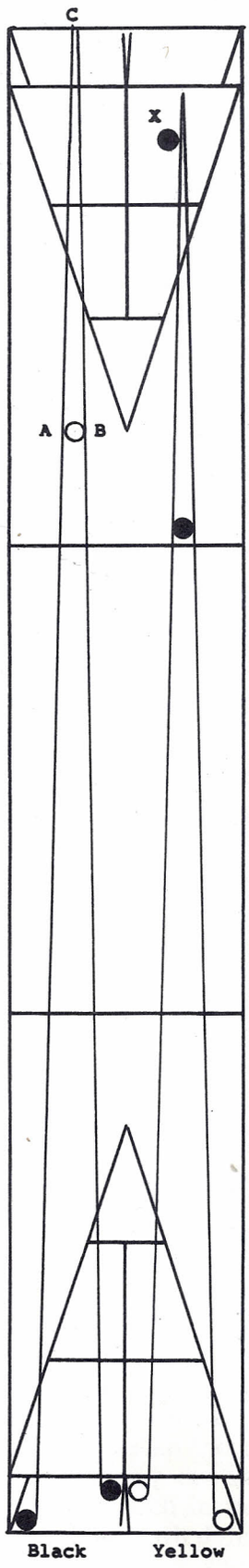


Figure 13

for the player who shoots it. Figure 14 shows four extreme positions of the cross guard. The guard at A has already been discussed. The chief danger of placing a guard at A is the risk of its stopping short of the deadline, thereby wasting a shot and passing the initiative to the opponent. A disc that fails to reach the deadline must be removed from the court before the next play, but as long as the disc touches the deadline, it is a live and playable disc.

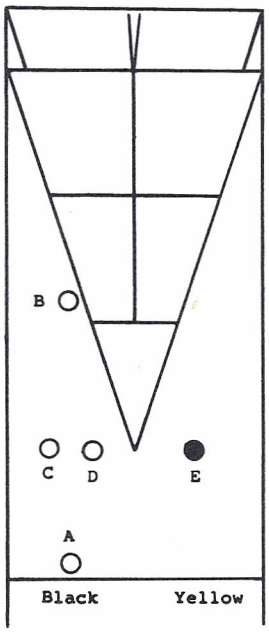


Figure 14

Consider the disc that travels too far and stops near B. The guard at B loses its effectiveness because the hiding area is so near to the kitchen that hiding a disc beyond this guard involves a considerable risk. An opponent will often ignore the guard at B and will place a cross guard of his own at E. This play creates a little problem for the player who shot the guard at B. Should he now use his own inferior guard and try to hide a score, or should he knock away his opponent's correctly placed guard?

Whichever way it is played, the odds favor the player who shot the better guard. The way it is actually played depends largely on the attitude and the skill of the player. The confident, aggressive player may choose to hide his next disc beyond his inferior guard, knowing that even a partially hidden score will force his opponent to go after it, and will prevent his opponent from using the hiding area beyond his own guard. Other players will choose to knock away the second and better cross guard, repeating this action until the 6th or the 7th disc comes up (whichever they are shooting at the moment) which they will attempt to hide beyond the inferior guard if that is still the best available shot.

A cross guard at C protects only the corner of the 7-area. Hiding a disc beyond this guard is difficult, too. This shot will be described in detail in Chapter VIII in the section on the corner-7 shot.

A cross guard at D loses some of its effectiveness because the opponent can hide a disc beyond this guard by shooting between the guard and the edge of the court. This shot is not recommended, however. Unless the cross guard is badly misplaced toward D, the opponent has a better shot than to hide a disc. More will be said on this in the section on the alley shot in Chapter VIII.

Occasionally, it is the opponent's disc that is found at B or C. Whichever color it is, this misplaced guard can be greatly strengthened by placing another disc in the normal cross guard position. The double guard is very effective.

Errors of aim, in the direction of C or D, are more serious than errors of distance, toward A or B. For this reason a cross guard should be shot from position 1 in the starting area. This position minimizes errors to the right or the left of the normal position of the guard.

HIDING A DISC BEYOND A CROSS GUARD

Before we go further into the subject of guarding and hiding, two confusing terms should be defined. In the discussions which follow, the word **behind** will mean toward the player who shot the disc; **in front of** will mean in the direction the disc is moving. In other words, one hides a disc in front of another disc, or beyond it; and one snuggles a disc behind another disc.

We have discussed the shooting of the cross guard, and we have mentioned one way to reply to that guard, clearing the board. Now, suppose that the removal of the guard has been unsuccessful, so that there is still an effective guard on the board when the player's next shot comes up. How will he go about hiding a disc beyond the cross guard?

The prime rule of good delivery is that the player must shoot at a definite point; therefore, it is important to know how to locate the exact

point to shoot at. There are two good ways of finding the best spot on the board on which to hide a disc.

1. One can get such a spot in mind by standing in the middle of his opponent's standing area and sighting down the court across the cross guard. The choice spot will be in line with the center of the opponent's starting area and the center of the guard. There is no rule to prevent the player from standing on the opponent's side to make this survey, and in a serious game it is often done.

2. The spot on which to hide a disc can be located with a good degree of accuracy, though, without stepping to the opponent's side of the court. To do this, simply imagine a line drawn through the guard disc parallel to the edge of the court (Figure 15). Any disc will be hidden from the opponent's view along this line, especially if the disc is placed a trifle to the left of this line when the guard is too far to the left, and a trifle to the right of this line when the guard is too far to the right.

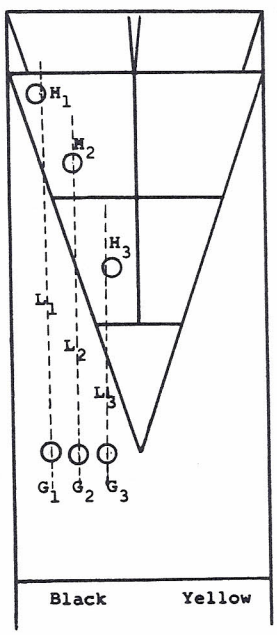


Figure 15

For example, G1, G2, and G3 represent three possible positions of a cross guard shot out by a player standing on the right side of the court. G2 is a normal cross guard; G1 is too far to the left; G3, too far to the right. L1, L2, and L3 represent imaginary lines through the center of each guard and parallel to the edge of the court. H1, H2, and H3 represent the positions at which another disc can be safely hidden in the scoring area beyond the guards. Notice that H1 is a trifle to the left of L1, and H3 is a trifle to the right of L3.

Now, having chosen the exact spot on which to place his disc, the player will exercise the usual care in making his delivery. He will make this shot from position 2 in the starting area, or if he needs the advantage of every inch in the starting area to shoot past the guard, he will shoot from position 3.

KNOCKING A DISC OFF THE BOARD

Discs are knocked off the board for various reasons and in various ways. Clearing the board has been mentioned and its uses will be considered in the next chapter. But it will be well in passing through this how-to-do-it chapter to mention that the angle shot is preferred for getting a disc off the board if it is desired that the cue disc leave the board also. Therefore, when clearing the board of a cross guard, the player will find that shooting from position 1 is the most effective angle, while discs in some other positions may be more effectively removed with a shot from position 2.

When there is some drift in the court, and the amount cannot be reliably determined, the drift can sometimes be used to the player's advantage as he clears the board of discs in the deep 7-area, near the kitchen. Under these circumstances some players simply shoot to hit the disc head-on and trust the drift to make a clean shot, getting both discs off the board.

In league games and tournaments in the eastern part of the United States, the use of the high-speed shot to clear the board is common practice. This is to lessen the chance of the cue disc sticking in place of the guard in the event that the collision is almost head-on. But in certain areas of the West, particularly in California, the high-speed shot is not permitted.

There are many occasions in a game when it is desired that the cue disc stay on the scoring area after knocking the opponent's disc off the board. Such a shot is more difficult to make on a fast court than on a slow one. The aiming point must be near the center of the target, and a slower shot must be used, but care must be taken that the speed of the cue disc is sufficient to drive the target all the way through the scoring area. It is a serious misjudgment of speed to allow the target to stay on the board to score. The opponent will quickly cover the score with a guard and will be seven or eight points ahead because of the careless error.

COVERING THE SCORE WITH A NEW GUARD

The successful hiding of a scoring disc beyond a well-placed guard presents the opponent with a problem. Normally, he has two choices, either remove the guard or remove the score, if the disc is only partially hidden. (Other shots that he might use, which must be considered as special situations, are mentioned in the next section, Spoiling a Partially Hidden Score.)

If the opponent chooses to remove the guard, the player must replace the guard to protect his scoring disc. The opponent has removed the original guard hoping that the second guard will not be so well placed as the first. Then he can attack the scoring disc.

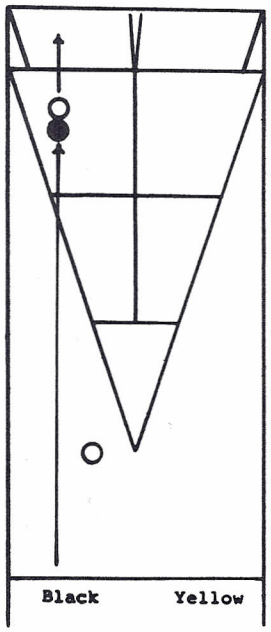


Figure 16

To replace the guard correctly, the player must find the exact spot on which to place his new guard. The same principles that were used when hiding the score (Figure 15) will apply now in reverse when he replaces the guard. And the new guard should be shot from position 1 for the same reason that the original guard was shot from that position. For some players replacing the guard satisfactorily seems to be more difficult than shooting the hide.

If the second guard is not well placed, the opponent's attack on the scoring disc may be doubly painful. If the guard is misplaced on the side of the scoring disc nearer to the player (Figure 16), often the opponent is able to cause his cue disc to stick for a score beyond the player's guard and, at the same time, spoil the score, perhaps even put it into the kitchen.

If, however, the guard happens to be misplaced on the other side (Figure 17), so that the opponent must spoil the score by shooting between the guard and the apex, he may have some difficulty keeping his cue disc from stopping in the kitchen after spoiling the score. He must shoot hard enough to insure that his disc goes entirely off the board. If the hidden disc is in the 7-area, the opponent surely takes the risk of his cue disc glancing into the kitchen if he tries to score.

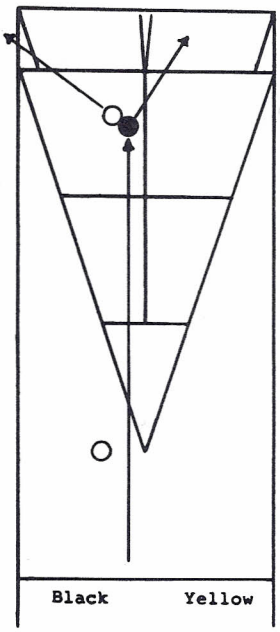


Figure 17

SPOILING A PARTIALLY HIDDEN SCORE

Experienced shufflers agree that this shot (Figure 17) should not be overworked. If the scoring disc is so well hidden that an attempt to spoil the score would be too chancy, the player has several other shots he can use.

1. If he is not shooting his last disc, he can, instead, knock away the guard.
2. If he is shooting disc No. 7, he can shoot to hide his own disc in a scoring area.
3. If he is shooting disc No. 8, he can shoot for a simple score.

4. If the partially hidden score is the winning score in the game and the player is using his last disc, he must get at it if he possibly can. A combination shot might be his only choice.

Usually it is unnecessary to take a risk in order to spoil a partially hidden score, but often a player is tempted to try this shot even against his better judgment. One should train himself to play conservatively whenever this situation comes up.

This shot, though not used so often as some others, is excellent for solo practice (Chapter XV). It develops precision shooting, and it is a shot that is more difficult because of the distraction, or mental hazard, of the guard disc. Shots involving a particular mental hazard should be given special practice.

Something more should be said about the mental hazard. The shot is difficult for many players simply because the guard divides one's attention while he is aiming. The player must discipline himself to block out the guard mentally while concentrating on the point at which he is aiming. This is very important. Of course, the player must consider the position of the guard at first to determine the target point. The point may be on the edge of the scoring disc, or even an inch or so from the disc, but after determining the exact point at which he will aim, the player must eliminate the guard entirely from his thinking and exercise the usual care in making his delivery.

A Fundamental Principle. One should not look at the guard while shooting at a partially hidden disc.

THE KITCHEN SHOT

A simple law of physics is of interest to the shuffleboard player in its application to the kitchen shot. From this law one learns that when the cue disc strikes another disc head-on, the moving disc comes almost to a full stop as the target disc receives virtually 100 percent of the energy of motion from the moving disc, and the target travels the same distance forward as the cue disc would have gone had the target not been in its way. (Actually, the target stops several inches beyond the point at which the cue disc would have stopped, since the target was six inches ahead of the cue disc when it began to move.)

From this, then, it follows that there is a definite speed that can be designated in shuffling as **kitchen speed.** This particular speed, which will cause an unobstructed disc to go straight from a player's cue to the kitchen and stop there will also be the correct speed to send the opponent's disc to the kitchen from any place on

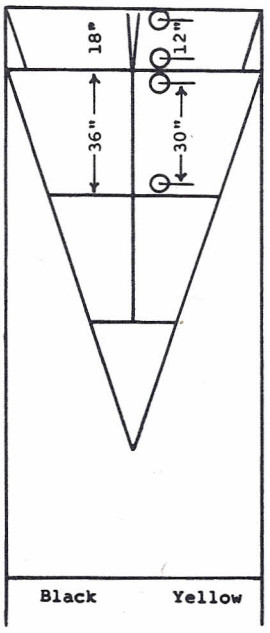


Figure 18

the board, provided it receives a direct hit. To send a disc to the kitchen with an angle shot slightly more speed is required.

The kitchen shot is more difficult than most players realize. Figure 18 illustrates this. The usable scoring depth of the kitchen is 12 inches; the scoring depth of the 7-area is 30 inches. Therefore, it is 30/12 or 2.5 times as difficult to cause a disc to stop in the kitchen as in the 7-area, when the only consideration is the forward motion of the disc. But there is also, of course, the consideration that the kitchen is farther away from the player, and that the kitchen shot is a bunt rather than a direct shot. The ability to make sensitive adjustments to the various requirements of speed is a skill that every shuffler is constantly striving to achieve, but there is no magic formula, simply a light grip on the cue, a smooth delivery, and practice.

SOME COMMON PROBLEMS WITH THE KITCHEN SHOT

Uses of the kitchen shot will be discussed in the next chapter, but under this heading a common misuse of this play can be mentioned; that is, its excessive use.

The Kitchen Player. A fact, seldom sensed by beginning players, is that the kitchen shot is one of the more difficult shots of the game. The shot is fascinating to new players, and often after developing a little skill with this particular shot, the new player begins to rely upon this play to win his games.

A point game can never be won solely with kitchen shots, but the frame game rewards the kitchen player since the objective is only to be ahead in score. Slow courts favor the kitchen player, too, since on a slow court one has trouble clearing the board and may leave an occasional disc in the scoring area for his opponent to work on. Players who practice under conditions that are conducive to kitchen shooting may develop that style of game unless they become aware early in their shuffling experience of the weakness of the kitchen game.

The best reply to the kitchen player's game is a rigorous clearing of the board—leaving nothing on the board for the player to put into the kitchen—and a score with each hammer. One should not allow the kitchen player to force him to play his kind of game.

One can usually spot a kitchen player early in a game. Many of them ignore the use of a guard and go on the board with their first shot, and that should be a clear warning to the opponent.

The Gift Score. Care must be used when making a kitchen shot to drive the opponent's disc off the scoring area. It is far better to overshoot the kitchen than to undershoot and give one's opponent an additional 7 points instead of 10 off. Because of the ever-present risk of adding 7 points to the opponent's score, good shufflers seldom try to kitchen a nonscoring disc of any kind. Only when an analysis of the scoreboard indicates that unusual measures are needed, would a player attempt to kitchen a liner. Usually the opponent facetiously thanks the player when the opponent's disc stops short of the kitchen to score.

Kitchening a Cross Guard. It is always a mistake in the normal game to kitchen a cross guard. This shot must be considered the wrong play even when it is successful. A player should not assume the great amount of risk associated with this shot. Aside from this being a difficult shot and aside from the chance of making a scoring disc out of a nonscoring one, there is a high probability that the cue disc will stick, leaving the opponent with another guard as useful as the first one, with the consequent hiding of the opponent's next disc for a score.

The only possible occasion for attempting to kitchen a cross guard would be in the end of the game when one's opponent is two or more discs ahead and needs but one disc to win, and in the next half round the opponent will have the hammer. In this situation, which is so critical as to call for a desperation shot, the player would try to kitchen anything on the board.

Kitchen-Speed-Plus. When attempting with his hammer to spoil his opponent's score, a player will also try to score his cue disc; and if the opponent's disc is favorably located, the player will also try to take 10 points away from his opponent on this particular shot by shooting near kitchen speed. Experienced players, when making this shot, deliberately shoot a little harder than what they think is necessary to put the disc into the kitchen, simply to insure that the opponent does not receive a gift score. This particular speed, which will be designated hereafter as kitchen-speed-plus, is a good speed to use when the player has no real need for a kitchen shot but has one offered to him free for the taking—kitchen speed, plus a little more for safety.

If the player errs on the slow side with this shot, the opponent's disc stops in the kitchen rather than in the 7-area. And if the opponent's disc happens to glance at a wide angle, making its distance to the kitchen greater than was anticipated, the kitchen-speed-plus may be sufficient to carry it to the kitchen.

Drift and Poor Aim. Every player has experienced a complete miss of a kitchen shot as he watched with chagrin his own disc stop in the kitchen. His only satisfaction was the assurance that, at least, he made the shot with the correct speed. This can happen with any disc, but it seems to occur more often when one is trying to kitchen a disc in the low 7-area. A disc in the low 7 is so far away that an accurate shot at it is difficult. And furthermore, to put a disc

lying in the low 7-area into the kitchen, the cue disc must be moving very slowly just before its impact with the target. The slowly-moving disc is extremely susceptible to unevenness in the court at that moment, and often it drifts one way or the other just before it strikes the target.

Even when the cue disc does not completely miss its target in the low 7-area, the shot can end unhappily (Figure 19). If the cue disc causes the target to glance at an angle of 45 degrees, the two discs will spread apart and both will travel the same distance forward. If the speed is correct to put the target into the kitchen, the cue disc goes in too.

For the reasons mentioned above, kitchening a 10 score may be easier than kitchening a disc deep in the 7-area. The disc must leave the cue at the same speed for either shot, but because the score in the 10-area is close by, the cue disc will be moving faster at impact and will be less affected by drift in the court. Aiming at the 10 score is less of a problem also because of the shorter shot. But if the problem is to score as well as to kitchen the disc in the 10 area, then this shot may not be easier than kitchening a disc in the deep 7. Nevertheless, this shot is often attempted, and it is quite often successful. For more on this particular shot, see Chapter IX, The High 10.

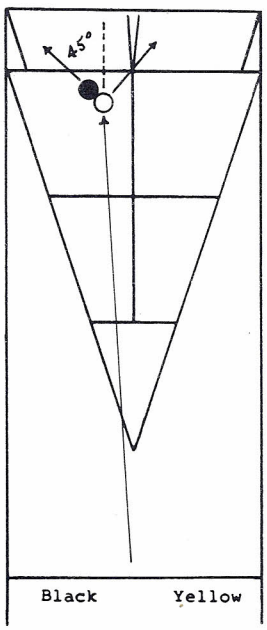


Figure 19

CHAPTER VI
SOME BASIC SHOTS — HOW TO USE THEM

In shuffleboard there are two distinct modes of play. They are called clearing the board and going on the board. The former is used by a player when he is ahead of, or even with, his opponent in score. The latter is used when the player begins to trail behind his opponent to the extent that his game is in jeopardy.

In this chapter we shall continue the discussion of the basic shots described in Chapter V. Here we shall discuss the correct use of these shots in each mode of play.

CLEARING THE BOARD

One of the basic principles of aggressive play is to keep the board clear of all discs when one is ahead in score, especially when he has the hammer. The object is to keep off the board any disc that might aid the opponent to score. The discs that are knocked away usually are the opponent's, but occasionally one of the player's own discs will stop in a position that would enable his opponent to hide a scoring disc. This maverick disc will be knocked away too in the process of clearing the board. The concept of clearing the board includes keeping one's own discs off the board as well as the opponent's until disc No. 8 is shot. This is to prevent the opponent from trying a kitchen shot.

When several discs are allowed to accumulate on the board during the play of a half round, the chance of a lucky shot occurring increases with each disc added to the number. The luck can be either good or bad, and often it comes in bundles of twenty to thirty points. This is a risk that no player who is leading in score can afford to take. Clearing the board is a simple technique for eliminating from the game a large amount of chance, thereby achieving a final score that more accurately reflects the skill of the players.

One sometimes hears the complaint that clearing the board makes an uninteresting game, but this complaint is never heard from players who understand the game. There are a variety of incidental plays available to the player who clears the board, and because no player can shoot perfectly, there is always the chance that the next shot will result in an error that can be exploited. This possibility, with the consequent suspense, insures that the game will never be dull, and the suspense becomes greater as the player's skill increases.

The player who has the hammer and is clearing the board is the offensive player. (See Chapter XII.) The other player, though possibly even in score, is compelled to assume a less aggressive role throughout that particular half round. His plays normally consist of placing his St. Pete three times and then finally making a difficult and uncertain shot with disc No. 7, hoping to thwart the other player when he attempts to score with disc No. 8. The defensive player will feel real satisfaction when he successfully prevents his opponent from scoring his hammer.

A player always depends heavily on his hammers to make his scores. The hammer scores in addition to a few extra scores that the player is able to sneak in, constitute his game so long as he does not get seriously behind. The player who consistently scores on his hammer shots stands an excellent chance of coming out ahead in a game, but two or three hammers lost in a game can—not always, but can—result in disaster Usually they must be made up by using more difficult shots. And this leads us to a discussion of the question: What does a player do when he gets behind in score?

GOING ON THE BOARD

We have seen how the player who is shooting the even-numbered discs can take the initiative from his opponent by clearing the board. The hammers alternate, however, so each player has the same opportunity; but after suffering the failure of a few shots, one player often finds that he is trailing badly though he is using the same strategy as his opponent. What can he do to get back into the game? He adopts the alternative mode of play. He goes on the board.

Kitchen Bait. When a player goes on the board, he simply shoots his disc down into one of the 7-areas without first placing a protective guard. A disc placed in this manner is commonly called kitchen bait. The opponent must

attempt to spoil this score. If the opponent's disc sticks, the player will try a kitchen shot, hoping to bring the opponent's score down by 10 points. The sole objective of this mode of play is to compel the opponent to put his discs on the board without a protective guard. Risky? Yes, very!

The kitchen shot is difficult. Expert players may make it not more than once out of three or four times even when they have the feel of the court, as they say, but a player cannot become better than an average shuffler without some degree of mastery of this shot. It is seldom possible to pull a bad game out of the hole without resorting to the kitchen shot.

A player may say that he cannot win by going on the board because his opponent is a better kitchen player than he. And he knows that he cannot win unless he does go on the board because he is too far behind to catch up with his opponent by relying on his hammer shots alone. So what does he do? He goes on the board. What else?

Replying to the Kitchen Bait. The experienced opponent seldom tries to bunt the bait into the kitchen. If he does use a kitchen shot, he is merely testing the player's mettle. The shot is never recommended. Hit and run is the correct reply to kitchen bait; that is, knock it off the board and get the cue disc off as well! Clearing the board is always the correct reply to any shot made with the thought in mind of tempting a player to place a disc on the board without a protective guard.

Where to Put the Kitchen Bait. The kitchen bait should be placed in the low 7-area for three reasons:

1. The farther away it is, the harder it will be for the opponent to knock it off the board, and the chance of the opponent's cue disc sticking is improved.
2. If the opponent decides to put the bait into the kitchen, his cue disc will stop close by in the 7-area where the player can more easily reverse the kitchen; that is, the player can bunt the opponent's disc against his own in the kitchen, thereby knocking his own disc out of the kitchen while leaving his opponent's disc in (Figure 20).
3. With the bait in the low 7-area, there is a good chance of the opponent putting his own disc into the kitchen while attempting to put the bait in (Figure 19).

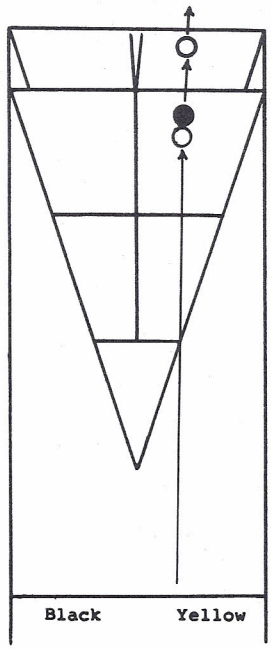


Figure 20

It is usually preferable to place the bait on the opponent's side of the board after his St. Pete has been placed, as at A in Figure 21. This is to minimize the risk of the opponent hiding the bait in the kitchen beyond the guard, or glancing his own disc for a well-hidden score beyond the guard as he clears away the bait. But, if the score is considerably one-sided and the play is near the end of the game, it will be to the opponent's advantage to ignore the bait when it is placed on his side of the board, and increase his score, which is rapidly approaching game point, by hiding a disc beyond the guard. In a situation such as this, the bait should be placed on the same side of the board as the St. Pete to compel the opponent to shoot at it. If the opponent needs only one disc to win, it may be necessary even to place the bait in the 8-area to block the opponent's attempt to score.

Another reason for placing the bait on the same side of the board as the opponent's St. Pete is that, in case the bait stops on the 7/8 line, it quite effectively blocks the opponent's next play, which would be to hide a disc beyond the St. Pete (as at B in Figure 21).

When disc No. 1 is being shot as kitchen bait, the player should place it on his own side of the

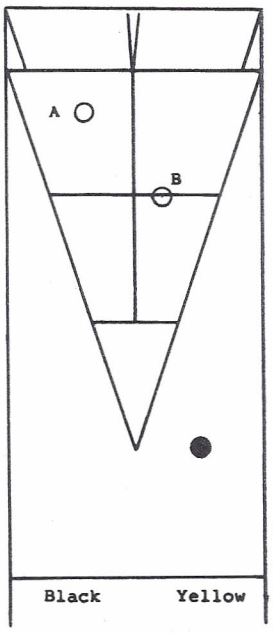


Figure 21

board where it is easier for him to make a kitchen shot and where his opponent will be less tempted to try a kitchen shot.

When to Play the Kitchen Bait. Normally a player goes on the board when he is about two discs behind, 14 to 16 points. But conditions alter this rule. Toward the end of a game, he may decide to go on the board when he is much less than two discs behind his opponent; whereas, at the beginning of a game, being 16 points behind might not be a cause for undue concern, because that much could be scored quite easily against the players in the first round if their opponents started off with the first two hammers. This would not call for going on the board immediately because in the next round the players, with their two hammers, would have a chance to recover.

When a player is about 10 points behind and a kitchen shot is not badly needed, and while he is still replying to his opponent's St. Petes by clearing the board, a quick change to kitchen bait with disc No. 6 may be good playing. If the opponent fails with a hit-and-run tactic or a kitchen shot, and his disc sticks for a score, it can be put into the kitchen for keeps since he has used his last shot. But if the opponent succeeds with a kitchen shot, the player must use his last disc to reverse the kitchen (Figure 20).

As the player trails farther behind in score, he will have to play on the board with discs No. 2 and No. 4 also. If he falls still farther behind, he must play on the board with discs No. 1, No. 3, and No. 5 as well. He will be placing his discs on the board whenever he can.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS: KITCHEN AND KITCHEN BAIT

Several things can happen to a player to sidetrack his strategy. It is well to have some of these questions settled in one's mind beforehand.

If the Opponent Misses the Kitchen Bait. What should a player do when his opponent completely misses the disc which the player put on the board as kitchen bait? Some players, doubtful of their skill, would cover the bait with a guard and play the remainder of the half round protecting the scoring disc. But is this logical? No. What was the bait put out for in the first place? To lure the opponent to the board with a chance of putting one of his discs into the kitchen. It is not possible to lure one's opponent toward the kitchen by covering the bait. Therefore, to be consistent with his objective, the player should shoot another disc into the opposite 7-area, far enough from the first to discourage his opponent from trying to knock both of them out with a combination shot.

If the opponent's disc sticks when he attempts to remove one of the baits, the player should ignore his other unprotected bait and put the opponent's disc into the kitchen. If the opponent successfully clears away one of the two baits and does not stick, the player will shoot another 7 score, unless he is shooting disc No. 7, in which case he will usually cover the remaining bait; or if he is shooting disc No. 8, he will score an 8.

The paragraph above describes the usual way this situation is played, but no principle in shuffling can be applied without first analyzing each particular shot. There are always exceptions—booby traps for the unthinking player. Consider the following problem.

Analysis Problem (Figure 22). The game is doubles at the foot of the court. The score is Yellow 67, Black 64. Game point is 75. Black is about to shoot disc No. 7. What will he do?

Compare your analysis with the discussion of this problem at the end of the chapter.

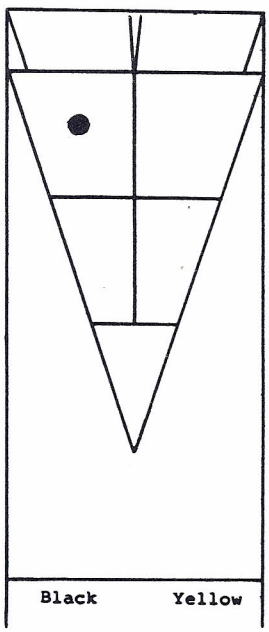


Figure 22

If the Opponent Shoots His Cue Disc into the Kitchen. What should a player do if his opponent shoots his own disc into the kitchen?

1. Assume that this is in a point game and the player does not badly need a kitchen shot. The player may be tempted to block the disc in the kitchen, but a blocking disc often has a way of embarrassing the player who shoots it by presenting his opponent with an unforeseen hide. An experienced player, especially when playing a game requiring a definite number of points to win, will not be distracted by an event such as this from pursuing his objective of racking up points toward the winning score. So rather than blocking his opponent's disc in the kitchen, the player will normally shoot for a score in the opposite 7-area, far enough away from the other disc to prevent a reversal of the kitchen shot. Now his opponent has a choice. He may attack the scoring disc or dislodge his own disc from the kitchen. If he chooses the latter, the player will cover his score of 7 on the next shot and his opponent will have, at best, only two discs left. The player has a good chance of saving his score, and if he has the hammer, a good chance of scoring two discs.

But the opponent may choose to try a kitchen shot on the disc in the 7-area and score his cue disc as well, making a total of 17 points. He would prefer to do that most of the time when he is shooting his hammer. Therefore, if disc No. 6 were shot directly into the kitchen, the other player would not normally put disc No. 7 on the board to be attacked by No. 8. Blocking would be in order. If the opponent then scores an 8, he is still ten points short of making his hammer.

2. But if this situation turns up in a frame game, the more effective shot may be to cover the disc in the kitchen to prevent its removal, if this can be done without giving the opponent a hide. The choice of shots is dictated in this case by the objective of the game. In one kind of game the player must collect scores to win, so he plays on the board where the scores are. In the other game it is necessary only to be ahead in score after an agreed number of frames have been played.

3. Another consideration is the point to which the game has progressed. If it is late in the game with the player needing only two or three discs to win when the opponent shoots his cue disc into the kitchen, the player, to protect his lead in score, must keep his discs off the board even if he has the hammer shot in that half round. Covering the disc in the kitchen with a guard would be called for in this instance.

4. Still another consideration is whether the disc is in the deep kitchen where the opponent may have trouble with his next disc sticking in the kitchen when he tries to knock the first one out. And also to be considered is the condition of the court. If it is slow, there is a greater chance of the opponent's second disc sticking in the kitchen when he tries to remove the first one. The deep kitchen and the slow court are points in favor of shooting for a score and letting the opponent take his chances on getting his disc out of the kitchen.

When to Reverse the Kitchen. The reversing of a kitchen shot, which is illustrated in Figure 20, is really a difficult shot. Sometimes the scoreboard analysis demands that this shot be made, but most of the time the player has a choice. The use of this shot is not well understood by some players, who have the notion that, whenever it is possible to play a combination to reverse the kitchen, it should be attempted in preference to knocking their disc out of the kitchen directly. The truth is, of course, a combination should be attempted only when there is a good chance of its success, or when there is little chance of success with a direct shot. The odds on these two shots should be weighed carefully, and if the direct shot has more chance of success, it should be used immediately.

The combination is always attempted when the kitchen is a deep one and the opponent's score is in the clear and close by the kitchened disc. The combination should not be used when the opponent's disc is nonscoring and poorly situated and the chance of succeeding with a direct shot is good. But, as suggested above, the player should never forget the scoreboard when considering the choice between these two shots.

ANSWER TO ANALYSIS PROBLEM (FIGURE 22)

The protecting of the score with a guard would be a losing play in this situation. The partners who are playing yellow need 8 points to win. The partners who are playing black will get two hammers if they can keep Yellow from winning in this half round. Black must not shoot into a scoring area that will give Yellow 8 or more points if he backstops. If Black should shoot another 7 in the opposite 7-area (difficult for Yellow to spoil with a combination shot), the best Yellow could do for himself would be to kitchen and score. The result would be Yellow 74, Black 61. With two hammers coming up, Black would be in a better position than he is at present; and if Yellow's kitchen shot should fail, Black would be in a very good position.

Why should Black not shoot a 10? Because only a high 10 would be safe. The risk of the cue disc stopping deep in the 10-area is too great.

CHAPTER VII
GUARDING AND BLOCKING

Guards are of two kinds: A protective guard, such as a cross guard, which is placed for the purpose of protecting the player's next shot, and a preventive guard, which is placed to forestall an anticipated play by the opponent. The latter form of guard is more often called a block.

THE TAMPA AS A PROTECTIVE GUARD

A protective guard, which has been mentioned but not discussed at length, is the Tampa. This guard should be placed close to the apex, but unlike the St. Pete, the Tampa is not a cross guard. The player puts it on his own side of the apex, as shown in Figure 23. The drawing shows the correct position of two of Yellow's guards, the Tampa (T) and the St. Pete (S). Black's guards would be in the same positional relationship to him.

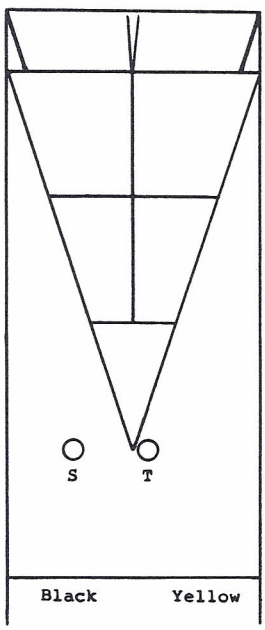
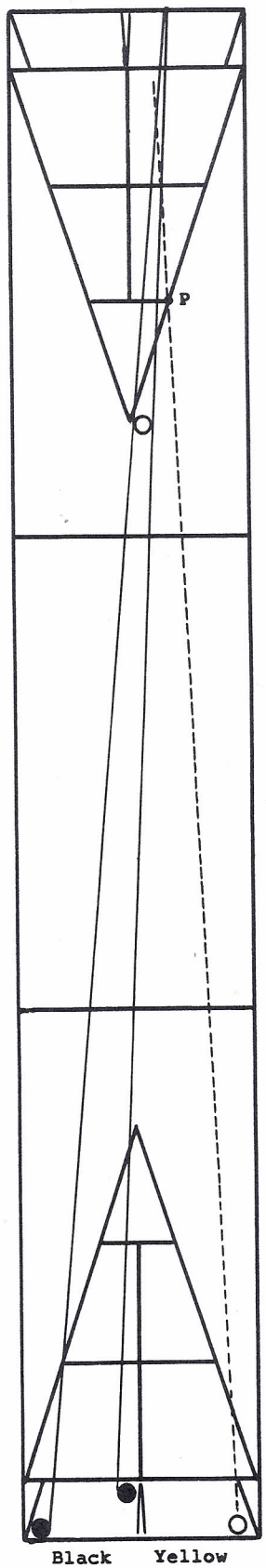


Figure 23

Figure 24, a scale drawing, shows the shape and the comparative size of the hiding area beyond a Tampa guard. Yellow has an excellent



hiding area a few inches from the centerline. To hide the cue disc in the protected area beyond a correctly placed Tampa, the player can spot his shot by aiming at the intersection of the 8/10 line and the sideline of the shufflegram (point P, Figure 24).

The drawing seems to indicate that Black can use this hiding place too, but when the Tampa is correctly placed, it is seldom possible for the opponent to shoot a disc past the Tampa so that it will cross the centerline.

However, Black would not need more than three or four inches between the apex and the Tampa to make this shot possible. Figure 25 illustrates this shot. It is a difficult shot for a beginner and a good one to set up for solo practice as it will surely develop precision. With its mental hazard, it requires real discipline of the practicing player.

By selecting the correct aiming point, the player can achieve a good percentage of success with this shot. Start the shot from position 3, and aim at the apex. Shoot to have the disc stop in the 7-area. If the court drifts toward one's opponent, this shot can be cut a little thinner, with the aiming point at the intersection of the 8/10 line and the centerline. This is not a commonly used shot, but like every other special shot, it can be very useful at the right time.

Nor can the Tampa be misplaced very many inches toward the apex without becoming useful to the opponent (Figure 26). If it stops exactly on the apex, both players have an equal hide, and in this situation the hide favors the player who gets in there first.

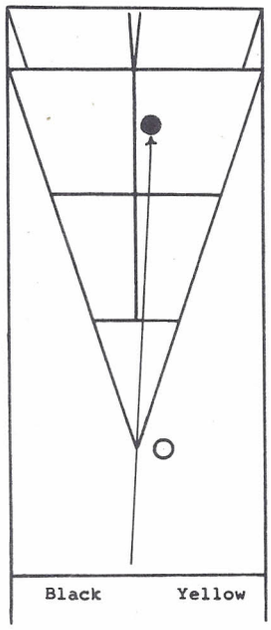


Figure 25

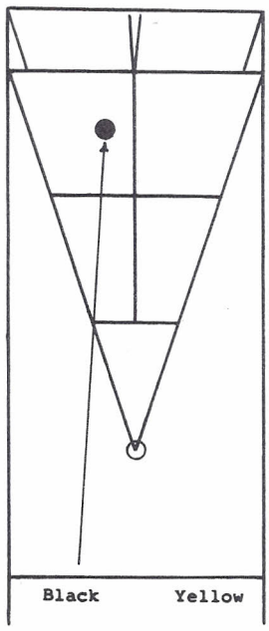


Figure 26

Now it is seen that a Tampa that is misplaced only a few inches either to the right or to the left becomes a guard for the opponent, and for this reason, a player must be very careful with his aim when he shoots this guard. Many experienced players scorn the Tampa because of this particular difficulty.

Special Uses of the Tampa. Despite its weaknesses, however, some players like to use the Tampa as an alternative shot to the St. Pete when they shoot disc No. 5. Discs No. 1 and No. 3 are shot as St. Petes, then No. 5 is shot as a Tampa. The change in the placing of the guard sometimes causes the opponent to aim carelessly, which may result in his disc sticking as he clears away the Tampa. Then the player can hide disc No. 7 beyond the stuck disc. Also, when shooting a Tampa with disc No. 5, the player gets a chance to find the correct range for shooting a high 10 score with disc No. 7, which the player intends to do if the opponent's disc No. 6 does not stick as he knocks away the Tampa.

The Tampa can be effective, too, on a drifty court. This use of the Tampa will be discussed in detail in Chapter XIV.

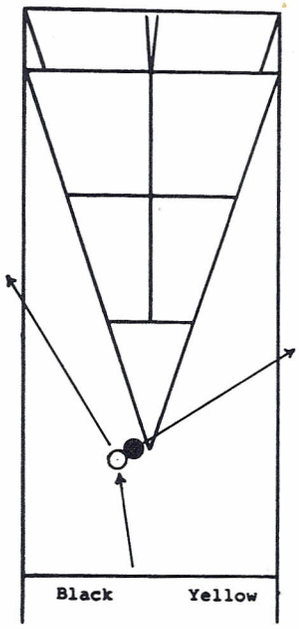


Figure 27

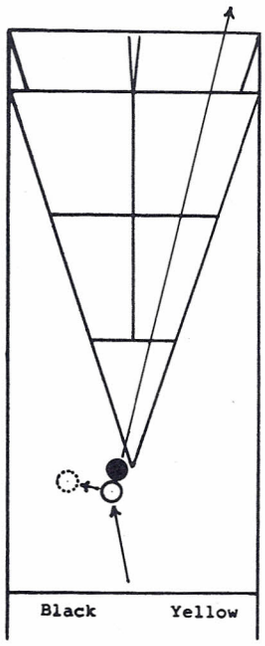


Figure 28

REPLYING TO THE TAMPA

Normally, the correct reply to the Tampa is to clear the board, but since the Tampa is so far from either side of the court, it is often difficult to get the cue disc entirely off the court after it strikes the Tampa. The shot is a greater problem on a slow court. Shooting from position 2 when clearing the Tampa, the player can increase his chances for success with this shot.

The cue disc should strike the Tampa on the side opposite the apex (Figure 27). At this angle it is easier to get the cue disc off the court, and if the disc does fail to clear the court, it will stop somewhere near the player's own St. Pete position. If the cue disc is shot to glance in the opposite direction and does not leave the court, usually it will be useful to the opponent for a hide, unless it stops at the player's Tampa position.

But there is also a disadvantage in striking the Tampa on the side opposite the apex. It is the risk of causing the Tampa to stop in the scoring area. The player must always guard against this possibility by shooting fast enough to insure that the Tampa will leave the court whichever direction it goes.

There are three things to consider when spoiling a Tampa guard: Do not drop it into a scoring area; do not let the cue disc stick, leaving another guard as effective as the first one; do not let either disc glance to a place that will give the opponent a good hide.

OTHER RESPONSES TO THE TAMPA

The following responses to the Tampa guard must be considered as inferior shots in normal play, though sometimes there may be particular situations in which a player would prefer to use one of these shots. The new player can try the shots on an experimental basis just to become familiar with them.

Kitchening the Tampa. Some players deliberately try to kitchen the Tampa and cause their cue disc to glance to their own St. Pete position (Figure 28). The risk in this shot is obvious. If the player is behind in score and badly needs a kitchen shot, he may assume the risk, which is considerable, of kitchening the Tampa; but kitchening a Tampa just because it is there is not good playing. There must be a better reason.

Scoring in the 7-Area. A fairly strong play in this group of shots is the placing of a disc in the 7-area close to the centerline, as at R in Figure 29. This disc is not hidden, but it is a difficult one to spoil because the opponent must shoot close to the guard. The spoiling of this

score is risky with a slow shot when the scoring disc is near the kitchen. But if the disc in the vicinity of R does not stop near the centerline, this shot is ineffective.

Although this shot involves some risk for the player, the chance of his shooting the cue disc into the kitchen is no greater than it would be if he were shooting kitchen bait. The shot is sound for disc No. 6 when the opponent is shooting a Tampa with disc No. 5 to get the range for a high 10 with disc No. 7.

Reversing the Tampa Guard. Occasionally, when a player attempts to clear away his opponent's Tampa, the shot is far enough off so that the cue disc glances across the apex to the player's own Tampa position. Of course, this is a fortunate circumstance, since the player has completely spoiled his opponent's guard and has set one up for himself in the same shot. But, desirable as this situation is, a player cannot use this combination as a deliberate reply to the Tampa. The reasoning is, that since the chief argument against using a Tampa is that it is a difficult shot to make, then how much greater should be the argument against reversing the guard, which is simply shooting a Tampa the hard way. In other words, it is very difficult to control the glancing of a disc with the accuracy needed to produce a safe and useful Tampa.

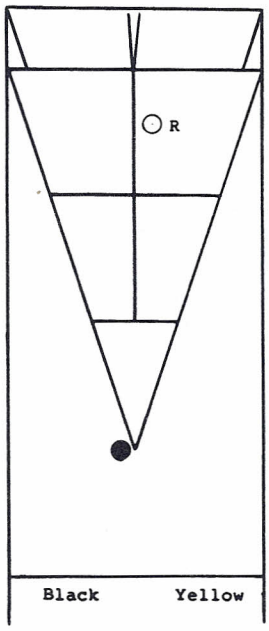


Figure 29

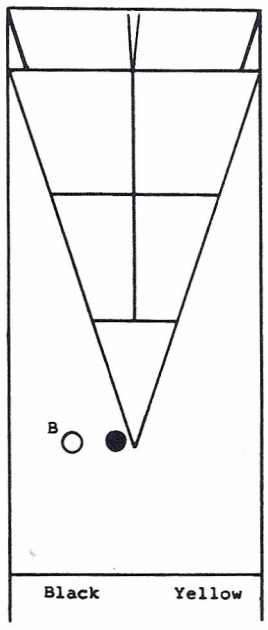


Figure 30

Filling In. Blocking, or filling in, is sometimes used as a reply to the Tampa, as placing a block at B in Figure 30. This block is placed close enough to the edge of the court to discourage the opponent from taking a hide along the edge. To the player who uses the fill-in method of replying to the St. Pete, this method of replying to the Tampa must seem illogical, since when using it, he places his opponent in exactly the same situation as he attempts to place himself when the opponent's guard is a St. Pete. That is, he leaves his opponent a chance to bunt the Tampa on to the scoring area beyond the double guard on the next shot. (See the section below on the Tampa block.)

THE TAMPA AS A PREVENTIVE GUARD

The blocking game is contrary to the concept of clearing the board. The experienced shuffler, who always plays a conservative but aggressive game, in most cases will shun the blocking technique and will vigorously pursue the clearing of the board and the using of every available hide. But it would be wrong to discredit completely a particular shot simply because it does not generally conform to an accepted mode of play. If one plays the game logically, he will always be assessing the value of special plays as they apply to a particular situation. The basic consideration

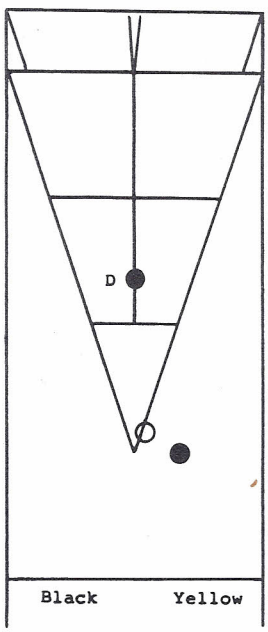


Figure 31

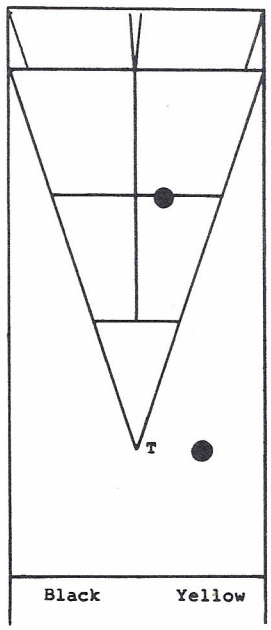


Figure 32

is the risk of the shot, and that is not constant from game to game.

The plays in the last part of this chapter are not presented as methods of playing the game, but rather as possibilities for use in special situations. There is no shot, however useful, that is acceptable all of the time; and no shot, however risky, is unacceptable in every instance. There is a place in this game for every kind of shot, though some of them are not used very often.

The Tampa Block. Tournament players seldom use this shot, though mediocre players, who always seem to have difficulty clearing the board, often use this shot as a substitute for clearing the board (Figure 31). This must be considered an inferior shot when it is used in this manner on a normal court. But sometimes, when the game is being played on a slow court, a player may find it very difficult to clear the board, even though he shoots hard. Rather than have his discs stick near his opponent's St. Pete position, he may decide to block, especially when the St. Pete is a few inches closer to the apex than normal. The player may shoot a deep Tampa (Figure 31) to block his opponent's next shot, which would be to hide a disc beyond his St. Pete. This leaves a double guard at the apex on the player's side of the board.

The player does not expect that his opponent will leave the double guard alone, but if his opponent fails to spoil it, the block becomes a potential bunt shot with the cue disc sticking in an excellent position to reinforce the St. Pete guard.

There is one thing to keep in mind when using a Tampa block. The guard is essentially a Tampa, and all the precautions related to the placing of a Tampa must be used when one makes this shot. If the guard is placed so that the opponent can slip a scoring disc beyond it, the opponent has a double guard. And, too, the guard must be placed so as not to block the other side of the board from the player.

Replying to the Tampa Block. The opponent can reply to the Tampa block in several ways.

1. He may knock it off the board and get his own disc out of the way so he can use his St. Pete hide. This is the usual reply when the player's strategy is clearing the board.

2. He may knock it off the board and let his own disc stick in its place as a potential bunt, to score on his next shot.

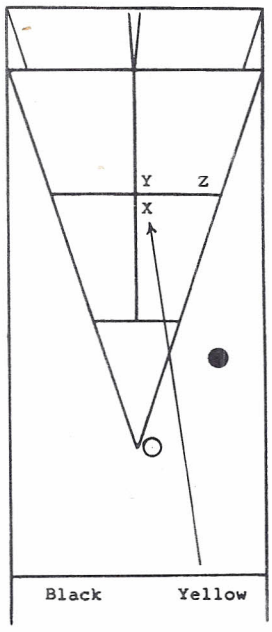


Figure 33

3. He may be able to bunt his St. Pete for a score and stick to keep the double guard formation.

4. He may place his cue disc on the centerline as a potential double (as at D in Figure 31).

5. He may, like some players who seem to be irked by the Tampa block, want to kitchen it whenever it appears; but that is always risky. It is so easy to make one's opponent a gift of seven points by underestimating kitchen speed.

OTHER PREVENTIVE GUARDS

A preventive guard may be used to forestall a shot to any part of the scoring area, but from the foregoing analysis of the St. Pete and the Tampa, it is apparent that a guard placed in any other position is likely to give one's opponent the advantage of a hide. So the player must consider the situation carefully before using a blocking disc in some other position. With a protective guard the situation is different. One places a guard wherever it is necessary to protect a score, but rather than to place a preventive guard in a position that will provide a hide for the opponent, the player should find an alternative shot.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS INVOLVING THE TAMPA BLOCK

Sometimes the Tampa block can be used to exploit an error. The success of the following plays depends on the misplacement of the opponent's cue disc.

The Nonscoring Hide. Figure 32 shows a very important use of the Tampa block. The attempted hide by Black has stopped on the 7/8 line. This play should now be blocked by Yellow with a disc at T, the Tampa position. This block prevents the opponent from having another chance to use the hide. If the guard were knocked away, the opponent would have a potential double. The same principle would apply if Black's disc happened to stop on the 8/10 line.

The Misplaced St. Pete. Placing a block in the Tampa position may be a more effective reply to a St. Pete that goes too far than clearing the board (Figure 33). One should study the possibilities of this shot carefully. The St. Pete should be in a position that allows room between the two guards for shooting the cue disc to the position of X or Y. Although there may be a possibility that the opponent may slip a hide between the guards to Z, the risk will not be significant because it will be a difficult shot. Very likely his reply will be to knock away the Tampa. The advantage of this play is that it neutralizes the opponent's guard and, in the same shot, it sets up a guard for the player. Probably, the best reply to this shot is to knock away the Tampa and cause the cue disc to glance a few inches to make a double guard.

A Nonscoring Disc on a Crossline. Two places a preventive guard can be used effectively are shown in Figure 34. When a kitchen bait, or any other disc, stops on a crossline, the usual reaction is to clear the board; but if the disc that stops on the crossline is not kitchen bait, a guard to prevent doubling on the opponent's next shot can be effective. The guard is placed in the player's St. Pete or Tampa position. The disc at A can be blocked by a St. Pete at S; the disc at B, by a Tampa at T. Then Yellow will, if given a chance, play a backstop shot against the blocked disc, A or B, to score an 8 and to send the liner to the kitchen beyond a double guard.

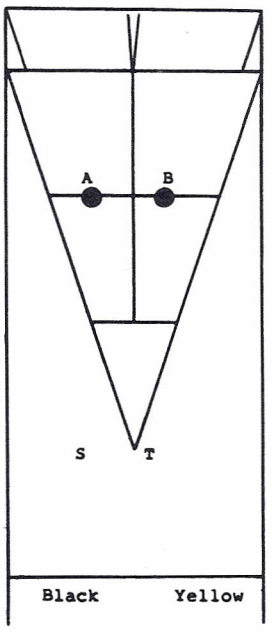


Figure 34

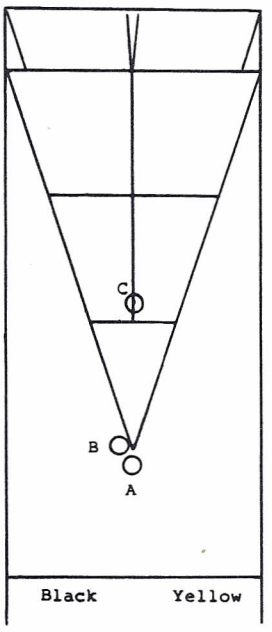


Figure 35

The strength of this play lies in the fact that the player is able to set up a guard for himself without delay and at the same time create problems for his opponent. If the opponent is an experienced player, he will not allow this play to develop as planned; nevertheless, the play is still effective in that it compels the opponent to deviate from his planned strategy.

Blocking with Disc No. 7. When shooting disc No. 7, the player may block the board. Figure 35 shows three positions at which a single disc may be placed as a block. Blocking with disc No. 7 is much more effective, however, when other discs are already in front of the scoring area. A block consisting of only one disc serves more as a distraction to the opponent than as an effective block.

Blocks A and B, in the vicinity of the apex, may cause the opponent to shoot a bit wide and get a liner. If the Tampa at B is to be used, the player should remember to shoot it on his opponent's side of the board. C is a good position to use when the court has a drift in that area; the opponent may nick the guard at C, giving the player a score, or he may go on the sideline trying to compensate for the drift. The disadvantage in placing a disc at C is the danger of not getting it fully out of the 10-area, where the opponent can use it as a backstop for a certain score of 10 for himself.

When the board is clear, the alternative to blocking the board with disc No. 7 is shooting a high number, which will be explained later.

CHAPTER VIII
HIDING A SCORE — SOME SPECIAL SHOTS

We have discussed the usual areas where scoring discs are hidden during a half round of play; that is, beyond the St. Pete and the Tampa guards. Hiding a disc in these areas is comparatively easy, but there are several other hides, some of them rather difficult to make, that should be mentioned at this time.

LOOK FOR HIDES

A player should be alert to hides that are offered to him unintentionally by his opponent. When the opponent's cue disc sticks or stops in a place that is advantageous as a hide, the player should use it. Beginning players sometimes fail to recognize such a hide because it is the opponent's disc.

The advantage of the unexpected hide is clear. If a player succeeds in sneaking in a hide and successfully protects his score throughout the half round, the result is as though he had shot five discs, whether he is shooting the even numbers or the odd.

Usually it pays to be aggressive in taking advantage of unexpected hides. If it is a situation which seems to benefit the two players about equally, one remembers that such a hide favors the player who gets to it first.

ANALYSIS PROBLEM (FIGURE 36)

The play is in the middle of the game and Yellow is slightly behind. Yellow is about to shoot disc No. 7. Where is a good place to put it?

Compare your analysis with the discussion of this problem at the end of the chapter.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR HIDES

The Corner-7 Shot. Occasionally, a player's guard stops too close to the edge of the court to be a good protection for a scoring disc, as in Figure 37. The protected area beyond G is only a corner of the 7-area, which is difficult to use for scoring. The area is small, like the corner of the 10, and it is at the extreme corner of the court near the kitchen. To lessen the risk of the kitchen in this shot, the player starts his shot from position 3, as close to the edge of the court as he can get. He aims at point P, which lies at the corner of the kitchen area, so that if his disc travels too far, it will stop on the boundary line at the end of the kitchen rather than wholly within the kitchen area. Though the corner 7 is a difficult shot, it can be made often enough to make it very useful at the right time.

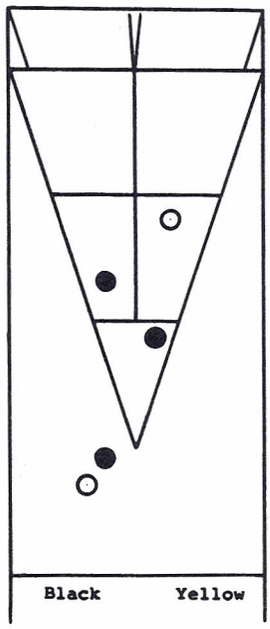


Figure 36

When a player shoots disc No. 1 too close to the side of the board for a good cross guard, often the opponent will ignore it and shoot a cross guard of his own. If the first guard was really bad, the player will not try to hide disc No. 3 beyond it, but will wait and use the hide for his last shot, disc No. 7, if no better hide turns up during the half round. So the player will knock away his opponent's cross guard with disc No. 3, and he will do the same with disc No. 5, then hide his last disc in the corner of the 7-area beyond the poorly-placed cross guard.

Disc No. 7 need not be completely hidden to frustrate the opponent when he shoots his hammer. The risk to the opponent when attempting to spoil a half-hidden score so near the kitchen is enough to cause even a reckless player to look for a better use for his hammer shot. Unless the disc in the corner 7 is the winning score, or brings the player perilously close to

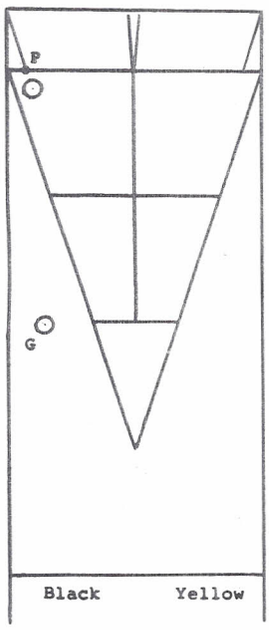


Figure 37

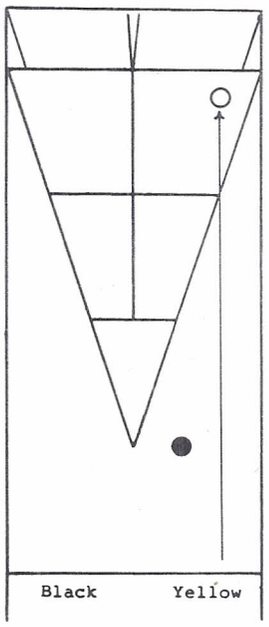


Figure 38

game point, the opponent will use his hammer for a simple score.

The Alley Shot. A tempting shot, and a risky one, too, is shooting to hide a score near the corner 7 beyond the opponent's cross guard, on the player's own side of the board (Figure 38). This shot does not have the built-in safety feature that the shot to the opposite corner 7 has. It ends in disaster so often that the edge of the court outside the opponent's cross guard has been nicknamed **suicide alley.** Tournament players shun this shot.

Consider the characteristics of the shot that make it risky. It is a long shot, the scoring area is small, and directly behind the scoring area is the kitchen. But that is not all. Few courts are of uniform slickness. There is often a noticeable slowness along the edges of a court, which makes the judgment of distance shooting uncertain. All of this spells out one word very clearly: Beware!

However, there are some things about this shot that are worth considering. If the opponent's cross guard is misplaced far enough toward the apex to allow the player to shoot approximately to the center of the 7-area, the danger of this shot ending in the kitchen is greatly reduced. But what is to be gained by hiding a disc in the 7-area when the opponent can easily come in from the opposite side and hide a disc in the 8-area with less risk? (Figure 39.) This simply results in a battle over a hiding place that is of dubious value to either player.

Is there ever a time, then, when the alley shot can be recommended? Surely not when logical strategy calls for a clearing of the board. Possibly—just possibly, in some situation when clearing the board is difficult, or when the player is shooting the odd-numbered discs, he might use this shot if he first places a Tampa block. But more likely, a player will find a use for this shot with disc No. 7, when a score is urgently needed and this is the best hide available.

There is, however, a situation for which the alley shot seems to have been made to order. This use of the alley shot will be discussed in Chapter XIV, Problems of the Drifty Court.

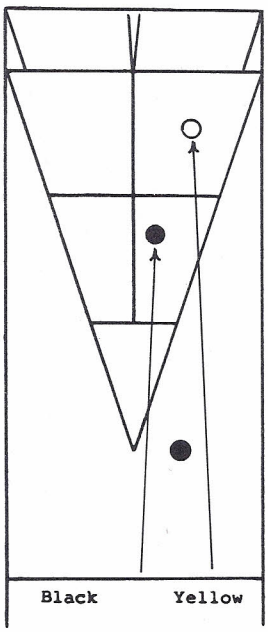


Figure 39

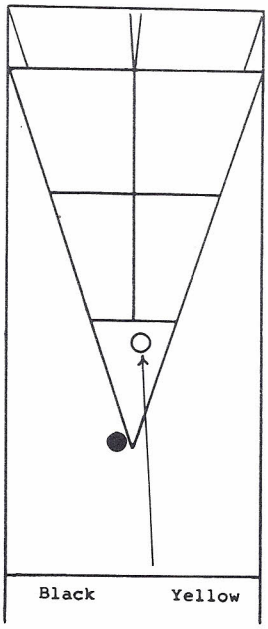


Figure 40

A Hide in the 10-Area. Another effective shot, for the right time in a game, is a hide in the 10-area beyond the opponent's Tampa guard (Figure 40). A player should keep this unique little sheltered area in mind, as it can become an important piece of real estate in a close game. It is easily accessible, but parking is a problem because the area is so small.

This can be a great opportune shot with disc No. 7 when the player needs a 10, or when there is nothing better to do with that disc; but its use with disc No. 7 can never be a planned strategy because no one would ever shoot a Tampa with disc No. 6. Sometimes, however, a disc just happens to be in the opponent's Tampa position when the player is ready to shoot No. 7.

The disc in the low 10-area will be about half concealed by the guard, and it cannot be used by the opponent as a backstop for scoring. The nearness of this hide to the Tampa guard calls for a combination shot in most cases, which, even if successful, will spoil the opponent's hammer.

Bunts and Glances. These shots are the logical outcome of the blocking game and are not so common with players who consistently clear the board. When they are used as incidental shots for hiding a disc, bunts and glances are very useful; but both kinds are weak shots for a planned strategy.

The mechanics of these shots will be understood better after a reading of the section on combinations and caroms, and a further discussion of them will be taken up in Chapter X.

HIDE TWO DISCS OR REINFORCE THE GUARD

Yellow has succeeded in setting up a guard with a score soundly hidden at D (Figure 41). Black has failed to attack this guard, and now Yellow has to decide what to do with his next shot. There is plenty of room to hide another disc between the guard G and the scoring disc D. Is this a wise play? Yellow must consider the risks and the need for another score, along with the possibility of his doing as well with some other shot.

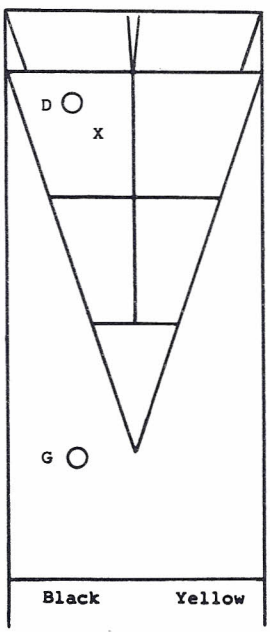


Figure 41

Let us consider the risks. To place another disc directly in line with G and D would be difficult, though not discouragingly so. But, if this disc should stop at some place such as X that would be more than 50 percent visible to the opponent as he is looking past G, the opponent could easily knock it away. The disc would go in the general direction of D; and the opponent would, in every case, attempt this shot, trying to spoil both scores with one shot. In shufflese, putting a disc beyond a guard in a position that endangers another well-hidden score is known as **putting a handle on it;** that is, putting a handle on the first score.

The conservative play for Yellow, in this situation, would be to reinforce the guard with his next disc rather than to hide another score. If he is trailing badly, he might attempt to hide the second disc; but if he is leading comfortably, he will play conservatively. And if he does not have the hammer, he will play, if possible, even more conservatively.

Another risk that Yellow must take, whether he hides a second disc or reinforces the guard, is the chance of having his cue disc nick (bump) his guard at G. This is about the worst thing that can happen to a player when he tries to shoot a third disc into an area where he already has a good hide. If he shoots to reinforce the guard at G, and his cue disc only slightly touches it, both discs will move apart, leaving the score at D wide open to attack.

ANSWER TO THE ANALYSIS PROBLEM (FIGURE 36)

How about an attempt to kitchen the black 8 and stick in the 8-area for a score that would be completely hidden? The knocking out of Black's 10 and 8 with a combination shot would leave Yellow's score in the 8-area unprotected, and Yellow's cue disc would not be able to score. Black could then attempt to play Yellow's 8 for the kitchen and cause his cue disc to stick in the 8-area for a score on his hammer shot.

CHAPTER IX
MORE SPECIAL SHOTS

THE BACKSTOP

A player often uses a disc that is already on the board to backstop his cue disc in the area he wants it. When a disc is hit head-on, the cue disc comes to almost a complete stop at the point of contact. Usually there is very little forward movement of the cue disc after its head-on collision with the target. Figure 42 shows some common uses of the backstop. (In each instance, consider that the disc in question is the only disc on the board.) Each of these plays has been, or will be, discussed in another section. The uses of the backstop which are illustrated in the diagram are:

1. To score and clear the backstop off the board. A, B, C, or D might be in this group.
2. To score and kitchen the backstop. The same discs, A, B, C, or D, might be in this group also.
3. To reverse the kitchen. Disc E, which is in the deep kitchen, is ideally located for a reversal of the kitchen.
4. To shoot a high 7 or a high 8. The player can use disc C, if it is his opponent's disc, as a backstop to place his cue disc so close to the 7/8 line that his opponent cannot, in turn, backstop against it and score.
5. To double a score, as can be done if the disc at B is the player's own disc.

The national shuffleboard rules require that any disc that passes through the kitchen and stops eight inches or less beyond the baseline must be removed from the court immediately so it cannot backstop another disc in that half round. An example is the disc at F. If F were touching the baseline, it would be left on the board. The referees often ask the players who are seated at the receiving end of the court to remove these discs, but a player must remember that he should not touch one of these discs until the referee asks him to do so.

The backstop shot is more reliable on a slow court than on a fast court because there is less tendency for the cue disc to glance on impact with the target. The target must be hit on dead center and usually the cue disc must be moving slowly as it strikes the target on a fast court. The slow speed of the cue disc makes the backstop shot susceptible to any drift in that particular part of the court. So under the conditions that may exist on a fast court, backstopping may be tricky, especially in the case of a long shot.

In Figure 43, Yellow can use his own disc in the 7-area as a backstop for spoiling Black's score of 8, while at the same time using Black's 8 as a backstop for his cue disc, to score an 8 for himself.

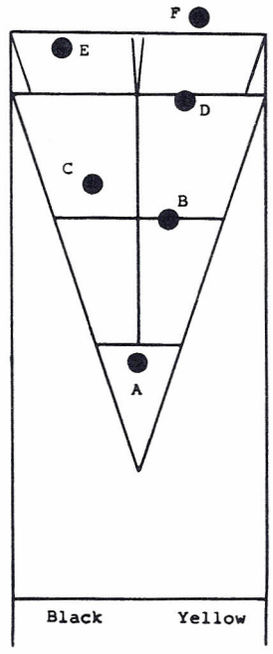


Figure 42

SHOOTING A HIGH NUMBER

The high numbers referred to here are: a high 10, as at A in Figure 44; a high 8, as at B; a high 7, as at C. High number means that the scoring disc is so close to one of the horizontal lines that the opponent cannot use the disc as a backstop to score his cue disc. A high number is difficult to shoot since, if the disc stops only 6 inches beyond the line, it becomes useful to the opponent as a backstop. And in the case of

the high 8 and the high 7, the disc becomes a good backstop if it falls short and stops on the line.

The High 10. The high 10 is a difficult shot to place, and a low 10 is easy to score against. When the player shoots too far into the 10-area, his opponent often tries, even though it may be an ill-chosen shot, to cause his cue disc to stick for a score and to send the player's 10 score to the kitchen. Many low 10's land in the kitchen, not because it is an easy shot or the correct shot, but because this shot intrigues many shufflers. This is sometimes called an up-and-down shot—10 points up and 10 points down. It is very tempting.

But, not infrequently, the player immediately regrets his choice of shot as he watches his opponent's disc leave the low 10-area and stop in the deep 7-area for a score. The shot, of course, should be made with kitchen-speed-plus, and occasionally an up-and-down shot will come from it.

If the low 10 happens to be near the centerline, it can be scored upon, and the disc can be kitchened by sending it directly down the centerline, thus avoiding much of the risk of dropping it into the scoring area. And, sometimes, especially when one is shooting his hammer shot and there are other scores on the board, it may be better to spoil the low 10 by bunting it gently upon the centerline.

When a player chooses to shoot a high 10 with disc No. 7, it is better that his disc fall short of the score than overshoot into the deep 10. Short of its goal the cue disc will serve as a nonscoring block for the opponent's hammer, rather than as a backstop; and as a block, the disc will never find its way into the kitchen.

A disc snuggled into the corner of the 10-area on the opponent's side of the board presents the opponent with a greater problem than a disc in the opposite corner (Figure 45). The disc must be hit lightly to keep the cue disc from glancing out of the 10-area; it must be hit with precision to make a kitchen shot. The combination of these requirements is so difficult that if both goals are sought, often nothing is achieved.

The value of a high 10 is greater on a fast court as it is then more difficult to score on.

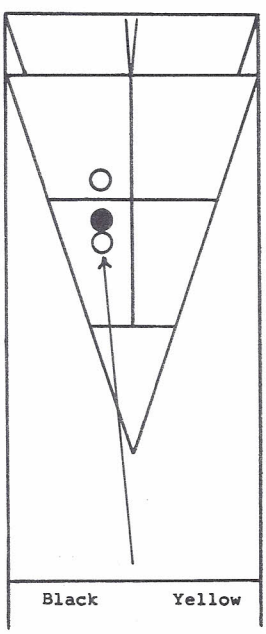


Figure 43

The High 8. Because of the difficulty of shooting a high 10, most players prefer to shoot a high 8. To shoot for any score of 8, the player can use the midpoint of either one of the 8/10 line segments to spot the shot (Figure 46). Since each of the 8-areas is wider at the back than at the front, shooting across the midpoint is like shooting the cue disc into the small end of a funnel. Once the disc enters the funnel safely, the sidelines are no longer a hazard since the moving disc has more and more room as it slides forward. The funnel principle is more effective when the shot is made from near position 2, toward the 8-area on the opposite side of the board. With this shot, the player's cue disc will cross the far corner of the 10-area, as shown in the drawing, and if the cue disc falls short of its goal in the 8-area, it will give the player an occasional score in the corner of the 10-area as a bonus for poor shooting.

The shot to the 8-area on the player's side of the board should be started from position 1. The midpoint of the other 8/10 line segment can be used to spot this shot, though more care must be taken to keep the cue disc off the centerline. When the center of this 8-area is used as the aiming point, scores are sometimes lost by the cue disc stopping on the sideline.

In replying to a high 8, the opponent must decide whether to attempt a glance shot to score or a kitchen shot, when scoring seems too difficult. One or the other of these two shots is almost always used when the player is shooting his hammer.

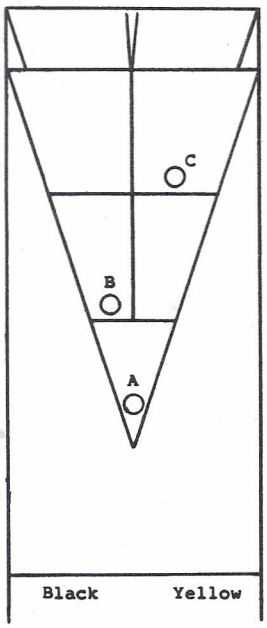


Figure 44

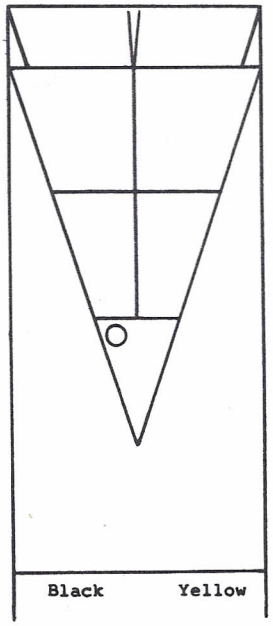


Figure 45

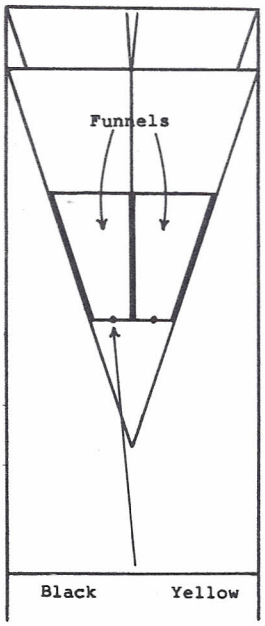


Figure 46

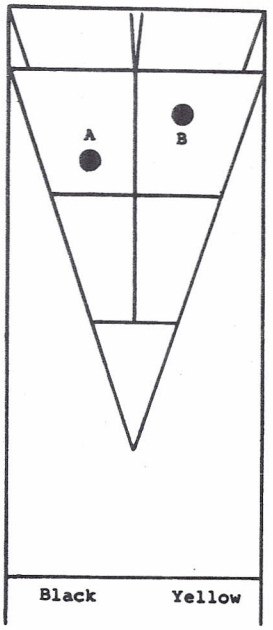


Figure 47

The value of the high 8 and the high 7 is greater on a slow court because the opponent's disc must glance a considerable distance to score, and a glance is more easily performed on a fast court.

The High 7. This disc is more difficult to place than the high 8, and the shot is seldom attempted unless a disc is already in the 7-area, as at A in Figure 47, that can be used as a backstop to insure that the cue disc will be stopped close to the line. If Yellow were to choose between disc A or disc B for an attack with his disc No. 7, he would choose A because that shot would give him a high 7, against which it would be difficult for Black to score his hammer.

The opponent finds it easier to score against a high 7 than a high 8 because of the greater width of the 7-area, but he also senses a greater danger from the near-by kitchen area.

When a player is in doubt of the depth of the space between the opponent's disc and the cross-line, as at A in Figure 47, he should ask the referee to tell him whether there is room to score behind the disc. He is permitted to do this under the national shuffleboard rules.

THE SNUGGLE SHOT

Whenever the score is uneven in a game, a half round in which both players score equally favors the player who is ahead. If a player is far ahead of his opponent, the advantage of an even half round becomes so great that the player can safely ignore his opponent's scoring disc, if doing so makes the scoring equal in that half round. On this principle lies the value of the snuggle shot.

Figure 48 shows Black's disc in the deep 7, where he shot the disc as kitchen bait. Yellow could have kept the score even by clearing the board, but, perhaps fearing that his cue disc might stick and be vulnerable to the kitchen on the next shot, he preferred to even the score by snuggling his cue disc close to Black's score, so that each player scores a 7. This play favors Yellow because he is so close to the winning score. Black cannot afford to let him have this score, but it is a problem for Black to spoil Yellow's score without doing greater harm to himself. A direct hit, even at high speed, will spoil Black's score and leave Yellow's disc on the board in almost the same place. If the shot is attempted with finesse, it may result in a fiasco,

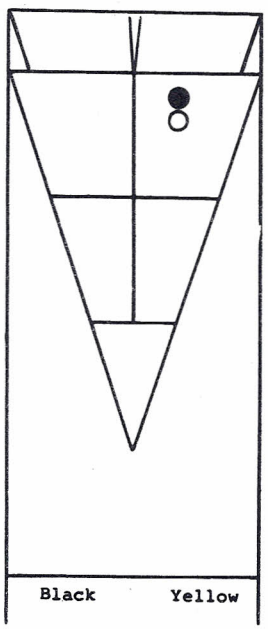


Figure 48

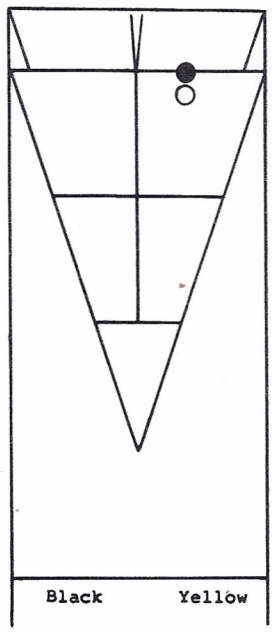


Figure 49

leaving Black's scoring disc or his cue disc in the kitchen.

The snuggle is a shot which requires a delicate touch. It can easily fail, and when it does, the result will always be less desirable than a clearing of the board; and, of course, the snuggle shot should never be used when clearing the board will leave the player in a superior position. It is primarily a shot to be used late in the game.

Beginning players may have a little difficulty deciding when to use the snuggle shot. Some, for instance, snuggle their cue disc behind their opponent's liner, or behind their opponent's disc which is just over a line. It is not so difficult to understand why these shots have no value to the player.

Figure 49 shows an instance in which the snuggle can be useful to a player who is slightly behind in score. Assuming that Yellow is behind in score and is shooting the odd-numbered discs, he can make this shot with discs No. 3 and No. 5, but preferably not with disc No. 7. There is more risk with the seventh disc. If the attempted snuggle should go too far and put the black disc into the kitchen, the opponent would reverse the kitchen with his hammer, and the player would be unable to retaliate.

WASTING A SHOT

There are times in a game when a particular disc may be a liability rather than an asset. The player may then decide to waste the shot rather than to place the disc on the board. The purpose of wasting a shot is to prevent the opponent from using the disc to his own advantage, as trying to play it for the kitchen, or scoring against it as a backstop, or using it for hiding a score.

Or perhaps the liability is the hammer that just happens to be there after the game is won. A player does not try to score his last hammer when it is not needed to win the game, because the shot can possibly fail and in some way give the opponent the score he needs to win. For instance, the hammer shot might spoil some of the player's scores that are already on the board, or nick one of the opponent's nonscoring discs giving him an unexpected and undeserved winning score; or it might bunt one of the player's discs into the kitchen, or stop of itself in the kitchen. Important games have been lost by experienced players because they failed to waste their hammer shot after the game was all but won.

The most sure way to waste a shot without in any way affecting other discs on the board is

to shoot the disc off the opponent's side of the court before it reaches the deadline. Often, however, players choose to waste a shot inconspicuously by shooting the disc so close to the opponent's edge of the court that it cannot be put into the kitchen, although it is over the deadline. One may also waste a shot by shooting the disc straight ahead so that it stops before it reaches the deadline, but one should never waste a shot by shooting the disc the entire length of the court when there are other discs on the board. One should use as much care when wasting a shot as when shooting for another purpose.

There is an unwritten rule in shuffleboard circles that demands that a player, for the sake of good sportsmanship, continue to play a somewhat normal game when he is ahead in score, and not resort to wasting shots simply for the purpose of keeping his opponent from scoring. A player might be criticized from the sidelines, for example, for shooting a disc off the side of the board, even in the last frame, simply to maintain a lead. This notion of good sportsmanship is not shared by the spectators of other sports. A team on the basketball court, for instance, does not hesitate to stall during the final seconds of a game to keep the opponents from scoring.

CHAPTER X
COMBINATIONS AND CAROMS

Combinations and caroms involve three discs. Displacement of the third disc, usually off the board, is the objective. When the cue disc strikes a target disc that, in turn, becomes a moving disc and strikes another target, the play is a combination; but if the cue disc strikes a target and continues on a different course to another target, the play is a carom.

COMBINATIONS

Line of Centers. Which way do two discs move after impact? If disc X (Figure 50) is shot from point A in the starting area, striking disc Y on its circumference at T, disc Y will move in the direction of BD, which is an extension of the line of centers BC. Line segment BC also passes through T, the point of contact of the two discs. And disc X will move in the direction of BE, which is perpendicular to BC.

Angle CBE, the angle between the combination and the carom, is always 90 degrees. The size of this angle and the direction that each disc moves have no relationship whatever to the point from which disc X was shot. Whether shot from A1 or A2, the angle between the combination and the carom will be 90 degrees; and if disc X strikes disc Y at T each time, the discs will fly away in the same directions each time. The difference is in their comparative speeds. When disc X is shot from A1, more energy is transmitted along line BE than if X had been shot from A2. Therefore, when shot from A1, disc X will move faster and go farther after impact than when it is shot from A2; and disc Y will move more slowly and will travel a shorter distance after impact if the shot is made from A1.

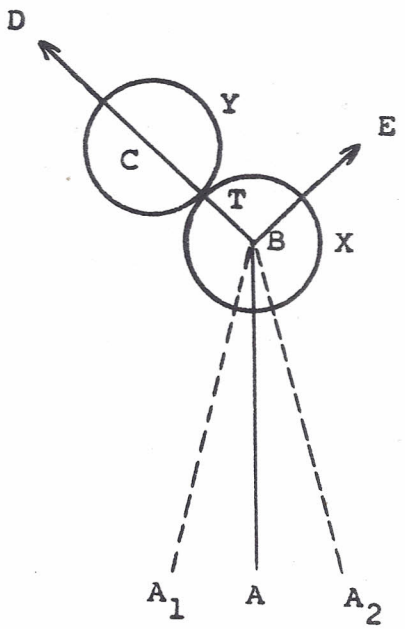


Figure 50

Finding the Aiming Point. Shufflers use various methods to make their combination shots. Whatever method is used, a successful shot is, at best, the result of a keen eye and a good estimate. Suppose the problem is to strike disc B in Figure 51a with disc C (not shown) so as to cause B to strike disc A. How shall C be shot to accomplish this?

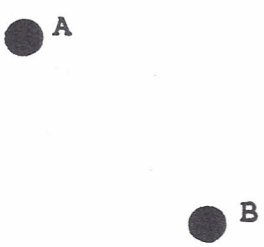


Figure 51a

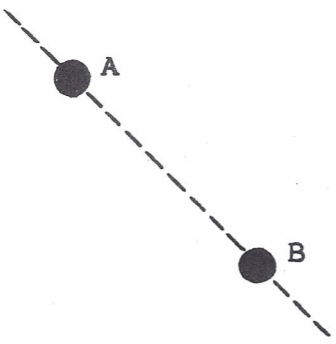


Figure 51b

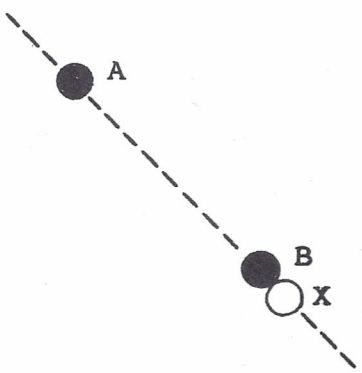


Figure 51c

Imagine a line drawn through the centers of A and B, as in Figure 51b. Now, as in Figure 51c, imagine another disc, such as X, placed so that it touches B with its center in line with the centers of A and B. The position of the imaginary disc X is the exact spot where the real disc C, the cue disc, must be when it strikes B to cause B to strike A. This is true regardless of the position from which the cue disc is shot. Disc B will always travel along line XB, the line of centers of discs X and B. If this line, when extended, also passes through A, or misses A by less than one-half the width of a disc, then disc B will strike A.

The Error Is Magnified. Why are combinations so difficult? Figure 52 shows why a combination shot is difficult to make. Notice that a disc that is shot from A, in the direction of AD, will cause disc D to move toward B; and a disc shot from A, in the direction of AC, will cause disc D to move in the direction of DE. The very small shooting error, equal to angle DAC, will cause the greatly magnified error in the direction taken by disc D, which is equal to angle BDE.

If it is desired that disc D strike the disc at F, then a high degree of precision will be required when shooting from A. Combination shots are highly uncertain when the two targets are more than two feet apart. The beginning player should not attempt a combination shot in a serious game unless the outcome of the game depends on that particular shot. The advanced player will practice these shots along with other difficult shots and will use them whenever his judgment dictates.

Reliability of the Combination Shot. Figure 53 illustrates an important principle. The combination shot is most reliable when it is made along the line passing through the centers of the cue disc C and the target T.

Point A represents the starting position of the cue disc. Notice that the angles at A are not equal in size. They become smaller as the cue disc strikes the target at a greater angle of combination (at T). Yet these angles have been drawn so that the change in the target direction is the same in each interval, 10 degrees. From the drawing it can be seen that the margin of aiming error (at A) becomes very small as the angle of combination increases to near its limit of 90 degrees. Above 45 degrees the reliability of the combination shot becomes so low that this play should be used only when there is no alternative. In other words, a head-on combination shot has a greater chance of success than a shot that causes the target to glance sharply to one side.

But it is not always desirable to make a head-on shot, since such a shot causes the cue disc to stick when it strikes the target. If one is using a combination shot, as in Figure 54, to remove Black's score in the 8-area that is well guarded by the St. Pete, a head-on shot from A would leave another guard as effective as the original one; and if the player fails to remove the scoring disc, he is faced with the same problem on his next shot. Of course, this situation is not a problem when the player is shooting his last disc, but at other times the player must shoot from a position near B to glance his disc away from the St. Pete position toward the edge of the board.

Usually a fast shot should be used when one shoots a combination, even though the fast shot tends to be more difficult to aim accurately. A slow shot has two faults that one wants to avoid in a combination shot: It is more susceptible to any drift that may be present in the court, and it often lacks the energy that is needed to clear both discs off the court.

The Bunt Shot. Opportunities to use combinations are numerous. Many shots of this kind do not involve three discs. The simple act of bunting another disc to a desired position on the board uses all the techniques of a combination shot, and it demands more skill than most three-disc combinations because of the great control of distance that is needed to make a successful shot. The kitchen shot is the most common example of the bunt. Whereas the kitchen shot often requires less precision in direction than a three-disc combination, almost always it demands a greater precision in distance. If, however, a kitchen shot is to be made against a backstop, the shot must be more precise in direction, while distance judgment is not so important since any excess energy will be absorbed by the backstop.

Kitchen shooting as a bunt shot should now be reviewed in the light of the foregoing principles of combinations. Figure 55 illustrates how a kitchen shot can be made when two discs are lying close together almost as easily as when the shot is made at a single target. The shot works very well even when there is a distance of several inches between the discs; only a bit

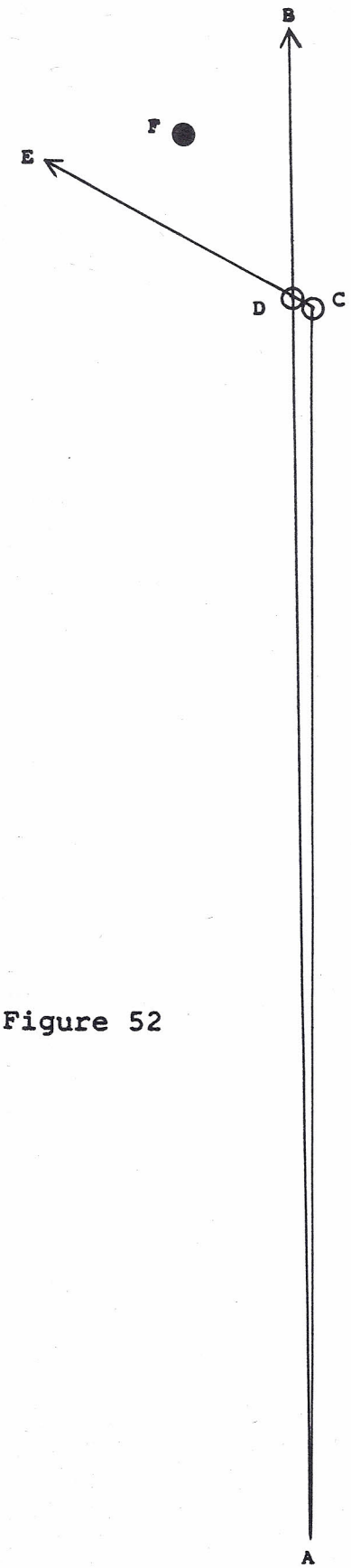


Figure 52

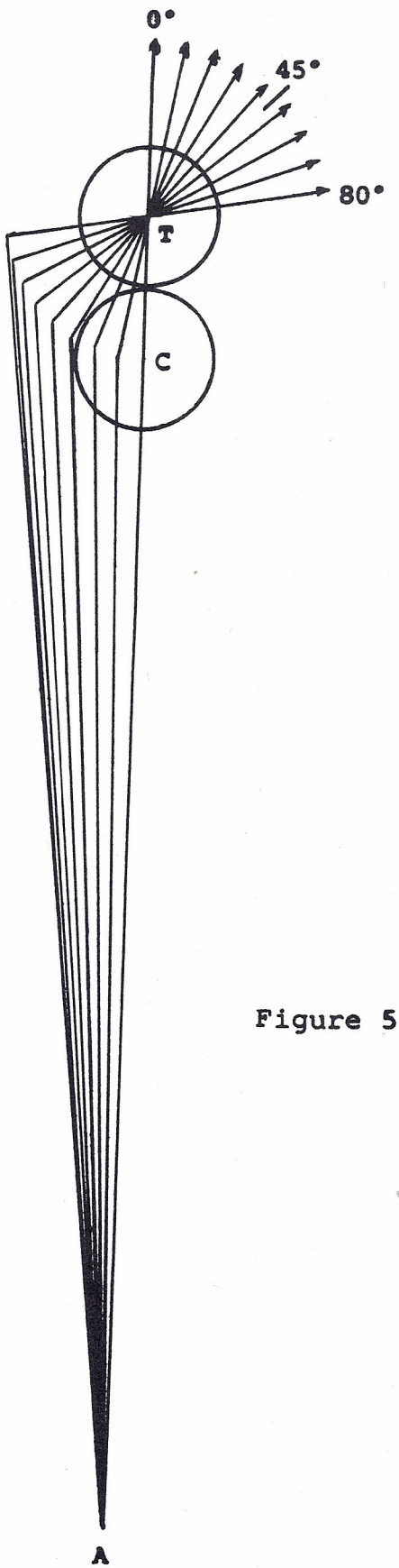


Figure 53

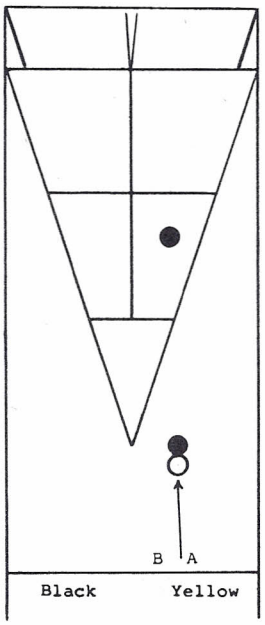


Figure 54

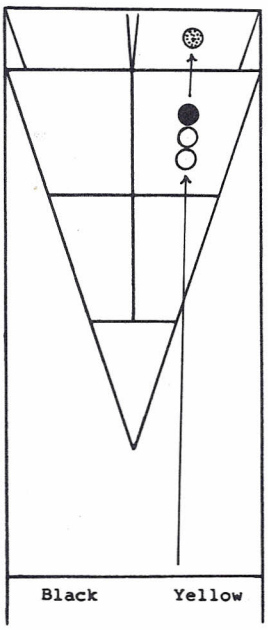


Figure 55

more accuracy is needed. When making this shot, the player remembers that kitchen speed is a mathematical constant of the court, so he does not shoot harder in this situation than he would if he were shooting at a single disc.

Bunt shots are, in effect, an extension of the player's shooting arm. He can reach out to the opposite end of the court and deftly adjust a stray disc, placing it in a desired position on the board, whether it be his own disc to score or his opponent's, for the kitchen. Bunts may also give the player a second chance at scoring a disc, and they are used occasionally to complete a two-step play to get a score on the board beyond a substantial guard.

A bunt is quite often useful in gaining a needed 10 score when the opponent has blocked the 10-area during the half round to prevent the player from shooting for his score. If the player has managed to place a disc close to the 10-area among the opponent's blocks, with his hammer shot he will attempt to bunt his disc into the 10-area. This play can be useful with disc No. 7, too, if the disc can be placed in the 10-area where it is even partially guarded.

ANALYSIS PROBLEM (FIGURE 56)

The reader may check his understanding of the principles of combinations by working this little problem. The answer is given at the end of this chapter.

(a) Draw these discs on a sheet of paper, and show by arrows the direction each disc, X, Y, and Z, will move as the cue disc strikes disc X at A.

(b) Make another drawing to show how the same discs will move as the cue disc strikes disc X at B.

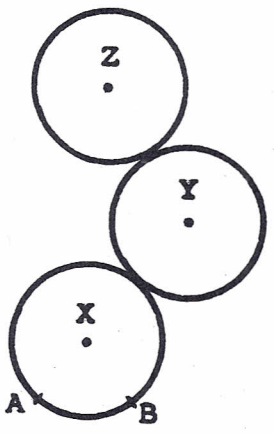


Figure 56

MULTIPLE SCORING SHOTS

The chief reason for keeping the board clear during a game is to prevent one's opponent from scoring several of his discs with one shot. In normal play this kind of shot is kept at a minimum by the preventive action of both players. Nevertheless, opportunities for making these shots do occur frequently.

The Double. The double is a shot in which a player scores both his cue disc and his own target disc that is lying on one of the lines of the shufflegram. Doubles have distinct characteristics, depending on whether the target disc lies on a crossline (Figure 57) or on the centerline (Figure 58). A crossline double usually leaves the two discs lined up, vulnerable to a combination shot; whereas, a centerline double often leaves the discs widely separated in different scoring areas. The crossline double requires a head-on hit for its completion, and it is the easier of the two shots to perform. The centerline double can be tricky, demanding more planning and considerably more skill in its execution. To shoot a centerline double successfully, the player must apply the principles of combinations, and it is important to control the distance that both discs travel since neither disc should stop on a line.

As compared to a kitchen shot, however, most doubles are comparatively easy to shoot. The percentage of success with either kind of double is high enough to warrant the selection of this shot whenever it appears, unless some other shot deserves priority. Even when a shot for a double fails, the result is often the scoring of one of the discs.

But there are some dangers lurking in these shots. Shooting for a centerline double in the middle of the 7-area, or deeper, is not safe because of the risk of sending one or both of the discs to the kitchen. The player must be careful to avoid the 45-degree hit in this case (Figure 19). A player may even tempt his opponent to take this risk by ignoring the opponent's disc on the centerline in the deep 7-area in preference to making a desired shot of his own.

Scoring a double frequently leaves both discs unprotected. When this happens, although one of the scores is lost, the value of the double lies in the player's chance to cover the other disc with a guard, which he could not have done if the disc had been scored by itself.

In certain situations the hammer is an excellent shot to use for shooting a double, because both scoring discs are safe from the opponent's attack. But the hammer should not be used on a centerline double below the 7/8 line, since the player will have no more discs to use in the event one of the discs stops in the kitchen.

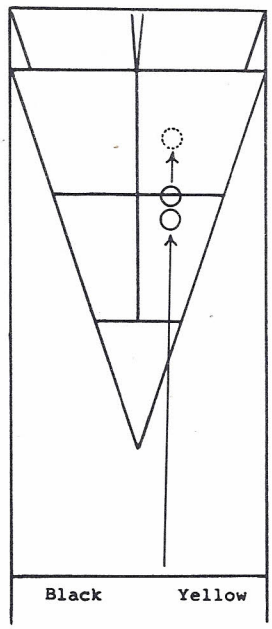


Figure 57

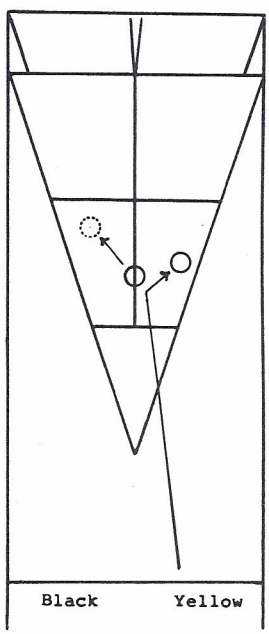


Figure 58

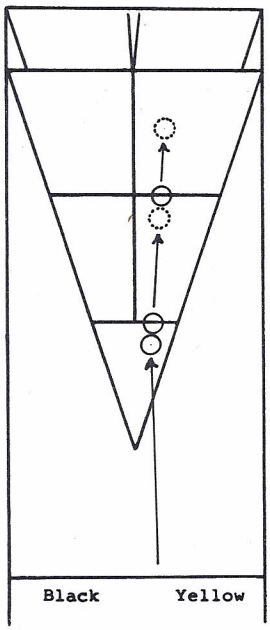


Figure 59

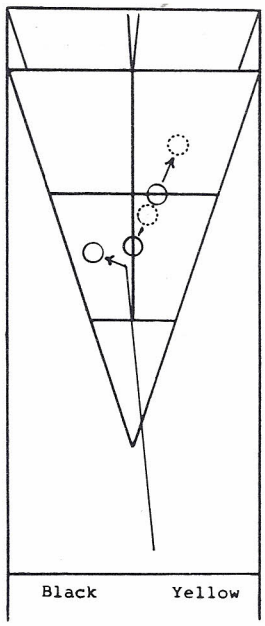


Figure 60

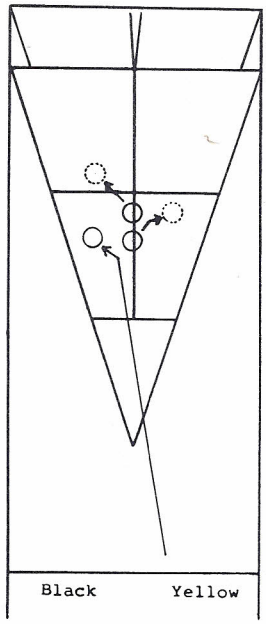


Figure 61

Discs resting on the sideline on the player's side of the board occasionally can be doubled, but all of these shots are difficult and uncertain. To insure even a fair degree of success, these shots should be started from position 3, and the liner should be more than half its width inside the scoring area.

The Potential Double. A disc lying on a line, where it can be scored along with the scoring of the cue disc, is known as a potential double. Normally, the spoiling of the opponent's potential double is rated in importance only slightly under the spoiling of a score. The automatic response is to spoil the opponent's potential double whenever it appears, but whether spoiling should have priority over hiding a score, depends, as always, on an analysis of the scoreboard and the situation on the shufflegram.

If the player has a good chance to hide a score and the potential double has little chance of success, the choice is not a difficult one to make. More difficult are the decisions based only on the player's urgent need for a score. In these situations, a very important consideration is whether the player has the hammer shot, or even an extra disc to shoot, with which he can deal with at least one of the scores if the opponent succeeds with his double.

The Triple. Triple shots — that is, the scoring of two discs besides the cue disc—are seldom planned. These shots are difficult and they fail more often than they succeed. Their value lies in the good chance the player has of scoring at least one of the discs, often two, with some chance of scoring three. Opportunities for a triple shot may occur in the course of a game when two of the player's discs are on the centerline, or near the intersection of the centerline and a crossline (Figures 59, 60, and 61). In these drawings the solid circles represent the discs which were on the board before the shot was made.

CAROMS

For the same reason that a combination shot has more chance for success when the two target discs are in line with the cue disc, carom shots are more successful when the cue disc glances sharply to one side. This is true because the angle between the carom and the combination is a right angle.

Two discs that are abreast on the board can be knocked away with a carom shot, and if they are not too far apart, the shot is fairly reliable (Figure 62). Although it is possible to strike two discs abreast on the opposite sides of the board,

something like picking up a split in bowling, the reliability of such a shot is extremely low.

Carom shots are more difficult than combinations. When the cue disc glances sharply in a carom, the first target absorbs most of the energy of the cue disc; therefore, a high-speed shot is needed to insure that the small amount of energy left with the cue disc will be sufficient to make the remainder of the shot successful.

When the cue disc glances at an angle of 45 degrees, the chances of success with a combination and a carom are about equal. At, or near, this angle the player's choice of shot will depend on considerations other than the mechanics of the shot. For instance, he will consider the possibility of a disc sticking as it strikes the second target, and he will play a carom or a combination according to whether he prefers his own disc or his opponent's disc to remain on the board.

A Fundamental Principle. A combination leaves the opponent's disc on the board if a disc sticks (Figure 63). A carom leaves the player's disc on the board if a disc sticks (Figure 64).

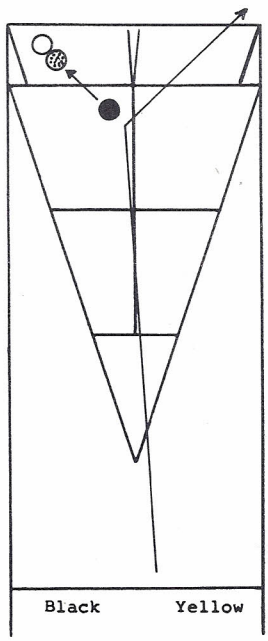


Figure 63

The Glance Shot. As the bunt is an incomplete combination, so the glance is an incomplete carom; and, as such, the principles of the carom apply to glances. A knowledge of these principles helps one to judge the feasibility of a particular shot.

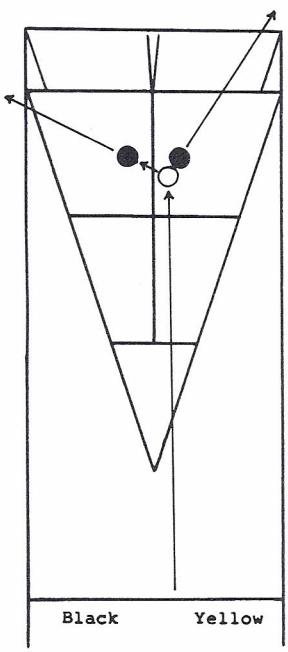


Figure 62

Glances provide another method of hiding a scoring disc. Often, as in Figure 65, another disc lies on the board in a suitable position for a hide. The value of the shot, in this particular case, is increased by the fact that the liner belongs to the player. If it belonged to the opponent, he could reply by doubling and spoiling the glance score with the same shot. Opportunities for this shot are common, and it should be used when the distance of the glance is not great, say 18 inches. If the player is behind in score to the extent that he is seriously thinking of going on the board, he can use a glance shot when the distance is much greater. If the cue disc fails to hide, he has simply made a kitchen-bait shot.

In Figure 66, the glance was made beyond a double guard. The double guard increases the value of this shot, since it would be difficult to control the glance so as to place it securely beyond a single guard, though sometimes it may be necessary to attempt the play.

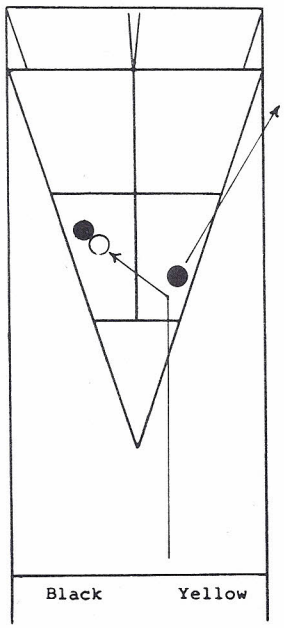


Figure 64

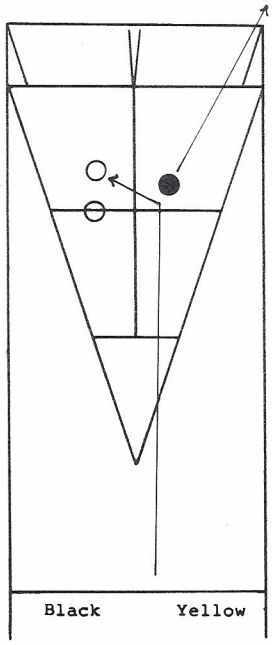


Figure 65

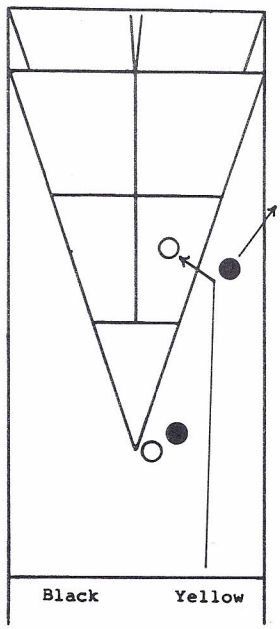


Figure 66

Answer to Analysis Problem (Figure 56).

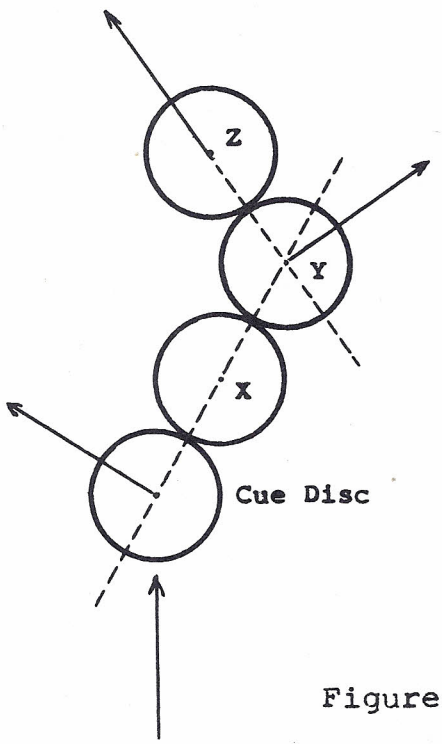


Figure 67a

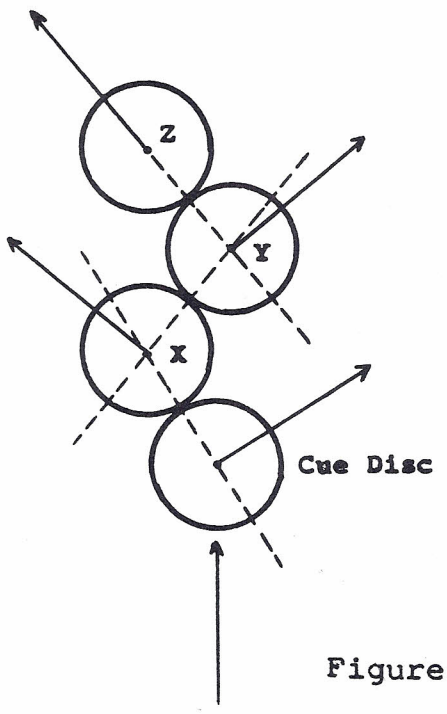


Figure 67b

CHAPTER XI
PREGAME SHOTS

The following discussion is in accordance with the rules of the National Shuffleboard Association. Various state rules differ widely in some respects.

PRACTICE SHOTS

Games in organized groups are usually preceded by several practice shots. The number of shots varies with the group. The national rules state that "Two full rounds of practice with each color are allowed for each player or team before play." The two players may shoot their discs alternately, Yellow first, or each player may shoot his four discs in succession, again Yellow first. If either player chooses to shoot all of his discs in succession, one of the players at the opposite end of the court may be asked to clear off the discs before the next player shoots his four.

There is always the question of how a player should use his practice shots. The answer, of course, depends on what the player wants to learn about the court. Some of the things he will want to determine are:

1. **Drift.** How much? Which direction? Is it uniform or spotty?
2. **Speed.** Is the court slow, fast, or medium? Is the speed uniform?
3. **Feel of the Court.** Try to determine just how much force is needed to make a particular shot.

Gathering so much information with so few shots is a big order. If a player has played a particular court before, he may be able to concentrate on the second and the third objectives, as the speed of the court is the characteristic that varies from time to time sufficiently to require reassessment. Drift in a court will change as the speed varies, but it is a characteristic that is less variable than speed.

A player cannot learn all he would like to know about a strange court in a few shots, so he must be selective while gathering his information. He should work out a pattern of practice shots that he likes to use whenever he starts a serious game; and while the practice shots are being made, the player should observe the movement of his opponent's discs as closely as his own as they travel the length of the court.

Each player will use his own judgment as to which shots to take to acquaint himself with the court, but the following suggestions should be helpful:

1. Practice shots should be made on an open section of the court. The discs should come to a stop by themselves. This is not a time to practice tactical shots; while bumping each other's discs around, the players learn nothing of importance about the court.
2. Shooting for the 7-area is a good average shot between the kitchen and the 8-area. It is a shot that the player should be able to make without the fear of sending his cue disc into the kitchen. This shot helps the player to get the feel of the court. It is useful, too, in making a hide.
3. Drift on the court should be determined for those areas where special care must be used when placing a disc during the game. If the court is found to have a bad drift, the practice pattern should be changed to include some special shots that the player will want to use because of the drift. After the players at both the head and the foot have had their practice shots with one color, the opponents will change positions and will practice with the opposite color. Each player to learn the court so he can make an intelligent choice of color. And how is the color choice made? It is made by the player who wins a simple competitive play called lagging for color.

LAGGING FOR COLOR

After the last practice shot has been made, the referee walks down to the middle of the court and announces to the players at the head that they may now begin shooting for the choice of color. The referee stands at the deadline (the second crossline) where he will judge the seventh and the eighth discs when they are shot.

Yellow shoots first, trying to place disc No. 1 on the deadline. Black follows with disc No. 2. These are only practice shots again, and the referee immediately removes the two discs from the court. Each player has two more practice shots, which the referee also removes. Then comes the test. Yellow shoots disc No. 7 at the

deadline and Black follows with No. 8. The referee judges these two discs carefully and announces which player has won the lag. The winner chooses the color he and his partner will play in all the games of that match.

One thing to keep in mind during the lagging is, that if the eighth disc strikes the seventh, which is already in its position on or near the deadline, the player of the eighth disc is disqualified and the choice of color goes to his opponent.

Choosing the Color. If the game is doubles, the choice of color should be made by both partners. Sometimes one end of a court drifts more than the other, or, perhaps for personal reasons, one of the players may have a preference for a particular color. For instance, if there is no detectable drift in the court and the game is a point game, the players might choose to shoot the black discs because of the possibility of their getting one more hammer shot during the game than their opponents will get.

If the court is well known to both players, they will have decided before the match begins which color they will take in the event that they win the lag; but on a strange court, the partners who win the lag will come together on the court to agree on the color choice. This decision will be made on the basis of the information that the players gleaned from their practice shots. Then the player who won the lag will inform the referee of their choice.

Either player of a doubles team may shoot for color. After the last practice shot has been made, the player at the foot of the court may come to the head to shoot for color. He need not necessarily return to the foot after the lagging is finished. At this time the players of either team may exchange positions on the court. This may be done only once during a match, and it must be done immediately after choosing the color.

The disadvantage of changing ends after the lagging is that neither player will be playing the game at the end of the court from which he made the practice shots.

CHAPTER XII
STRATEGIES

Strategy is a word that one hears often on the shuffleboard courts. A suitable definition of this expression would be a series of plays that are planned to accomplish a single objective. Then, besides strategies, there are the incidental shots. These shots are the player's reactions to his opponent's unexpected plays, or his reactions to the unexpected results of anticipated plays. Although an incidental shot is not a part of a planned strategy, it should support the strategy. But why belabor the point when, after all, there are only four discs to shoot? Perhaps because it has been customary to speak of strategy in shuffleboard circles for a long time, but let's continue to investigate the idea.

OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

The two objectives of a shuffleboard game are to score as often as possible and to prevent one's opponent from scoring whenever possible. Offense and defense in shuffleboard are related to these two objectives. An offensive play is a shot that is made to increase the player's chance of scoring. A defensive play is a shot made primarily to keep the opponent from scoring.

A strategy, however, can include plays of either kind. For instance, setting up a cross guard with disc No. 1 is a defensive shot, but it is a part of an offensive strategy because its purpose is to prepare a situation for scoring. Likewise, clearing the board with disc No. 2 has a double purpose: to prevent the opponent from scoring (a defensive shot), and to prepare the board for scoring disc No. 8 (an offensive strategy). By successfully clearing the board, a player can keep his opponent in a defensive position throughout the half round; but one failure to clear the board will allow the opponent to make an immediate use of the offensive aspect of his shot.

There is no place in the game of shuffleboard for defensive strategies—only defensive shots. Because defensive strategies will not win, a player should always plan to take the offensive. When a player is behind in score, he must play the offensive as strongly as possible. The mode of play known as going on the board is offensive strategy carried to a daring extreme.

When a player has the option of scoring beyond his opponent's guard (offensive shot), or knocking away the guard (defensive shot), the player usually chooses to score, knowing that in doing so he forces his opponent to play the game his way (offensive strategy) and to go after his score; otherwise, the player will be chasing his opponent without a chance to score his own disc (defensive strategy).

The blocking game (Chapter VII) is as near to a defensive strategy as one can get, and this sort of game often leads the player into a series of defensive shots aimed at preventing his opponent from scoring. Thus the blocking game may cause a player to lose the chance to pursue an offensive strategy, and the opportunity will go to the opponent by default.

STRATEGY, DISC BY DISC

The following sections are a play-by-play review of the strategies that have been covered in the foregoing chapters. The shots that are discussed herein are both strategic and incidental since they cannot very well be separated in a discussion of the game.

First Disc. There are two approaches to a half round of shuffleboard—set up a guard or play on the board. When a player is ahead of or even with his opponent, he should shoot disc No. 1 as a guard. The player who is behind in score will at least be considering the playing of disc No. 1 on the board as kitchen bait. There is very little variation in the shooting of the first disc.

Sometimes, when a player's score is close to game point, the first shot may be wasted to prevent an attempted kitchen shot. When the player is but one number from the winning score and his opponent is badly in need of a kitchen shot, the player, knowing that his opponent will play discs No. 2, No. 4, and No. 6 as kitchen bait and then use No. 8 to kitchen anything on the board, may shoot the first disc close to the edge of the court where it cannot be kitchened and where it will not be a potential hide for a kitchened disc. This strategy requires clearing the board successfully for the next six shots and shooting a good hammer, which is quite an order.

Second Disc. When disc No. 1 is correctly played as a guard and the player of disc No. 2 is not behind in score, he will clear the board or block the board with the second disc. (Blocking is almost always an inferior play to clearing the board.) But, if the player is behind in score, he may play disc No. 2 as kitchen bait.

When disc No. 1 is played as a cross guard but goes too far, leaving the opponent a poor chance for a hide, the player can place the second disc in his own cross guard position. He can repeat this play with disc No. 4 if his opponent clears the board with No. 3; but with disc No. 6, the player should clear off disc No. 1, which he left on the board, so his opponent cannot use it as the only available hide for disc No. 7.

When disc No. 1 is poorly placed as a cross guard by being several inches toward the apex, the player may be tempted to try an alley shot; but this is not a recommended shot.

When disc No. 1 is correctly played as kitchen bait, indicating that the opponent is behind in score, the player of disc No. 2 will clear the board. He should not try to kitchen the bait. When disc No. 1 is correctly played as kitchen bait and it stops on a line where it becomes a potential double, disc No. 2 is used to clear the board.

Intermediate Discs. By the time even the first two discs have been played, the game may have developed unpredictably; but the intermediate discs (No. 3, No. 4, and No. 5) continue in a logical manner the style of game begun with the first two shots. If the initial guard has been displaced, it will be replaced with disc No. 3 and with No. 5 also if necessary. If the guard was not displaced and there is no scoring or threatening disc on the board, disc No. 3 should be hidden in the scoring area beyond the guard. If the opponent has used disc No. 2 to score, then No. 3 will be used to knock it away.

The player should be opportunistic with the intermediate discs, taking advantage of any errors that may turn up in the opponent's plays. Any of the intermediate discs should be used to sneak in a hide whenever the opportunity turns up to do this without giving the opponent a free number.

In a sense, the function of each player's first three shots is to prepare the board for the player's last one. When the player has the hammer, he desires to have the board clear of scoring discs when he makes his last shot. However, disc No.7 is rather ineffective when the board is clear; it can be used to the best advantage when there is a chance to hide it. So it logically follows that sometimes the player of the odd-numbered discs may be more concerned with blocking the board than with keeping it open.

Whereas disc No. 4 almost always is used to clear off the opponent's potential double, discs No. 3 and No. 5 are used sometimes to cover them, when that can be done without giving the opponent a place to hide his next shot (Figure 34). An exception with disc No. 4 is when No. 3 is shot as a hide and stops on the line. Disc No. 4 should be used then to block the opponent's next play, so that he does not get a second chance to hide a score beyond the guard (Figure 32).

Sixth Disc. The function of disc No. 6 is somewhat different from that of any of the others. It can serve no useful purpose as a St. Pete or a Tampa since the player's next disc will be the last shot of the half round and will need no protection. Therefore, if the player is even or ahead in score and the board is clear, disc No. 6 is more a liability to him than an asset. Almost anywhere the player might put this disc, it may be a hide for the opponent's last shot, or it may be vulnerable to a kitchen shot, or possibly both. So under these conditions (ahead in score and the board clear) disc No. 6 is often wasted. Some players prefer to waste this shot in an inconspicuous way by shooting the disc toward their St. Pete position but closer to the edge of the board so it cannot be kitchened or used as a hide.

When the board is clear, disc No. 6 should never be placed in a guard position, but if the player has an unprotected score on the board, he will use disc No. 6 as a protective guard in whatever position it is needed.

If the player is ahead in score and there is another disc of either color on the board that can serve even as a poor hide for disc No. 7, then No. 6 should be used to clear the board. Or if one of the player's own discs happens to be in a nonscoring position where it is vulnerable to a kitchen shot, again, disc No. 6 should be used to clear the board.

If the player is behind in score and the board is clear, disc No. 6 should be used as kitchen bait. The player may decide to do this even though he is not far enough behind to play kitchen bait with the other discs during the half round.

Seventh Disc. Disc No. 7 has many uses. If it cannot be used in its primary function, hiding a score, its secondary function is to reduce, as far as possible, the opponent's chance of

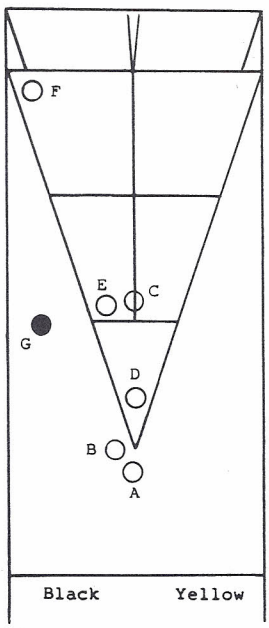


Figure 68

scoring with his hammer. When it is placed as at A or B in Figure 68, the seventh disc serves as a block. As a block it is not much more than a distraction to the opponent as he shoots his hammer; but there is always the possibility that the opponent's disc will nick the block and miss its goal, or that the opponent will miss his aim while trying not to nick the block.

The 7th disc, when placed at C, is often an effective block, especially if the court drifts. Care should be taken not to have C lying partly in the 10-area where the opponent can use it as a backstop for an almost certain score. Also, the disc at C becomes less effective when shot too far.

Discs at D and E are high numbers, which are useful ways to employ disc No. 7 when the player is behind in score. At F is the corner-7 shot, which can be used if there happens to be a guard in the vicinity of G.

Disc No. 7 should be hidden if there is the possibility of even a partial hide. If it is a poor hide, the opponent will be compelled to shoot at it; and even though he spoils it, he may be unable to score with his hammer. When considering possible hides for the seventh disc, one should not overlook the possibility of hiding a score in the 10-area beyond the opponent's Tampa.

If the opponent needs nine or ten points to win the game, disc No. 7 must be used to block the 10-area. The player must be careful that he does not overshoot into the 10-area, where his disc will serve as a backstop to give his opponent an almost certain win.

Eighth Disc. With the clearing of the board strategy, the first three shots in a hammer half round are a preparation for the last shot, which is the shot on which the player chiefly relies to make his scores. Other scoring in the hammer half round, though important, is incidental. The player who can score four out of five of his hammer shots is usually in a good position in his game. The value of the hammer shot is so clear to all shufflers that most of them do not take unnecessary risks with this shot, preferring rather to shoot for a simple score than to try for a higher gain from a more difficult shot. The player will always ignore a partially hidden disc when shooting his hammer, unless the hide is the winning score for the opponent or brings him perilously close to game point. The player will take the easy doubles in the vicinity of the 8-area on his hammer shot.

If the opponent has an unguarded scoring disc on the board, the player will try to spoil that score and, at the same time, grab a score for himself. If he is far behind in score, he will attempt a kitchen shot and a score even when the disc is on a line. If the disc is on a line and cannot be played for both a kitchen shot and a score, the player must decide from his analysis of the scoreboard which of the two shots is more useful to him.

A player who is clearing the board will kitchen a pigeon (a disc lying on the 7/8 line) only with his hammer shot, so that the kitchen cannot be reversed. If the pigeon is the player's own disc and he is shooting the odd-numbered discs, he should knock it off the board or block it with the seventh disc or earlier.

CHAPTER XIII
PROBLEMS OF THE ENDGAME

The word endgame, as used here, has been borrowed from the vocabulary of the chess players, but any game that has special problems in the last few plays has an endgame and requires special consideration.

In shuffleboard, the endgame is the hardest part of the game to play. It is also the headiest part of the game. Many times a game has been brought successfully to within one shot of the winning score, then lost because the player failed to see the opportunities or the dangers in what should have been the final half round of play. More complications can develop at the end of a game than at any other time. This means that a player has more chances to make a blunder in this part of the game. And if the players' scores are about even, there is little time left in the endgame for either player to recover from a blunder.

The scoreboard assumes its greatest importance in the endgame. Not only does the player consider the number of points that he and his opponent must have to achieve the winning score; he will also carefully compare the two scores. The difference between the scores is important because the final half round can end with both players exceeding the game point, the higher score being the winner.

The solution of an endgame problem may depend on whether the game is singles or doubles, a point game or a frame game, or whether the play is at the head or the foot of the court in a doubles game. Games that are a combination of the frame game and the point game create further complications in the endgame. For instance, a game that has a limit of 14 frames and a game point of 75 points, whichever comes first, keeps the players mentally alert toward the end of the game.

For the point game, critical numbers to keep in mind are those scores that require just two discs to win. The expression **magic circle** is used sometimes to designate this scoring level. The magic-circle level for a 100-point game would be, of course, different from that of a 75-point game. Since the objective of most games is 75 points, one should keep in mind the significance of the following scores:

57 requires a 10 and an 8 to win;
59 requires two 8's to win;
60 requires an 8 and a 7 to win;
65 requires a 10 to win.

Although the score of 60 is usually considered the lower limit of the magic circle, there is still a considerable amount of "magic" in the score of 57. (See analysis problem No. 2, page 69).

The importance of these scores derives from the fact that in a doubles game each team has two successive hammers, and then they must play two half rounds without a hammer shot. If a player and his partner are so fortunate as to arrive at the score of 60 in the same round as they have their two hammers, and their opponents are not yet in the magic circle, they have a real advantage over their opponents. If each player can successfully clear the board and score his hammer, they will win the game.

On the other hand, if the players arrive at the score of 60 in the same round in which their opponents have the hammer shots, and their opponents are not yet in the magic circle, it is better that the players (without the hammers) simply bide their time, playing cautiously to keep their opponents' score down, and wait until their own hammer round comes up before attempting to win the game. At this point in the game, conservative playing has special rewards. The conservative player does not rush the game.

In a singles game the hammer goes back and forth between the players every half round. Consequently, the magic circle concept does not apply in exactly the same way to a singles game.

The strategy at the end of a frame game is only a trifle simpler than the strategy in a point game. Toward the end of a frame game, the players must keep in mind the exact number of hammers left in the game; whereas in a point game, the players must estimate the number of hammers each will need to attain game point.

And one remembers all the way along in a frame game that, though the scores are even, if the opponent has one more hammer shot remaining than the player has, the opponent is really ahead in score.

A game is not won until the last disc has been shot. A player's luck can change as late as the last shot in either kind of game. So the player must always maintain a winning attitude, even when the odds seem to be overwhelmingly against him. As long as there is any possibility whatever of keeping the game alive, the player will continue to choose the best shots he can find and to shoot the best he can. That is the spirit of the game.

The tabulated analysis of the following game situations shows the importance of the scoreboard in the selection of the correct shot. The analysis shows, too, why so many incorrect shots are chosen during a game. No player has the computer-like mind that is sometimes needed to choose, in a few seconds, the best shot from all of those available.

ANALYSIS PROBLEM NO. 1 (FIGURE 69)

Let us assume that Yellow, playing in a singles game, is confronted with two of his opponent's discs, one in the 7-area, the other in the deep 10-area. Yellow is about to shoot his hammer. What is his best shot?

To emphasize the importance of the scoreboard, we shall assume four different game situations and shall analyze each one. The scores at the beginning of the half round in which Yellow is making his shot are: (a) 68-62; (b) 67-62; (c) 65-68; (d) 62-68.

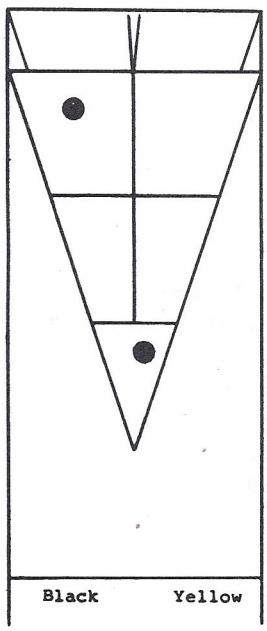


Figure 69

ANALYSIS PROBLEM NO. 1: TABULATION

Scores At the Beginning Of the Half Round	(a) 68-62	(b) 67-62	(c) 65-68	(d) 62-68
If Yellow:	Then the Score Will be:			
1. Spoils the 10,	68-69	67-69	65-75	62-75
2. Spoils the 7,	68-72	67-72	65-78	62-78
3. Spoils the 7 and scores,	**75-72**	74-72	72-78	69-78
4. Spoils the 1 and scores,	78-69	**77-69**	75-75	72-75
5. Kitchens the 7 and scores,	75-62	74-62	72-68	**69-68**
6. Kitchens the 10,	68-59	67-59	65-65	62-65
7. Kitchens the 10 and scores,	78-59	77-59	**75-65**	72-65
8. Makes a combination shot,	68-62	67-62	65-68	62-68

Analysis. Yellow's first concern is whether to make a combination shot or to take a shot that will affect only one disc. He realizes that the scoring discs are too far apart for him to risk a combination shot unless the immediate outcome of the game depends on that shot, and he sees that if he chooses a combination shot, he will not be able to score his cue disc. He observes, too, that he cannot line up his cue disc with the two targets, which would improve his chance of success with a combination shot. And, finally, there is the added risk that the target disc in the 10-area may stick when it knocks out the score in the 7-area. If that should happen, the result of the combination shot would be equivalent to shot number 1. So Yellow concentrates on the other shots in the tabulation.

A further consideration is that in the next half round Black will have the hammer. Yellow would like, if he cannot make a winning shot, at least to make a shot that would leave him ahead in score as he starts the next half round. That would give him more options in his strategy for the next half round of play. Consider now the different parts of the problem.

(a) Shots number 3, 4, 5, and 7 are all winners. The safest shot should be chosen. That is number 3.

(b) Shots number 4 and 7 are the winners, and number 4 should be chosen because it has a greater chance of success. If Yellow should try shot number 7, he would be assuming the added risk of the disc in the 10-area stopping short of the kitchen and scoring a 7 for his opponent.

(c) Shot number 7 is the only winner, and the shot must be made so as to avoid, as far as possible, the many risks. The first consideration is to score the cue disc in the 10-area; the second is to get the opponent's disc entirely through the 7-area. So the shot will be made with kitchen-speed-plus. If the up-and-down shot results from this, the game is won; if the disc overshoots the kitchen, the result is equivalent to shot number 4, and the game is a tie. If the score becomes a tie, then Yellow will have another hammer shot.

(d) There is no winning shot in this situation, but numbers 5 and 7 both will leave Yellow leading in score. This is about all the advantage Yellow can expect to get out of this half round; but if he can prevent his opponent from scoring in the next half round, or if he can sneak in a score of his own equal to his opponent's, Yellow will win. Since Yellow will lose the game immediately if he does not successfully make a kitchen shot, he should choose shot number 5, the one which is more likely to succeed.

MORE PROBLEMS FOR ANALYSIS

The reader may compare his analyses of the next five problems with the discussions at the end of this set, which are offered as suggestions rather than as answers. Often there is no perfect answer to these problems. Expert shufflers may talk about the correct play for a given situation, but since their choice of shot must necessarily be based on experiential knowledge, there is not complete agreement in all instances. Anyway, part of the fun in shuffling is the arguing about the merits of the shot that failed.

ANALYSIS PROBLEM NO. 2 (NO DRAWING)

The game is doubles and the score is Yellow 57, Black 62. Game point is 75. The play is at the head of the court, and the board is clear. Yellow is about to shoot his hammer. How should he shoot?

ANALYSIS PROBLEM NO. 3 (FIGURE 70)

Yellow is ready to shoot a disc. Should he guard his 7 or spoil Black's potential double?

ANALYSIS PROBLEM NO. 4 (FIGURE 71)

The score is Yellow 67, Black 62. Black is about to shoot his hammer. What shot should he take?

ANALYSIS PROBLEM NO. 5 (FIGURE 72)

It is the last frame of a singles game. The score is Yellow 40, Black 38. Yellow has the hammer. How should Black shoot disc No. 7?

ANALYSIS PROBLEM NO. 6 (NO DRAWING)

Beginning the last frame of a singles game, Black leads by 7 points and Yellow has the hammer. Discuss: (a) Yellow's strategy; (b) Black's strategy.

ANSWERS TO THE ANALYSIS PROBLEMS

2. The yellow team needs 18 points to win; the black team needs 13. Either team can win with two discs on the board, and neither can win with one. Since the yellow team has two hammers coming up, they should try to win the

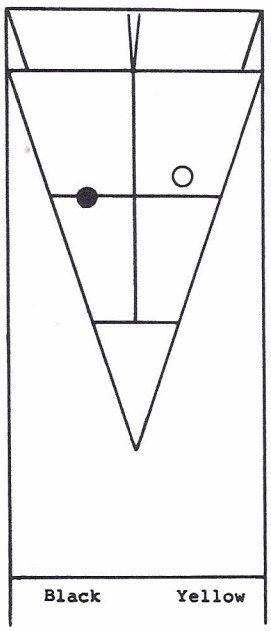


Figure 70

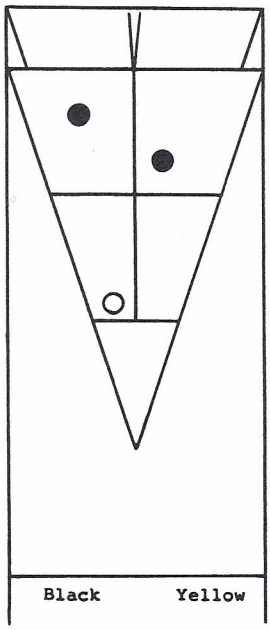


Figure 71

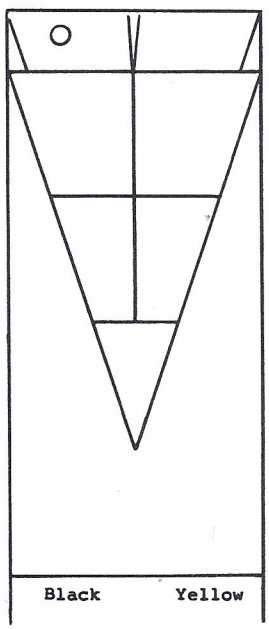


Figure 72

game before the hammers go to their opponents. But if Yellow should shoot an 8 and leave the 10 for his partner, the opponent would surely block the 10-area in the next half round. So Yellow should shoot the 10 at the head of the court, and let his partner go for the 8.

3. What is the score? That makes a difference in Yellow's choice of shot, because his choice will depend on which player is in a greater need of the score. If this is near the end of the game with Black ahead, Yellow must keep Black from scoring, and he will have to deal with the potential double. But if Yellow is far ahead, needing only a score or two to win, Yellow must protect his own score. Possibly Yellow can frustrate Black in regards to both shots by shooting a 10.

4. Black should waste his hammer shot if this is a 75-point game or the last frame of a game. Otherwise, he will try to knock Yellow's 8 off the board and glance his cue disc to the opposite 8-area for a score.

5. Black should shoot a 7 on the side of the board opposite the disc in the kitchen. Yellow must then kitchen the 7 to win. Black would lose the game quickly by covering Yellow's disc in the kitchen.

6. If Yellow clears the board and shoots an 8, he will win. If Black shoots a high 8 with disc No. 7, Yellow has two choices, neither one an easy shot, to produce a win: He must kitchen Black's high 8 or glance his cue disc into the opposite 8-area to score while at the same time spoiling Black's score. If Black puts disc No. 7 any place in the 7-area, Yellow must kitchen it to win, or the result will be at best a tie. Yellow's strategy will be to clear the board and try to score his hammer for an 8.

Probably, Black would prefer to shoot a score of 7 with disc No. 7 and to take a chance on Yellow's kitchen shot or a tie, than to take a chance on his high 8 going several inches too far, which would give his opponent a backstop for the winning score. Then, if Yellow fails to score when spoiling Black's 7, Black would win. If Black decides to go on the board with disc No. 7, he may prefer to start playing kitchen bait at the beginning of the frame, which will set the mode of play for the entire frame and will give him an opportunity to exploit a weak play if it is made by his opponent.

But Black may use another strategy. He may shoot his first three discs as St. Petes, being careful to allow Yellow no chance to hide a score by the use of the alley shot. If Yellow succeeds in clearing each of these guards off the board, Black will shoot disc No. 7 as suggested above.

CHAPTER XIV
PROBLEMS OF THE DRIFTY COURT

Thousands of games are played each year on drifty courts, and, many times, the better player has lost the game because he did not understand, or could not play, the drift. All shufflers avoid the drifty court; many never develop a technique for handling the drift, although their teams must play on these courts during the shuffling season. Perhaps a shuffleboard club should consider itself fortunate to own one drifty court simply for the experience its members get from playing on it.

This chapter has been written to show that playing a drifty court can be exciting, if not completely rewarding. The relative success with certain shots no longer applies, and a few shots that would be disapproved on a normal court can be used sometimes by one player or the other when there is a favorable drift in the court.

COURT DRIFT

The surface of a shuffleboard court should be level and of uniform texture, but it is difficult to construct a concrete slab having the dimensions of a shuffleboard court and meet the requirements of a good court. After a rain, one may see pools of water standing in several places on a court, revealing low spots that were not noticeable on the dry surface. Those imperceptible low spots may cause an unpredictable drift of the cue disc, to the right in some places, to the left in others. It is difficult for a player to adjust his aiming to the irregularities of that kind of court. In other instances, where the drift is caused by an uneven settling of the entire slab, the drift will be more uniform, and a playing technique can be developed to master it. This is the kind of drift that will be discussed in this chapter.

A drift of three to six inches is common on many courts; it may be much more on some others. To detect the drift on a strange court, the player watches the cue disc carefully as it comes to a stop. In the last two feet of its journey down the court, the disc will move the farthest off its course. The drift is more noticeable when the cue disc is aimed directly at another disc or at a definite point, such as the apex. Then one may observe the disc swerve to one side, perhaps completely missing the target.

When describing the characteristics of a particular court, one should not say that the court has a drift to the right or to the left, since the truth of that statement depends on whether the player stands at the head or the foot of the court. Rather, one says that the drift is toward the yellow side of the court, or toward the black side, whichever is the case.

A peculiar characteristic of court drift, especially when it is uniform, is that it always favors one player over the other. If the cue discs drift toward the yellow side of the court, the player of the black discs has a real advantage in every game played on that court. Such a court is called a black court, and the opposite is true, of course, on a yellow court.

Remembering that the cause of drift on a court is that the discs are actually sliding down hill, we shall, in this discussion, designate the opposite sides of the court as the high side and the low side. On a black court, the black discs are started from the high side, and all moving discs tend to drift off their course toward the yellow side. On a yellow court, the opposite is true.

The advantage that one player has over the other derives from the fact that the player on the low side of the court has serious difficulty hiding a disc beyond a St. Pete guard, while, in some instances, the high-side player finds the matter of hiding a disc to be easier than it would be on a level court.

When a game is to be played on a strange court, the players must determine by means of practice shots the amount and the direction of the drift. Once this is determined, a player will compensate for the drift by a two-step process. Before every shot, he will: 1. Consider what his aiming point would be if he were making the shot on a level court; 2. Choose a new aiming point as far toward the high side of the target as he suspects the drift to be. This is called playing the drift.

Another principle the player must keep in mind is that a slow shot drifts farther off course than a fast shot. The reason is obvious. The

amount of drift is proportional to the length of time that the disc is in motion. Therefore, good hides and long kitchen shots into the deep 7-area, where the cue disc must come to a stop or almost to a stop before the impact, are difficult shots to make on a drifty court.

To help with his understanding of the following discussions, the reader should actually perform the shots that are described therein.

PLACING THE ST. PETE GUARD AND HIDING THE SCORE

The problems of the two opponents on a drifty court are quite different, and they must be described separately. In Figure 73, each player desires to shoot his St. Pete to position B, but, in each case, the cue disc may stop at C unless the player plays the drift. If either player overcompensates for the drift, the cue disc may stop at A. On the low side of the court the cue disc tends to drift too far from the apex; on the high side, it drifts too close.

For the high-side player, hiding a disc beyond A or B (black disc) is no problem because there is ample hiding space in that part of the shufflegram, but the hiding area beyond C consists of only a corner of the 7-area. Therefore, the high-side player would prefer to err in the direction of A than of C, when placing a guard in the St. Pete position. His opponent on the low side cannot safely use an alley shot, even when the guard is at A, because the tendency of his cue disc to drift toward the sideline makes scoring difficult (Figure 74).

But how different the problem is for the low-side player! His guard tends to drift toward the apex (Figure 75). Despite his efforts to compensate for the drift, some of his guards may stop at C; and for his opponent on the high side, this is a situation that can be exploited. The opponent discovers that an alley shot past C is comparatively safe—an easy shot to make because the cue disc drifts toward the center of the board, across the sideline, and away from it. Although a suicide alley shot is seldom recommended in play on a normal court, it seems to have been made to order for this particular situation.

But is it wise for the high-side opponent to make the alley shot and let the low-side player have a good hide on the other side of the guard? It turns out that the player on the low side seldom has a real good hide beyond a normal St. Pete guard. If he does succeed in placing a well-hidden disc, a certain amount of luck has been

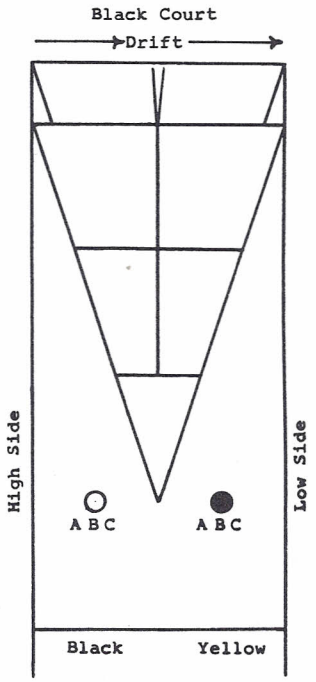


Figure 73

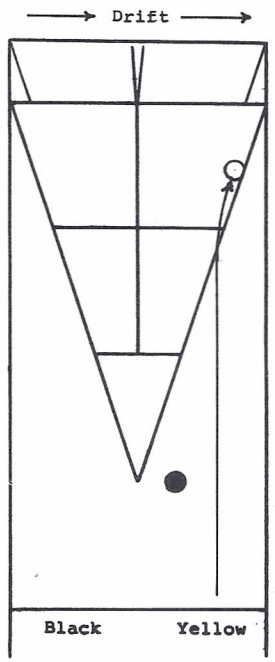


Figure 74

with him. The reason that the low-side player has difficulty hiding a disc beyond this guard is twofold: His cue disc must be hidden with a slow shot, which, because it is slow, has the maximum amount of drift; and to spoil this score, his opponent will use a fast shot, which, because it is fast, will have the minimum amount of drift. To make a good hide, the low-side player must shoot very close to the guard, and he cannot fully compensate for the drift without taking the chance of nicking the guard.

Another Technique Used in Hiding. Some players have discovered that the low-side player has somewhat less difficulty when placing his hide if he shoots his St. Pete just over the deadline (Figure 13). This position allows the player more room in which to compensate for the drift without the danger of nicking the guard, although it gives him less hiding room on the board. The chief difficulty of this shot is that the cue disc may easily stop short of the line and have to be removed from play. The result is a wasted shot with the initiative going to the opponent.

This shot has real merit, however, and it is an easier shot to make than the Tampa shot,

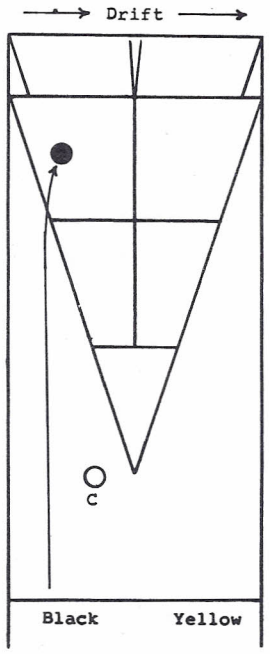


Figure 75

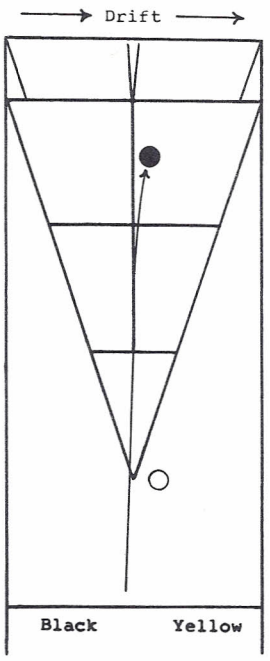


Figure 76

which is described below. The choice of this shot in preference to the Tampa may depend on the amount and the location of the drift. Other than this particular shot and the Tampa, the low-side player has little choice for a guarded score except to use a bunt or a glance.

Bunt Shots and Glances. The low-side player, being at a disadvantage, must gain his scores by using more difficult shots than those required of his opponent. The opponent, playing the high side, seldom needs to use a bunt to score. And he seldom does use it because the bunt is a difficult shot to make on a drifty court, but the low-side player should look for opportunities to use this shot because good hides can be obtained by its use. It is best to use a bunt when the score can be protected by a double guard, but often the double guard can be preplanned.

Glances, too, can be useful if the player can control them. Usually a glance is more difficult to shoot than a bunt.

THE TAMPA ON A DRIFTY COURT

The high-side player can get very good hides beyond a Tampa guard. His cue disc drifts safely out of sight from his opponent. The only worry for the high-side player is that his cue disc may drift upon the centerline. That reason, and the fact that the high-side player really has no need for another kind of guard, accounts for the unpopularity of the Tampa as a high-side guard.

As a low-side guard, the Tampa has been denounced by many players, but its use for that purpose should not be rejected without a thorough study of the low-side problem in each particular situation. Since the primary purpose of this chapter is to discover strategies that will be helpful to the low-side player, we shall consider this special use of the Tampa.

The Tampa As a Low-Side Guard. Some players are not aware that it is possible for the low-side player to use a Tampa successfully as a protective guard, but even if a low-side player prefers not to use the Tampa systematically, he should be attentive to its incidental use.

Before going further, the reader should examine again Figure 24, which shows the hiding area beyond a Tampa on a normal court. The effect of the drift is to move the hiding area several inches toward the low side. This displacement is somewhat farther toward the low side in the 7-area than it is in the 8-area. So in the lower 8-area and in the 7-area, there is protection for the low-side player's cue disc,

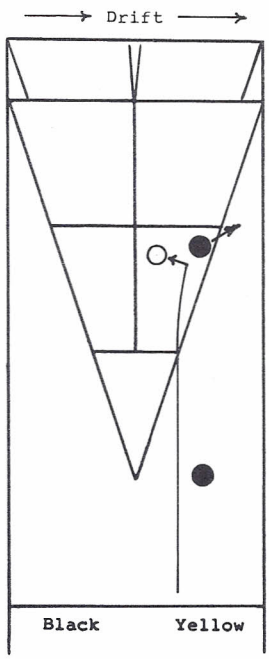


Figure 77

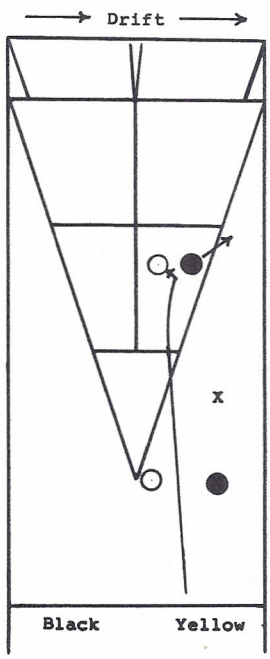


Figure 78

despite the drift. A well-placed Tampa provides adequate hiding area for the low-side player's score, and the opponent is compelled to shoot at an unfavorable angle to spoil it.

But the Tampa is Risky. The argument against the Tampa is that it is a difficult and a rather high risk shot. If the Tampa is misplaced only three or four inches from the apex, the opponent on the high side of the court can shoot a disc so that it will drift over the centerline, making a beautiful hide in the 7-area beyond the player's own guard (Figure 76). This shot can be made repeatedly by many players, and it can be a game loser for the low-side player. The only protection the player has against this shot is his skill in shooting a good Tampa. But one should realize that the person who shoots well enough to exploit a misplaced Tampa in this manner also shoots well enough to shoot a good Tampa. The former is the more difficult shot.

This shot (Figure 76) can be made only by the high-side player, of course. To make the shot successfully, the opponent will usually use the intersection of the centerline and the 8/10 line as his aiming point. The exact spot depends on the amount of drift. The opponent will plan to have the center of his cue disc pass over the intersection, as shown in the drawing. He shoots for the 7-area. It is exciting to watch the cue disc glide close by the Tampa and smoothly drift across the centerline to a stop just inside the opposite 7-area.

Spotting the Tampa. A point in favor of the Tampa shot is that there is a very good aiming point for this guard. After determining the amount of drift near the Tampa position, the player can use the apex to spot his shot. He shoots either at the apex or at a point an estimated distance to the high side of the apex, to make his Tampa guard drift correctly into position.

SHOOTING FOR A HIDDEN DISC

Because there is a hook at the end of a slow shot, it is possible to shoot close to the high side of a guard and gently bunt a disc that seems to be safely hidden beyond it. The contact of the two discs is gentle and the discs spread apart usually not more than a foot, like shooting for a double score (Figure 77). If the hidden disc is close to a line on the low side, the shot effectively spoils the score. This shot is useful when the cue disc can be made to glance to a score in the shelter of other discs on the board, and this leads us to a little different emphasis on

the Tampa as a low-side guard. Consider now the Tampa block.

THE TAMPA BLOCK

On a level court the Tampa can be an effective block of a St. Pete that has gone too far (Figure 33). On the low side of a drifty court, the Tampa assumes a much greater inportance in this play. Its effectiveness as a block is enhanced by the drift of the court, and its importance as a protective guard is increased by the great need of the low-side player for a useful hide. In Figure 78, Black, the high-side player, has shot a St. Pete. The normal reply to this shot is to clear the board, but because the court drifts to his side, Yellow has replied with a Tampa block that leaves enough room between the two guards for a disc to pass through. Of course, this would be a better situation for Yellow if Black's guard were farther down the court, as at x; but Yellow still has a real advantage. Black should knock the Tampa away on his next shot, but what would happen if he chooses to hide a score by shooting between the guards? 1. There is a good chance that, because of the drift, the cue disc will nick one of the guards. 2. If the disc gets through, there is a chance that the score will be only partially hidden and can be spoiled by Yellow, as explained in Figure 77. If that turns out to be the play, Yellow has his Tampa in place to protect his score. 3. If Black succeeds in hiding his score so well that Yellow cannot spoil it by a direct hit, Yellow still has a chance to hide a score in the same area. There will be room for Yellow to hide another score in this area, too; but not so for Black.

But the important consideration in this situation—one which should not be overlooked—is that, because of the drift, shooting a disc between the two guards is more difficult for the high-side player from his angle than for the low-side player. If the St. Pete happens to be a few inches farther down the court, the matter of hiding a disc becomes much more difficult for the high-side player and is easier for the low-side player.

Thus, one sees that the Tampa, which is inherently a risky shot, is also a very aggressive shot for the low-side player on a drifty court. How much it should be used depends on the shooting skill of the player, the skill of the opponent, and a number of intangibles which the player must try to evaluate.

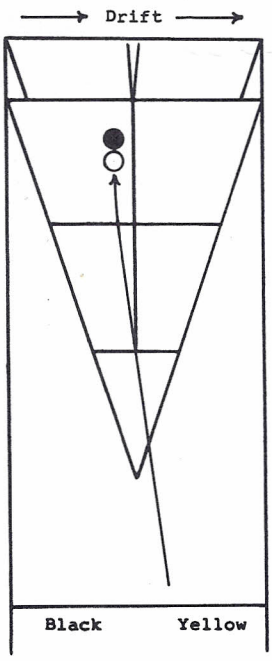


Figure 79

OTHER SHOTS

Compensating for the Hook. Besides compensating for the drift in a court, it may be desirable sometimes to compensate for the hook at the end of the shot. Some shots have a greater chance of success if the cue disc is traveling straight forward over a particular part of the court. The low-side player can accomplish this by shooting his cue disc obliquely from near position 2. For example, when the player shoots his hammer at the disc in the 7-area (Figure 79) so as to stick to score and to kitchen the target disc, the cue disc should be moving straight forward lest it glance and spoil the shot. Starting the shot from position 2, compensates for the hook so that at the instant of the impact the disc is moving in the desired direction. The aiming point, of course, is slightly to the high side of the target.

In Figure 80, by shooting from position 2, the player causes the cue disc to move straight forward into the pocket.

Shooting Disc No. 7. On a drifty court one of the better places to put disc No. 7 when the board is clear is on the centerline, just beyond

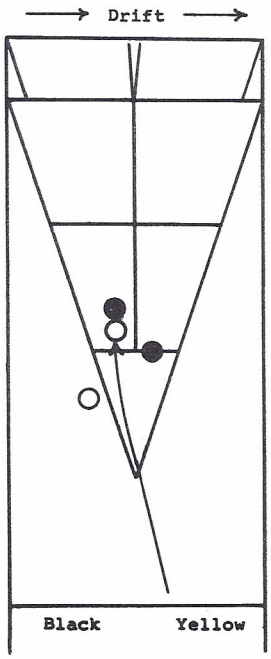


Figure 80

the 10-area (Refer to C in Figure 68). If the opponent shoots his hammer for a score of 8, there is a real danger, because of the drift, of his nicking the liner and giving the player a score, or having his cue disc drift upon the side-line, depending on which 8-area he shoots at. The opponent would be using good judgment to shoot for a score of 7 in this situation.

When making this shot with disc No. 7, the player must be careful to have his disc stop completely out of the 10-area lest it serve as a backstop for the opponent's hammer shot.

PRACTICE IS NEEDED

Another problem of the drifty court—and this must be the greatest problem—is the lack of practice on it. Players always pass up that court when they have a few minutes to themselves for solo practice, and seldom does a foursome start a game on it. Two players, however, who are interested in the improvement of their technique, can help each other by agreeing to spend a definite amount of time on a drifty court; and, of course, they will change colors after each game.

It is more rewarding to win on the low side, and it can be done quite regularly after one begins to find his way around on the court.

Round robin is a good game for practice on a drifty court, since each player has a chance to shoot both colors at the head and the foot twice in each round of play.

In the following chapter the reader will find some additional suggestions on practice.

CHAPTER XV
SUGGESTIONS ON PRACTICE

Since experience is the complement of knowledge, this work would not be complete without a few suggestions on practice. No play that is described in the foregoing chapters will begin to work out as planned without it. Practice is essential, since in no other way can a player select his weakest points and work on them systematically until he overcomes his problem. Whenever one finds himself losing scores in a game because of a particular weakness in his shooting, he should go to the court for half an hour or so of intensive practice by himself; that is, solo practice.

Solo practice is especially useful for developing a skill to game proficiency. This is a time for the player to analyze his problems and to make the same shot over and over until he sees some improvement. However, every player experiences a certain kind of growth in real game situations, too. For instance, the skills that develop in a tense game between two league or tournament players, each of whom is intent on achieving victory, cannot be duplicated anywhere else or in any other way.

The beginning player's first concern is correct delivery, and practice is essential, perhaps the only way, to develop this skill. There are two considerations in most shots, aim and distance. It is better to take them one at a time. Shooting for a simple score of 8 or 7 does not require an inordinate amount of aiming skill, but the new player has trouble controlling the distance of this shot. Shooting for a simple score is a good shot to start with. The player should practice by himself until he can score in the 8-area or the 7-area on either side of the board with comparative ease, while using a good delivery technique.

After the beginning player has developed a reasonable control of distance, he is ready to practice shots which require more precision in aiming. The basic shots will furnish this practice, and sometimes, for the sake of efficiency, it may be better to practice these shots in a related sequence. The following sequence of shots is natural:

1. Shoot a cross guard with either color.
2. Hide a disc of the same color.
3. Clear off the cross guard with a disc of the opponent's color.
4. Replace the cross guard with a disc of the player's color.
5. Test the quality of the replaced guard by trying to spoil the hidden score with a disc of the opponent's color.
6. Repeat steps 1 through 5, using opposite colors.

These shots are in the order in which they might appear in a game, if one assumes that the opponent has failed in his attempt to clear the board immediately after shot No. 1.

This routine uses five discs, but since something is almost certain to go wrong with some of the planned shots, there will be an opportunity to use the remaining discs for practicing shots like doubling, bunting, shooting for a simple score, hit and run, kitchen shots, etc., which will be worked into the sequence naturally. Each one of the eight discs should be shot with a definite purpose in mind. Each one should be shot carefully, with correct delivery.

Whereas, in solo practice, it is sometimes desirable to practice several shots in a sequence, there are a few instances in which it is better that two players work together on single shots. Scoring across the centerline past a misplaced Tampa (Figures 25 and 76) is an example. This shot requires a precise set up, and for awhile the Tampa will have to be set up repeatedly after each shot. The cue disc, too, may have to be removed sometimes to make room for the next try. The player at the foot of the court can do this while the other player shoots seven discs in succession. Then the helper at the foot will make the same shots from his end of the court. One should start with the Tampa misplaced about

eight inches, then it should be moved gradually toward the apex as the player's skill increases.

With a little imagination a good practice technique can be worked out for other special shots. Many of these are fine-touch shots, which are good to work on to develop control. Two people can work on them more easily than one when it is desired to repeat the same shot over and over until a degree of improvement is achieved.

Husband and wife work especially well together at practice drills because each one is interested in the other's improvement as well as his own. Working together, they can enliven their practice by making a private game of it. In the following game one player is at the head of the court; the other, at the foot.

Turkey Shoot. This game, with different rules, is often played by an entire shuffleboard club. It is also a good practice exercise for two players. They should stand at the opposite ends of the court. The object of the game is to score as many of the eight discs as possible. The kitchen is counted as a positive 10 score instead of the usual 10 off. The two players will vie with each other for high score.

There is a simple strategy in this game: 1. One should shoot the first few discs into the 7-area where they will not block the discs which will be shot later. 2. One should not try to score directly in the kitchen, because a disc which overshoots is completely lost, while a disc which overshots the 7-area may score a 10. 3. One should not try to bump good 7's into the kitchen; the extra three points are not worth the risk of spoiling a good score; but it may pay to try to salvage the easy doubles if they can be made without disturbing other nearby discs; otherwise, leave them. 4. Leave the 8-areas for the last three or four discs.

Forty-Five. Another practice game—one which gives special attention to the problems of the endgame—can be played by two players in the normal way, the only difference being that the game begins with both players' scores at 45 and continues to the game point of 75. This is a short game of thirty points, about four hammers apiece, but it is not the same game at all as starting at zero and playing to a game point of 30. Starting the game at 45-45 has advantages. The magic circle level comes where it ought to be, at the score of 60, and all the strategies of the endgame come about naturally at the scoring level where one would expect to encounter them. The basic advantage of the short game, of course, is that more endgames can be placed in a given length of time.

More on the Endgame. A very productive form of practice on endgame problems is the setting up of single-frame situations. The practice takes the form of a walking singles game with the two players shooting alternately from each end of the court. Before either player shoots, they assume a score within the magic circle, such as Yellow 68, Black 70. Then they play until one player wins. It is surprising to what extent this form of practice will sharpen a player's endgame analysis.

Variable Court Conditions. A problem in shuffling that, curiously, is seldom mentioned is adaptability to varying court conditions. It is a real problem since court speed can change, not only from court to court, but from hour to hour on the same court. Often the player who exhibits the most skill in adjusting to these changes will win the game.

This skill seems to be a natural one with some players, but, as with other skills, one should be able to improve it with intelligent practice. However, the kind of practice that is needed to develop adaptability seems to be contrary to that which is needed to develop other skills. For example, one usually chooses a court that is in excellent condition for ordinary practice, and he makes the shots over and over under unvarying conditions. But practicing for adaptibility necessitates a change of courts during the practice, with the purpose in mind of overcoming the changing conditions. So what should a player do?

Everyone will admit that the ability to adjust quickly to varying conditions of the court is important and will help a player win games, but how can the skill be developed? On this note we will leave the reader at his solo practice with this investigative problem to which he can apply a little original thinking.

(The end.)

Glossary

Alley. 1. The official name of the gutter, the concrete area, two feet wide, between two adjacent courts. 2. Suicide alley.

Apex. The forward angle, or point, of the scoring diagram.

Backstop. A disc of either color lying on the scoring diagram so that it is capable of stopping the cue disc at a desired position.

Bait. Kitchen bait.

Baseline. The horizontal line that separates the 10-off area from the players' standing area.

Baseline extension. The extension of the baseline across the alley on each side of the court. This is an unmarked line.

Beads. Fine, glass globules that are often sprinkled on a court to lessen the friction between the court surface and the moving discs.

Black court. A court on which moving discs tend to drift toward the yellow side of the court. The direction of the drift favors the player of the black discs.

Block. 1. A disc that is placed so as to interfere with the opponent's next shot; a preventive guard. 2. A disc that happens to stop in a position that interferes with either player's shot. (The word block should not be used as a general name for disc.)

Blocking game. Repeatedly shooting a Tampa block after a St. Pete has been placed by the opponent, instead of clearing the board; also called filling in.

Board. 1. The scoring diagram, as in "Don't go on the board." 2. Any part of the court beyond the deadline, as in "Clear the board."

Bunny. A disc that represents the winning score.

Bunt. An attempt to move a disc that is already on the board to a more favorable position by striking it with the cue disc.

Carom. A shot in which the cue disc strikes a target disc, then moves on a different course to another target.

Clear the board. To make a shot that removes all discs, including the cue disc, from the court.

Close disc. A disc that stops so close to a line that it is difficult to determine whether it scores.

Color lead. The color of the first disc to be played in a half round or frame.

Combination. A shot in which the cue disc strikes a target that, in turn, becomes a moving disc and strikes another target.

Court officials. Tournament manager, divisional referee, court referee, court umpire, and court scorer (scorekeeper).

Cover a disc. To place a disc on the board as a protective guard for a scoring disc that is already on the board.

Cross guard. A disc that is placed about midway between the apex and the edge of the court on the opponent's side to provide protection for the next shot.

Cross pilot. Cross guard. This word is no longer used in shuffleboard parlance. See **Pilot.**

Cue disc. In any particular play, the disc that is being pushed by the cue as distinguished from the other discs on the court.

Dead disc. A disc that is out of play for the remainder of the half round. A disc that leaves the court or fails to reach the deadline is dead. A disc that stops on the deadline or just touches it is a live and playable disc. A disc projecting over the edge of the court is not dead until it tips of its own weight into the gutter. A dead disc lying on the court, or against the court, must be removed before the next play.

Deadline. The deadline is the second of the two crosslines near the center of the court over which the cue disc passes. The cue disc passes over two crosslines but over only one deadline. The first crossline is the deadline for the discs that come from the opposite direction.

Deep. See **High.**

Delivery. The act of shooting a disc.

Disc. The official name of the disks used in a game of shuffleboard.

Double. A shot that scores both the cue disc and

a liner of the same color. Before the shot, the liner is known as a potential double.

Drift. 1. The tendency of a freely moving disc to change its course. 2. The condition of a court that causes this tendency.

Feel of the court. A feeling that the speed of the court is just right for the player's style of play.

Foot. The end of a court opposite the scoreboard.

Frame. Undefined in the national shuffleboard rules. The author's definition: A frame is that portion of a game of shuffleboard, begun at the head of the court, in which each player shoots four discs.

Friendly game. See **Fun game.**

Fun game. A game in which sociability is more important to the players than excelling.

Game point. The scoring level that a player must attain to win a game.

Glance. A shot in which the cue disc, after its impact with a target, changes its course to stop in a more favorable position on the board.

Go on the board. To shoot a disc for a score.

Guard. 1. Protective guard: A disc that is placed for the purpose of providing protection for the next shot. 2. Preventive guard: A disc that is placed for the purpose of preventing a play by the opponent.

Gutter. Alley.

Hammer. Disc No. 8; the last disc to be shot at either end of the court.

Handle. A second disc placed beyond a guard that protrudes enough to enable the opponent to spoil both scores with a combination.

Head. The end of the court at which the scoreboard stands.

Hesitation shot. A shot in which the cue comes to a brief stop during the delivery.

Hide. 1. An area on the scoring diagram that is accessible to the player's disc and is protected from an attack by the opponent's cue disc. 2. A scoring disc that has been placed in that area.

High, deep, low. These words refer to the position of a disc in a scoring area. High 10, high 8, high 7 refer to a disc that stops just over the line in these areas, leaving a space too small for the opponent to score while knocking away the disc. Deep 10, deep 8, deep 7, deep kitchen refer to discs that are near the far side of these areas, allowing room for the opponent to score by using the discs as backstops. Low is sometimes used instead of deep.

High number. A general name for a high 10, a high 8, or a high 7.

Hit and run. A clearing-of-the-board shot used on a scoring disc, usually a kitchen bait, rather than on a guard. Often other discs are left on the board after this shot has been made. The shot consists of knocking the bait off the board and glancing the cue disc off the board as well.

Hook shot. A shot in which the cue noticeably changes its direction during the delivery.

Kitchen. The part of the scoring diagram officially designated as the 10-off area.

Kitchen bait. A disc that is placed on the board, preferably in the deep 7, without a protective guard for the purpose of getting the opponent's cue disc into an area where it can be put into the kitchen.

Kitchen player. A player who, regardless of his score, relies heavily on kitchen shots to win his game.

Kitchen speed. The speed of a cue disc that will cause it to stop in the 10-off area if it continues to move freely down the court.

Kitchen-speed-plus. A speed of the cue disc slightly faster than kitchen speed. It is calculated to carry an opponent's disc off the scoring area for sure, and possibly into the kitchen if the player should err on the slow side.

Lag. To shoot for the choice of color before a tournament game begins.

Leaner. A disc leaning against the edge of the court.

Liner. A live disc lying on a line.

Live disc. A disc which is in play. See **Dead disc.**

Lose one's hammer. Refers to the hammer player failing to score during the half round of play.

Low. See **High.**

Magic circle. The scoring level of two numbers (about 15 points) from game point. In a 75-point game, 60 is considered to be the lower limit of the magic circle.

Match. 1. In a tournament, one or more games played by the same opponents to determine which one will continue to compete. 2. In league play, a complete set of games played by two member teams.

Nick. The unintentional striking of the cue disc against another disc on the board.

Number. The general name of the positive score values on the scoring diagram; a 7, an 8, or a 10.

Open board. The empty scoring diagram, or a large part of it, on which the cue disc is to be placed for a score.

Out. Shoots first. Black is out means Black shoots first.

Pigeon. A live disc lying on the line dividing the kitchen and the 7-area.

Pilot. A Tampa guard. (This word, no doubt, comes from the days when shuffleboard was played only on the deck of a ship. It is not used in modern shuffleboard parlance.)

Playing the drift. Compensating for the drift to produce a shot equivalent to the one which would have been made on a level court.

Point. 1. Score. 2. Apex.

Point game. A game in which the players must attain a predetermined score to win.

Roll. Sometimes used to mean glance.

Round. 1. In doubles or in walking singles, a round is the playing of sixteen discs, eight from the head and eight from the foot. 2. In nonwalking singles, a round is the playing of sixteen discs, all from the same end of the court, either the head or the foot. A **half round** is that part of a game in doubles or singles in which eight discs are played from either end of the court.

Rush the game. To take an unnecessary risk toward the end of a game for the purpose of getting an extra score on the board to bring the game to a premature close.

St. Pete. A cross guard.

Separation triangle. A wedge-shaped design, without a base, in the center of the 10-off area that separates the yellow and the black discs at the beginning of a half round.

Shufflegram. This word, which is a contraction of the expression shuffleboard diagram, has been coined by the author. Since shuffleboard has undoubtedly come of age, it is felt that the scoring diagram should bear the dignity of a name.

Sneak. A score safely hidden by exploiting a weakness in the opponent's play.

Snuggle. To place a scoring disc close behind one of the opponent's discs for the purpose of protection.

Steal one's hammer. Refers to a player scoring in a half round while his opponent, the hammer player, fails to score.

Stick. To stop on the board (as in case of the cue disc) in almost the same place as the disc which was knocked away.

Strategy. A plan involving a series of plays that are directed toward a single objective.

Suicide alley. The entire length of the court lying between a cross guard and the nearer edge of the court.

Tampa. A guard placed close to the apex.

Target. The disc at which the cue disc is aimed.

Up-and-down shot. A shot at a disc in the 10-area that scores 10 for the player and 10 off for the opponent.

Yellow court. A court on which moving discs tend to drift toward the black side of the court. The direction of the drift favors the player of the yellow discs.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

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