



WEST COAST DISTRICT YOUTH SHUFFLEBOARD PROGRAM GUIDE



SECTION 1 • INTRODUCTION

Welcome

This guide is based on the successful West Coast District Youth Shuffleboard Program developed with the Pinellas Park Teen Summer Camp. It is intended to help shuffleboard clubs and organizations start and operate a youth shuffleboard program using a simple, proven approach.

The guide assumes your organization already has shuffleboard courts and basic equipment. It is not a detailed coaching manual or rule book. Instead, it provides practical guidance for organizing and conducting a successful youth program.



Program at a Glance

- Six approximately 90-minute sessions
- Ages about 12–17
- 8–36 youth participants
- One or two Assistant Coaches for every 4 participants
- Demonstrations, drills, and games in every session
- Certificates presented at the final session

Our Goal

By the end of the program, participants should understand the basic rules of court shuffleboard, demonstrate the fundamental shooting skills, practice good sportsmanship and teamwork, and feel comfortable continuing to play at their local club.

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SECTION 2 • GETTING STARTED

Organize the Program

Choose a Program Coordinator and Lead Coach (can be the same person), and coordinate the schedule and participant details with the city, rec center, or organization staff.

- Plan six 1.5 to 2 hour sessions.
- Recruit one or two Assistant Coaches for every 4 participants.
- Have coaches arrive at least 30 minutes early for setup and a brief orientation each session.

Prepare the Equipment

Most clubs will already have the main equipment. Before each session, make sure the courts and supplies are ready:

- Cues and discs
- Scoreboard chalk/pens and erasers
- Drawing chips and buckets
- Stickers for lesson awards

Keep It Simple

The program does not require elaborate preparation. Keep lesson demonstrations brief, spend most of the session on the courts, and let the Assistant Coaches reinforce the lesson during drills and games.



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SECTION 3 • RUNNING EACH SESSION

A Simple Session Flow

Use the same basic routine each week. A familiar format keeps the program easy to organize and gives participants more time to play.

1. Coaches Arrive and Set Up

Arrive about 30 minutes early. Prepare the courts, equipment, drawing chips, and lesson materials.

2. Welcome and Demonstrate

Bring the group together for a short introduction to the day's lesson and a brief demonstration.

3. Draw for Courts

Have participants draw chips for court assignments before the drills. Keep the same draw for the rest of the session.

4. Drills and Guided Practice

Use short drills to practice the lesson. Assistant Coaches work with the participants on their assigned courts.

5. Play Games

Move into 8-frame doubles games. Add another game when time permits.

6. Wrap Up

Recognize good effort and sportsmanship, give lesson stickers when appropriate, make announcements, and clean up.

Timing

Most sessions will run about 1.5 hours. Allow up to 2 hours when adding another game or when the lesson needs more practice.

Lesson 1

Allow extra teaching time in the first session. Later lessons can use shorter introductions because the coaches can reinforce instruction during drills and play.

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SECTION 4 • BASIC PROCEDURES

Drawing for Courts

Use drawing chips to make court assignments quick and fair. Have participants line up, draw a chip, and go to the court shown on the chip. The participants can be counted in line to prepare the correct number of chips for the draw. Keep the same draw for drills and games for the rest of the session. Courts should be filled with four participants each, with any extras on one additional court. Any counselors or staff that are attending should be invited to participate as well.

Coaching on the Courts

Assign one or two Assistant Coaches to each group of four participants. Coaches should demonstrate when needed, give simple corrections, and reinforce the lesson while the participants practice and play.

Safety and Equipment

- Keep cues and discs under control and out of walkways.
- Make sure the opposing player stays out of the way of the shooter.
- Return equipment to its proper place after play.
- Have participants help with cleanup at the end of the session.



Coaching Approach

Keep coaching positive and practical. Praise effort and improvement, correct one thing at a time, and emphasize teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the program.

Keep Play Moving

Avoid long explanations once play begins. Most instruction is best given on the court while participants are practicing or playing.

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SECTION 5 • THE SIX-SESSION PROGRAM

Lesson 1 — Basics

The first lesson is the most important and should receive extra teaching time. Introduce the basic information participants need to begin playing safely and correctly.

- Basic terminology and etiquette
- Shooting order and the hammer
- How scoring works and how to use the scoreboard
- How to hold the cue and use a smooth two-step pendulum delivery

Drills

- Proper Shooting Technique — each participant shoots two discs with individual coaching.
- Shooting a Frame to Score — players alternate four discs each and try to place every disc in scoring.

After the drills, play two 8-frame doubles games and continue coaching the basics during play.

Coaching

Progression

Coach what has already been taught. It is fine to suggest a shot that will be explained later, but avoid teaching later strategy concepts before their lesson.

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Lesson 2 — Guards

Introduce the idea of guarding before scoring and show how guards can be used or removed.

- Tampa and St. Pete guards
- Shooting positions and hiding a score
- Clearing guards
- Blocking the hammer shot

Drills

- Place a guard and then place a scoring disc behind it.
- Practice clearing Tampa and St. Pete guards.
- Play a frame using guards and clearing; use the seventh disc to block the board when no hide is available.

Lesson 3 — Discs on the Board

Teach participants to respond to discs already in play rather than automatically trying to score.

- Clear an open score
- Uncover a hide
- Cover a scoring disc
- Do not chase a well-hidden disc

Drill

Set up a scoring disc, practice covering it with a guard, clearing the cover, and deciding when to stop chasing the hidden score and use the hammer to score instead.

Keep It

Practical

The lesson plan introduces useful concepts without trying to cover every game situation. Coaches reinforce each week's lesson during drills and games.

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Lesson 4 — Kitchen Bait

Introduce kitchen speed and the use of a scoring disc as bait when a kitchen opportunity is worth the risk.

- Kitchen speed
- Desired results: stick, miss, or self-kitchen
- When kitchen bait is useful

Drill

Alternate between placing kitchen bait, hard clearing it, and attempting kitchen shots. Practice with both colors and at both ends of the court.

Lesson 5 — Strategy Basics

Use the score and the hammer to introduce simple game strategy.

- Ahead with hammer — clear and score
- Ahead without hammer — steal the hammer
- Behind with hammer — seek extra score or a kitchen
- Behind without hammer — steal the hammer or seek a kitchen

Drill

Put sample scores on the scoreboard and play full frames with Yellow out and Black out while participants make decisions based on whether they are ahead or behind.

Build on

Earlier Lessons

Continue coaching the skills and concepts already learned. The later lessons add strategy; they do not replace the fundamentals from the earlier sessions.

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Session 6 — Mingles Tournament

Finish the program with a simple Mingles Doubles tournament. The tournament gives participants a chance to use what they have learned in a fun, competitive setting.

Game Format

- Four 8-frame games
- Draw for court, end, and color before each game
- Tie scores stand after eight frames
- No penalties
- Players may repeat a court or opponent when the random draw produces it

Scoring the Tournament

- Each winning player records the final game points toward a four-game tournament total.
- A bye counts as a win and receives the median score of the players in that game.
- A player can have only one bye and draws first in later rounds.
- Winners are determined first by games won, then by tournament point total.

Coach Participation

Pre-assign coaches to court positions so participants do not have a coach as a partner and, when possible, every court has at least one coach.

Keep the

Final Session Fun

The final session should feel like a celebration. Keep the tournament moving and emphasize sportsmanship. Afterward, present certificates and awards, thank everyone involved, and encourage participants to keep playing.