

## Part I – The Fun/Hands-on Section

“Blessed are the flexible, because they shall not get bent out of shape.”

(College of Marin)

We all need to become more flexible – are you? We’ll soon find out. This first section is designed to have *you* put the pencil to the paper - *Have Some Fun!* Everyone I talk to or play against, seem to echo the same sentiment, “Shuffleboard needs to bring back fun/enjoyment into the game!” Well, that’s what I aim to try and do in this section. Obviously, I thought to put it at the end of the text. I then thought better of it and felt that this is where it belongs! I sincerely hope that your flexibility will allow this to happen! Give it a close look and *enjoy!* (All answers will appear on the last page of this text – NO PEEKING! (A, B and C are *Mental* – D, E and F are *Emotional*)

### A. How much do you know about the game?

1. What is the maximum length of a shuffleboard cue?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the length of the shuffleboard court – baseline to baseline?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many discs will fit into the 10 area?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many discs will fit into the -10/kitchen area?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many matches do you need to win in a 64 player field to win the Main Event/Championship?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_
6. In what year was the first International (I.S.A.) held?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Extra Credit: Where?  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Unscramble these common shuffle terms:

Example: \_ \_ \_ euc (Answer: c u e)

1. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ eusho

2. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ cinte~~h~~k
3. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ mheram
4. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ rcgitahn
5. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ paatm
6. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ engls~~g~~u

C. Shuffleboard Word Search

Find and circle all the shuffleboard terms listed at the left. They may be in an up, down, forward, backward, or diagonal position. Unscramble the letters not used in the WORD SEARCH to find the answer to the SHUFFLEBOARD NEMESSES. Enjoy!

		X	W	Y	T	L	A	N	E	P	N	E	V	E	S	A
Aim	Lag	A	H	O	E	T	I	H	A	N	M	A	E	T	P	E
Apex	Lead	W	P	A	L	C	O	R	E	H	I	D	D	E	N	M
Arc	Leaner	Y	D	O	K	L	T	I	A	B	A	L	X	P	A	G
Backstop	Lost	C	E	A	T	N	E	N	O	P	P	O	E	T	A	P
Bait	Match	S	L	L	E	S	I	Y	I	K	M	N	C	S	E	M
Baseline	Math	I	B	R	L	H	K	G	T	C	A	H	P	E	A	U
Beads	Miss	D	U	E	S	A	E	C	S	A	T	L	D	E	K	B
Black	Nick	F	O	U	L	O	E	K	A	L	R	E	L	I	S	H
Bump	Opponent	G	D	E	N	C	T	D	F	B	L	E	T	O	I	T
Carom	Partner	E	U	S	D	A	E	B	I	I	T	C	N	N	R	A
Cease	Penalty	D	P	A	C	G	A	L	V	C	H	O	A	A	I	M
Cue	Pigeon	I	D	L	R	O	I	E	U	E	I	A	H	R	E	W
Deep	Play	S	N	E	A	D	R	E	N	L	S	U	T	S	O	L
Degree	Risk	N	E	T	N	Y	G	E	T	A	R	T	S	S	I	M
Delivery	Roll															
Disc	Score															
Double	Seven															
Duel	Shot															
End	Side															
Fast	St. Pete															
Foul	Strategy															
Gasp	Suicide Alley															
Guard	Tampa															
Hats	Tap															
Head	Team															
Hero	Ten															
Hidden	Wax															
Hit	Win															
Kitchen	Yellow															

SHUFFLEBOARD NEMESSES: ○○○○○○○○ And ○○○○○○

D. How to Plant a Shuffleboard Garden  
(Chris Hoekstra – District 8, CA)

Plant 4 Rows of Peas

- Personality
- Perseverance
- Promptness
- Preparation

Plant 4 Rows of Squash

- Squash negative thinking
- Squash gossip
- Squash criticism
- Squash indifference

Plant 4 Rows of Lettuce

- Let us use information sincerely
- Let us respect our association and staff
- Let us show sincere enthusiasm
- Let us be an example

Plant 4 Rows of Turnips

- Turn up for meetings
- Turn up with a friendly smile
- Turn up with ideas to share
- Turn up with new players so they, too, may enjoy the fruits of the garden

E. What Makes 100%  
(Dwain Johanson – Mesa, AZ – Dist. 4)

Ever wonder about those people who say they are giving *more* than 100%?  
Here's a little math that might prove helpful:

If:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Is represented as:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 1 4 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

Then:

H A R D W O R K  
8 1 18 4 23 15 18 11 = 98%

K N O W L E D G E  
11 14 15 23 12 5 4 7 5 = 96%

But,

A T T I T U D E  
1 20 20 9 20 21 4 5 = 100%

And,

B U L L S H I T  
2 21 12 12 19 8 9 20 = 103%

So, it stands to reason that hard work and knowledge will get you close, attitude will get you there, but bullshit will put you over the top.

- F. Finally, a little song for the musically inclined.  
(Shirley Bilderback - Mesa, AZ - Dist. 1)

Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Shufflers

Verse: Mamas, Don't let your babies  
Grow up to be shufflers  
Let 'em pitch horseshoes  
Or hit tennis balls  
Ride in golf carts,  
Or shop in the malls  
Mamas, don't let your babies  
Grow up to be shufflers  
'Cause they're never at home  
And you're always alone  
They're trying to figure out the game

Verse: Shufflers ain't easy to love  
And they're harder to hold  
They'd rather play you a game  
Than give diamonds or gold  
Beat up o' trophies are  
Their prized possessions  
Each game is a challenge, they say  
You'll never understand why

They never give up  
They won't cook - - but  
They're in the kitchen all day

## Part 2 – The Mental Game

“The more you say, the less people remember. The fewer the words, the greater the profit.”

(Fe'nelon)

Well, here we go! I will do my very best to keep my writing as clear and succinct as possible in order to adhere to the above quote. As the title of Part 2 indicates, this section will deal with the mental elements of the game of shuffleboard. I realize that, many times, the mental and emotional elements are closely intertwined – I've taken the writer's liberty of doing my best to keep them separate.

### A. Defining the Word

I would like to begin with a clear and concise definition of the word - *mental*. Webster's, and other dictionaries, describes the word as “something relating to or of the mind.” Clearly, the mental aspect of the game indicates game strategy – our decisions on shot selection – but as I'm sure most of you agree, it's *much more* than that. The much more part is what this section will deal with. Think about it – of the physical, emotional, and mental sides to each and every game (even each and every shot we take), the mental side of our play is the only one that is *hidden*. (Our opponent can see our shot and our reaction to it, but not our thinking). *Later in this book I'll have each of you access your physical, emotional, and mental skills*. The successful shuffler, I feel, is the one who can achieve *balance*. I contend that the most important element of the three is the mental. By the time you get to your personal survey, I hope you will also see this.

### B. Three Mental Elements to Master

In every game you play, there are 3 items you must control on the mental end. *The first is Yourself*. By that I mean, developing mental toughness – sometimes things don't go our way and sometimes our play for this day is not up to par. If we cannot keep our head (mental), our match is probably doomed. I, like you, *after* the completion of a match in which we've struggled, question our mental approach to the events. We say such

things as: Why did I do that? Why didn't I stick to my game plan? Why did I lose patience? These and any other affirmations tell us that our mental approach needs to be strengthened. Let me put it another way – nobody likes to lose. I, like you, have lost matches; yet I am at peace with myself. Why? I believe that in those matches my mental game stayed strong – I played well, but, it just wasn't my day.

*The second element* is to be able to analyze your *Opponent's Play*. I feel that very few players give this enough consideration. I've always contended that shuffleboard is like a game of chess. (Am I making the moves, or am I always reacting to my opponent's play?) During a match, your mind must be clear and on the task at hand. (We'll talk about types of players a bit later).

Thirdly especially in Arizona and California we must be able to master *the Court*. This involves the type of shots the courts allow us to make along with assessing, as quickly as possible, how our play for the day seems to be. Haven't you said this a time or two, "I can usually make that shot" or "I didn't think the court would play that way for that shot." Shooting positions and choices of shots to be taken come into play here. Again, *if* mentally we respond appropriately, there are many times a game can be salvaged. In every game a thinking (mentally strong) shuffler determines what they *can* do (shot-making) and what they *should* do (mental strength). We all need to be much stronger on the latter.

### C. The Different Types of Shufflers

Please read and study this section very carefully. Look at each type profiled from two standpoints – 1. which of these categories do I fit into, and, 2. which of these categories does my opponent fit into?

1. The Novice - I know many times upon a loss or poor play for the day, we may feel this way. For our study here, however, we are talking about the newer shuffler or one that's played for a good amount of time but for some reason just doesn't get it. You will note two main characteristics of this type of shuffler. The first is that you never know what they're going to do. This unpredictability can drive you crazy if you let it. *Don't let it!* Keep your strategy intact and just let the game happen. The second trait that is really in evidence is that the novice seems to have no conscience. This is a tough one from this standpoint – as I tell shufflers in my strategy sessions, anytime a shuffler takes a shot, any shot, they have a 50 – 50 chance that it will succeed – no matter how crazy it seems to us. The point here to remember, again, is to stay patient and continue to play the percentages. Sooner or later the game should come back your way. One final point here. Every

year I lose a game or two to the novice, because for an entire game things just go their way (luck?) and maybe my play for that day is off from the physical side. Believe me, it happens (more on this a bit later).

2. The Shooters – Simply put, many shufflers who are quite adept/skilled on the shot-making end simply try to outshoot you. Their strategy or mental toughness may not be what it should be, but boy can they make the shots! I see two traits from this type of shuffler. One is that they want to/seem to play very fast when it's their shot. My suggestion to you is to slow down your play when it comes to be your shot. I realize this is a bit of gamesmanship, but, hey, you're trying to win the match. There is no clock in the game, make your opponent wait – challenge a disc, call for wax, jockey your disc a bit more – whatever works. The other trait I see with the shooter is that they portray an air about them, almost one of invincibility. If you let this affect you (emotional), you might be in for a long match. You need good mental toughness here – like the ad says “never let ‘em see you sweat”. A bit of playacting might be necessary here – you need to portray that same sense of invincibility!
3. The Talker – Shuffleboard, from Pot Luck play, to In-Park Play, to League Play, to Tournament Play – is supposed to be a competitive game with social implications. Some shufflers, the talkers, take it to an extreme. I see two traits with these types of players. The obvious one is that they like to talk about - anything. At the risk of being called anti-social, the obvious thing to do is to politely ask them to tone it down. I choose to just not respond to their queries – I've even considered earplugs (hah!). The other trait the talker possesses is that, as long as they are ahead or close in a game, they keep talking. However, once they get behind, 98% of the chatter seems to stop. Obviously, stay mentally strong and get ahead early in a match – it will stop the chatter!
4. The Easy-Going – This one is a little tougher to analyze; in other words, is this type of shuffler really this way, or are they playing head games with you? There are two traits to look for with this type of shuffler. One is that they laugh or make comments about their shot selection, strategy, or seemingly bad luck. If this is not a ploy, then many times, you will truly end up with a fairly easy win. I suggest that you play the sympathy card with them – “Gee, that’s a tough break” or “Wow, I thought you’d make that shot, too.” The other trait this player seems to have is they really don’t seem to care whether they



win or lose. If they are on the up-and-up, I really respect this type of player. I do realize in closing this section, that the easy-going shuffler is emotionally well-balanced. They win a lot of games.

5. Head Games – again, this is a tactic aimed at challenging our emotional game. Yet, I mention it here because mentally, you need to spot this in a player *and* you need to deal with it. I truly believe that the player using this approach is doing it to try and rattle you. There are two traits to look for here. One is they challenge everything - these are lousy courts, the charting stinks; these discs are terrible, etc. You get the picture here – they are trying to fill your head with negative thoughts. Don't let them – either ignore their statements or turn them into positives - these courts are fine, the charting seems fine to me, and I like these discs – again, gamesmanship on your part. Oh well. The second trait is much more sinister. Yes, there are shufflers who will do anything to win! *Don't let them!* Calmly challenge them. If they are crowding you (in your line of vision, making noises with their cue, etc.), ask them calmly to stop. *If they ignore you/refuse to stop, call the Head Referee or even the Tournament Director to explain the situation. Shuffleboard has rules and they need to be adhered to.* I'm sure most of you reading this would do what I have done on a number of occasions, and that is to correct a 1 point scoring error you shouldn't have - we all want to win, but not at the expense of cheating. Much more on this later in the *sportsmanship* section.
  
6. The Competitor – This brings us to our last category of shufflers – players who want badly/expect to win. I believe there are actually *two* groups of shufflers that fit this group. The *first* type of shuffler has competition in his/her blood. They will try to win at everything – whether it be a friendly game of cards, in every bingo game, etc. There are two traits that this group possesses. One is that they have it in their being that winning is everything; hence, they tend to show their emotions on any bumps in the road. The other thing is they seem to have two personalities – one *on* and the other *off* the court. For some reason as soon as any event begins, their personality swings into the competitive mode. Generally, just continue to play your game and let this first type of competitor (emotional), self-destruct. This brings us to the Champion Shuffler – the competitive man or woman who tends to win more times than the average shuffler! You can see two definite traits in this type of player. The *first* is that they are mentally strong – they are the tacticians. Once the match begins, they have their *plan* and they *stick to it*. Of course, if they fall behind or get near games end, they have a plan for that, too.

If two equally physically capable shufflers play each other and they're both on their game, the game may hinge on one shot. If you're lucky enough to be watching a game like this, you're in for a treat. The other trait most players in this category possess is that, they handle adversity / their emotions quite well. In watching them play, they look unflustered in all situations. If you win against such players, you know you've been in a match. Obviously, this last shuffler is the one we *all* strive to become.

### Closing Comments

In concluding the first part of this section on Mental Toughness, I would like to share some final ideas with you. As my strategy teaching co-partner, Ward Dowell of Mesa, AZ states, "It's the mental toughness that determines winners, when two players of equal ability meet." More specifically, the winning player generally remembers better (mental) and thinks more clearly (more mental) in crucial game situations. We can all become this way, but many times we need to develop techniques that work for us. For now, two immediate ones come to mind. Most of you have heard of the first in one way or another – to read positive affirmations while waiting on play from the other end. Some common ones (written down to read) can be ones such as, "I can make this upcoming hammer" or "I can score on both sides from this (#4) shooting position." The other idea most top shufflers employ is to chart the course and refer to notes (illegal in CA and the ISA) as the game unfolds. There are many others. The aim of all of this is simple – you need to be able to stay *focused* – *the shot-making may be a bit off for the day, but never the mental!* This last idea will enable you to win on those off days. As we all know, most players can win when they are *on* – the trick of it all is to win, or at least be competitive, on your *off* days. Again, the mental should always be on!