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PART 15: SHOOTING FOR SIMPLE SCORE (E)

There is a natural tendency for the beginner to shoot for simple scores for most of his shots, even though the opponent has a scoring disk on the board or a disk which threatens to be developed into a double (as in the fourth shot of Part 3).

On the contrary, after a little experience the shuffler more often shoots to knock away any scoring or threatening disks of his opponent.

As has been seen in the illustrative examples in Parts 2 to 5, much of the play in shuffleboard is used by players in nullifying the plays of each other, or in making plays that are so nullified. Because this is true, it occurs in many cases that the effective scoring of a half-round is made by the last-shot of the half-round, using a shot for simple score, after which the opponent has no further turn.

There seems to come a time, when the shuffler has been play-ing the game for several months, when he finds that he is not succeeding in scoring with as many of his last-shots as he thinks he should. His thought may go to the extreme, that "the play for score on the last-shot is the hardest shot in the game."

Perhaps he expects to score too high a percentage of such shots. It has been seen in the preceding article that the experts score about 80 per cent of them. In any case, this shot is far from being the hardest in the game, and failures can be reduced by careful shooting.

When used as the last-shots of half-rounds, the shots for simple scores constitute the most regular and frequent standard score gainers. A shuffler who reliably can place scoring disks successfully for 70 per cent or 80 per cent of his last-shots usually can count on winning most of his games. A player who fails to score for the greater part of his last-shots may expect to lose most of his games.

In exception to what is said in the first paragraph above, when it is too difficult at the last-shot to spoil a scoring disk of the opponent, or when other available shots are too complicated or risky, it is normal to neglect the opponent's disk or other shot, and to shoot for a simple score in some available part of the board.

For example (see Fig. 16), it is Red's last-shot. The score is not critical (score about even, early in the game). Since the black disk F is well protected by H and E, Red cannot hit it directly except by a shot at a very thin left edge of F. A combination shot to knock H or E against F does not have high probability of success. Red should shoot for a simple score at X on the open side of the board.
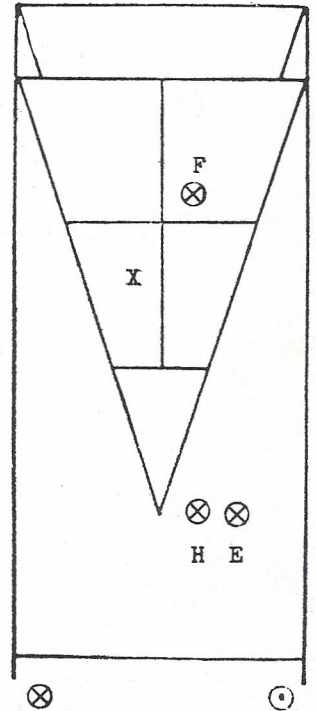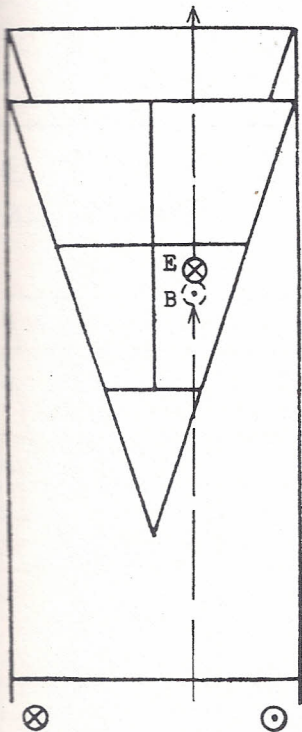

Figure 16

PART 16: BACKSTOP (A)

Figure 17

A disk already on the board, perhaps in scoring position or perhaps not, is frequently used as a backstop to stop the movement of the shooting disk upon making a full hit or nearly full hit, and especially to stop the shooting disk in a scoring area.

A backstop is especially useful on a court or part of a court where the shooter is having difficulty in stopping at desired points, as on a very fast court. It thus adds to the accuracy of the shot.

For example, assume that the shooter has a good chance on an empty court to make an eight. But he has a greater chance of scoring (see Figure 17) by using E as a backstop when he shoots B against it.

HOW DISK STOPS. Assume there is a disk F on the board (Figure 18), and that a player shoots at it with disk C, intending to use F as a backstop. When the striking disk C hits the struck disk full, that is, directly on center, it stops at once, with an edging forward of perhaps one-sixteenth inch up to ¾ inches, depending mainly upon the force of the shot. See Part 9, Hits and Angles (A).
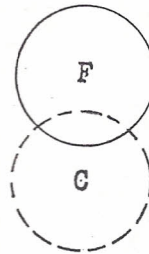

Fig. 18

If the hit is slightly to the side, the striking disk moves a little to the side and in doing so edges onward somewhat more, to perhaps one-half inch to three inches or more, depending upon how far off center the hit is made and also upon the force of the shot.

On a slow court the sideward movement and forward edging after the hit are less than on a fast court, so that stopping against a backstop is easier and more accurate. On a fast court, on the contrary, accurate backstopping is more difficult because of greater sideward movement, which may occur with a hit even a small fraction of an inch off center.

This effect is particularly notable in backstopping against a disk fairly high in the 10-area, that is, near to the point of the triangle, since even a small sideward movement may put the striking disk on a line.

The same considerations apply to slow and fast shots. In order to backstop a disk accurately against another, a slow shot is surer, whereas a fast shot, if it hits slightly off center, may glance too far to the side.

A friend has just shown us a scrapbook in which he is pasting all these articles.

13

PART 17: BACKSTOP (B)

In planning to use a backstop, it is important that there be sufficient space behind the disk (nearer the shooter), for the disk to stop without lying on a line.

SPACE TO STOP. In Figure 19 let it be assumed that only various backstop shots are being studied. There is insufficient space for the shooting disk behind disk G without stopping on a line. On the other hand, there is clearly enough space to stop against disk F and not touch the line.

In the case of disk H, the shooter probably cannot see well enough from his end of the court to judge the distance between the disk and the line; in which case he should ask a court official, under Rule G-2, to tell him how many inches of space lie between the disk and the crossline.

If, as in Figure 20, a disk F in place overlaps a line and extends an appreciable distance, 1½ inches or more, to the rear of the line, it should be possible to use that disk as a backstop and leave the shooting disk C in scoring area.

But if the disk F extends only about one-half inch in rear of the line, then the shot is not impossible, but requires more accuracy in hitting the exact center than most shufflers can count on attaining with reasonable certainty.

WHERE BACKSTOP GOES. In using a backstop, consideration usually must be given the direction or area where the struck disk may be driven, especially if it might score for or against the shooter.

An example of the use of a backstop is shown in Figure 21. Disk H-1, drawn with a full line, is the only disk on the board initially and the shooter wishes to use it as a backstop. He hits it lightly with disk D, which stops in the 10-area. Disk H-1 is pushed gently onward to position H-2, and remains on the center line.

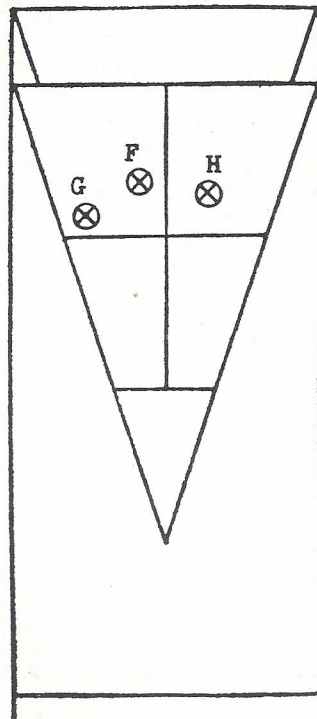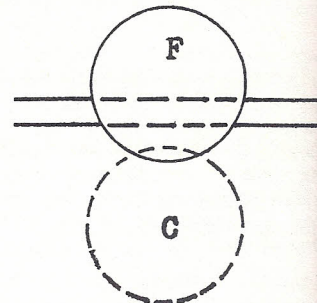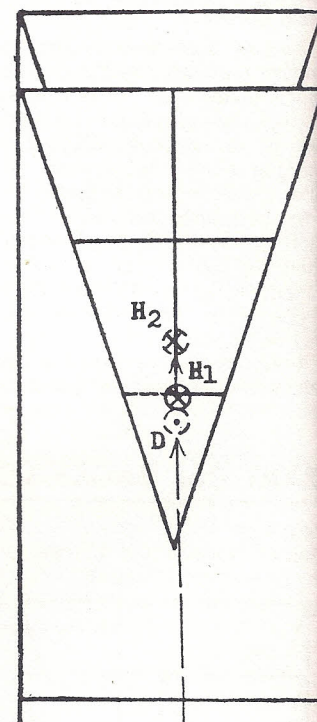Thus the shooter has used the opponent's disk H-1 as a backstop to score his own disk D, but has avoided driving H-1 into scoring position.

A similar shot was discussed in "Unusual Shuffle Shots" October 20, 1957.

Figure 20

Figure 19

Figure 21

PART 18: BACKSTOP (C)

When two of the opponent's disks G and H (Figure 22) lie abreast with insufficient space between them for a disk to pass between them, they constitute a double backstop. This is the most perfect and advantageous form of backstop. The aiming point is exactly between the two disks. To stop at D, against and between them, is a very reliable shot.

BACKSTOP AT KITCHEN. A backstop disk E (Figure 22) located at the far line of the kitchen is very useful for stopping an enemy disk in the kitchen. It is not easy to hit an enemy disk so as to insure that it will hit the backstop, but in many a case an enemy disk F-1 being knocked away should be directed toward such a backstop in the hope that the disk may be backstopped in the kitchen, at F-2.

On the other hand (Figure 23) care should be taken to avoid aiming a shot for simple score toward a point, such as X, which is on a line pointing toward an enemy disk H in the kitchen or toward any disk A at the far edge of the kitchen, since either disk may act as an unfavorable backstop to stop the shooting disk in the kitchen in case the latter disk happens to over-shoot its target spot X. It is usually better to select another line along which to shoot, such as a line to Y.

In a similar way, a friendly disk should not be knocked toward or against a disk in the kitchen or on its far edge, lest it be backstopped there to stay in the kitchen.

An enemy disk G (Figure 23) on the near edge of the kitchen may, however, be utilized as a backstop in order that the shooter may not put his own disk in the kitchen; hence aiming a shot for score at or toward such a backstop is often desirable.

HANDLE WITH CARE. Also, the enemy disk G on the near edge of the kitchen may simultaneously be put in the kitchen. Still, such a shot must be aimed with special care, for there is danger that, if the hit is not well centered against the backstop,
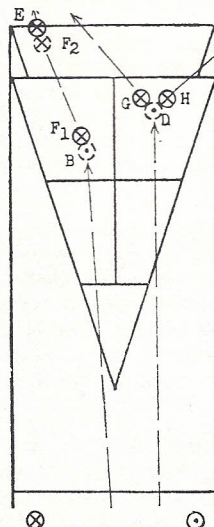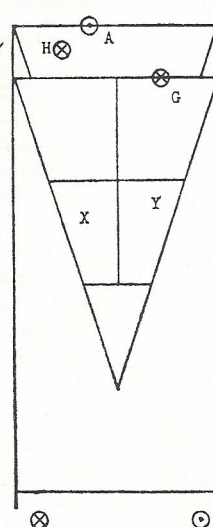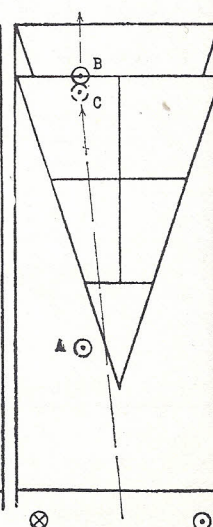

Figure 22   Figure 23   Figure 24

the shooting disk may glance off and itself go into the kitchen.

A friendly disk B (Figure 24) at the near edge of the kitchen may also be used as a backstop to score a 7 with the shooting disk C. There is even more danger and therefore more necessity for accurate shooting than in the shot described above, for one or both of the friendly disks might stop in the kitchen. In the case shown, the backstopped disk C also will have protection from disk A.

The shot must be accurately centered, and speed must be such that the backstop disk will be knocked completely through the kitchen. A gentle hit would be dangerous as it might put the backstop disk B into the kitchen. A gentle hit at an angle might put both disks into the kitchen.

AVOID LEAVING BACKSTOP. The shooter should be especially careful, in his shot preceding a last-shot by the opponent, to avoid leaving him a backstop to help him score and perhaps to be knocked into the kitchen.

PART 19: GLANCING HIT

In connection with glancing hits the terminology used by shufflers is not standardized, as also applies to many other aspects of shuffling. This article is concerned with hits in which the shooting or striking disk glances off to one side to go to a particular spot or in a particular direction.

The term "roll-over" is often used to apply to the case of a disk which glances off to a spot where it is hidden and therefore protected. This type of shot will be discussed later in connection with hiding.

The amount of sideward movement of the shooting disk after the hit is dependent upon the striking angle, the speed of the shot, and the speed of the court. The amount of sideward movement is not very difficult to control when it is to be rather small. But the control is difficult when it involves a movement of several feet.

GLANCING HIT USE. When a player, at his last-shot, has a free shot for score, one in which he is not constrained to knock away another disk, the usual shot, as described in Part 11, is a shot for simple score.

However, occasionally, on a tricky board, when the shuffler is uncertain of his ability to stop at a given point, he may use a glancing hit against a disk such as E-1 (Figure 25) in order to stop his shooting disk from going too far, and to cause it to glance off to stop in a given area, as at A.

Such a shot may also be particularly useful in attempting a shot for a 10, the area in which he has to stop being very small. Since the hit against F reduces the momentum of the shooting disk B, it facilitates stopping in the small area.

If an enemy disk such as G-1 (Figure 26) is less than six inches beyond a cross-line and so allows insufficient space to backstop a disk against it, a glancing hit affords the means of knocking away the enemy disk and also scoring at the same time, as at C. This type of shot occurs not infrequently.

ACTION OF STRUCK DISK. In connection with a glancing hit, in most cases the struck disk is simply driven away from the scoring diagram, but at times special attention must be paid to the course
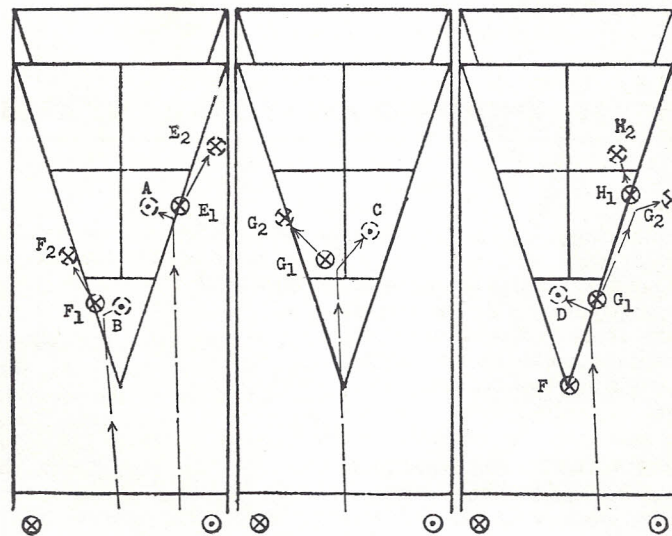

Figure 25   Figure 26   Figure 27

the disk may take after being hit.

For example, in Figure 27, only disks F, G-1 and H-1 are initially on the board. If disk G-1 is hit in order to glance the shooting disk into the 10-area, there is danger that, as shown in the diagram, G-1 may be driven against H-1, and then H might be knocked into scoring area, as at H-2. Or, alternatively, G-1 might hit H-1 on the left side and itself glance into scoring area.

In order to avoid this type of danger, it would be better to play the glancing shot against disk H-1 in the first place, as for the shot against E-1 in Figure 25.

PART 20 — KNOCKING AWAY SINGLE DISKS (A)

If the opponent has a disk in scoring position or threatening a double (as in Part 3, fourth shot), the first consideration is usually to knock it away, in fact the shooter in most cases practically is compelled to do so if he can reasonably accomplish it.

For a direct shot to do this, the hit may be full or at an angle.

WHERE DISKS GO. In making such a shot, what happens to the opponent's disk is always a consideration in planning the shot. His disk should not be left in another favorable scoring position, but should usually be driven completely outside, or onto a line, or into the kitchen. Also it should not hit and spoil a friendly scoring disk, or knock one into the kitchen, or accomplish some other harm.

Similarly, what happens to the shooting disk must also be planned, whether it is to be left in scoring position and where, or whether it stops on a line, hides beyond another disk, glances off the board, etc.

FULL HIT. For a full hit the shot is aimed at the center of the opponent's disk. It will send that disk directly onward, to a distance which depends on the force of the blow, so that the shooter should adjust the force in accordance with the distance he is to send the enemy disk.

At the same time, in accordance with the considerations of Part 17, the opponent's disk acts as a backstop for the shooting disk.

ANGLE HIT. Instead of a full hit to knock away a disk, an angle hit or glancing hit may be used.

If (Figure 28) the enemy disk F to be spoiled is partly hidden by another disk E, it cannot be struck with a full hit, so that a glancing hit is necessary. If the amount of disk exposed is thin, this may require great shooting accuracy. When chances are poor, a different shot may be preferable, depending on the situation.

Even against a disk in the open a glancing hit may be used, for various reasons and situations. The most common of these cases are shots in which it is desired not to leave the shooting disk as a target for the opponent, or as a guard in place of a guard being knocked away, or when it is desired not to leave either disk on the board, that is, when the play is to clear the board.

CAN IT BE HIT? Practice and experience will show the degree of personal accuracy upon which the shuffler can rely. The ability

to hit a partly hidden disk depends upon the amount of the disk that can be seen, upon the shooter's skill and his accuracy of the moment, upon the length of the shot, and upon the distance that lies between the target disk and the disk that partly hides it.

In order for the shooter to determine if he can shoot past a disk to hit a disk beyond, he should sight from the side of his shooting disk past the intermediate disk.

For example, in Figure 29, he should sight from the right side of his shooting disk D, past the left side of the guard disk H, toward the disk he wishes to hit. The line of sight (dotted) indicates that if the right side of the shooting disk clears H in passing it, the shooting disk cannot hit G, but it can hit F.

PART 21: KNOCKING AWAY SINGLE DISKS (B)

In knocking away a single disk to clear the board, a good aiming point is usually one edge of the target disk. With the center of the shooting disk directed at this aiming point (Part 6,) there is margin for shooting error, right or left.

DISKS AWAY. Also, with a hit along this aiming line, most of the momentum of the shooting disk is communicated to the struck disk to knock it away. So that for a shot with medium speed or faster, there is little need to be concerned about a possible failure of the struck disk being knocked off the board unless the shot happens to make a thin hit (or a miss!!).

On the other hand, less than half of the momentum usually remains with the shooting disk, and there may not be enough to carry it off the board. Therefore special attention must usually be paid to insuring that there is sufficient momentum for the striking disk to leave the board.

Hence, in clearing the board a speedy shot is desirable so that the shooting disk will have enough remaining speed to glance well to the side even if it hits almost as a full hit.

Again, as part of the action to get the shooting disk definitely off the board, it is surer to cause it to move off toward the nearer side of the court than toward the farther side. Hence it is well to hit the target disk on the outer side (toward the nearer side of the court).

If, as mentioned in Part 20, either disk is liable to do some harm, the plan of shooting should be modified, for example, by aiming to strike on the other side of the target disk.

TOURNAMENT EXAMPLE. Figure 30 shows a situation that occurred in one of the semifinal matches of the State Gold Medal Tournament at Mirror Lake Club March 11, 1954. Janet Smith, the shooter Red, was playing against Amy Close, the opponent Black, with the score at 36 to 54, respectively. These two outstanding shufflers now stand fourth and second on our All-Time Roll of Champions.

Janet had a 7 on the board at A. And Amy had just played to snuggle disk F-1 fairly close to disk A, hoping that Red would avoid shooting to spoil F-1 or to put it in the kitchen on account of the risk of knocking it against A and spoiling that red disk. Janet was about to play the sixth shot of the half-round.

If Red's shot were planned to spoil F-1, it should necessarily be made at an angle, so that F-1 would not be driven against A. (This play is the one that we also usually attempt, but we have a pernicious habit of spoiling our own disk beyond.)

In this situation, Janet shot (Figure 31) with a perfect angle to avoid hitting A. But, in addition, she knocked F-1 into the kitchen at F-2, and her shooting disk glanced off to the right to score at 8 at C. She had perfect results as to the directions and destinations of both disks.

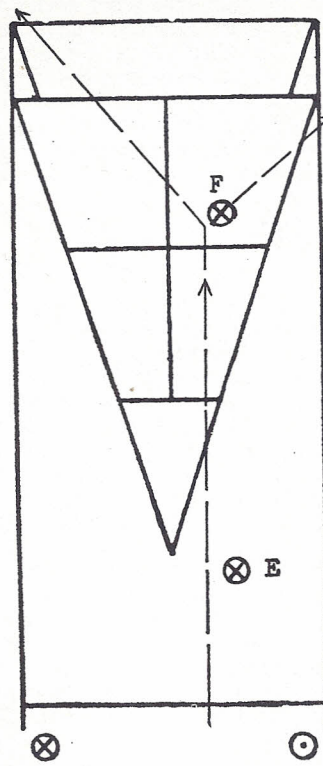Gain for the shot: 26 points (spoiled enemy 8, also gave opponent 10-off, and made 8 at C).
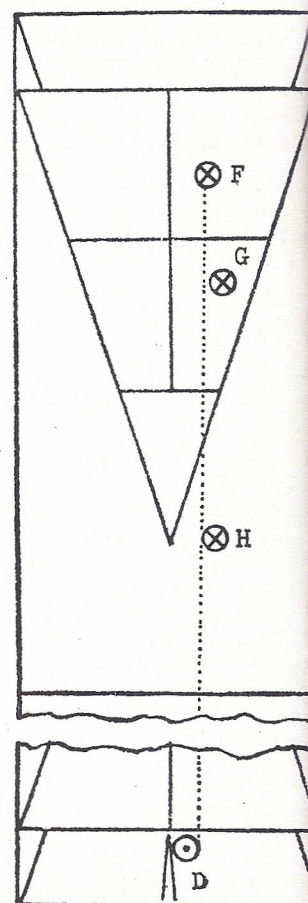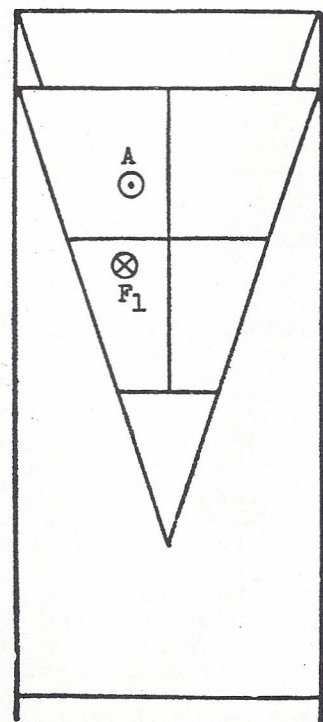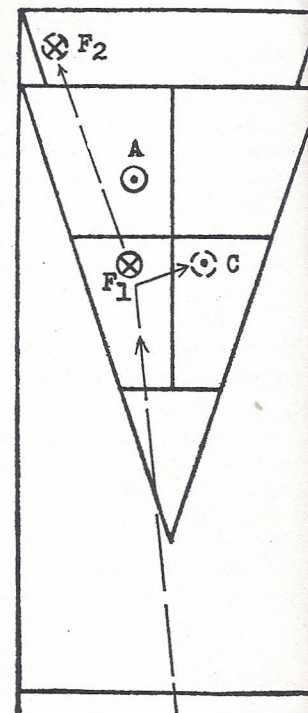

Figure 28

Figure 29

Figure 30

Figure 31

If one of the shooter's disks such as B-1, B-3 or B-4 (Figures 32, 33 or 34) lies in an advantageous scoring position, the usual play is to protect or cover it by a guarding disk or guard, such as C-1, C-2, C-3 or C-4. Protected scoring disks constitute one of the best means of winning.

The guard should, as shown, be so placed as to interpose between the opponent and the disk to be protected, and thus prevent the opponent from knocking away the scoring disk.

DISTANCE APART. It is necessary that the guard disk be placed at a reasonable distance from the disk to be protected, neither too close nor too far.

If the two disks (scoring disk and guard disk) are so close together as to be in contact with each other, or nearly so (as B-1 and C-1 in Figure 32), the opponent at his next shot will simply knock the guarding disk C-1 against the scoring disk B-1 and spoil the latter. (It is assumed that C-2 is not on the board.)

Somewhat similarly, if the guard disk is at C-2 (Figure 32) instead of at C-1, and is only about three feet from the disk B-1 to be protected, there is some protection, but the opponent has considerable chance to knock the guarding disk C-2 against the scoring disk B-1 and spoil it.
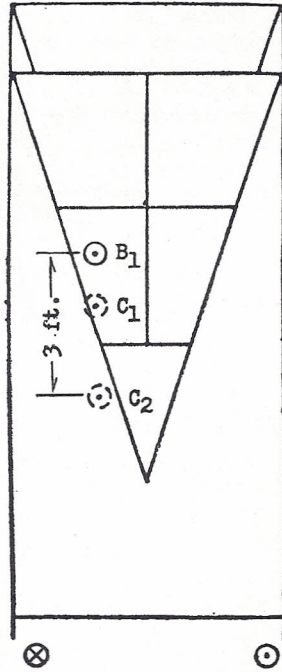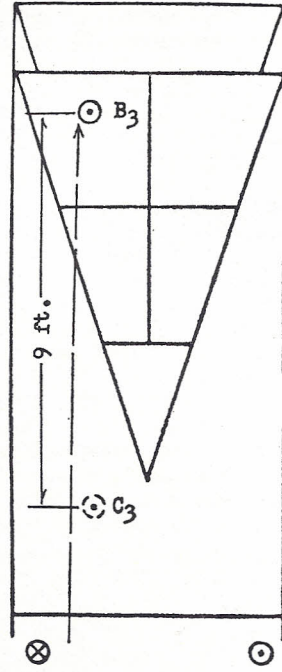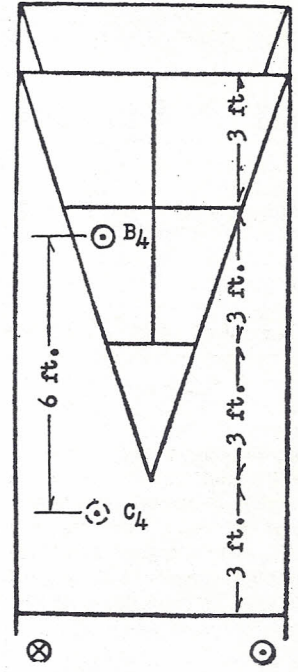

Figure 32

Figure 33

Figure 34

On the other hand (Figure 33), if the guard C-3 is too far from the disk B-3 to be protected, it will be possible for the opponent to shoot from one side or the other of his starting area past the guard and still hit the scoring disk B-3. In fact, if the guard disk is as much as eight or nine feet from the disk to be protected, there is almost always enough of the disk that can be seen from one or the other side of the opponent's starting area to constitute a suitable target.

The effective protection given by a guard varies with the skill of the opponent in shooting past it or in knocking it at the disk beyond.

In general, it may be said that the best distance for protection is about five to seven feet, with six feet stated as a good standard distance, as shown in Figure 34.

In estimating distances, it is well to remember that the various successive lines or points on the court are three feet apart as marked on Figure 34.

PART 23: GUARDING (B)

A guard disk D, in order to be properly located to protect a scoring disk C (Figure 35), should normally be stopped directly on the line KC running from the center of the opponent's starting area to the disk to be protected.

In order to reach this spot, the shooter would like very much, if he were permitted, to shoot from the center of his opponent's starting area directly at the disk to be protected. Then, wherever the disk were to stop, it would be right in the way of the opponent's next shot at C.

Of course this is not permitted, so the shooter should do the next best thing and shoot from the edge of his starting area closest to the opponent's starting area, that is, always from the inner edge of his own starting area.

GOOD AIMING POINT. He should normally aim his disk D at point P (Figure 35), about one inch outside the edge of disk C to be protected, and on the side away from his own side of the court (in this case to the left of C). He is thus shooting on a diagonal line that crosses the opponent's probable line of aim.

Then when disk D stops at six feet from C it will be at a point D directly on the line from the center of the opponent's starting area to the center of disk C. This is the standard case.

If, as occasionally happens, it is desired to place the guard D at about eight feet from the disk C, then the aiming point is about two or three inches (instead of one inch) outside the edge of disk C.

On the other hand, if the disk D must be closer to C, at four feet distance, as when protecting a disk deep in the 10-area, then the aiming point should be at the edge of disk C. And in case the guard D must be placed at only two feet from C, the aiming point is 1½ inches from the center of C, that is, half-way from the center to the edge of the disk.

In all of these cases the aiming point is still on the side away from the shooter's side of the court.

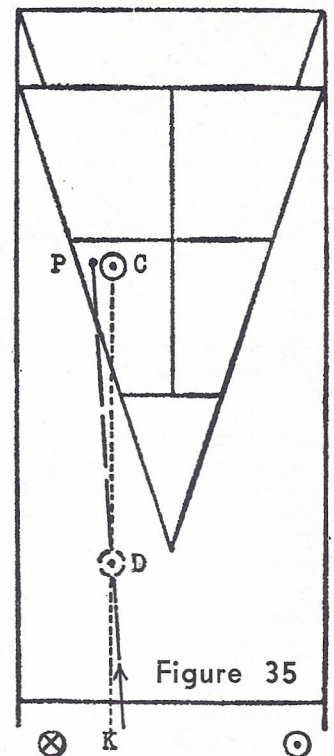**SIGHT AS OPPONENT DOES.** An alternate method of determining where to place a guard

Figure 35

disk is to step over to the opponent's side of the court and sight to see how the opponent might shoot to knock away the disk C to be protected. The shooter would sight along the line KC at the disk C, placing himself usually behind the middle of the opponent's starting area.

If there are other disks on the board, this method of sighting from the opponent's side is especially useful, and in such case the shooter should also usually sight from one or both edges of the opponent's starting area, as applicable.

In sighting as above, the shooter picks the spot where he want to place the guard disk, usuall about six feet from the disk t be protected, then goes over t his own side and shoots for tha spot.

PART 24: GUARDING (C)

Even though a guard disk D (Figure 36) is well placed directly on the line of sight (dotted) from the center of the opponent's starting area and six feet from the protected disk C, it is possible for an extremely accurate player to shoot past D and hit an edge of C. Or he might shoot to knock D against C by a combination shot, which succeeds about one time in three when the disks are about six feet apart.

Thus perfect protection is not possible with a single guard disk, although a considerable degree of protection is afforded, which is often reasonably adequate.

PARTIAL PROTECTION. It often occurs that the guard D is not exactly on the line desired, but is an inch or two to one side. In such cases the opponent can more readily hit the protected disk.

However, there is still partial protection, which may turn out to be sufficient for the purpose in view. Although the opponent can hit the partially protected disk, he may be able to hit it only with an angle hit, not with a full hit. Hence he will be unable to use the disk C as a backstop for his shooting disk.

Furthermore, he is restricted as to the angles that he can use and therefore as to the angle shots he may desire to make, involving such results as glancing off or rolling over into scoring area.

Again, the exposed portion of the partially protected disk C may be such as to make it highly probable that the opponent's shooting disk, after hitting it, will glance off into the kitchen.

Also there is the possibility that the opponent's shot may not be straight to his aiming point, but may diverge and hit the guarding disk D, and thus be ineffective.

Finally, even though it may happen that the guard disk D is placed so much to the side that the scoring disk C can be just fully seen, still the closeness of the guard disk D to the shooting line of the opponent restricts the latter's freedom of shooting and may even lead to his shot hitting the guard disk D instead of the target C.

In general, therefore, partial protection is advantageous even though it is not complete.

COVERING A 10. When the shooter has a disk A in the 10-area (Figure 37), that disk is hard to protect. There is not enough room between the disk A and the deadline KK to place a guard
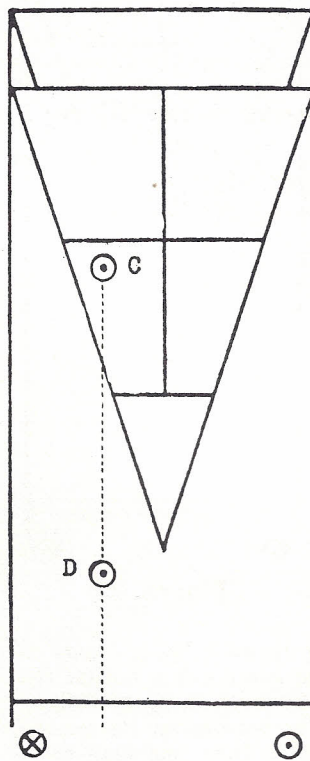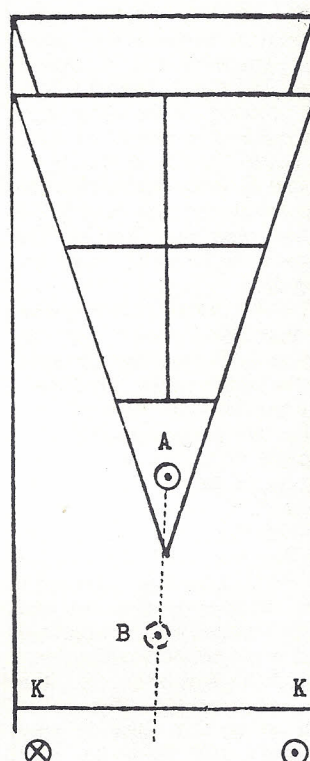
Figure 36

Figure 37

and still have it at sufficient distance from A so as not to be knocked rather readily against A.

And in addition it is very hard to place the guard disk accurately within that restricted space. It happens not infrequently that the prospective guard disk is sh short of the deadline and mus be removed. Or the disk may too far and either hit the disk or stop within a few inches of i

Of course the shot requires sp cial attention to accuracy.

PART 25: GUARDING (D)

A failure to place a guard effectively is usually costly, and occasionally may be decisive.

GUARD BADLY PLACED. In a tournament game the score was: Red 69, Black 67. Thus either player could have won the game with one scoring disk.

Red had a disk in the 8-area at C (Figure 38), and if the disk were maintained on the board it had strong chances of winning the game for Red. Accordingly his proper play was to protect it by a guard, preferably placed at X, about six feet from C and on a line (shown dotted) from the center of the opponent's starting area to the disk.

Red was to play the seventh shot of the half-round, which of course was to be followed by the last-shot, to be played by Black.

Red shot to protect his disk C, but his aim was poor and his shooting disk stopped at D, leaving C unprotected (Figure 39).

Black then had a clear shot at C, and played it. He knocked away C, and backstopped his own disk H against it to score an 8.

Gain for Red's shot: Disaster. Gain for Black's shot: 16 points.

Score for the half-round; Red O, Black 8.

Resulting overall score: Red 69, Black 75; and Black had won the game.

BIRD IN HAND. One of the errors of judgment frequently seen is an attempt to obtain an additional score instead of protecting one lying already on the board.

For example, in Figure 40 there is a disk A lying on the board. It is now the shooter Red's seventh shot. As shown above, he should protect disk A. If this is done reasonably well, he can expect to end the frame with essentially the same score as his opponent, that is, 8 to 8, or 8 to 7

Instead, however, he mistakenly shoots for an additional scor on the open right side of th board.

If the shooter were sure of making this shot, it might occasionally give him an advantage. An there are exceptional circumstances when it should be playe in about this way.

But even if the shooter wer certain of stopping in scoring area, as at X or Z, the opponen would be reasonably certain t

spoil one of the disks, leaving no gain for the shooter, and he would often spoil both disks, or succeed in a kitchen shot, with no gain or even greater loss to the shooter than if he had merely protected his scoring disk.

And, again, what so often happens is that the shot fails to make any score, stopping at V, W or Y, whereupon the opponent shoots to score against A as a backstop and also to put A in the kitchen. The opponent's chances of gaining have been actually improved by the shooter.

Again let it be said: Protect the scoring disk. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

REPLACE GUARD. In general, when a scoring disk has been protected by a guard disk, and if the opponent then knocks away the guard disk, the shooter should promptly place another guard in its place.

Figure 38   Figure 39   Figure 40

PART 26: GUARDING (E)

When the opponent has a disk E in the kitchen (Figure 41), the shooter should usually cover it by a guard C, in order to prevent the opponent from knocking his own disk out of the kitchen.

KEEP IN KITCHEN. In the diagram, three possible positions, C-1, C-2 and C-3, are shown for disk C.

If the guard is placed at C-1 in this situation, about six feet from E, usually the best distance for protecting a disk, it is almost certain that the opponent will attempt a combination shot. This is true because the shot to hit and spoil C-1 is forced upon the opponent by the fact that C-1 is a scoring disk.

Whereas if C is played a little shorter, to C-2, then the opponent is not forced to hit C-2 since it is on a line. Also since C-2 is a little father from E, the combination shot is harder to make.

The farther C is from E (as at C-3), the harder is the combination, but the easier it is for the opponent to shoot past the guard disk C and hit E.

DEPTH IN KITCHEN. Again, if the disk E lies deep in the kitchen, as shown, and if the opponent shoots to knock away E, there are some chances that the opponent's shooting disk may stick in the kitchen in case the hit is full or nearly so.

So, if the disk is deep and the opponent is one who has difficulty in clearing the kitchen and tends to stick there, it may occasionally be a good idea to leave the way open for him to do so if there happens to be a good play elsewhere on the board instead of the play to guard the kitchen disk.

This also tends to prevent the opponent from knocking the guard disk C against E and causing the latter to stick there in the kitchen.

On the other hand, if the kitchen disk is close to the near edge of the kitchen, there is little danger that the opponent may hit and leave the guard disk C in the kitchen by driving it against disk E as a backstop. There is also less probability that the opponent may himself stick there in a direct hit against the kitchen disk. There is therefore more need to cover the kitchen disk with a guard.

COVER IT. It is recognized that although this general procedure of covering the opponent's kitchen disk is normal, there are occasions when it is not fol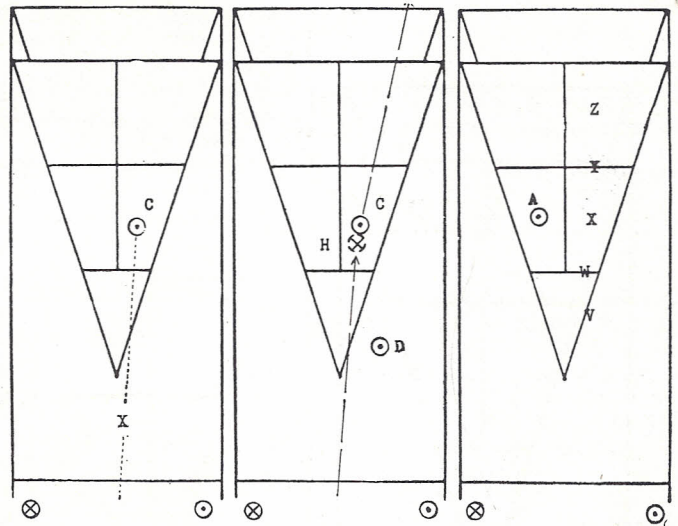lowed by experts. Such a variation may occur when the opponent is an expert and appears to be outstanding at playing combination shots, and when the situation appears to favor his knocking the possible guard disk C against a deeply-placed kitchen disk E.

But even the experts are found to succeed in an average of only about one time in three tries at combination shots at six feet distance.

In general, it is to be repeated that in most cases the most suitable action is to cover the kitchen disk with a guard.

PART 27: GUARDING (F)

If a guard to protect a disk B (Figure 42) consists of only a single disk A, it may be good protection, but it cannot be considered perfect protection, as mentioned in Part 24. Depending upon the positions of the disks, the opponent may be able to spoil the protected disk B by a direct hit, even if only a very thin hit, or he may be able to spoil it by a combination.

Also, if his play is a shot for a combination to drive the guard disk A against the hidden disk B, he has the expectation that in case he does not succeed in spoiling B he may at least knock away A, and that when Red replaces it with another guard, the guard may be less effectual.

SUPPLEMENTING GUARD. When a guard A (Figure 42) is considered insufficiently effective to protect a scoring disk B, the shooter should supplement it in order to increase the protection.

In order to determine how to supplement the existing guard, the shooter should sight from one or both sides of the opponent's starting area, to see how the latter will probably shoot. In this case (Figure 42), it appears that he will almost certainly shoot from the right side of his starting area, as indicated by the line of sight (dotted), and will try to hit the right side of the partly-hidden disk.
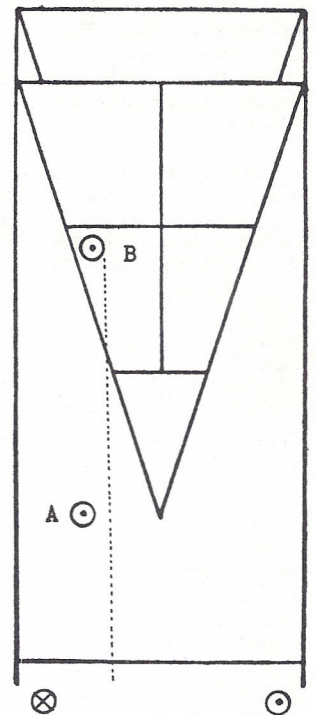

Figure 41

Figure 42

Figure 43

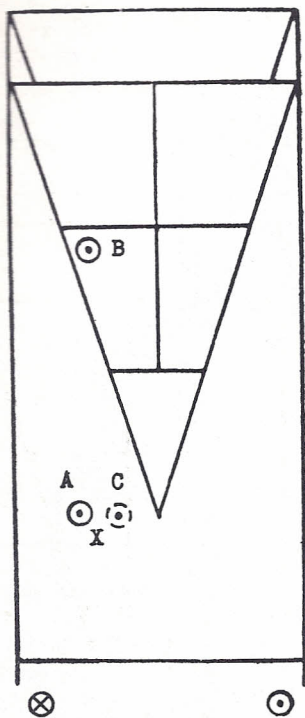Figure 44

Figure 45

Figure 46

Figure 47

Accordingly the shooter should place another disk at about C (Figure 43) to block the opponent's best shot. It should be so placed that the opponent cannot shoot between A and C.

If the opponent then shoots to knock away both A and C, he may accomplish this play rather easily with a shot aimed between them, but he is likely to leave his shooting disk at the point X where it hits the two guarding disks. The shooter can then again sight to see how his hidden disk B may be vulnerable to the opponent's play, and he may again place a supplementary disk to reinforce the guard.
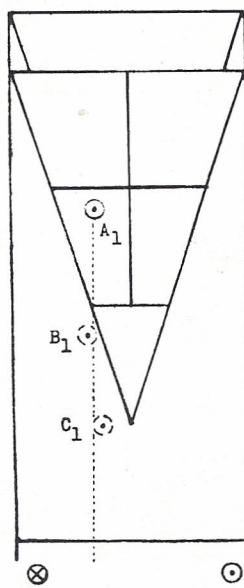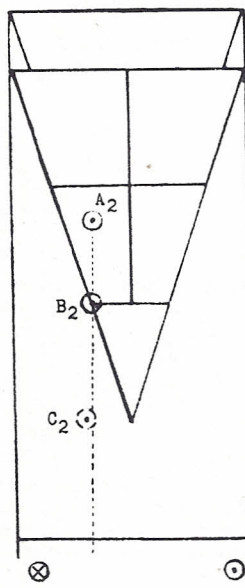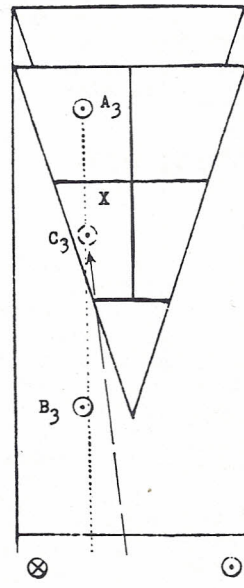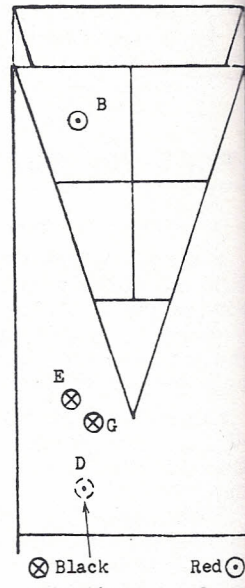
PART 28: GUARDING (G)

Protection which is nearly perfect (Figure 44) consists of two or more guarding disks B-1 and C-1 which are almost but not quite in line with the disk A-1 being protected, in other words in a zigzag.

Their spread from left to right should be wide enough so that the opponent cannot hit the protected disk A-1 by shooting at it directly from either side.

In addition, the middle disk B-1 prevents the near disk C-1 from being driven against the scoring disk A-1 to knock it away. And at the same time the near disk C-1 covers the middle disk B-1 so that the opponent cannot hit the latter full enough to drive it against the scoring disk A-1.

GUARD TOO CLOSE. In figure 45 only the scoring disk A-2 and the guard disk B-2 (full-line circles) are on the board initially. However, the guard disk B-2 is too close to A-2 and can be driven against it without great difficulty. In this case the guard should be supplemented by an additional disk C-2 placed farther away from the scoring disk. In effect this protects the existing guard B-2. The three disks C-2, B-2 and A-2 should, as discussed above, be almost but not exactly in line.

GUARD TOO FAR. In Figure 46, with only A-3 and B-3 on the board initially, the guard disk B-3 is too far from A-3 to protect it well. The opponent can shoot past B-3 on one side or the other to hit A-3.

In this case an especially good shot is to place the supplementary disk C-3 between the two disks on the board and, as above, not quite in line.

In this case, special attention is needed to insure that the intermediate disk C-3 is so placed that it is covered in part by the near disk B-3. If it is off to the side and close to A-3, as at X, so that the opponent can drive it against A-3, it may actually help the opponent to spoil A-3 instead of hindering him. This is often called "putting a handle on it." There is a strong tendency to do this in shooting, which must be watched against.

In supplementing the guard B-3, if the disk C-3 can also be placed in scoring area, as shown, the advantage is thereby increased.

If the opponent knocks away one of the guarding disks, another usually should be put in its place.

INSURING VICTORY. In the Yuletide Tournament, at Mirror Lake Club, St. Petersburg, Dec. 30, 1954, there was a long and hard-contested match between Amy Close, (the shooter Red), five times Florida State Champion, and Shirley Schneider, a skillful shuffler, the opponent Black.

Near the end of the third and decisive game the score was 68 to 60, respectively, and the situation was as shown in Figure 47 except that disk D was not on the board.

At Close's seventh shot of the half-round she had a scoring disk B in the 7-area, which was enough to win the game, and this disk was protected by a double guard composed of disks E and G

Schneider had shown herself very skillful at playing combinations, and there was a possibility that she might be able to knock E or G against B to spoil the latter and save the game, perhaps even to make a score in addition. In any case her situation was desperate; she was forced to attempt any shot that might save the game.

Close studied the case carefully. She desired to place a disk D so as to reinforce the guard and prevent an effective combination shot with either E or G against B. However, this shot in place D had the danger that it might hit E or G and move it aside, thus ruining the guard and opening the way for the opponent to shoot directly at B, as often occurs.

Amy Close shot with the greatest care, a very delicate shot, and placed her disk D perfectly, thus preventing the opponent from spoiling B. Close thus won the game and the match.

It is interesting to note that earlier in the same Close-Schneider game, a failure by one of the players to place a disk accurately to supplement a guard resulted in the opponent making a gain of 41 points in two shots.

PART 29: GUARDING (H)

After some experience, the shuffler can usually foresee the shot that his opponent will play next. In many cases it will be possible and desirable to prevent him from making that shot by placing a preventive guard in his way.

PREVENTIVE PLAY. Here is one case, shown in Figure 48. Four disks lie on the board, A, B, F and C, covering most of the board near the point of the triangle. It is now the seventh shot of the half-round and the shooter Red, on the right, is to play it.

After a brief glance at the board, it is very clear that if the situation is unchanged when Black makes his next shot, he will attempt to make a score on the left side of the board by shooting through the gap between disks A and B.

A suitable play for Red would therefore be to plug that gap by putting a disk there, thus practically prohibiting the opponent from scoring at all.

MANY CASES. There are many cases in which such a preventive play may well be made, and they cannot all be covered here. However, some of them may be mentioned, as follows:

Guard to prevent a scoring shot by the opponent, including the above and many other cases.

Guard to protect a friendly scoring disk and prevent an opponent's shot from spoiling it. This is most common. Examples are shown in Parts 3, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28 and many later cases.
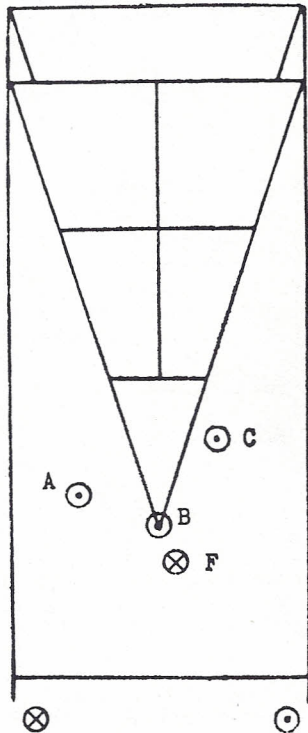
Guard to prevent a kitchen shot (treated later in the series).

Filling-in to prevent the opponent from hiding beyond disks on the board (later in the series).
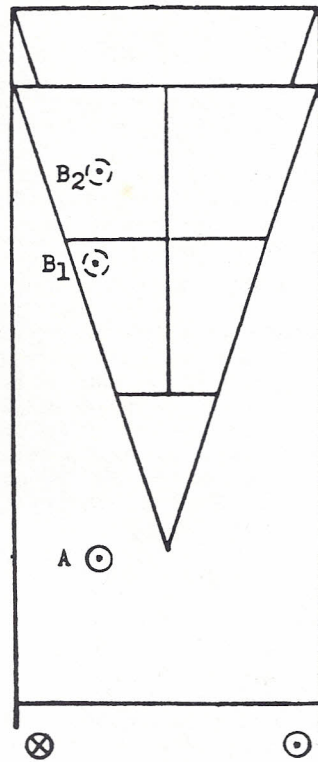
Guard to prevent doubling by the opponent (Part 4, and later).

Guard to prevent a combination (later).

Guard to prevent a carom (later).
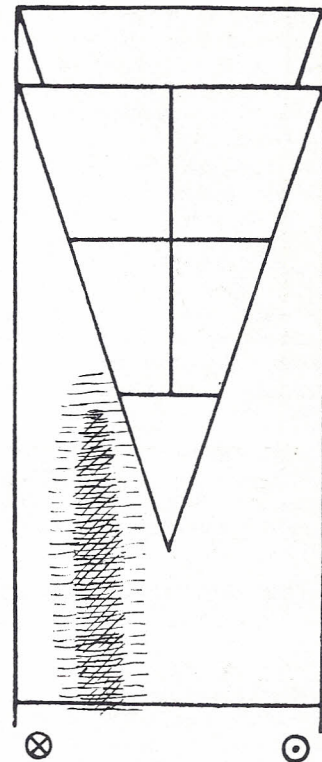

Figure 48

Figure 49

Figure 50

PART 30: GUARDING (I)

Instead of first placing a scoring disk and then a guarding disk to protect it, the ordinary procedure, especially at the start of a half-round, is first to place the guard and thereafter to hide the scoring disk beyond it. This procedure of placing a preparatory guard is used at the start of about 80 per cent of half-rounds, or frames, of actual play.

CROSS-GUARD. The standard shot is the cross-guard, as A in Figure 49, which is played across the court to the opponent's side, about halfway between the point of the scoring triangle and the outer side of the court. Such a guard is also called a "cross-pilot."

This location allows a disk to be later hidden beyond it, in scoring position on the opponent's side of the court, for an 8 at about B-1 of a 7 at about B-2.

LARGE SUITABLE AREA. In general, the cross-guard is very advantageous for the shooter to use in hiding.

A cross-guard may be placed within quite a large area, as shown shaded in the diagram, Figure 50, and still be reasonably effective . . . It is most effective at the darker middle of the shaded area, and less effective toward the more lightly shaded edges. Shooting for this area is not difficult.

PART 31: GUARDING (J)

With further reference to the placing of the cross-guard, although there is a large area that is more or less suitable for such a guard, as shown in Figure 50, it will be well to consider various spots around the rim of this area and the disadvantages incurred in placing disks there.

VARIOUS SPOTS. If the cross-guard is placed at S or T, Figure 51, on or close to the deadline KK, it will not usually have the best effectiveness in covering the later scoring disk, since it must be far from the disk to be placed beyond it, and the opponent will often be able to shoot past it to spoil that disk. But it will still furnish some protection, while the shot to hide beyond it will be easier to make because there is less probability of hitting

the guard disk in passing.

If the guard disk happens to stop astride the deadline, as at S, and the opponent then is able to knock it away so that his shooting disk is stopped short of the deadline KK and must be removed (Rule D-16), this is usually an advantage for the opponent, because his disk does not remain there for the shooter to hide beyond it later.

One of the errors in shooting to place a cross-guard is to stop short of the deadline, as at R, and thereby necessitate the removal of the shooting disk from the board.

If the guard happens to stop too deep at the side of the board, as at Y, it is rather ineffective as a guard. For any later attempt of the shooter to hide beyond it there is only a very limited area for hiding, and the nearness of the kitchen involves danger. Accordingly the opponent will usually ignore a disk at Y.

LAST-RESORT USE. However, a disk at Y may still have some usefulness in a last-resort play toward the end of the frame, as

discussed later. Alternatively, the shooter may supplement it by a disk at V to form a strong guard V-Y.

If the guard disk is placed too near the edge of the court, as at U, it protects little or nothing of the scoring triangle, and is of little value. However, as in the preceding case, it may be supplemented by a disk at V to form a strong guard U-V.

AIDING OPPONENT. If the disk is spotted practically touching the point of the triangle, as at X, it will definitely favor the opponent, becoming a Tampa guard for him (See Part 33, later), and allowing the opponent to hide beyond it by shooting down the side of the court to Z.

Finally, if the disk is three or four inches from the point of the triangle, as at W, the opponent can still shoot to hide along the outer side of the court to near Z. Of course the shooter can also later shoot past W on the right side to hide beyond it if he gets a chance to try. But the opponent has the first chance to hide, so it favors him.
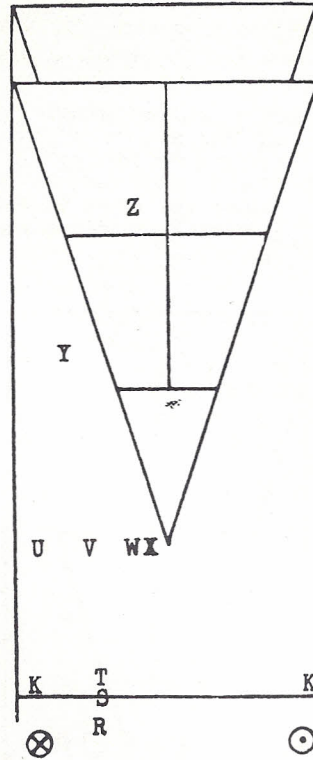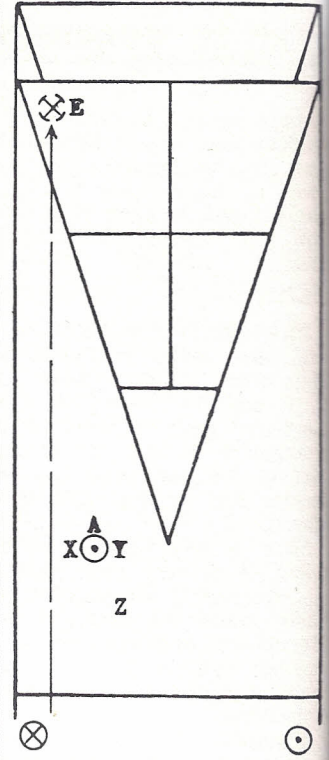

Figure 51

Figure 52

PART 32: GUARDING (K)

In the preceding article it was mentioned that when a cross-guard has been placed too close to the center of the court the opponent may shoot past it along the outer side of the court. Even when the cross-guard disk A (Figure 52) is at its normal position, about halfway between the point of the triangle and the side of the court, a shot by the opponent is still possible to E, although difficult. This play is sometimes said to be "down suicide alley."

ADJUST CROSS-GUARD. If it appears that the opponent is good at such shots, the guard should be placed a little nearer to the edge of the court, as at X.

If, on the other hand, it develops that the opponent is weak at hiding along the outer edge of the court, or for some reason does not attempt such shots, or if the court is so slow along the sides (as frequently is the case) as to make such shots impracticable, then the shooter can well place his guards a little nearer to the middle of the court, as at Y.

In this case also, the position of the guard may advantageously be somewhat nearer to the deadline, as at Z, where it allows more room for passing and leaves more of the 8-area available for hiding.

As previously mentioned, it is usually best for the first shot of a

half-round to be a cross-guard. In case the opponent knocks away this guard, as often occurs, and if there is no strong reason for a different shot, then this shot for a cross-guard should usually be repeated on the shooter's next turn, and similarly for his third turn of the half-round, as demonstrated in Part 5. However, it would obviously be seless to place a cross-guard at the seventh shot of the half-round.

If the player who shoots first for a half-round fails to place a good cross-guard or to accomplish an effective shot requiring the attention of his opponent, then the latter may well ignore the first play and place a cross-guard of his own for use in hid-

ing, and if it is knocked away the next shot he should usually replace it promptly. Here again it obviously would be useless place a cross-guard at the six or eighth shot of the half-roun

OPPONENT'S DISK STICK Thus, as shown above, whenev the shooter places cross-guar and the opponent regularly knoc them away, the shooter may w continue to place cross-guards. is to be expected that eventual one of the opponent's shots w strike a cross-guard with a fu hit and stick in place, appropr ately located as a guard instea of the guard knocked awa Thereupon the shooter can hi a disk beyond it.

PART 33: GUARDING (L)

The Tampa guard or "Tampa pilot" is another type of preparatory guard beyond which it is proposed to hide a scoring disk. It is similarly suitable for the first shot of a half-round, and for later replacements.

TAMPA GUARD. The shooter Red places the Tampa guard at A (Figure 53) on **his own side** of the board, adjacent to the point of the triangle, and with the edge of the disk just touching the point or about an inch or two

from the point. He hopes with a later shot to hide a scoring disk beyond it in the 8-area or 7-area on his own side, as at W or X.

If a disk is to be hidden beyond A, the shooter Red can note the hidden area and select his aiming

point by going to the middle the opponent's starting area a sighting over disk A (dotted lin toward W or X. A disk placed such a spot will be hidden fro the opponent, hence the Tamp guard furnishes protection for