

PART 102: WASTING THE SHOT

It is sometimes desirable for a player to waste his shot, primarily in order to prevent the opponent from using it as a target of some kind and especially as a target for a kitchen shot or as a backstop for scoring.

Another suitable occasion is at the last-shot of a half-round when there is enough score on the board to win the game for the shooter, and therefore it is undesirable to risk spoiling any of the scoring disks or to risk going into the kitchen. Wasting the shot is clearly in order.

The shot may be wasted intentionally in a number of ways, including the following (Figure 204): (1) Shooting through the court without stopping, as along line Z. (2) Shooting diagonally off the side of the court, as on a line to and beyond X. (3) Playing to stop well to the side of the court and outside of scoring area, as at W. (4) Snuggling at Y against some disk A already lying at the side of the court. (5) Playing to stop short of the deadline, as at V.

AS EXAMPLES of the methods of wasting the shot, one of

our topmost greats, in a state-wide tournament, wasted two of his shots over the side of the court. In another similar tournament he wasted his shot by having it stop short of the deadline.

Examples of wasting the shot are also shown and discussed in the following articles:

Several cases of wasting the shot to avoid being put in the kitchen, Part 80.

Sixth shot with board clear, later in the series.

Seventh shot with board clear, later in the series.

Snuggling, Part 80 and later in the series.

FAILURE TO WASTE. The importance of wasting the shot can best be illustrated by some examples of failure to do so.

In a tournament match the score was: Red 68, Black 73. Red had a 7 and an 8 on the board to make his score 83, while Black had a 7 to make his score 80. It was Red's turn to play, and it was the last-shot of the half-round. He had the game won, and had only to waste his

shot in order to insure victory. However, he attempted another type of shot, spoiled his own 8, and lost the game at 75 to 80.

In an inter-club match, the shooter had the game on the board and should have wasted his last-shot, as for the preceding case. Instead, he shot for a score, his shooting disk stopped in the kitchen, and he lost the game. One of his teammates remarked, "Tommy should be shot." Another teammate replied, "Don't worry, his wife Mary (who was his partner) will take care of it." (The names have been changed to protect the innocent.)

In a very important match, the final of the National Open Singles Championship in the summer of 1937, the shooter had the winning score on the board, and needed only to waste her last-shot in order to win the championship. She played her shot without enough care, and stopped in the kitchen, thereby failing to win the championship and also losing her opportunity, for in the succeeding play her opponent won the game and the championship.

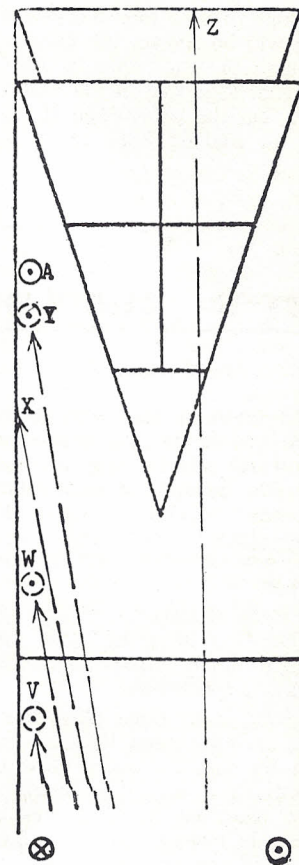


Figure 204

PART 103: CENTER-SHORT AND HIGH 10 (A)

A center-short is a shot placed at or near point X in Figure 205. It is short of the point of the triangle and about in line with the center line of the court.

A high 10, also called a "Scotch 10" or a "shallow 10," is a disk lying in the 10-area, as at Y in Figure 205, but not deep enough in the triangle for the opponent to use it readily as a backstop for a score.

These two are related in several respects, but obviously have important differences.

As will be shown, it is somewhat preferable to shoot for a center-short than for a high 10.

One of the related aspects is that, in plays made for center-shorts, a small percentage of high 10s may result. Conversely, when plays are made for high 10s, center-shorts do result in a majority of cases.

SEVENTH SHOT. At the seventh shot of a half-round, the shooter is often faced with a clear board and therefore with a situation in which he can hardly hope for much success. Any scoring

disk that he could place would be fully exposed, appropriate as a target for a kitchen shot, and perhaps suitable as a backstop for the use of the opponent.

Under these circumstances the shooter's play is in the nature of a last-resort attempt.

The use of the high 10 has been standard practice at the seventh shot when the board is clear, but it is now believed that this practice should be modified to some extent.

HIGH 10. If the shooter makes a 10, high or low, the opponent is normally forced to spoil it.

And if a high 10 is well placed he cannot expect to make any score in his favor but by a long kitchen shot. Of course there are exceptional cases, as shown in Part 105 and later in the series.

In order for the high 10 to be effective, it is not necessary for the disk to be spotted so close to the point of the triangle that a disk cannot be inserted by hand between it and the point of the triangle.

When the opponent shoots

against it, if the shot varies by even a small fraction of an inch from a full hit, there will be some glancing to the side, and frequently enough to cause the shooting disk to touch a line. The side-ward movement varies with the accuracy of the shot as to direction and with the speed of the shot.

Incidentally also, the value of the high 10 when once in place is greater on a fast court than on a slow court, since the side-ward movement of the opponent's shooting disk after a hit is greater, and makes it harder for him to backstop a disk in the narrow part of the 10-area (Part 16). Conversely, scoring against a high 10 is easier on a slow court.

The high 10 is very hard to place, and it has the disadvantage that if it is over-shot but still remains in the 10-area it is not only an inviting target for a kitchen shot but is liable to afford the opponent a backstop for scoring a 10.

Still, there are some chances that the opponent may knock

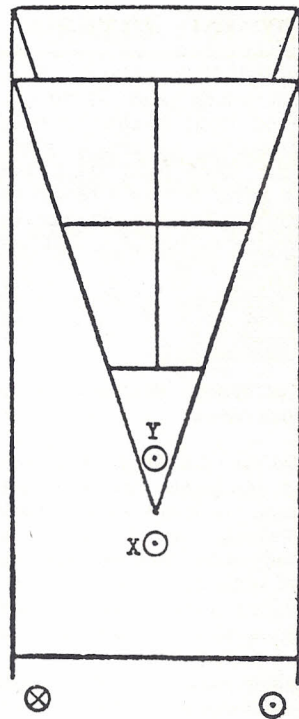


Figure 205

the high-10 disk into the 7-area.

As will be shown, the value of the high 10, when once in place, is higher than that of the center-short, but the percentage of success in making high 10s is so

low as to make the shot for center-short somewhat preferable.

As an exception, if the opponent needs only a 7 or 8 to win the game, the high 10 may be the best last-ditch play for the

seventh shot, as in examples to be shown later.

CENTER-SHORT. The general effect of the center-short is that of an obstruction at or near the point of the triangle which re-

duces the space available for the opponent's shot for simple score.

The opponent's last-shot may then be spoiled by clipping the center-short or by being crowded to the side so as to fail to score.

PART 104: CENTER-SHORT AND HIGH 10 (B)

The question has been raised from time to time as to whether it is worth while to play for high 10s. One former national champion has remarked to us that she never plays for high 10s because they are so often put in the kitchen.

A study of statistics of high 10s is therefore in order and has brought forth some interesting facts and conclusions.

Among many other plays there have been recorded 180 shots for high 10s with the board clear or essentially clear. All of the shots were recorded in 40 games of statewide tournaments, in which the 37 players on both sides were all experts. In fact 24 of the shufflers were on our All-Time Roll of Champions.

As a matter of convenience in this study, the players for the high 10s are called the shooters, and the others are the opponents.

OPPONENTS' GAINS. After the recorded shots for high 10s, about half of the plays by the opponents made gains. These gains resulted from kitchen shooting, backstopping, or simple scores. On the other hand there were some gains that were occasionally given to the shooters, as when attempted kitchen shots left disks in scoring areas.

The resulting net gains for the opponents have been totaled and averaged, and are shown in the box. By using these figures we can compare the results in the various cases.

BOARD CLEAR. As a basis of determining the value of playing for high 10s, it is well to compare the results with the scoring that is made with last-shots when the board is clear.

In Part 14 the average score under such conditions is stated as 6.3 points. This was based on 80 shots, but has since been strengthened and confirmed to exactly the same average figure by extending the series of observations to 234 shots, as shown in

the last line of the box.

HIGH 10s. Of the 180 shots for high 10s, the number of high 10s successfully made was 29.

After these shots, the net average gain for the opponents was only 1.9 points, as compared with the 6.3 mentioned above for scoring on an open board. Therefore these shots were unquestionably worth while when considered by themselves.

But these successful high 10s, which were only 16 per cent of the whole, cannot be considered apart from the rest.

LOW AND MEDIUM 10s were 36 in number, that is, 20 per cent of the total 180 shots.

The net gain by the opponents in connection with these 36 shots totaled 268 points, or an average of 7.4 points per shot.

Thus the opponents gained more than the 6.3 points that they would have made with the board clear.

ALL 10s. Now, similarly considering together all of the 10s that were actually scored, including high, medium and low, the average net gain for the opponents was 5.0 points.

NEAR MISSES. Of the 180 shots for high 10s, 115 failed to make the 10-area. They were near misses, generally short or to the side. Their effect was partially to obstruct the area at or near the point of the scoring triangle.

After these near misses, the opponents made scores which averaged 565 points, with an average gain of 4.9 points per shot.

As compared with the average of 6.3 points for a clear board, the opponents' scores were reduced by 1.4 points, that is, by 22 per cent, because of the partial obstructions formed by the near misses.

It must therefore be concluded

Situation	No. of plays	Total net score by opponents	Average net score per play
After high 10s	29	56	1.9
After low & medium 10s	36	268	7.4
After all 10s	65	324	5.0
After near misses	115	565	4.9
After all shots for 10s	180	889	4.9
With board clear, for comparison	234	1,482	6.3

that these partial obstructions have been desirable, although not of high value.

COMPARISON. The high 10s are very valuable when once in place. But playing for them brings in also the medium and low 10s, which are a liability and which lower the values. As shown in the table, the average net gain of the opponents "after all 10s" is 5.0 points.

This last figure is essentially the same as for the near misses, 4.9, and for "all shots for 10s," also 4.9 (next to last line).

It thus appears that the near misses, the center-shorts, have essentially the same value as do all the 10s, as well as for all of the shots made in playing for 10s.

Accordingly the scoring advantages are as great in shooting for centershorts as in playing for high 10s. At the same time the risks of making the undesirable medium and low 10s are reduced.

CONCLUSION. It is therefore concluded that playing for the center-short is a somewhat preferable shot.

An aiming point about three to six inches short of the point of the triangle should be suitable. We are convinced that many shufflers now use such an aiming point in playing for high 10s. The center-shorts will be made and will cause their expected effect, and once in a while a high 10 may appear as a by-product, but there should be few if any medium or low 10s.

PART 105: CENTER-SHORT AND HIGH 10 (C)

It is generally inadvisable to play for a center-short with board clear except at the seventh shot of a frame.

If played at the sixth shot or earlier, a shot to a point G, Figure 206, would allow the opponent to hide at X. This has been discussed in Part 33, under Guarding.

Of course, this disadvantage does not apply when a disk has been placed at this spot with the seventh shot, for the opponent will not thereafter be interested

in hiding, since there will be nothing from which to hide.

REPLY TO HIGH-10. If the opponent happens to have a high-10, the shooter must usually spoil it. This was discussed somewhat in Part 70.

If the high-10 is accurately placed, it can rarely be used as a backstop for scoring, but still it must be spoiled. The shooter is frequently led to play it for the kitchen, with a possible gain of 20 or more points for the shot. The nine-foot kitchen shot is not

easy, but often, there is nothing better to play.

Also mentioned in Part 70 is the possibility of merely pushing an enemy 10 gently onto the center line, if there is room to backstop against it for a score.

Occasionally, instead of shooting to spoil a high-10, the best action of the shooter may be to neglect the high 10 and make another type of play such as a shot for simple score, especially when the substitute play is likely to win the game.

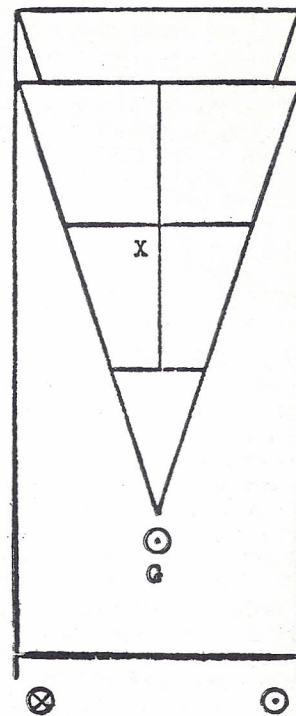


Figure 206

PART 106: CENTER-SHORT AND HIGH 10 (D)

Somewhat the same effect as that of a high 10 may be obtained from a disk, such as B in Figure 207, which has been placed in the 10-area and partially hidden beyond a center-short at E. The opponent Black must usually shoot to spoil B, and he can hit it, but if it has been well placed he cannot score against it nor can he put it in the kitchen. The disk is therefore even better than a well-placed high 10.

HIGH 8. When a disk has been placed as a high 8 at A in Figure 208, it partakes of some of the characteristics of the high 10, but is generally less advantageous and is less frequently used.

When in place, it must ordinarily be spoiled. It cannot be scored against as a backstop when it is close to the 8-10 cross-line. But it may be spoiled by an angle shot, while a score may be made at the same time by means of a glancing hit which sends the shooting disk into the

8-area on the opposite side, as shown in figure 208. This is not an easy shot, but is accomplished with some frequency.

A high 8 is hard to place with accuracy. If short or over, it is liable to be a good backstop for the opponent. In order to be effective in preventing the opponent from backstopping against it for a score, it must be less than about 5½ inches beyond the 8-10 cross-line.

Occasionally it may be placed by means of a backstop, if an enemy disk happens to be at the right distance from the 8-10 cross-line.

A HIGH 7, shown at B or C, Figure 209, partakes of the characteristics of the high 8, with much less value. If well placed, it cannot be scored against by backstopping with a direct center hit. But it is easier to score against by a glancing hit, and also easier to put in the kitchen.

It is harder to place with accuracy, and placing it is seldom

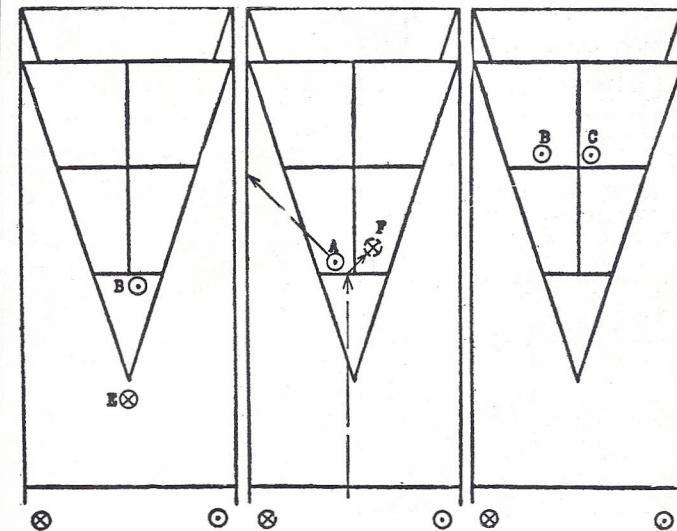


Figure 207

Figure 208

Figure 209

attempted unless a backstop is available for the purpose.

For these reasons a shot for a high 7 is rarely desirable.

PART 107: SNUGLING (A)

When the opponent has one or more shots still to play and has a disk on the board, such as E in Figure 210, the shooter may at times gain an advantage by snuggling (also called "cuddling" or "nestling").

This is done by stopping the shooting disk just short of the enemy disk, as at C, so that the opponent will be unable to spoil it or knock it into the kitchen without sacrifice of his own disk E. In attempting to spoil C he

may knock it against E and leave C in scoring area.

In a similar way, a disk could be snuggled at X against an enemy disk F, lying a cripple on the near edge of the kitchen. In that case the danger to F in-

cludes especially the liability of putting it in the kitchen.

DIFFICULT. Snuggling is difficult to accomplish, as it requires a delicate touch and accurate shooting.

The best protection to the

snuggled disk occurs when it is in contact with the other disk, but adequate protection is obtained if the disks are only a few inches apart. Still, if they are as much as a foot or two apart there is some protection, which varies with the skill of the opponent.

If the shot to snuggle goes too

far, it will hit the enemy disk and may knock it away, thus spoiling the purpose of the shot, and almost surely exposing the shooter's disk to danger of a kitchen shot. If the shooting disk moves the enemy disk only a few inches, the effect is usually the same as if the shooting disk were stopped short, as desired.

But if the shooting disk played to X in Figure 210 goes a few inches too far and puts the enemy disk in the kitchen, the shooter has made the same mistake described in Part 79, that of putting a cripple in the kitchen while the opponent still has another shot to reverse the situation and leave the shooter in the kitchen.

PART 108: SNUGLING (B)

Toward the end of the Sunshine Skyway Tournament at St. Petersburg, Aug. 31, 1954, Carl Spillman, the topmost of the all-time greats, was the shooter Red and the score was at game apiece with Spillman leading 54 to 67 in the third and deciding game, and needing only 8 points to win the game, match, and tournament.

It was the sixth shot of the frame, and Spillman was later to have the last-shot.

The opponent Black had just placed an 8 at G on an otherwise empty board, Figure 211. G was kitchen-bait (Parts 74-77), placed there by the opponent with the expectation that the shooter would knock it away and perhaps leave his shooting disk there to be put in the kitchen.

In view of his lead in score, Spillman had been replying to kitchen-bait with the usual procedure of clearing the board. However, at this moment he changed his tactics.

He snuggled his disk C gently against disk G.

It was then imperative for the opponent to spoil C, because if it were left in place it would win the game for Red. With disks touching or essentially so, it was impracticable to spoil C or dunk it without sacrificing G.

In fact, the way to spoil C

would be by an angle hit similar to those described in Parts 63-64 (Disks in Contact), and with enough speed to insure that the disk C would be squeezed out to the side far enough to put it out of scoring area. This was the action taken in similar cases by Spillman and by Farrell Bruner.

In this case the opponent did not succeed in spoiling C. It was left in scoring area, as was also a black disk.

There was then no need for the shooter to score his last-shot, and he did not do so, for the game was already won by disk C, with the score at 61 to 75.

PLAYING TO THE SCORE. The selection of the snuggle shot in the foregoing case depended upon the situation, including the score. It was fully suitable to the situation as it existed. But if the score had been 67 to 62 and at the seventh shot, with the opponent in the lead and still to have the last-shot, the snuggle shot would have been unsuitable and probably disastrous.

The opponent would then merely have let Red have his 8 with disk C, while he would have played for a simple score with the last-shot, expecting to make 15 or 16 points to bring his score to 77 or 78, as against 75 for Red,

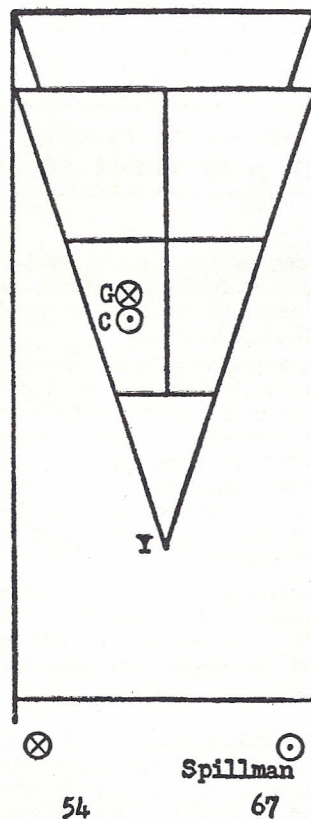


Figure 211

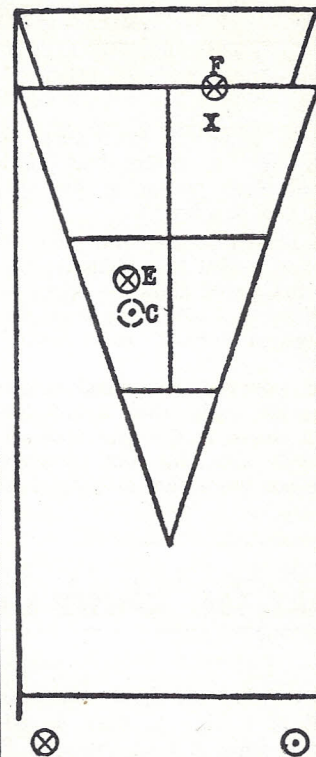


Figure 210

and this would have won for Black.

VARIATION. Suppose the foregoing snuggle shot in Figure 211 had been made earlier in the frame, perhaps at the second or fourth shot. Suppose also that the over-all score were far from the winning score, and that the opponent Black were desirous of saving his disk G for an 8 even though also saving the shooter's scoring disk. In that case Black's next action might well have been to place a guard at Y to protect both disks.

It must also be remarked that because of the difficulties of accurate snuggling, it is only occasionally used as a reply to kitchen-bait. The normal defense is to clear the board.

PART 109: SNUGLING (C)

Another example of snuggling occurred in one of the last matches of the 1954 Dimco-Gray Tournament at Lakeland, with Webster H. Smith, one of the topmost all-time greats, playing as the shooter Red.

The score was 39 to 63 in favor of Smith. At the sixth shot of a frame he saw the situation as shown in Figure 212, less disk C-1. Disks A, G-1 and E were on the board.

Smith snuggled his shooting disk to C-1, just short of G-1, as a protection to C-1 against spoiling or kitchening. It is to be noted that the snuggling in this case was against a disk lying on a line instead of against a scoring disk.

The opponent was then forced to spoil C-1, because to leave it on the board would give Smith 71 prospective points in the over-all score and he would still have

the last-shot with which to win the game.

The opponent therefore shot to spoil C-1, but his hit drove it squarely against G, where it stopped at C-2, Figure 213, still in scoring area for an 8. The black shooting disk glanced to the right to H. G-1 was driven out of court.

Then, with an 8 already on the board, Smith shot for a score on the open side of the board and

accomplished it to win the game.

VARIATION. In the foregoing case, on account of the great lead by the shooter and his nearness to winning the game, the opponent was forced to try to spoil C-1. On the other hand, if the opponent were to have the last-shot and if the score were not so close to the winning 75 points as to force the opponent to try to spoil C-1 regardless of

his own scoring, a snuggle shot by the shooter Red close to a disk on the 7-8 line, as above, would usually be undesirable.

Such a snuggle shot would invite the opponent to shoot against it for a double score, as shown in Figure 214, by stopping H against C-1 and having C-1 tap against G-1 to move it onward for an additional score at G-2. The opponent's gain for the last-shot would then be 15 points, even though the shooter would retain his 8.

ANOTHER VARIATION. Or alternatively, about as was done in one tournament case by Gerald Anderson, disk C-1 in Figure 212 might be hit by the shooting disk H, as shown in Figure 215, and tapped diagonally to a line at C-2. The shooting disk would remain at H for an 8. And G-1 would be tapped onward for a score of 7 at G-2.

The opponent's gain for this shot would 23 points, with 15 points gained for the half-round.

Without ruling out other situations, it would appear that an especially favorable time for snuggling is when the shooter is within one or two disks of win-

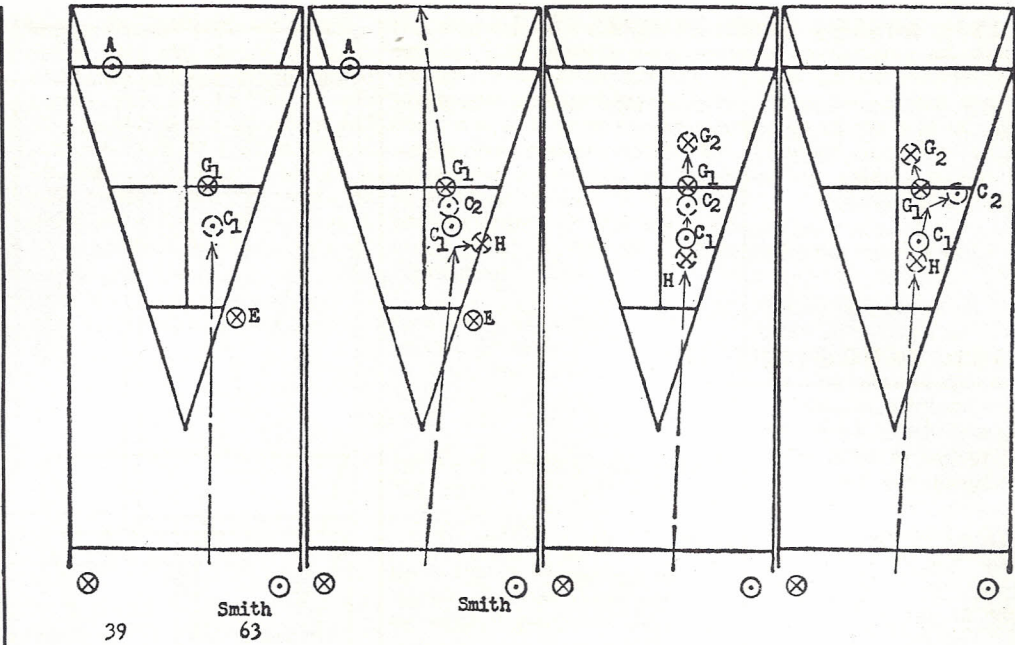


Figure 212

Figure 213

Figure 214

Figure 215

ning and has two disks to play while the opponent has only one.

The shooter then has his last-shot in reserve to correct any

untoward happening that may occur.

PART 110: SNUGLING (D)

As seen from the preceding discussions and cases, the procedure of snuggling avoids knocking an opponent's disk away at a time when the normal procedure for most cases is to clear the board.

Snuggling is usually designed to build up the shooter's score and help it to approach the game score, even though it may also result in adding to the opponent's score.

The play by the shooter is of course planned on the basis that it is to be followed by a shot by the opponent.

The snuggle shot is thus applicable to the seventh shot of the half-round, in order to make a score and retain it. The opponent will then want to make a score with his last-shot if possible; and he may find that a shot to spoil the snuggled disk may prevent

him from scoring. Hence he may sometimes leave the snuggled disk in place and shoot elsewhere.

The snuggle shot is safer for the shooter at the sixth shot of the frame, as his own last-shot then remains available to retrieve any undesirable results from the opponent's shot.

SNUGGLE WASTING. When the shooter desires to waste his shot, as discussed in Part 102, one method of doing so is to snuggle his shooting disk against a non-scoring disk.

For example, in the Full Moon Doubles Tournament at Lakeland, Dec. 15, 1954, the powerful team of Spillman and Perreault had a commanding lead of about 45 to 20.

The opponents had been trying

to cut down that lead by means of kitchen-bait and kitchen shots.

At the sixth shot of a half-round the only disk on the board was a non-scoring disk A, Figure 216. In order to avoid the opponent's kitchen play, Spillman played his shot to C, snuggling near A.

He thus prevented the opponent from putting A in the kitchen, made it difficult for the opponent to put C in the kitchen, and avoided putting C near the middle of the board where it might be a better target for kitchen shooting.

A similar play by Amy Close was described in Part 80. Other similar plays made by Bill Folberth, Jerry Anderson, Mary Scalise, and others have been noted.

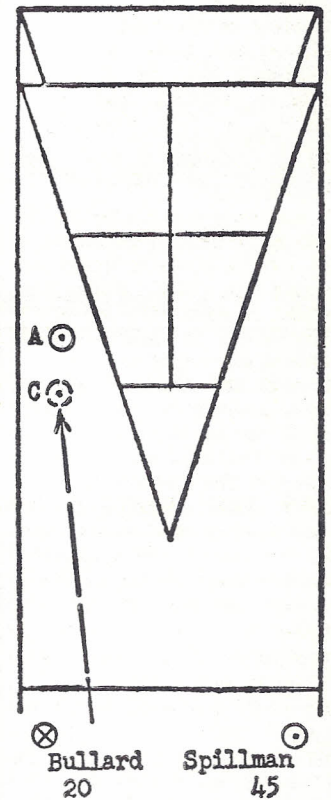


Figure 216

PART 111: MISSES AND ERRORS (A)

Misses and errors by inexperienced players are often caused by defects in technique, such as defective grip, shooting at too high speed, loss of balance, careless aiming, and sometimes by a change of mind during shooting.

There is no single and certain cure, since there is a wide variety of errors, but the best general curative action is constant care.

On the other hand, if shufflers could always shoot where and how they wished to shoot, there would be much less fun in the game.

ERRORS BY EXPERTS. Every player makes misses and other errors. The inexperienced player should not become discouraged because he makes misses. He can derive consolation and hope from the fact that top-level shufflers such as national and state champions also make misses.

As to the types of errors, they are even more numerous and varied than the shots that are considered sound.

In watching statewide tournaments, it has been observed that practically every type of miss or shooting error has been performed by excellent shufflers.

If the best shufflers can do it, we can also.

While the experts are among those who make mistakes, it must be recognized that their percentages of mistakes are

smaller than those of ordinary players.

It may give us some encouragement and instruction to examine some of the misses and errors made by experts, especially the greats. All cases cited below were in statewide tournament play.

In many cases we have seen expert shufflers shoot at scoring disks lying in the open, such as kitchen-bait, with no other disks on the board, and miss them completely. These cases are so frequent that records have not been made of many of them. But we do not have notes of misses by several of the all-time greats.

We have seen an expert shoot at a disk in the open in tournament play and miss it twice in succession.

We have seen a shuffler who has several times been national champion play for a simple score of 8 and stop in the kitchen, and we have seen other experts do the same.

CAROM MISS. In playing caroms, one of the most frequent types of misses is to pass through a gap between the target disks without touching either.

Figure 217 shows such a miss which decided a game in the 1956 Times Tournament. The carom was well selected, but everybody makes misses, so Red lost the game.

SHORT MISS. In the 1954 Full Moon Doubles Tournament the

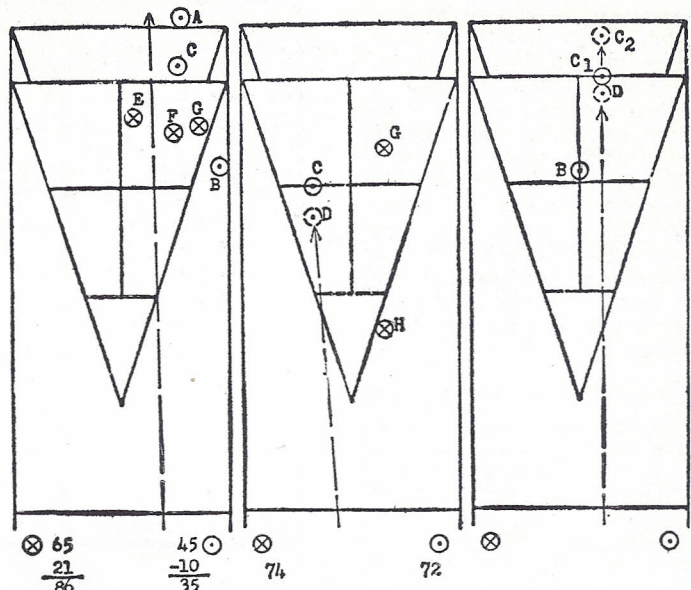


Figure 217

Figure 218

Figure 219

situation toward the end of the first game of a match was as shown in Figure 218. The score was 74 to 72 against the shooter Red, a top-level shuffler.

The opponent Black had a 7 at G, protected by H, while the shooter Red had a liner at C. It was Red's last-shot.

She played to make a double on C, a good selection, and if she had accomplished the shot she would have won the game with a score of 81 to 87. However, her shot was a few inches short, and the opponent won the game at 81 to 80.

LOOK BEYOND. A shuffler, in selecting his shot in a com-

pllicated or difficult situation, should regularly consider what will happen if he makes a miss, or if he hits at an unexpected angle.

In one of the semifinal matches of the Sunshine City Tournament Feb. 22, 1956, one of the all-time top shufflers shot to make a double with disk B in Figure 219. Disk C-1 lay on the kitchen line. Other disks on the board have not been shown.

The shooter missed B. She made a double, but it was with C-1, putting C-1 in the kitchen at C-2 and scoring with her shooting disk at D, to lose three points with the shot.

PART 112: MISSES AND ERRORS (B)

One of the misses frequently seen is to shoot to put an enemy disk in the kitchen, but to miss and see the shooting disk go on to stop in the kitchen. The fact that the shooting disk has stopped in the kitchen has demonstrated that the correct shooting speed has been used, although the target disk has not been hit correctly.

Figure 220 shows such a case in which the shooting disk D grazed H and spoiled it, but glanced onward to the kitchen. This shot was made by one of the all-time greats. A somewhat similar shot was shown in Figure 183 of Part 94.

WRONG TARGET. In the 1954

Gasparilla Tournament the shooter Red, a top-level shuffler, was faced with the situation of Figure 221. The opponent had a large lead in score and needed only seven points to win the game.

The shooter Red played to knock away the enemy scoring disk F. Instead, she missed F and hit her own disk B, knocking it into the kitchen. That shot clinched the loss of the game.

MISS. In the finals of the same tournament, the shooter, a top-level shuffler, had a slight lead in score at 48 to 45. At a last-shot he had a situation with two enemy disks G and H widely separated in the corners of the 7-

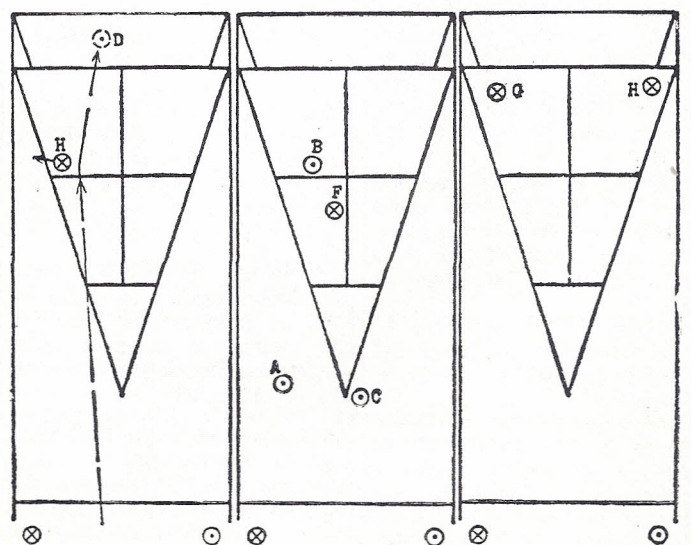


Figure 220

Figure 221

Figure 222

areas as shown in Figure 222.

The shooter shot gently at one of the enemy disks, apparently expecting to put that disk in the kitchen and to remain for a score of 7. Actually he missed, made the kitchen with his shooting disk, and allowed the opponent a commanding lead of 38 to 59. This miss may have been caused by drift, which is to be discussed later.

TWO TRIES. In the semifinal match of an important tournament, an expert who had been a semifinalist in a national championship was shooting for a score on a clear board and put

himself in the kitchen. Then on his next shot he tried to knock away his kitchen disk and missed it completely.

An interesting and fairly frequent occurrence is for a player to miss an easy shot, then to accomplish the desired result with a more difficult shot. The reason is usually because of overconfidence and careless aiming in the first place, followed later by careful aiming and shooting.

In an important tournament a former Florida state champion shot to spoil an enemy 7 on an otherwise clear board and missed it completely. At the next shot

her opponent placed a guard to protect the 7, thereby making it harder to hit and spoil the 7. Thereupon the shooter played again, more carefully, hitting and spoiling the enemy disk.

STUCK. One frequent error, in attempting to knock a friendly disk from the kitchen, is to hit it too full (Part 81) and to leave the shooting disk stuck in place in the kitchen. The writer has seen a shuffler who has several times been national champion do this three times in one afternoon in important tournament play.

ERRORS DECISIVE. Each game is a combination of both

good and bad plays, but the decisive elements of most games seem to be the errors. When there are no errors of importance by either side, which is a rare condition, the game may be expected to be about even.

When a considerable gain is made by one shuffler, it is usually because of a blunder committed by his opponent. The better shuffler of a match takes advantage of the faults committed by his opponent.

Accordingly it may be said that, in general, games are lost by errors rather than won by good play.

PART 113: MISSES AND ERRORS (C)

In the quarterfinals of an important tournament, the shooter Red, one of the top-level greats, faced the situation of Figure 223 at the seventh shot of a frame, with the score at 46 to 57 in her favor. The obvious play was a combination to knock H against B, which she attempted.

However, she made a complete miss, leaving the opponent a potential gain of 18 points, which the latter then stretched to 26 points by scoring an 8 with the last-shot, to make the over-all score 62 to 47, a commanding lead. Other top-level greats have made the same type of miss.

NEVER GIVE UP. In a statewide tournament, the shuffler who had a short time previously been runnerup in the national open championship was in a difficult situation at his last-shot. He shot to recover, but added to the advantage of his opponent, so that the opponent gained 35 points for the half-round.

When we are in a difficult position toward the end of a game, and feel that we are losing, we remember these 35 points and never give up hope. Our opponent might happen to do the same as that shooter did.

45 POINTS. In a minor tournament, a player who later was runnerup in national closed championship was faced with the situ-

ation shown in Figure 224. The opponent had a prospective gain of 27 points on the board.

The shooter, Red, played the last-shot. It grazed H-1 gently, as shown in Figure 225, pushed it into scoring area at H-2, then moved onward to stop in the kitchen at D. This raised the gain of the opponent for the half-round to 45 points.

Numerous other examples of errors are shown in the various parts of the text.

IN GENERAL, it may be expected that a miss or error will usually result in a score or a gain for the opponent. In a close game a single bad shot at a critical time may sometimes give the opponent a commanding lead and may decide the game. For an example, see Part 25. Other examples are shown later.

In some cases, care in planning and in shooting can often avoid serious consequences.

On the other hand, there is a widespread saying that, if a player makes one mistake, especially among experts, there is little hope of winning the game. This is generally untrue, as will be seen in observing the play of experts, especially in their use of kitchen play as a means of recovery, and in noting the wide variations in scores that result therefrom (Part 77).

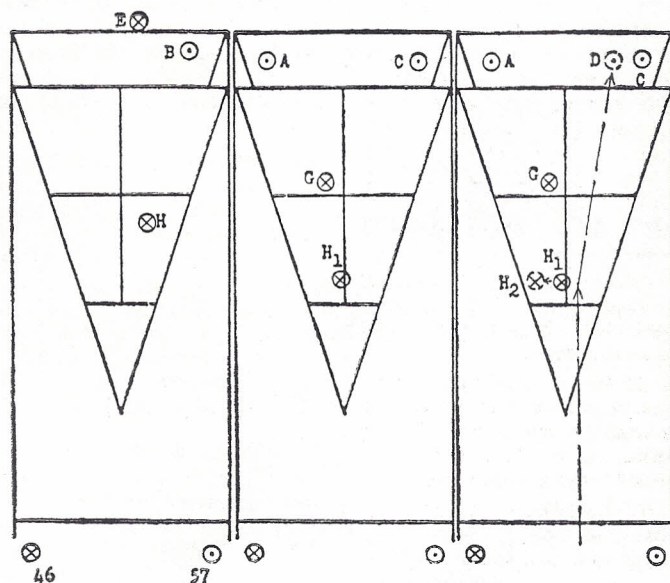


Figure 223

Figure 224

Figure 225

CONCLUSIONS may be drawn from the foregoing and from other similar examples, and may be stated as follows:

- Careful shooting should never be neglected.
- The shooter should not count on winning even if he has a lead of 15 to 30 points or more.
- The possibilities of unexpected plays and unexpected scoring should not be overlooked, but should be searched with thought.

- When the shooter has a scoring disk on the board he should be especially careful not to risk spoiling it.
- If a number of enemy disks are permitted to accumulate on the board, even though they are non-scoring disks, some development may cause some of them to become scoring disks in an unexpected way. It is wise to keep the board clear when ahead in the score.
- Errors made are often decisive in the game.

PART 114: UNEXPECTED PLAYS

In the strict sense of the word, there is very little luck or chance in the game of shuffleboard. What most people call luck is usually merely an unforeseen

combination of hits and glancings which is caused not by luck but by an inaccuracy in the shooting line or by use of a different amount of force than planned.

If such a shot were studied with sufficient care in advance it would frequently be foreseen, but rarely does the shuffler consider it useful or desirable to

take this trouble.

The writer, not being accurate, does make poor shots, and not infrequently. When our friends commiserate with us about our

"bad luck," we often reply, "not bad luck, just poor shooting."

In some cases the shooter should figure out in advance what may happen in case his shot diverges to a line somewhat different from that which he plans, or in case his speed is greater or less than planned.

There are possibilities of unexpected and drastic developments in play which should not be overlooked. A slight error in direction may change the entire situation. Often this can be foreseen and avoided. Cases of this type have been shown in Parts 111 to 113.

SURPRISE. In one of the matches of the 1955 Farnham Fox Doubles Tournament, the National Open Champion, Farrell Bruner, saw the situation as shown in Figure 226. The oppon-

ent had a 7 on the board at H, and the shooter had a disk C on the line at the side of the 10-area.

The score was 61 to 69 in his favor. He was about to play his last-shot.

He played to spoil the enemy disk H. His shooting disk nicked his non-scoring disk C and moved it unexpectedly into the 10-area, to win the game for him at 61 to 79.

His amused wave of the hand after the shot showed clearly how surprised he was at the unforeseen development.

DISK MOVED? In another somewhat similar tournament case, the shooter, three-times Florida state champion, clipped a disk in passing and made a 10 for her opponent, which decided the game in favor of the

opponent.

A curious occurrence, which happens from time to time, is one in which the shooter has planned his shot to hit a particular disk and has aimed to hit it in the manner he desires, without noticing that if his disk follows his aim, it must necessarily hit the edge of some intermediate disk.

Strange developments may then result when the shot is attempted. "Who moved that disk into my way?"

Obviously a suitable corrective action in cases of this type would usually be to allow a margin of safety between the aiming line and the intermediate disk, so that the shooting disk could pass with a separation of at least an inch and preferably more.

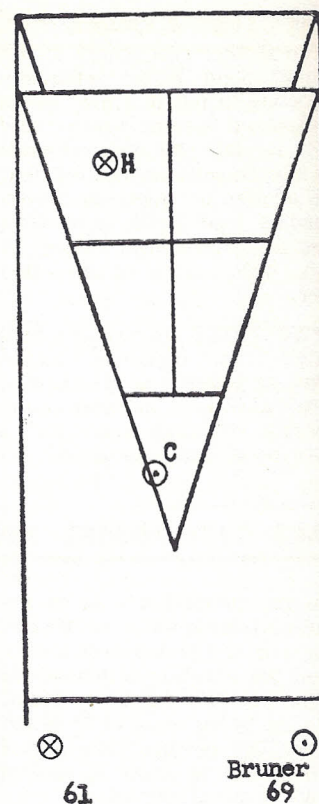


Figure 226

PART 115: POT SHOT

At times the board may be covered by numerous disks, with enemy disks in scoring positions covered by effective guards. A player may be tempted to make a smashing pot shot, hoping somehow to break up the situation and knock away some of the enemy disks.

This is a play of desperation. It is sometimes called, not inappropriately, a "slobber shot."

The shot is not liable to be harmful to the shooter if only enemy disks are likely to be spoiled, and no friendly disks are liable to be put in the kitchen. In such a case, knocking around the enemy disks may be acceptable. Still, a plan for doing so should preferably be made.

On the other hand, the disks on the board might be so placed that knocking them around indiscriminately might result in a gain for the opponent.

Some pot shots in actual practice and mainly among inexperienced players have resulted in net gains of 30 or 40 points for the shooter or for the opponent.

PLAN THE SHOT. In general, a wild pot shot is to be avoided. It is better to substitute a planned shot, with the chances of gain or loss calculated in advance. The planned shot may happen to be so complicated as to be beyond the skill of the shooter, but his planning may result in gain.

Again, his planning may some-

times show him that a pot shot may do more harm than good and should therefore be avoided, with a different type of shot substituted, as shown in one case below.

A situation which invites the shooter to make a pot shot is already disadvantageous to the shooter. Such situations can often be avoided by preventing accumulations of disks on the board, that is, by keeping the board clear (Part 101).

EXAMPLES. Recording the play of experts has not produced much in the nature of pot shots. The experts do not often close their eyes figuratively and slam into the pot. At least some part of their shots is usually planned.

The shot shown in Figure 182 of Part 93 partakes of this nature.

Another shot is shown in Figure 227, and was reportedly made in sociable play by Charles Smith, the 1937 winter national closed singles champion, with a gain of 62 points for the shot.

ACCUMULATION. The situation shown in Figure 228 occurred in the 1954 Times Tournament. How Frank Henderson succeeded in putting his four black disks into one 8-area, in which there was also a red one, is hard to explain, and required accurate shooting.

Then Jerry Anderson had a pot shot to make.

NOT POT SHOT. In the quar-

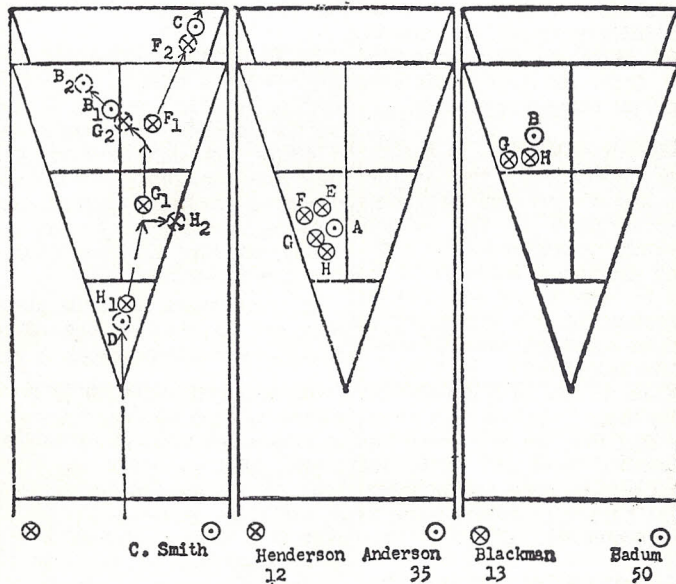


Figure 227

Figure 228

Figure 229

terfinals of the 1955 Fun 'n Sun Doubles Tournament, Henry Badum, the shooter Red, playing against Ralph Blackman, saw the situation of Figure 229 at his last-shot.

Black had two 7s and Red had one 7.

Many shufflers would have slammed a hard shot to spoil the black disks, and might not

have succeeded, for a study of the disks would indicate that one black disk would probably have remained on the board.

Instead of a pot shot, Badum played an 8, to raise his team score to 65, within 10 points of game, at the same time accepting Black's gain of 14 points to reach the score of 27.

PART 116: COURT PECULIARITIES (A) GENERAL

Most shuffleboard courts have peculiarities which affect the play, usually adversely. Allowance for these irregularities can and should be made in some cases.

Before an important match, it is especially needful to learn the peculiarities of the court on which play is to take place, and to become used to shooting on it.

INFLUENCE. A shuffler playing on the home courts with which he is familiar has normally an advantage, even though opposing visitors may be informed of the court peculiarities.

The play of a skillful shuffler depends largely on being able to place his disks accurately where desired. But when a court is irregular in speed, or is drifty, especially if the drift is not everywhere the same, in short, when the court is tricky, this attempted accuracy of the skillful shuffler is defeated. He cannot depend on his touch of the court. He drops to the level of the player who

does not know where his disks will go.

When courts are especially bad, they are avoided when practicable. When this cannot be done, the attempt should be made to identify the difficulties and make allowances for them.

The most important factors are speed and drift, which will be covered in later articles.

THE LINES painted on a court have some slight vertical thickness, which tends to slow the speed of the disks slightly as they pass over the lines.

One advantageous method of overcoming this difficulty is, before painting the lines, to use a wash of muriatic acid over the narrow areas to be painted in order to etch or pit the surface of the court and allow the paint, when it is put on afterwards, to sink below the general level of the court surface.

MOISTURE — on the court, such as wet spots, dew, or sprin-

kle of rain, will slow a moving disk and will usually ruin any shot. Moisture on the bottom of the disk has a similar effect.

If a disk becomes wet on its lower face, it should be dried or allowed to dry before using. If a court is wet, it should be dried before play.

If there is a sprinkle of rain, play should be stopped until the court dries. In order to determine if a court has dried, a disk should be shot the length of the court. If dampness then shows on the bottom surface of the disk, the court is too damp for play.

If a court or part of a court is in shadow during the daytime, the fall of dew in the evening may so dampen the court as to make it unplayable.

DUST, LEAVES, etc., accumulate on a court, and every court should be swept daily before play, and usually more often. During play of a match it even may be necessary to sweep the

court from time to time. Difficulties in shooting may also be caused by insects, cigarette paper or ash, tobacco, or other trash.

A pine needle or blade of grass may roll under a disk and affect a shot. If the length of the needle lies diagonally to the direction of movement of the disk, the effect of the rolling, like that of a roller log lying under a heavy weight, may be to cause the disk to swerve slightly to the side.

Players and officials should be alert to remove trash from the court.

DISKS should also be checked for defects, especially for chips that have started but have not fallen off. They may be found through noting small shiny black areas on the bottoms of disks and near the edges. Such chips usually ruin any shot. The chips should be removed and the edges of the pits smoothed by a knife blade or emery cloth, or by rubbing on the court. See also Part 8.

PART 117: COURT PECULIARITIES (B) SPEED

Court speed is also discussed in Parts 7, 11, 16, 19, 39, 99, 104, 120 and 122.

There are liable to be differences in slipperiness or speed, in various parts of a court, from time to time on the same court, and between different courts.

These differences may be caused by the finish of the court surface, the care of the courts including the kind and recency of waxing, the thoroughness and recency of sweeping, the amount of use the court has had, and other causes.

There may also be variations of speed due to the weather, such as wind (which may blow away powdered wax, or may blow away sand sprinkled on the court to make the disks slide, or may blow sand or dust onto the court), moisture (as previously mentioned), or sunshine (to dry the court).

BLAME. Because peculiarities of courts do exist, there is a tendency of many shufflers to blame their own errors on court conditions. "When you are losing, the court is always bad."

The comment is often heard that "the court is slowing down." While this does occur at times, it is often unsound as an excuse, because it is probably the player

who has changed his speed of shooting gradually and imperceptibly.

Incidentally it is easier on a fast court to knock away individual disks and to clear the board. Also, because less strength is required than on a slow board, greater accuracy in direction is usually obtainable. Conversely, on a slow court, clearing the board is more difficult because sticking is more liable to occur; also backstopping is easier.

"**HOW IS THE SPEED** of this court?" is a question that may be asked of another shuffler. There is no way to state the speed of the court in such terms as will give another player enough information to play accurately without practice shooting. Such terms as "fast," "slow," "slow along the sides" are helpful but not satisfying. Practice play is necessary as discussed in Part 7.

SLOW AREAS. Most courts are faster along the axis of the courts where disks are played constantly, and are slower along the sides.

Some courts may be so slow at the sides that shots in those areas need considerable extra force, and it is therefore undesirable to use the sides for play-

ing shots requiring a delicate touch.

On a court that has had poor care, a shot may pass over some slippery spots and some slow spots. Disks may slide over some areas with unexpected speed, or may stop suddenly at other spots.

The court may have materially different speeds along lines that are only a few inches apart. For example, shots made with the same initial speed on two lines about eight inches apart might go to distances differing by as much as 20 feet. In play on such courts, accurate shooting is difficult or impossible.

EXAMPLES. In order to determine variations in speed of the surfaces of certain courts, a catapult was used to shoot a disk with the same speed along different lines parallel to the sideline.

The variations in distances to which the disk traveled are shown in Figure 230. In the diagram the stopping points that are joined by a line were for shots with the same speed. The results are shown for two different courts, ABCDE for one court and FGHJK for another.

CHOICE OF SIDE. When one side of a court is much faster than the other side, it is usually

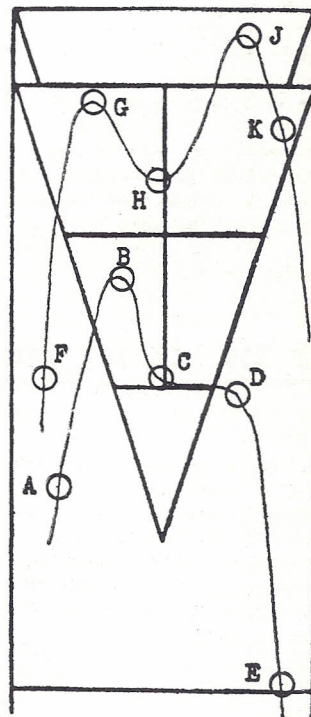


Figure 230

a disadvantage to shoot from the slow side to the fast side, most shots being played diagonally. The first part of the shot is

slowed by the court, and in the last part of the shot, when the disk reaches scoring area, the speed is faster than expected. The disk therefore tends to move too rapidly through the scoring area.

Under these circumstances the

shuffler should if practicable select the side which allows him to shoot from the fast side toward the slow side.

SAND. Where sand is strewn on the court surface to make the disks slide, the unavoidable movement of the sand during play progressively changes the

amount of sand on any given area of the court, and therefore changes the speed of the court.

When there is wind the sand is blown away, the court loses its speed, and a shot made after a gust of wind may stop six feet or more short of where it would

have stopped before the sand was blown away. The shuffler is forced to guess how much the speed of the court has changed since the last gust of wind.

In one important tournament a number of the best shufflers were defeated in the early rounds because of such conditions.

PART 118: COURT PECULIARITIES (C) DRIFT

Shuffleboard courts should be perfectly level, but because of faulty construction or more often because of settlement most of them have a gentle slope to the right or left which is imperceptible to the eye but enough to cause disks to swerve slightly off the straight line.

DRIFT. Such sideward swerving is called drift. It is understood by practically all tournament players, but the vast majority of other players do not know about it and therefore pay no attention to it. Yet it is frequently decisive in the winning or losing of a match.

Drifts of one to three inches are common, and on a few courts the drift may be as much as a foot.

The sideward swerving is greatest when the disk is moving slowly in the last part of its movement, just prior to stopping.

The lower side of the court, towards which the disks drift, is occasionally called the "down-hill" side, and the other the "up-

hill" side.

Figure 231 shows a court in which the drift is to the left (curves are exaggerated).

DIFFERENT DRIFTS. Although on most courts the drift is toward the same side in all parts of the court, as in Figure 231, on a number of courts the drift is toward one side in one area of the court and toward the other side in another area.

For example, Figure 232a shows drift which is inward from both sides. Figure 232b shows drift outward toward both sides.

In another case, Figure 233a, there may be drift on one side of the court and none on the other.

Or again, it may be different in direction and amount at opposite ends of a court.

Occasionally the drift may be to the left for part of the way along the court and then to the right farther onward, as shown on the left side of Figure 233b.

CHANGES IN DRIFT. The amount of drift may vary from time to time. For example, there is liable to be more drift when

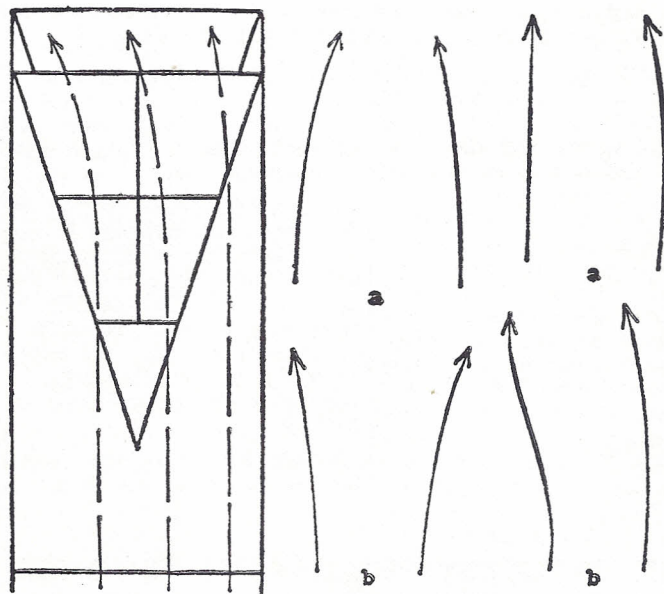


Figure 231

Figure 232

Figure 233

the court is fast, after a recent waxing, or less when the court is slow, as when there has been no waxing for a long time.

If a court is given an unaccustomed treatment of waxing,

drift that was previously unsuspected may appear.

Finally, over a period of several years settlement may develop and cause drift where previously there had been none.

PART 119: COURT PECULIARITIES (D) DRIFT

When the existence of drift on a court is known or suspected, the direction and amount of the drift should be determined by using a number of test shots before starting an important match. If practicable there should also be several practice rounds in addition to those necessary to learn and become used to the speed of the court (Part 7).

It is noteworthy that many players, and even some experienced ones, have played on courts having drift without suspecting the existence of the drift.

The amount of the drift, that is, the amount that a disk moves

sideways, depends partly upon the speed of the shot. A disk that is moving at high speed drifts but little.

A disk that is moving slowly and finally stops on the board has the greatest amount of drift. The drift increases as the disk slows in its movement just before stopping.

MEASUREMENT OF DRIFT. The amount of drift is measured as the number of inches that the center of the disk swerves away from the straight shooting line in moving and stopping at the far end of the court.

The amount and direction of drift may be expressed, for example, as "three inches drift to the south (left) when shooting west" (or from the head of the court), or "four inches drift to the south (right) along the middle of the court when shooting east" (or from the foot of the court), or "four inches drift to the north on all parts of the court."

In many cases the over-all conclusion is expressed as follows: "No. 4 is a red court." This means that the drift is toward the black side generally, that the red side is favored, and that the shuffler who wins the choice of

color in accordance with the rules should choose the red side.

TEST SHOTS. In order to determine the direction and extent of drift, the player should intently observe the movement of disks as they slow and stop at the far end of the court. In doing this it is best, when practicable, to aim at a well-defined target at the far end, such as another disk or an intersection of lines. Estimating drift without using a definite aiming point is liable to be less satisfactory.

Probably the best method is first to shoot a disk, as A in Figure 234, into or near the kitchen