

## CHAPTER IV SEVERAL BASIC SHOTS EXPLAINED

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

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

### A TYPICAL ROUND OF PLAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Also called a cross pilot. See the glossary.

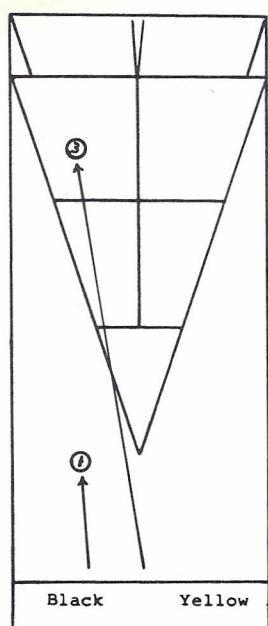


Figure 8

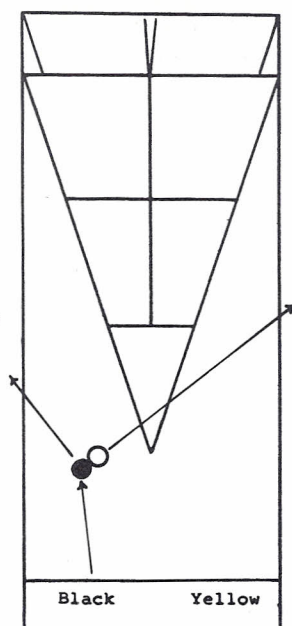


Figure 9

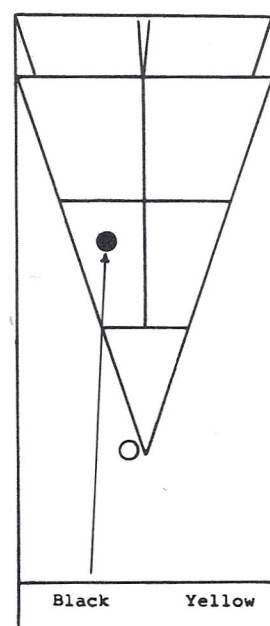


Figure 10

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

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

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

to score in some place on the board with the hope of complicating Black's last shot.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

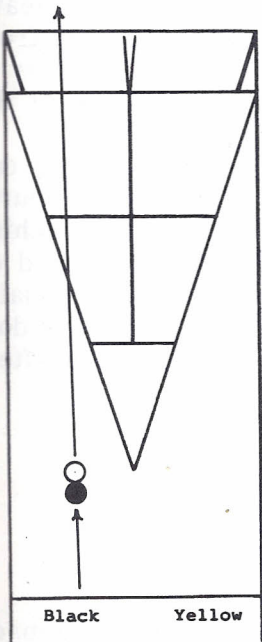


Figure 11

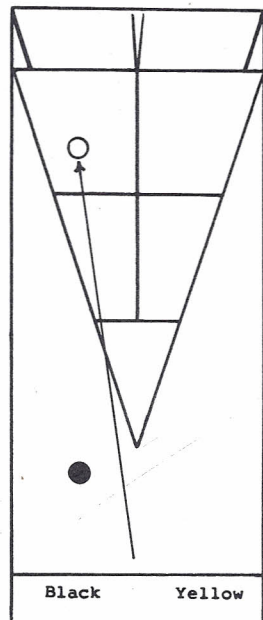


Figure 12

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### FOULS AND PENALTIES

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

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

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

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

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

### FOULS AND PENALTIES APPLIED TO A FRIENDLY GAME

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

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

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

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

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

### ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS IN CHAPTER IV

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

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

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

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

4. Why didn't Black try to score a 10 with his hammer? The useful surface in the 10-area is about half as large as the useful surface in one

of the 8-areas, and considering the pointed shape of the 10-area, which leaves very little latitude for the scoring disc, the 10 is more than twice as difficult to shoot as an 8. Experience has taught shufflers to shoot an 8 when shooting for a simple score on an open board unless some other score is urgently needed.

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