

# COURT SHUFFLEBOARD - TEN STRATEGIC RULES

*Ten Strategic Rules* provides strategies you might want to use for playing winning shuffleboard. For the basics of playing or scoring please see "Court Shuffleboard – Getting Started".

Compiled by Bill Boyes, this is a collection notes gleaned from various people and books, and particularly from the video-tape by **Glen Pelletier**.

Also see *Suggestions To Shufflers*, a very good document compiled by **Bob Finta of Coronado Shuffleboard Club**.

**Preface:** I believe this document tries to do too much, contains too much, and is too complex. But for now, here it is and I ask for your comments and questions, dear reader. (A Table of Contents would be a big help.) (So would an experienced editor!)

Abbreviations Used in this document: **O**-Opponent, **K**-Kitchen, **SP**-Saint Petes, **T**-Tampa, **H**-Hammer

## SHUFFLEBOARD TERMS:

The evolution of the sport leaves many terms behind in the dust, yet the "old timers" and some of the older instructions (and even the rules) still use these old term. The following is simply a list of everything I have found in my shuffleboard travels. Of course, having so many terms and different meanings to some of the terms is very confusing to newcomers to the sport. Hopefully this list helps somewhat.

Block = (n) (1) a disk in a position to (at least partially) prevent O from playing a Hit, or scoring.  
(v) to shoot your disk to a position that creates a Block. Can sometimes mean the same as *Hide* but can also be confusing. (2) (archaic) any disk.

Board = (n) The scoring area. See "Go on the Board"

Bump-up = (v) to hit a disk just hard enough to move it into a scoring position.

Clear = (v) Shoot to hit a target disk at an angle so both the target disk and the shooter leave the court. A bad clearing shot will result in the shooter remaining on the court so that O can attempt to Kitchen it or Hide behind it.

Double = (v) Hit your own disk off a line to score both that disk and the shooter. A disk on the 7-8 line or the 10-8 line requires a just a simple "Bump-up". A disk on the center-line requires a gentle angle-hit.

Frame = The play of all eight disks from one end, four by each side. A scoreboard entry.

"Go on the board" = (v) To play a shot into the scoring area, usually in the open (not behind a Guard). This is a tactic designed to have the opponent Hit and Stick, so you have the opportunity to Kitchen them.

Good Disk = (n) A disk in the scoring area which does not overlap a line (when viewed straight down from the top). See "Score".

Hide = (n) a disk that you can score behind. Often, the first player of a Frame will "Put up a Hide." as the first shot. (v) Shoot your disk to a scoring position that your opponent cannot "See".

Hit = The disk shot strikes another disk, usually to knock that disk out of the scoring area, into the Kitchen, or onto a line.

Hit and Roll = After a glancing Hit, the Shooter moves sideways away from the point of impact, and sometimes behind a Block.

Kitchen = (n) The 10-Off area. (v) Hit a disk so that it ends up in the Kitchen.

Knock = see *Hit*.

Hammer = The last shot of a Frame. If Yellow has first shot then Black would have the Hammer, and vice versa. The person with the Hammer should score with at least one disk, and particularly the Hammer shot itself. (Also see *No Hammer* in TACTICS, below)

Hide = (n) a disk which blocks Opponent from a scoring area while at the same time allowing you to shot a disk to the scoring area. O would then have to Knock away the Hide before shooting at your good disk. (v) The act of shooting a disk to a spot behind another disk so Opponent does not have a direct shot to hit the disk you shot. To score behind a block is to "hide".

Hit-and Hide = Knock O's disk off the board and slide behind a Hide. (That good ol Knock and Roll.)

Kitchen = (n) the 10-Off area in the scoring diagram. (v) Knock a disk into the 10-off.

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Kitchen-Player = (1) One who plays attempted kitchen shots almost no matter what the score. One who foolishly plays kitchen shots when they should be focused on winning the game.

Kitchen-Tactics = When O is significantly ahead, and over 55 points, putting O into the Kitchen once or twice will significantly change the dire situation you are in. O will go from just needing just two or three scores to win, to needing five or six. Emotionally, O will go from “smelling victory” to “back in the battle”. You will have gained some badly needed “time”.

Lines:

8-10-Line = The line separating the “10” scoring area from the “8” scoring area.

7-8-Line = The line separating the “7” area from the “8” area.

K-7-Line= the line separating the Kitchen (10-Off) from the “7” area.

Center-Line = the line down the middle of the scoring triangle separating the two “8” and two “7” areas. The “Separator Mark” between the Black and Yellow sides of the Kitch is not counted as a “line”.

Roll=(n) the path of the shot disk after striking another disk on the court. Typically used with "hit and roll" to describe hitting O's disk then sliding to a hidden position. (v) action of disk shot after striking another disk.

Score=(n) a Good Disk. (v) Shoot a disk into the scoring area to result in a Score.

See = (v) Ability to shoot a disk to a certain location. If you can “see” a disk on the board, then there are no “blocks” preventing you from hitting that disk.

Shoot = (v) Play a disk. (x) Expletive upon shooting one's Hammer into the Kitchen.

Shooter = The disk that is shot or played.

Stick = After a Hit, the Shooter stops somewhere in front of the Kitchen.

Win = (v) (1) Score more points. (2) Officially, at the end of a Frame, have reached 75 points , or if both sides have reached 75, have more before O, or

## PRINCIPLES

Shuffleboard can be played in a simple enjoyable way: Try to score and hope you don't get knocked off by your opponent. After you play at this level for a while your skills increase and you and your opponent just seem to be trading shots knocking one another off the scoring area. The last one to shoot usually wins that round. You ask “What strategy can I use when I shoot first, so that my opponent will not have a simple score with his last disk?” The answers are found below under St. Pete, Tampa etc. These are the names for the basic “guards” that the first shooter may decide to play to make his opponent's shots more difficult.

***GUARD: Make your first shot a guard or block. Then use it to score behind if you get the chance.***

***Exception – Opponent is more than 15 points ahead, or O has the Hammer and 60 points, then use a strategy needed to put O into the Kitchen – involves putting your first shot in a scoring area, usually the "7" area. See Kitchen Bait below.***

SET UP YOUR GUARD (TAMPA OR ST.PETE)

- a) The St. Pete is the “wide side hide”. It is played to a point that mostly blocks O from scoring on their side of the scoring area, while at the same time giving you a place to put your next shot so that O cannot easily Hit you off. The ideal St. Pete ends up halfway between the tip of the “10” and the edge of the court, and even with the tip of the “10”. You should practice shooting St. Petes and then the subsequent “Hide” behind the St. Petes – almost exactly in the center of the “7”. See diagram
- b) The Tampa hide is a “near side hide”. It is played to your side of the top point of the “10”, as close as possible. It must be on your side of the center-line of the court. The Tampa blocks your opponent from your side of most of the scoring area, but at the same time gives you a pathway to

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shoot into that area. A well placed Tampa is delightful to have, but if out of position by even a few inches may give O a place to hide.

***SCORE: Always make your hammer. They add up.***

***WATCH: (a) the Scoreboard – it will tell you what you should be trying to do – Score, Guard, Kitchen, Take risks.***

***(b) the Shots – see where the drift is. What can you use to help you hide a good disk? What can your Opponent use, or not use?***

## TACTICS

### (1) AVOID THE “SUCKER HIDE”.

a) A St. Pete too close to the center will allow O to shoot down their own side of the court into the “8” or “7”, and it hides those same scoring areas from you. The sucker hide creates a hide for O, as it is essentially a Tampa for O. worse, if your attempted Tampa attempt ends up on O’s side of the “10” point, it creates a perfect Tampa for O, one that O will gratefully accept by hiding in behind it in the scoring area. If that happens then knock off your Tampa by (a) hitting it hard in the direction of O’s disk (you may get lucky and Clear the Board); (b) more risky, but hit your Tampa up into the scoring area while at the same time exposing O’s so it is no longer hidden by either your shooter or the former Tampa.

b) A Tampa that is on your side but too far from the point creates a St Pete for O. O can shoot across and in behind a such a poorly placed Tampa.

(c) An attempt to block O from “doubling” their disk on the center-line will almost always result in a Tampa for O. If you put up a Tampa, and O tries to score behind it, but ends up on the center-line, you must be careful not to block O’s side of the center-line and thereby give O a free place to hide (exception: You are playing the 7<sup>th</sup>-disk and wish to block O from using the disk on the center-line for “Doubling”. Sometimes, the best answer is to score on your own side, preferably in the area away from O’s center-line disk. (If they are on the 8-8-line, play into the 7, lest they play a “combination” shot to double and at the same time knock you off or onto a line.

If you have one last shot and O has the Hammer and the board is blocked except for one last spot, you can safely take that spot away by playing a hide to that spot even if it would be a “sucker” St Pete or Tampa. O will have no place to go with the Hammer. But if it is on your second or third shot, be very careful of blocking the center-line but letting O score elsewhere behind your block.

### 2) KITCHEN BAIT

Kitchen Bait is your shot played into the open near the “10 Off”. A shot into the “7” near the back line would be Kitchen Bait. You hope O will Hit and Stick, giving you a chance to hit O into the Kitchen. If O is smart O will play a glancing hit so both your scoring disk and his shooter will end up off the court, but sometimes mistakes are made, and you will get the opportunity to kitchen O’s disk.

a) Use only if 15 or more points behind.

b) In mid-game, use only when O has the Hammer.

c) With your hammer, use only with your third disk so if O hits and sticks, you can Kitchen without worrying about being kitchened in return.

### • KITCHEN PATH

If O goes into the Kitchen, don’t bother to block his path to it. Try to score your own points, and aim for a “7” or “8” on the opposite side of the court.

Exceptions:

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- a) Use your last disk to block if O has over 65 points and the hammer.
- b) If you have over 55 points, you must do more than just block. You must also try to score. Block with a high "8". Don't give him an easy score.

## 3) AVOID SUICIDE ALLEY

Suicide Alley is your side of the court on the outside of O's St Pete. It is very difficult to hide behind a St Pete unless you have most of the scoring area to shoot at (i.e. the St Pete was very poor). If you decide to go down "suicide alley" you risk leaving your shot short and giving O a chance to hide behind the St Pete. You also risk putting yourself into the Kitchen

Response to a wide St Pete (narrow alley), and you have the Hammer:

- a) Knock it off.
- b) Put up your own St Pete. O will probably not be able to hide behind his wide St Pete because his hiding spot (the only spot you cannot shoot at directly) is away down in the deepest corner of the "7", very small and therefore hard use.

## 4) NEVER RUSH THE GAME

If you are over 60 points, do not take chances in order to score. If you are over 65 and O less than 45 then ignore O. Just create a hide and score behind it, then double block. Alternatively, wait for your own hammer to try to score, and avoid all opportunities for O to kitchen you - if O's hammer, then clear the board (O's kitchen bait) and keep it simple avoid giving up a double score. Then shoot your last shot into the gutter (where it cannot be kitched). WAIT FOR YOUR HAMMER, clearing the board and making your hammer, and hoping your partner will do the same.

## 5) USE TEAMWORK

In doubles, be supportive of your partner. Remember you have two hammers in a row (but so does opponent).

## 6) PLAY PERCENTAGE SHOTS

- \* With the Hammer, be conservative and keep the board clean, especially in a tournament.
- \* Watch the score, both your own and O's. Keep O's winner off the board.
- \* If you do not have a better than 50-50 chance at Hitting out O's scoring disk, then at least score one of your own (i.e. make your hammer even if it means letting O's good hidden disk stay. Exception: O's winning disk MUST be removed or kitched.)
- \* Remember, Kitchens do not win games. You must score yourself to win.

## 7) MIND YOUR SILENT PARTNER – THE SCOREBOARD.

Good players check the scoreboard when they stand up to play their end. Various scoreboard-hammer scenarios follow:

- a) BOTH SCORES ARE UNDER 60 (You need time and consistently good shots.).
  - i) WITH THE HAMMER – Normal strategy: keep the board clear and make your Hammer.
  - ii) NO HAMMER – Normal Strategy: Block (your Opponent) and Score (Set up a hide (Orlando or St. Pete), then use it!
- b) YOUR SCORE IS OVER 60. Make your Hammer. Don't get put into the Kitchen.
  - i) WITH THE HAMMER – Be patient. Protect a scoring disk – double block it (guards).
  - ii) IF THEIR SCORE < 45: Ignore their scoring disk in favor of hiding and scoring yourself. You will win with only two scoring disks.
- c) THEIR SCORE > 60 (They can win with two Hammers.)
  - i) THEIR HAMMER – You must reduce their score – KITCHEN TIME. Shoot a deep "7" in the open. The temptation to THEM is to try to kitchen you or at least Knock you. You don't care as long as their shooter disk stays around and you get a chance to kitchen them. Even if their disk ends up on a line, you will attempt to Kitchen it.
  - ii) You cannot risk letting them score behind a hide (guard). When shooting your "7", don't put it on the same side as their SP, because that would make it easier for them to perform a Knock-and-Hide.

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## 8. DON'T BE A HEADHUNTER (KITCHEN PLAYER)

Often a Kitchen (or attempt) can result in you in the Kitchen if your shooter stays on the scoring area where O can get at it with their next shot.

If you can win with your current Hammer(s), do not leave your shooter where O can Kitchen you. O will frequently leave a wide open "tempting 7". If you want to Hit then don't try to Kitchen because your shooter will often stick, and then be Kitchened by O. Then you will no longer be in the position of getting your win with your Hammer(s).

Don't try to Kitchen an Tampa or St.Pete unless you are desperate – Example: O's score over 60 and able to win with their current Hammer. Putting a Tampa or St Pete in the Kitchen requires a lot of luck. Exception: You cannot create your own good hide. (Ed. Note - What does this mean?)

Exception: When clearing a St Pete early in the game, angle hit it hard enough to "Corner-Kitchen" it. That is, hard enough to knock O into the kitchen at one edge of the court. Start out shooting a little bit too hard to be sure of not leaving a "7" for O, then adjust to try for the kitchen. Your shooter should leave the court. What might go wrong? Due to drift or your own fault, you will hit and stick, leaving O a Hide. If you try to Corner-Kitchen and also Roll to your own Tampa or St Petes you are risking leaving O a hide most of the time. There is extra risk trying to Corner-Kitchen a Tampa, as there is even more chance you will leave O a Hide.

## MORE SHUFFLEBOARD TACTICS

This list suggests shots you might use in a specific situation.

Your Last Shot & No Hammer	<p>Steal the Hammer!</p> <p>The whole idea in this common situation is to make it most difficult for the O to score with their hammer. If you can keep them from scoring or score yourself, then you have effectively stolen their hammer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the board is partially blocked then complete the blockade with your last shot if you can. Fill in the one remaining gap O might use to go get to the scoring area.</li> <li>• If you cannot effectively block O from scoring, then you have to score yourself so as to make it difficult for O to both Knock you and also score. Place your last disk so it scores but is just over a line. Then if O Knocks and Sticks O's disk ends up on that line and does not score. Of course, if O plays the Hit, they may try to Kitchen you. Consider that if O has 60 or more, and can win with their hammer(s), they will ignore your disk and simply score. All you can hope for is O's shot will miss their Hammer. The best places for your disk are the most difficult and risky (of course): Here's a list in order of best-first:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Top of the "10". Barely into the "10" triangle, this is best because if O plays the Hit, they will stick on one or both of the side lines of the "10" or glance off entirely out of the scoring area. It is impossible for O to Knock and Score. To score, O has to concede your "10" and try for an "8" or "7". A "Top-10" shot is risky because: a) You are aiming for a very small area; b) if your go even 12 inches too far, O has a relatively easy Hit-and-Stick to score 10.</li> <li>2) Top of the "8". Barely into the top (nearest part) of the "8", this also a Hammer stealer! It makes a Knock and score extremely difficult as O must hit perfectly and glance off to score. With a Hit-and-Stick O ends up on the 8-10 line or center-line.</li> <li>3) Top of the "7". This is still a good shot but as the scoring area is wider at this point a glancing Hit to score is a little easier. It is also easier for O to Kitchen you compared to a high "8".</li> <li>4) Near the middle line or a side-line: With a not-so-well played Hammer, O might stick on the line you that are near.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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