

ANALYZE EACH OF THREE CHOICES

Yellow is behind 61-55, but has the hammer at the head end in a doubles match. How does yellow play it? Here are three ways, three tactics. Let's look at them.

First, yellow can clear the board and hope to score his hammer and then expect his partner to do the same at the foot. That would move the score to about 70 to 61 with two black's two hammers coming up. Yellow then needs to try to stop one of black's hammers, to stay alive for yellow's next hammers. It's a straightforward tactic used often, mostly with success.

A second commonly used tactic is simply for yellow to go right to the board, hoping to get black in the kitchen some way. Many use this tactic and it too works very often.

A third tactic is to try to get two yellow scores while giving black one. That gives yellow partner the opportunity to score his hammer for a win. That can work, too.

Which would you use?

Because black is ahead, they likely won't try for 10's or 8s to defend against the first two yellow hammers, because they would be sitting ducks for kitchen tries. So yellow can often make those first two hammers. And it's often possible to prevent one of black's two hammers. Then yellow has two tries to go out and win. The first option is not a bad choice.

A good kitchen player may try the second option, especially against a poor board clearer.

Option three is risky but if you pull it off, can be rewarding (provided your partner understands this).

So in this match, black led with a wide Tampa and yellow tried to cross the center line and hide hoping to hide one score and get a second score the hammer, but as happens yellow shot too hard and went into the kitchen. Black then scored an 8 behind his wide Tampa.

What was yellow's next shot? (Check the diagram).

Yellow considered nicking out the 8, but it was well covered. Yellow gave it some thought and decided to leave the 8 and remove the 10-off. It wasn't a bad choice since the black 8 was high and it would be hard for black to get two scores. And then, as hoped, black did shoot short on his try for a second hide.

So here was yellow's chance to make two scores again. It was risky because black could poke his third disc in for the second score but black likely wouldn't be successful and he might even knock out his good 8. Even if black did score two, yellow still had the hammer to try to get at least one out and keep the game alive for his partner.

Yellow took the hiding shot but after 3 calls it was determined that it was touching the 7/7 line. Black tried for a bump and failed so yellow scored the hammer. Yellow's partner at the foot then tried for two but only got one. Yellow ended up losing.

How would you have played this situation?

