

## DUCK HUNTING

Every shuffleboard match brings a brand new situation. This match involves a duck so we'll call it "duck hunting."

The match involved four very good shufflers. The court was running well, perhaps just a little on the slow side. It drifted toward the center a bit from both sides. Play was late in the second game and all the players had solid control of their shots and adequate knowledge of the court and drifts.

Black was leading at 51 to 66 and had won game one. The yellow players were in danger but, because they had the next two hammers, they had a chance.

At that score and hammer rotation how would you, shooting yellow from the lead approach the frame?

The scores are very important here. Black's 66 is a fine score but it isn't 67 or 68 where an eight or seven will reach 75. Yet at 66, a ten will reach game while at 64 it wouldn't.

Yellow's 51 is a problem. Anyone in that spot would like to have just a point or two more. At 51, yellow needs three eights. Two eights and a seven will only reach 74. Of course a ten would be a big help. If yellow is to reach 75 with three scores, they must include two eights and a ten. Otherwise yellow needs four scores.

With that analysis, yellow had a couple of choices as the frame started.

One strategy is to clear board and score, then expect partner to clear and score. That would advance yellow's score to 65 or 66 or 67. Then they would have to survive black's two hammers, keeping one or the other from scoring. Finally with the hammers back, yellow would try to clear and score, at both ends and win the game.

Another approach is for yellow to try to make two scores, allowing black to have one in the bargain. That's the usual strategy with 52 or 53 or 54 but at 51 it's tougher because of the need for eights and tens.

In this game yellow decided to go for scores. Play moved to the sixth shot with the discs on the board, as shown. It's yellow's shot.

As you can see, yellow has positioned a disc on the 8/10 line to give him a chance for 18, a great addition to 51. On the other hand, black has already hidden a score and yellow can only afford to give up one black score, two would be fatal (even if yellow scored 26.) Also on the board is the black Tampa and way down on the 7/-10 line is a black duck, (duck is an expression for a disc on the 7/-10 line waiting to be shot into the kitchen.)

What should yellow do?

Yellow can (1) try to kitchen the duck or (2) make his 18. Either of these leaves a black the chance to hide a second disc. Yellow chose a third option (3) because of black's chance to make a second hide.

Yellow cleared the Tampa to keep the game alive, hoping black would cover the black seven. Then yellow would try for 18. But black was smarter and scored a black eight over the black seven. Yellow then had to remove the black eight with no chance of making two scores.

Some figured that yellow's best chance to win was to try to kitchen the duck. If yellow makes it, black is in serious trouble because a second hide won't put him out and now yellow can go out with an 18, (plus the seven) on his hammer.

Do you agree, that yellow should have gone duck hunting?

