

CHAPTER VIII

HIDING A SCORE — SOME SPECIAL SHOTS

We have discussed the usual areas where scoring discs are hidden during a half round of play; that is, beyond the St. Pete and the Tampa guards. Hiding a disc in these areas is comparatively easy, but there are several other hides, some of them rather difficult to make, that should be mentioned at this time.

LOOK FOR HIDES

A player should be alert to hides that are offered to him unintentionally by his opponent. When the opponent's cue disc sticks or stops in a place that is advantageous as a hide, the player should use it. Beginning players sometimes fail to recognize such a hide because it is the opponent's disc.

The advantage of the unexpected hide is clear. If a player succeeds in sneaking in a hide and successfully protects his score throughout the half round, the result is as though he had shot five discs, whether he is shooting the even numbers or the odd.

Usually it pays to be aggressive in taking advantage of unexpected hides. If it is a situation which seems to benefit the two players about equally, one remembers that such a hide favors the player who gets to it first.

ANALYSIS PROBLEM (FIGURE 36)

The play is in the middle of the game and Yellow is slightly behind. Yellow is about to shoot disc No. 7. Where is a good place to put it?

Compare your analysis with the discussion of this problem at the end of the chapter.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR HIDES

The Corner-7 Shot. Occasionally, a player's guard stops too close to the edge of the court to be a good protection for a scoring disc, as in Figure 37. The protected area beyond G is only a corner of the 7-area, which is difficult to use for scoring. The area is small, like the corner of the 10, and it is at the extreme corner of the court near the kitchen. To lessen the risk of the kitchen in this shot, the player starts his shot from position 3, as close to the edge of the court

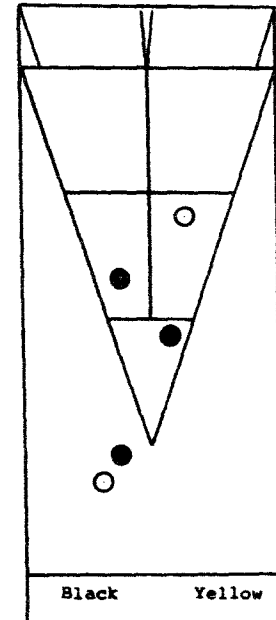


Figure 36

as he can get. He aims at point P, which lies at the corner of the kitchen area, so that if his disc travels too far, it will stop on the boundary line at the end of the kitchen rather than wholly within the kitchen area. Though the corner 7 is a difficult shot, it can be made often enough to make it very useful at the right time.

When a player shoots disc No. 1 too close to the side of the board for a good cross guard, often the opponent will ignore it and shoot a cross guard of his own. If the first guard was really bad, the player will not try to hide disc No. 3 beyond it, but will wait and use the hide for his last shot, disc No. 7, if no better hide turns up during the half round. So the player will knock away his opponent's cross guard with disc No. 3, and he will do the same with disc No. 5, then hide his last disc in the corner of the 7-area beyond the poorly-placed cross guard.

Disc No. 7 need not be completely hidden to frustrate the opponent when he shoots his hammer. The risk to the opponent when attempting to spoil a half-hidden score so near the kitchen is enough to cause even a reckless player to look for a better use for his hammer shot. Unless the disc in the corner 7 is the winning score, or brings the player perilously close to

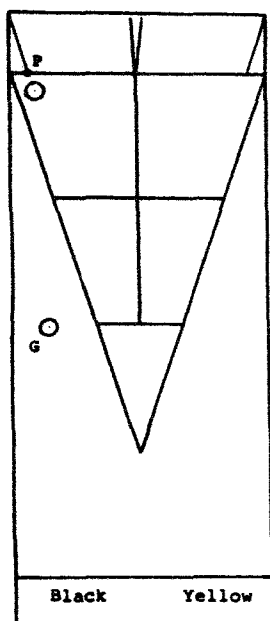


Figure 37

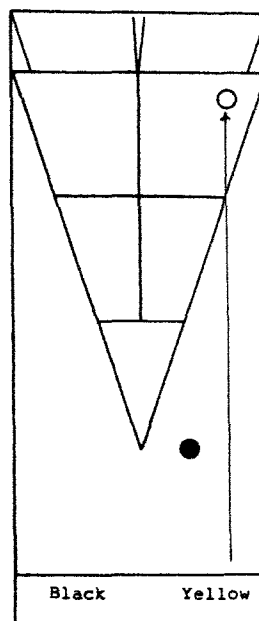


Figure 38

game point, the opponent will use his hammer for a simple score.

The Alley Shot. A tempting shot, and a risky one, too, is shooting to hide a score near the corner 7 beyond the opponent's cross guard, on the player's own side of the board (Figure 38). This shot does not have the built-in safety feature that the shot to the opposite corner 7 has. It ends in disaster so often that the edge of the court outside the opponent's cross guard has been nicknamed **suicide alley**. Tournament players shun this shot.

Consider the characteristics of the shot that make it risky. It is a long shot, the scoring area is small, and directly behind the scoring area is the kitchen. But that is not all. Few courts are of uniform slickness. There is often a noticeable slowness along the edges of a court, which makes the judgment of distance shooting uncertain. All of this spells out one word very clearly: Beware!

However, there are some things about this shot that are worth considering. If the opponent's cross guard is misplaced far enough toward the apex to allow the player to shoot approximately

to the center of the 7-area, the danger of this shot ending in the kitchen is greatly reduced. But what is to be gained by hiding a disc in the 7-area when the opponent can easily come in from the opposite side and hide a disc in the 8-area with less risk? (Figure 39.) This simply results in a battle over a hiding place that is of dubious value to either player.

Is there ever a time, then, when the alley shot can be recommended? Surely not when logical strategy calls for a clearing of the board. Possibly—just possibly, in some situation when clearing the board is difficult, or when the player is shooting the odd-numbered discs, he might use this shot if he first places a Tampa block. But more likely, a player will find a use for this shot with disc No. 7, when a score is urgently needed and this is the best hide available.

There is, however, a situation for which the alley shot seems to have been made to order. This use of the alley shot will be discussed in Chapter XIV, Problems of the Drifty Court.

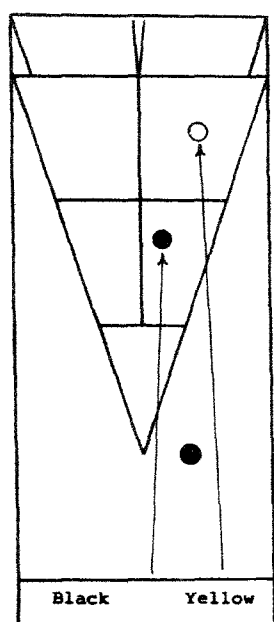


Figure 39

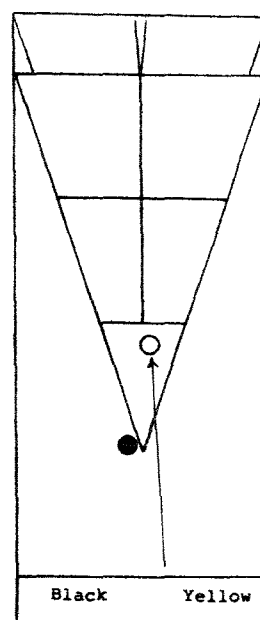


Figure 40

A Hide in the 10-Area. Another effective shot, for the right time in a game, is a hide in the 10-area beyond the opponent's Tampa guard (Figure 40). A player should keep this unique little sheltered area in mind, as it can become an important piece of real estate in a close game. It is easily accessible, but parking is a problem because the area is so small.

This can be a great opportune shot with disc No. 7 when the player needs a 10, or when there is nothing better to do with that disc; but its use with disc No. 7 can never be a planned strategy because no one would ever shoot a Tampa with disc No. 6. Sometimes, however, a disc just happens to be in the opponent's Tampa position when the player is ready to shoot No. 7.

The disc in the low 10-area will be about half concealed by the guard, and it cannot be used by the opponent as a backstop for scoring. The nearness of this hide to the Tampa guard calls for a combination shot in most cases, which, even if successful, will spoil the opponent's hammer.

Bunts and Glances. These shots are the logical outcome of the blocking game and are not so common with players who consistently clear the board. When they are used as incidental shots for hiding a disc, bunts and glances are very useful; but both kinds are weak shots for a planned strategy.

The mechanics of these shots will be understood better after a reading of the section on combinations and caroms, and a further discussion of them will be taken up in Chapter X.

HIDE TWO DISCS OR REINFORCE THE GUARD

Yellow has succeeded in setting up a guard with a score soundly hidden at D (Figure 41). Black has failed to attack this guard, and now Yellow has to decide what to do with his next shot. There is plenty of room to hide another disc between the guard G and the scoring disc D. Is this a wise play? Yellow must consider the risks and the need for another score, along with the possibility of his doing as well with some other shot.

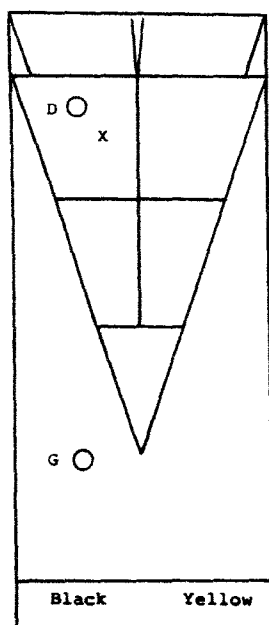


Figure 41

Let us consider the risks. To place another disc directly in line with G and D would be difficult, though not discouragingly so. But, if this disc should stop at some place such as X that would be more than 50 percent visible to the opponent as he is looking past G, the opponent could easily knock it away. The disc would go in the general direction of D; and the opponent would, in every case, attempt this shot, trying to

spoil both scores with one shot. In shufflese, putting a disc beyond a guard in a position that endangers another well-hidden score is known as **putting a handle on it**; that is, putting a handle on the first score.

The conservative play for Yellow, in this situation, would be to reinforce the guard with his next disc rather than to hide another score. If he is trailing badly, he might attempt to hide the second disc; but if he is leading comfortably, he will play conservatively. And if he does not have the hammer, he will play, if possible, even more conservatively.

Another risk that Yellow must take, whether he hides a second disc or reinforces the guard, is the chance of having his cue disc nick (bump) his guard at G. This is about the worst thing that can happen to a player when he tries to shoot a third disc into an area where he already has a good hide. If he shoots to reinforce the guard at G, and his cue disc only slightly touches it, both discs will move apart, leaving the score at D wide open to attack.

ANSWER TO THE ANALYSIS PROBLEM (FIGURE 36)

How about an attempt to kitchen the black 8 and stick in the 8-area for a score that would be completely hidden? The knocking out of Black's 10 and 8 with a combination shot would leave Yellow's score in the 8-area unprotected, and Yellow's cue disc would not be able to score. Black could then attempt to play Yellow's 8 for the kitchen and cause his cue disc to stick in the 8-area for a score on his hammer shot.