

COVER SHOTS

Many shuffleboard games are won by good and bad cover shots. A carefully placed guarding block can seal up a game. A guarding block that goes awry can allow a sure win to slip away.

Covering seems so simple. First you hide a good seven. Then your opponent clips away the pilot in front of it. Now, facing the opponent's hammer, all you have to do is cover that seven and you've stolen a score. All you have to do is set another pilot just like the first one. It's not all that simple. There are a number of points to take into account.

First, a player must decide, should the cover spot be close to the score or far away from the score? A cover far from the score, over six feet usually allows corners of the score to show. The geometry makes it necessary for this shot to be almost perfect. Meanwhile a close cover, 3 to 4 feet, usually gets the disc totally covered and prevents the opponent hitting a corner of the score. Yet, the closer the cover, the more able the opponent is to combination out the score by driving the cover into the good disc. Usually on a drifty court it's better to cover close, on a straight court a little further away.

Allowing for the drift is just as important on a cover shot as on a shot to put a seven into the 10-off. As the cover shot slows to a stop, it will drift. The shuffler has to allow for this.

Now be careful, not to cover, as they say, on the board. Be careful not to cover a seven near the center by putting your disc into the 8 or 10.

Players should also be aware of which corner of the good score to cover. If the game is near to the end and opponents are desperate for a kitchen shot, be absolutely sure the outside corner of the score is guarded. Then the score can't be clipped into the kitchen. If the opponent isn't desperate, cover the inside corner to prevent him from the clipping the score to a line and remaining on board for a good opponent's score.

Putting up a second cover can also be tricky. You have a good seven, one side is already covered. All you have to do now is put a second guard beside the first. But-if you get too close you'll might clip the other block and leave a lane between the two.

Locking cover shots means having two or more cover discs positioned so a drive shot won't work. It's like a cover for the cover. Sometimes the locking is done by setting a disc in front of the other, sometimes by going behind. The diagram shows a shot going behind a cover for a locking cover.

That about covers cover shots.

