

EIGHT IS ONE MORE THAN SEVEN

“Boy that was a close match. At the end, one point made a large difference for yellow. They had 77 and black had 76.”

How many games have been decided by one point? How many times has the end-of-game strategy been dictated by a single point?

We all start to figure points as we near 75. For example, 59 is not as good as 60 and 61 is much better than either. A single point makes a big difference. At 65 a ten will win, at 64 it won't. At 68 a seven will win, at 67 it won't.

Some of us even look at scores in the 40's. 43, will take four eight's to win; 44, takes four scores too but one can be a seven; at 45, two eights and two sevens; and finally at 47, no eights are needed, just four sevens. All are one point differences.

Yet knowing this, we don't always keep it in mind early in a game. Sometimes we score sevens when we should be scoring eights.

What we need to keep in mind is that “Eight is one more than seven.”

That's obvious to us but how do we apply it? Where in our strategy and tactics do we make use of this basic arithmetic and gain that special point.

Here are some situations where we can shoot for either an eight or a seven. In these, selecting an eight may gain a key point for us.

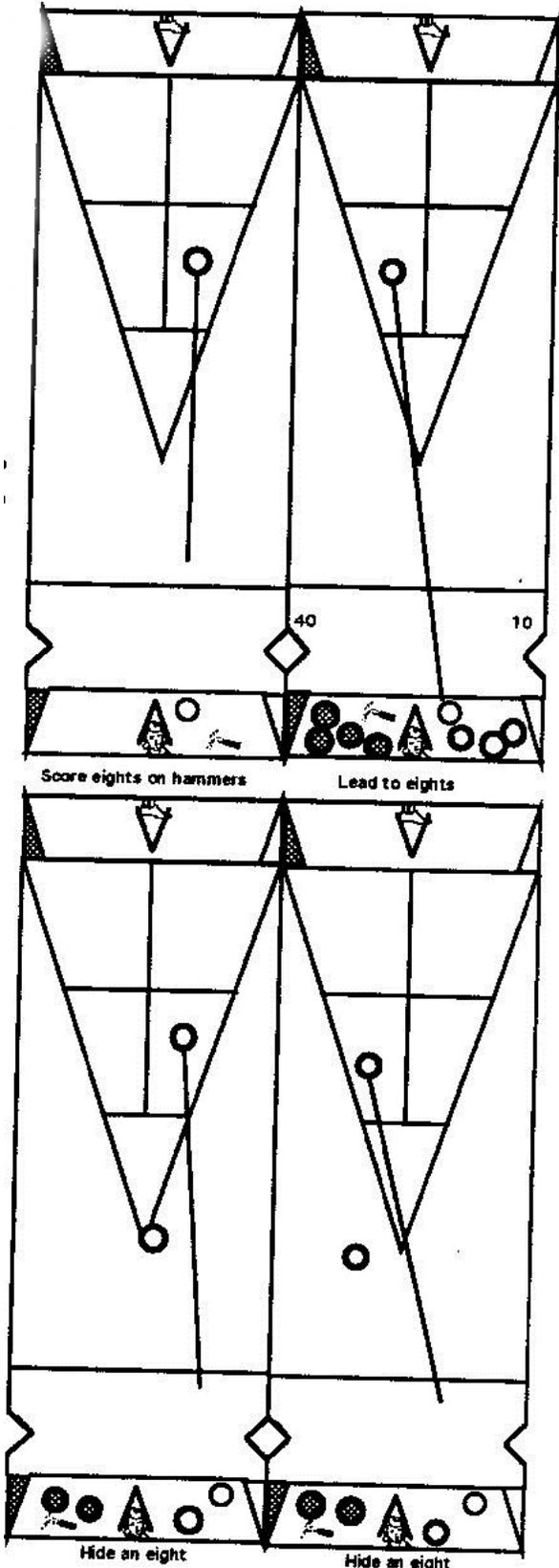
The most obvious opportunity is on your hammer. We all try to shoot eights rather than a seven, as that one point we saw above, can be big.

Against hammers, players often use their seventh shot to shoot short tens, high eights, and corner sevens. Remember, if on one of those attempts the shooter is off a little and leaves a good backstop, seven is one point less than eight and three points less than a ten. These points can mean the game.

A good option may be to force our opponent to shoot down the outside of the board with his hammer. This can be accomplished by blocking up the area around the 10. The opponent may still score, but it may be only a seven.

Now when a player is behind, he usually shoots to a seven hoping a board clearer will stick or miss. Using the eight is one more than seven rule, should this shot be an eight? Probably not, because it may be your opponent who scores the eight.

What do you think?



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