

CHAPTER V

SOME BASIC SHOTS

HOW TO MAKE THEM

The cross guard, or St. Pete, which was mentioned in Chapter IV, is by far the most common and most useful shot in the game. It is an easy shot, too. In this chapter the characteristics of the cross guard will be examined, and several other shots will be discussed.

SETTING UP A CROSS GUARD

The correct placement of the cross guard is on the side of the court opposite the player and midway between the edge of the court and the apex. The cross guard in Figure 12 is Yellow's guard, even though it is a black disc. It stands directly in front of Yellow's opponent, effectively blocking a portion of his side of the board.

Figure 13 is a scale drawing, which shows the shape and the comparative size of the hiding area beyond two cross guards—one, yellow, in the normal position; the other, black, barely across the deadline. Notice the characteristics of the hiding area:

1. Triangle ABC is the area that is inaccessible to Black's cue disc. This area, which is nowhere wider than a disc, tapers to a point beyond the guard. It is clear, then, that no disc can be 100 percent hidden beyond a cross guard.
2. If the guard is close to the deadline, the hiding area barely extends to the center of the 7-area.

One can see why a cross guard becomes less effective as the distance from it to the scoring disc increases, but this does not mean that the cross guard near the deadline is a poor guard. Consider for a moment disc X in Figure 13. X is completely visible to the opponent, yet Yellow must execute a careful and precise shot to get at it. Why? Because the cross guard, in this case, allows Yellow no margin of error whatever on one side of the target although the target is in full view. Picking off a scoring disc beyond a guard, such as X, is difficult. More will be said about this shot later.

The cross guard is not a difficult shot because it is still very effective when it is slightly misplaced. However, when it is placed too far from its normal position, problems are created

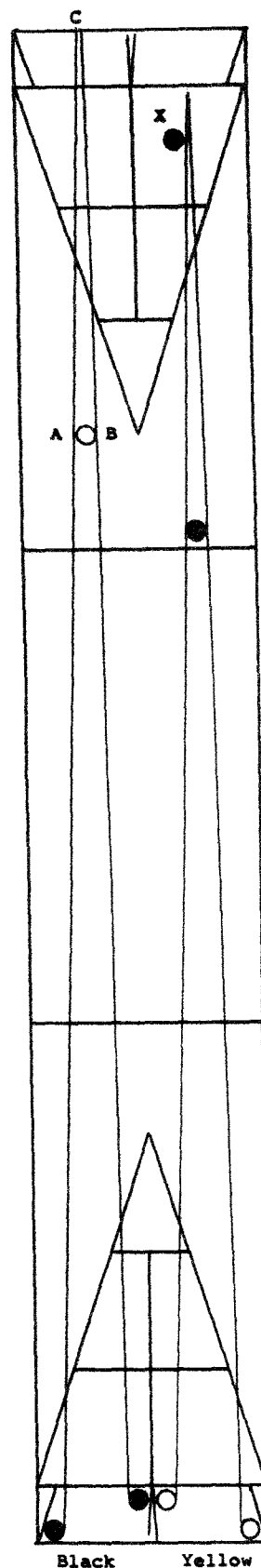


Figure 13

for the player who shoots it. Figure 14 shows four extreme positions of the cross guard. The guard at A has already been discussed. The chief danger of placing a guard at A is the risk of its stopping short of the deadline, thereby wasting a shot and passing the initiative to the opponent. A disc that fails to reach the deadline must be removed from the court before the next play, but as long as the disc touches the deadline, it is a live and playable disc.

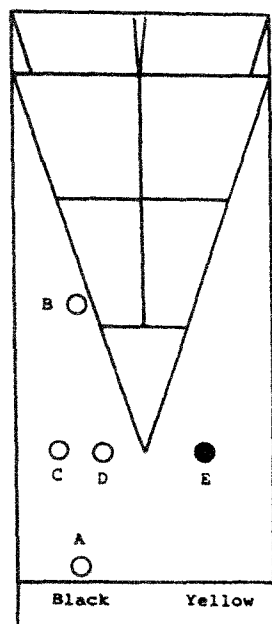


Figure 14

Consider the disc that travels too far and stops near B. The guard at B loses its effectiveness because the hiding area is so near to the kitchen that hiding a disc beyond this guard involves a considerable risk. An opponent will often ignore the guard at B and will place a cross guard of his own at E. This play creates a little problem for the player who shot the guard at B. Should he now use his own inferior guard and try to hide a score, or should he knock away his opponent's correctly placed guard?

Whichever way it is played, the odds favor the player who shot the better guard. The way it is actually played depends largely on the attitude and the skill of the player. The confident, aggressive player may choose to hide his next disc beyond his inferior guard, knowing that even a partially hidden score will force his opponent to go after it, and will prevent his opponent

from using the hiding area beyond his own guard. Other players will choose to knock away the second and better cross guard, repeating this action until the 6th or the 7th disc comes up (whichever they are shooting at the moment) which they will attempt to hide beyond the inferior guard if that is still the best available shot.

A cross guard at C protects only the corner of the 7-area. Hiding a disc beyond this guard is difficult, too. This shot will be described in detail in Chapter VIII in the section on the corner-7 shot.

A cross guard at D loses some of its effectiveness because the opponent can hide a disc beyond this guard by shooting between the guard and the edge of the court. This shot is not recommended, however. Unless the cross guard is badly misplaced toward D, the opponent has a better shot than to hide a disc. More will be said on this in the section on the alley shot in Chapter VIII.

Occasionally, it is the opponent's disc that is found at B or C. Whichever color it is, this misplaced guard can be greatly strengthened by placing another disc in the normal cross guard position. The double guard is very effective.

Errors of aim, in the direction of C or D, are more serious than errors of distance, toward A or B. For this reason a cross guard should be shot from position 1 in the starting area. This position minimizes errors to the right or the left of the normal position of the guard.

HIDING A DISC BEYOND A CROSS GUARD

Before we go further into the subject of guarding and hiding, two confusing terms should be defined. In the discussions which follow, the word **behind** will mean toward the player who shot the disc; **in front of** will mean in the direction the disc is moving. In other words, one hides a disc in front of another disc, or beyond it; and one snuggles a disc behind another disc.

We have discussed the shooting of the cross guard, and we have mentioned one way to reply to that guard, clearing the board. Now, suppose that the removal of the guard has been unsuccessful, so that there is still an effective guard on the board when the player's next shot comes up. How will he go about hiding a disc beyond the cross guard?

The prime rule of good delivery is that the player must shoot at a definite point; therefore, it is important to know how to locate the exact

point to shoot at. There are two good ways of finding the best spot on the board on which to hide a disc.

1. One can get such a spot in mind by standing in the middle of his opponent's standing area and sighting down the court across the cross guard. The choice spot will be in line with the center of the opponent's starting area and the center of the guard. There is no rule to prevent the player from standing on the opponent's side to make this survey, and in a serious game it is often done.

2. The spot on which to hide a disc can be located with a good degree of accuracy, though, without stepping to the opponent's side of the court. To do this, simply imagine a line drawn through the guard disc parallel to the edge of the court (Figure 15). Any disc will be hidden from the opponent's view along this line, especially if the disc is placed a trifle to the left of this line when the guard is too far to the left, and a trifle to the right of this line when the guard is too far to the right.

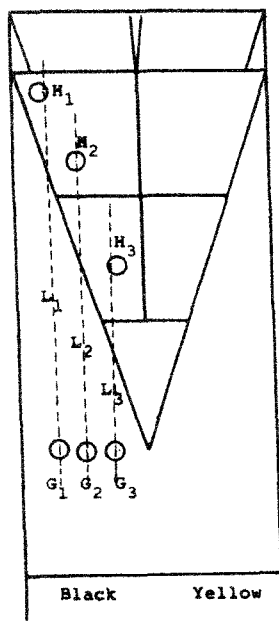


Figure 15

For example, G₁, G₂, and G₃ represent three possible positions of a cross guard shot out by a player standing on the right side of the court. G₂ is a normal cross guard; G₁ is too far to the left; G₃, too far to the right. L₁, L₂, and L₃ represent imaginary lines through the center of each guard and parallel to the edge of the court. H₁, H₂, and H₃ represent the positions at which

another disc can be safely hidden in the scoring area beyond the guards. Notice that H₁ is a trifle to the left of L₁, and H₃ is a trifle to the right of L₃.

Now, having chosen the exact spot on which to place his disc, the player will exercise the usual care in making his delivery. He will make this shot from position 2 in the starting area, or if he needs the advantage of every inch in the starting area to shoot past the guard, he will shoot from position 3.

KNOCKING A DISC OFF THE BOARD

Discs are knocked off the board for various reasons and in various ways. Clearing the board has been mentioned and its uses will be considered in the next chapter. But it will be well in passing through this how-to-do-it chapter to mention that the angle shot is preferred for getting a disc off the board if it is desired that the cue disc leave the board also. Therefore, when clearing the board of a cross guard, the player will find that shooting from position 1 is the most effective angle, while discs in some other positions may be more effectively removed with a shot from position 2.

When there is some drift in the court, and the amount cannot be reliably determined, the drift can sometimes be used to the player's advantage as he clears the board of discs in the deep 7-area, near the kitchen. Under these circumstances some players simply shoot to hit the disc head-on and trust the drift to make a clean shot, getting both discs off the board.

In league games and tournaments in the eastern part of the United States, the use of the high-speed shot to clear the board is common practice. This is to lessen the chance of the cue disc sticking in place of the guard in the event that the collision is almost head-on. But in certain areas of the West, particularly in California, the high-speed shot is not permitted.

There are many occasions in a game when it is desired that the cue disc stay on the scoring area after knocking the opponent's disc off the board. Such a shot is more difficult to make on a fast court than on a slow one. The aiming point must be near the center of the target, and a slower shot must be used, but care must be taken that the speed of the cue disc is sufficient to drive the target all the way through the scoring area. It is a serious misjudgment of speed to allow the target to stay on the board to score. The opponent will quickly cover the score with a guard and will be seven or eight points ahead because of the careless error.

COVERING THE SCORE WITH A NEW GUARD

The successful hiding of a scoring disc beyond a well-placed guard presents the opponent with a problem. Normally, he has two choices, either remove the guard or remove the score, if the disc is only partially hidden. (Other shots that he might use, which must be considered as special situations, are mentioned in the next section, Spoiling a Partially Hidden Score.)

If the opponent chooses to remove the guard, the player must replace the guard to protect his scoring disc. The opponent has removed the original guard hoping that the second guard will not be so well placed as the first. Then he can attack the scoring disc.

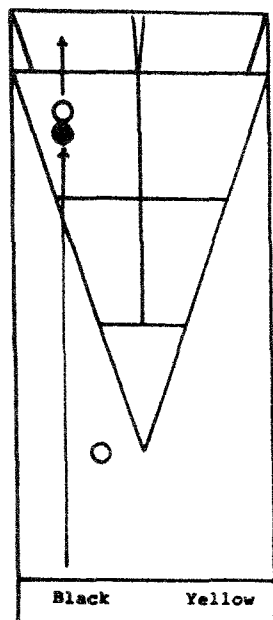


Figure 16

To replace the guard correctly, the player must find the exact spot on which to place his new guard. The same principles that were used when hiding the score (Figure 15) will apply now in reverse when he replaces the guard. And the new guard should be shot from position 1 for the same reason that the original guard was shot from that position. For some players replacing the guard satisfactorily seems to be more difficult than shooting the hide.

If the second guard is not well placed, the opponent's attack on the scoring disc may be doubly painful. If the guard is misplaced on the side of the scoring disc nearer to the player

(Figure 16), often the opponent is able to cause his cue disc to stick for a score beyond the player's guard and, at the same time, spoil the score, perhaps even put it into the kitchen.

If, however, the guard happens to be misplaced on the other side (Figure 17), so that the opponent must spoil the score by shooting between the guard and the apex, he may have some difficulty keeping his cue disc from stopping in the kitchen after spoiling the score. He must shoot hard enough to insure that his disc goes entirely off the board. If the hidden disc is in the 7-area, the opponent surely takes the risk of his cue disc glancing into the kitchen if he tries to score.

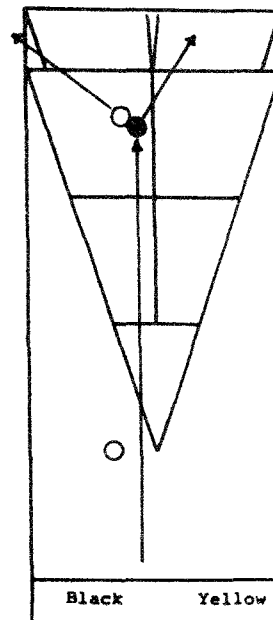


Figure 17

SPOILING A PARTIALLY HIDDEN SCORE

Experienced shufflers agree that this shot (Figure 17) should not be overworked. If the scoring disc is so well hidden that an attempt to spoil the score would be too chancy, the player has several other shots he can use.

1. If he is not shooting his last disc, he can, instead, knock away the guard.
2. If he is shooting disc No. 7, he can shoot to hide his own disc in a scoring area.
3. If he is shooting disc No. 8, he can shoot for a simple score.

4. If the partially hidden score is the winning score in the game and the player is using his last disc, he must get at it if he possibly can. A combination shot might be his only choice.

Usually it is unnecessary to take a risk in order to spoil a partially hidden score, but often a player is tempted to try this shot even against his better judgment. One should train himself to play conservatively whenever this situation comes up.

This shot, though not used so often as some others, is excellent for solo practice (Chapter XV). It develops precision shooting, and it is a shot that is more difficult because of the distraction, or mental hazard, of the guard disc. Shots involving a particular mental hazard should be given special practice.

Something more should be said about the mental hazard. The shot is difficult for many players simply because the guard divides one's attention while he is aiming. The player must discipline himself to block out the guard mentally while concentrating on the point at which he is aiming. This is very important. Of course, the player must consider the position of the guard at first to determine the target point. The point may be on the edge of the scoring disc, or even an inch or so from the disc, but after determining the exact point at which he will aim, the player must eliminate the guard entirely from his thinking and exercise the usual care in making his delivery.

A Fundamental Principle. One should not look at the guard while shooting at a partially hidden disc.

THE KITCHEN SHOT

A simple law of physics is of interest to the shuffleboard player in its application to the kitchen shot. From this law one learns that when the cue disc strikes another disc head-on, the moving disc comes almost to a full stop as the target disc receives virtually 100 percent of the energy of motion from the moving disc, and the target travels the same distance forward as the cue disc would have gone had the target not been in its way. (Actually, the target stops several inches beyond the point at which the cue disc would have stopped, since the target was six inches ahead of the cue disc when it began to move.)

From this, then, it follows that there is a definite speed that can be designated in shuffling as **kitchen speed**. This particular speed, which will cause an unobstructed disc to go straight from a player's cue to the kitchen and stop there, will also be the correct speed to send the opponent's disc to the kitchen from any place on

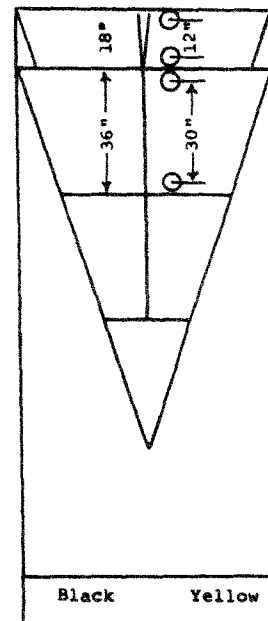


Figure 18

the board, provided it receives a direct hit. To send a disc to the kitchen with an angle shot, slightly more speed is required.

The kitchen shot is more difficult than most players realize. Figure 18 illustrates this. The usable scoring depth of the kitchen is 12 inches; the scoring depth of the 7-area is 30 inches. Therefore, it is $30/12$ or 2.5 times as difficult to cause a disc to stop in the kitchen as in the 7-area, when the only consideration is the forward motion of the disc. But there is also, of course, the consideration that the kitchen is farther away from the player, and that the kitchen shot is a bunt rather than a direct shot. The ability to make sensitive adjustments to the various requirements of speed is a skill that every shuffler is constantly striving to achieve, but there is no magic formula, simply a light grip on the cue, a smooth delivery, and practice.

SOME COMMON PROBLEMS WITH THE KITCHEN SHOT

Uses of the kitchen shot will be discussed in the next chapter, but under this heading a common misuse of this play can be mentioned; that is, its excessive use.

The Kitchen Player. A fact, seldom sensed by beginning players, is that the kitchen shot is one of the more difficult shots of the game. The shot is fascinating to new players, and often after developing a little skill with this particular shot, the new player begins to rely upon this play to win his games.

A point game can never be won solely with kitchen shots, but the frame game rewards the kitchen player since the objective is only to be ahead in score. Slow courts favor the kitchen player, too, since on a slow court one has trouble clearing the board and may leave an occasional disc in the scoring area for his opponent to work on. Players who practice under conditions that are conducive to kitchen shooting may develop that style of game unless they become aware early in their shuffling experience of the weakness of the kitchen game.

The best reply to the kitchen player's game is a rigorous clearing of the board—leaving nothing on the board for the player to put into the kitchen—and a score with each hammer. One should not allow the kitchen player to force him to play his kind of game.

One can usually spot a kitchen player early in a game. Many of them ignore the use of a guard and go on the board with their first shot, and that should be a clear warning to the opponent.

The Gift Score. Care must be used when making a kitchen shot to drive the opponent's disc off the scoring area. It is far better to overshoot the kitchen than to undershoot and give one's opponent an additional 7 points instead of 10 off. Because of the ever-present risk of adding 7 points to the opponent's score, good shufflers seldom try to kitchen a nonscoring disc of any kind. Only when an analysis of the scoreboard indicates that unusual measures are needed, would a player attempt to kitchen a liner. Usually the opponent facetiously thanks the player when the opponent's disc stops short of the kitchen to score.

Kitchening a Cross Guard. It is always a mistake in the normal game to kitchen a cross

guard. This shot must be considered the wrong play even when it is successful. A player should not assume the great amount of risk associated with this shot. Aside from this being a difficult shot and aside from the chance of making a scoring disc out of a nonscoring one, there is a high probability that the cue disc will stick, leaving the opponent with another guard as useful as the first one, with the consequent hiding of the opponent's next disc for a score.

The only possible occasion for attempting to kitchen a cross guard would be in the end of the game when one's opponent is two or more discs ahead and needs but one disc to win, and in the next half round the opponent will have the hammer. In this situation, which is so critical as to call for a desperation shot, the player would try to kitchen anything on the board.

Kitchen-Speed-Plus. When attempting with his hammer to spoil his opponent's score, a player will also try to score his cue disc; and if the opponent's disc is favorably located, the player will also try to take 10 points away from his opponent on this particular shot by shooting near kitchen speed. Experienced players, when making this shot, deliberately shoot a little harder than what they think is necessary to put the disc into the kitchen, simply to insure that the opponent does not receive a gift score. This particular speed, which will be designated hereafter as kitchen-speed-plus, is a good speed to use when the player has no real need for a kitchen shot but has one offered to him free for the taking—kitchen speed, plus a little more for safety.

If the player errs on the slow side with this shot, the opponent's disc stops in the kitchen rather than in the 7-area. And if the opponent's disc happens to glance at a wide angle, making its distance to the kitchen greater than was anticipated, the kitchen-speed-plus may be sufficient to carry it to the kitchen.

Drift and Poor Aim. Every player has experienced a complete miss of a kitchen shot as he watched with chagrin his own disc stop in the kitchen. His only satisfaction was the assurance that, at least, he made the shot with the correct speed. This can happen with any disc, but it seems to occur more often when one is trying to kitchen a disc in the low 7-area. A disc in the low 7 is so far away that an accurate shot at it is difficult. And furthermore, to put a disc

lying in the low 7-area into the kitchen, the cue disc must be moving very slowly just before its impact with the target. The slowly-moving disc is extremely susceptible to unevenness in the court at that moment, and often it drifts one way or the other just before it strikes the target.

Even when the cue disc does not completely miss its target in the low 7-area, the shot can end unhappily (Figure 19). If the cue disc causes the target to glance at an angle of 45 degrees, the two discs will spread apart and both will travel the same distance forward. If the speed is correct to put the target into the kitchen, the cue disc goes in too.

For the reasons mentioned above, kitchening a 10 score may be easier than kitchening a disc deep in the 7-area. The disc must leave the cue at the same speed for either shot, but because the score in the 10-area is close by, the cue disc will be moving faster at impact and will be less affected by drift in the court. Aiming at the 10 score is less of a problem also because of the shorter shot. But if the problem is to score as well as to kitchen the disc in the 10 area, then this shot may not be easier than kitchening a disc in the deep 7. Nevertheless, this shot is often attempted, and it is quite often successful. For more on this particular shot, see Chapter IX, The High 10.

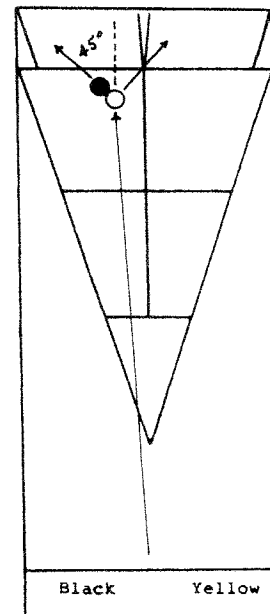


Figure 19