

SHUFFLEBOARD SURVIVAL TIPS

Unfortunately, shuffleboard does not use many calories, but it does burn up brain cells. It's a game of strategy and nerves -- mental war, so-to-speak. To be successful, you must understand and consistently use high percentage plays based on basic strategy and statistics.

PRACTICE SHOTS - CRITICAL

He who learns the board the quickest, stands a better chance of winning the game.

1. Tell Referee "Please remove disks from board."
2. Don't leave the disks short or shoot through the kitchen. Disks must score.
3. Try shots to either side of the board.
4. Never waste a practice shot practicing a take-out.
5. Watch your opponent practice. In tournaments you switch sides.

KNOW THE STATS: Know your score. Be aware of the frame you are in and the number of hammers you have left in the game. This will give you a clue to the types of shots you need to make.

LOW PERCENTAGE SHOTS:

1. Soft shooting,
2. Kitchen shooting
3. Doubling a low 7-7-liner
4. Shooting for a ten
5. Tap-ins anywhere on the outside line of the scoring triangle
6. Triangle combination shots of more than 2 ft.

Avoid the above when you have enough hammers left to win the game.

Use low percentage shots when you don't have enough hammers left to win the game.

HIGH PERCENTAGE SHOTS:

1. Shooting the hammer shot to a clean scoring area
2. Shooting for 7's or 8's,
3. Take-outs with enough speed
4. Blocking your opponent's scoring path.

MISSING DISKS: Most of us miss disks because we shoot softly, trying to "stick". Shooting softly does not pay because slow disks pick up drifts. Soft shooting turns a high percentage shot into a low percentage shot.

TAKE-OUTS:

1. Do not aim for the side of a disk in the kitchen. You will hit and stick about 10% of the time, and, of those, you will get them out 50% of the time...A very low percentage.
2. Same is true with disks in the deep seven. Don't aim for the side of the disk.

BLOCK: This is any disk that you or your opponent can hide behind. When shooting at your opponent's blocked disk, always get in a position where you can see as much of the blocked disk as possible before you attempt to take it out. Never miss both the block and your opponent's disk.

BOTTOM LINE: When you have the hammer, keep the board clear so you have a clean board on your last shot. When your opponent has the hammer, set a "Block" on the board either by scoring so that he/she has to take you out, or by blocking up his/her path to the scoring area. With this process you will win most of your games.

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shuffleboard does not burn a lot of calories. But it does burn up brain cells. It is a game of strategy and nerves – mental war, so to speak. So in order to be successful, you must understand and consistently use high percentage plays based on basic strategy and statistics.

BOTTOM LINE – Keep the board clear when it is your hammer so that you are shooting down to a clean board with your last shot. Plug the board when it is your opponents hammer, either by scoring so that they have to take you out, or by plugging up their path to the scoring area. If you do nothing else, shuffling this way will win you an awful lot of games.

Always count the number of hammers that you have left in a game. This will determine the kind of shots that you are going to take.

Avoid low percentage shots when you have enough hammers left to win the game by simply scoring on each of your hammers.

But you must play the low percentage shots when you no longer have enough hammers left to win the game. It is your only chance to win!

LOW PERCENTAGE SHOTS: soft shooting; kitchen shooting; doubling a low 7/7 liner; tap-ins anywhere on the outside line of the house triangle; combination shots of more than 2 feet; shooting for a ten.

HIGH PERCENTAGE SHOTS: shooting your hammer down a clean board; shooting for 7's or 8's; take-outs with enough speed; blocking your opponents scoring path.

MISSING DISCS – The biggest reason we miss discs is that we shoot TOO SOFT, usually in an attempt to “stick on their disc.” Shooting soft does not pay because slow discs will pick up drifts. It can cost you the game! Soft shooting turns a high percentage shot into a low percentage shot.

DO NOT AIM FOR THE SIDE OF A KITCHEN DISC for fear of hitting & sticking. You are going to hit and stick about 10% of the time, and of those, you will get them out 50% of the time. So that is a low percentage shot. When aiming for the side of these discs you will miss them at a much higher percentage. Same thing is true with discs in the deep seven. Don't aim for the side of them because you are afraid you will hit them and roll into the kitchen. This is for the exact same reasons as stated above.

PRACTICE SHOTS – Absolutely critical! Focus and concentrate. Whoever learns the board the fastest stands a better chance of winning the game. Remove every practice shot as you shoot them. Don't leave them short and don't shoot them through the kitchen; they must go in the house. Usually try two shots to either side. Never waste a practice shot practicing a take out. Watch your opponents practice since you're going over to that side next.

BLOCK – Technically any disc that you or your opponent can hide behind. When shooting at your opponents blocked disc, always get in a position where you can see as much of the blocked disc as possible before you attempt to take it out. NEVER miss both the block and your opponent's hidden disc. Try to take out both discs until you have only one disc left. Then, if it's your hammer you may have to concede it and attempt to score. If it's your opponents hammer, go down and plug up their scoring path to keep them from doubling.

WHEN IT IS YOUR OPPONENT'S HAMMER and there are discs of either color touching any part of the outside line of the scoring area with your last shot, **DO NOT TAKE THESE DISCS OFF**. Make them tap their own disc in, which is a low percentage shot. Don't give them a clean board for their hammer, which is a high percentage shot. You must always play the percentages!

HAMMER – If you are not scoring, you must change something. Prayer is not going to work here. Continue to change your shooting position until you find something that works – and then remember it! Leave your cue on the board after every shot so that you can make adjustments. This will require great concentration.

KITCHEN SHOOTING – a low percentage shot, and one of the most difficult shots in shuffleboard. However, when you do not have enough hammers left to win the game simply by scoring, you must start trying to put your opponent in the kitchen. Never try it before that time.

CURVED BOARDS – Most boards have a curve of some kind. When a board has a high side and a low side stay up on the high side. If your disc slides down to the low side, your opponents will put discs in behind it, using yours for a block. Adjust your shots until you are staying up on the high side. Failure to do so will cost you the game.

WHEN PLAYING CURVED BOARDS increase your take out speed and shoot to allow for the drift of the board. Lots of discs are missed in the first couple of frames when playing curved boards because players fail to do these two things. Also remember that hitting and sticking will be very difficult and kitchen shooting will be almost impossible.

REMEMBER – the scoring area of the eight is 62% larger than the ten and the scoring area of the seven is 225% larger than the ten. Shooting for tens is a low percentage shot. Don't do it unless you need a ten to win the game.

THE SIXTEENTH FRAME is treacherous. Don't lose a game there that you should have won. If you don't need it, don't do it. But if you do need it you must do it. There are no guarantees in shuffleboard, so be very careful.

LAST SHOT OF THE GAME – YOUR HAMMER – any score will win it for you. Never, never, never leave it short of the house. You must get in for a score.

SHUFFLEBOARD is 10% technical and 90% mental. Players spend about 5 minutes actually

shooting discs in a game. That leaves 85 minutes for our brains to get us into all kinds of trouble. That's why athletes hire professional psychologists; they have the same problem. Toughen up! There are two kinds of shufflers: those who think they will win, and those who think they will lose. They are both right.

If you have any questions or problems or concerns, give me a call – I would love to help.

See you on the shuffleboard courts.

Shirley Bilderback