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CONRAD DANIELS' OUT-SHOT PHILOSOPHY

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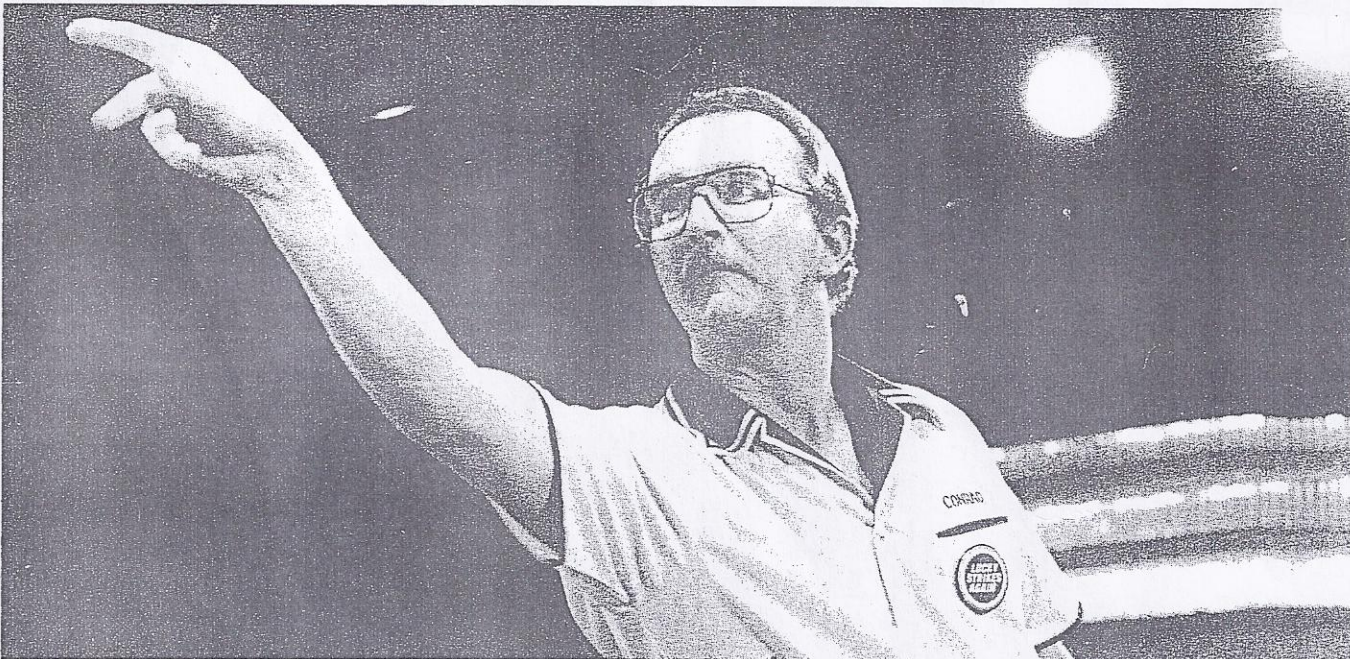
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OUT SHOT PHILOSOPHY

By Conrad Daniels



AP Photo

The perfect form and release of Conrad Daniels.

Editor's note: Conrad Daniels is one of the first players in our sport to be known as a "Professional Dart Player". He owns and runs Trenton, New Jersey's best known dart bar, Vet's Tavern. He was the first American to ever win a British Isles championship, England's Champion of Champions in 1975 and added the Open Singles titles from the North American Open and the U.S. Open within the same year. This burst of success in '75 brought him a national reputation. Conrad continues to be a strong Singles player today, having added, in 1984, the Lucky Strike Filters Washington Open and New York Open Singles to his long list of accomplishments. He recently took the time to put down on paper some of his thoughts regarding the strategies on out-shot combinations involved in the '01 games.

I've been fortunate enough to compete against many of the greatest players in the world plus the many top players that the U.S. has to offer. In discussing, out-shot strategies with them, I found they don't always agree with my recommended combinations but, most agree with the concept behind the combinations.

Keep in mind that the '01 games — 301, 501, and 1,001 — are all offensive games. The only defense is to have a better offense than your opponent!

The only other real strategy that I have employed in playing '01 is one that depends upon the situation in the game itself. I have always believed that when you are playing opponents who are in a position to go out on you, while you're at the line, you should try to keep them in a position that would be as nervous and as tense as possible. This is accomplished by keeping them vulnerable to the fact that you, yourself, may go out.

By adjusting your out-shot combinations to include escape clauses — that is, leaving yourself an opportunity at an out should you not hit your exact target (for example, hitting a single instead of the triple)—you're attempting to get your opponents thinking about more than just their next turn. Instead of them just concen-

trating on winning the game, you've allowed yourself the most opportunities to win it yourself.

An extension of this escape clause strategy is that, "It isn't over 'til it's over." Just because your opponents are down to a double doesn't automatically give them the ability to win the game. I have seen the world's best players miss several times at the double out — although it doesn't happen very often.

As long as the game requires the double off finish, there will always be a margin for victory regardless of whom you are playing. An extra three or six darts might just be all you need to reach a level for your own opportunities to win the game.

Out-shot combinations require you to start thinking about your next turn even though you still have a dart left in your current turn. I've included a short guide (chart A) to use for your last dart when you are in the 179-189 range. Your opponent will have six darts in hand, instead of three, anytime you are not on a three-dart out combination. But if you're down to any double out combination — even if it's the double bull — there's still some doubt in their mind. They may structure their game differently and not be quite as at ease in throwing their darts.

To help you choose between combinations that have different options, you need know your own throwing tendencies. A couple of good practice sessions are necessary to determine these.

Use a plain sheet of paper and cover the areas of the 19 and 20 wedges, also outlining the triples of each. Throw at least 200 darts at each area and then take notes from your throwing patterns. A normal pattern would be missing high and low on the target area as opposed to missing from side to side.

The pattern of side to side is an easier error to correct. Its main causes are not standing solid at the line and improper follow-through — not dropping your arm straight, but throwing your arm to the left or right.

If your pattern is high and low, you're in the company of a good 90% of the players that miss their target that way. The causes of this error are a bit more involv-

ed. Some of them include leaning over too far, releasing early or late, throwing without enough velocity, bringing the dart back too far or not far enough, or as is more often the case, some combination of these.

The main objective here is to become knowledgeable about your own throwing tendencies. You'll find that you use this understanding to your own advantage in overplaying certain situations. For instance, when you have 48 left and you know that your tendency is to miss high, you would overplay the shot to the sixteen wedge. If you are a "low" player you would aim for the eight wedge.

It's a training process that is beneficial only to you. You will become more aware of what you are doing and you can then compensate for what you tend to do, especially within crucial game situations.

A knowledge of the dartboard itself is helpful in throwing good combinations. The only place on the board that has more than one odd number together is the 7, 19, 3, 17 area.

In a heated game, with the arm shaking and the stomach churning, and you're in the out range of 23-43, any single dart in that four-pie area will leave you on a double. In gaining a position from which to win the game, any double is better than no double at all.

The even-numbered wedges also have some "wide-spaced" areas. They are the 18/4, 6/10, and of course the 8/16. Taking these areas under consideration in setting up and shooting out combinations will allow you some room for error.

Another philosophy used in getting out quickly is that from 90 down, shooting the proper triple but hitting a single, leaves you just needing another single to set up an out. Keep this in mind, especially in crucial

situations, so that by playing the numbers correctly, you will get at the least one dart with which to win the game.

In considering how to set up on a particular double, the available breakdowns of a number should be one of the factors involved.

Of course, 32 is the premier out by having the five breakdowns of 32, 16, 8, 4, and 2. It is also unique in having its first breakdown in the wedge right above it. Double top (40) and its three breaks (40, 20, 10) is the second most used out. It has the advantage of being the highest out on the doubles ring, which means you can reach it just a little more quickly.

The 24 and 36 outs have pros and cons about both of them. The double 12 will give three breakdowns (24, 12, 6). But a miss on the third break leaves you on the 3 and into the idiot box of needing single 1, double 1. The double 18 has only two breakdowns (36, 18), but, it is also a high out number. If the second break is singles then after a single 1, you're back into the double 4 with three more breaks.

It's really a matter of preference. I personally prefer the double 12 because of its location and angle on the board. I especially like the angle with the second break, the double 6 and besides, I don't really mind shooting down at the double 3.

In your practice routines, remember to practice at least those doubles that you'll use most often in your own out-shot combinations. Knowing your own game will increase your chances of winning. And, of course, practicing the out shot itself, will improve your winning percentage.

These are the out shot combinations that have somewhat different strategies. I have recommended particular methods of attack on the higher numbers,

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from 100 and up, to be used with three darts in your hand.

Keep this in mind; the recommended three-dart out shot may not be the same shot to use when you have only one or two darts in your hand.

From 170 on down to 148, the combinations are fairly standard and in some cases, there is only one way to take out a particular number. What I am giving you is the overall best shot with a particular number of darts in your hand.

148 — I personally recommend staying with the twenties wedge and going t20, t20, d14. The drawback is that the d14 doesn't leave the good breakdowns. Many players go with the t20, t16, d20 combination to have the d20 breakdown advantage. I have played this number both ways at given times. Usually the choice depends on the lie of my first dart because I prefer to stay with the t20 as often as possible.

144 — Many of the British players use the t18, t18, d18 combination. Since I throw at the t20 consistently throughout the game, I shoot this one t20, t20, d12. The d12 finish also allows for an extra breakdown over the d18.

142 — The combinations used here are, I think, predicated on the game situation. After an initial t20 leaving 82, players will go either t14, d20 or dBull, d16. Now a t14 is easier to hit than a dBull, and if the game is on the line, follow that route. However, if you are far ahead, the dBull option is not a bad choice. Hit it and you're on d16, single it and you're on 57 with a s17 for the third dart to set up d20.

141 — I recommend t20, t19, d12, while many players will go t20, t15, d18. Basically it's the difference of breakdowns in the d12 versus the d18. Another consideration is that most players shoot t19 more often than t15.

140 — This has some very nice options. The t20, t20, d10 will keep you with the t20 shot. If you have a bad lie after the initial t20, the t16, d16 combination will put you into the very favorable d16 breakdown.

137 — A number of players use the t20, t15, d16 combination. I prefer the combination of t20, t19, d10. If you score the initial t20 and then only score a s15, you'll still need another triple to get to a double. If you score a s19, it leaves you with 58 and another single (s18) will put you on a double (d20). On this number, nineteen shooters have a nice option using t19, t16, d16.

135 — This one would depend on the situation of the game. Starting with t20 leaves t17, d12. I suggest that if you are planning the dBull finish, throw the dBull with your first dart. The advantage of throwing this way versus the t20 is that if you should hit a sBull you're still in a position to win the game (t20, dBull). A s20 leaves no chance of finishing 115 with the remaining two darts.

132 — Textbook finishes include t20, t16, d12 and t20, t12, d18. If I have a good lie on the first t20, I prefer to go right back at it to leave d6. If I should single the 20, another s20 will put me on the best breakdown number, d16. It depends most on how you feel about

the d6; if you shy away from it completely, you should follow the textbook. If the game is on the line, an initial shot at the bull is not a bad idea, leaving a 107.

130 — This is a number with great three dart options. The first shot has to be the t20; after that, your position in the game should dictate your next two shots. A t20 strike will leave the t18, d8. Or you could go with just needing another single to set up the double and shoot s20, dBull. If the first dart is a s20, you still have an available two-dart finish with t20, dBull.

129 — Dave Kelly's famous out shot¹. On this one, I personally consulted with three of the top-ranked players in the world. They all agreed with what I have always felt; the t19 is the best beginning shot. The combinations are t19, t16, d12 and t19, t12, d18. A s19 would leave the t20, dBull two-dart out combination. Dave's philosophy certainly has some merit, but it's still best to leave yourself an escape clause and to keep your opponent thinking about your shot.

128 — This has a nice finish of t20, t20, d4. If you have a bad lie after the first t20, an excellent follow-up would be t12, d16. This one also can be done with t18, t14, d16 if your position in the game is crucial and you want to have the 110 finish available.

127 — This one goes t20, t17, d8. A s20 will allow for a t19, dBull finish.

126 — This is another one of those shots involving an escape clause. I recommend t19, t19, d6, although it doesn't give you any great options on breakdowns. If you're in a more flexible position, there are some good options with t20, t10, d18 or t20, t14, d12.

125 — Again, this is a number with several possibilities, and the preferred line is determined by the position you are in during the game. Going t18, t17, d10 has merit, since a s18 still leaves the 107 two-dart out. Other players prefer to throw the bullseye on the initial shot. A sBull leaves you a clean 100 shot. Still another option would be t20, t19, d4.

124 — The first dart is t20, The s20 miss will leave the t18, dBull finish. Otherwise, with a t20, it's the t16, d8 to finish. The shot at the t16 leaves a good out shot even if you slip upstairs to the t8.

123 — The t19 is recommended on your first shot simply because a s19 will leave the 104 two-dart out.

122 — Starting with t18 would leave the 104 option if you hit a s18. After hitting the t18, the options are t20, d4 or t10, d16. Also, depending upon the game situation you are in a s18 will leave a dBull finish.

121 — I throw the t20, t15, d8. There are also a number of players that play the t17 knowing that if they single it, the 104 two-dart out is left. I believe that going for t20 is the best bet because a s20 leaves the 101 two-dart out shot. Also, if you slip over to a s1, you're still in a good position with 120. Down at the 17, if you slip over to a s2, you're at 119, and you have to play around the board again.

108 — This one is a matter of philosophy. I believe in throwing at the t19, followed by s19, d16. simply

because you have the second shot right at the same wedge should you single it on the first shot. Also, the center of the t19 and center of the d16 are at the same height on the board. Many players will play it t20, s16, d16 and there is probably as much to say for one combination as the other. Another number to consider is t16, even though we don't play it very often. A miss on either side still leaves a triple to get down to a double.

107 — I suggest that you throw at the t19 for two reasons. First, it gives you the dBull shot, should you desire to take it. If you miss the 19 pie, you will have a shot for the double on either side (by hitting 7 or 3 you have either 100 or 104). Hitting the t19 leaves a s18 and d16 or, if you're shaky about busting on the 18, a s10 leaves the d20 finish.

105 — This has some variations from the orthodox, t20, s13, d16. Other players fancy the t19, s16, d16, which gives you the last two shots in the same wedge. Throwing at t20 but hitting 5 or 1 still leaves you a two-dart out shot.

104 — Many players feel that they're supposed to start with the t18. That's fine, if you must go out under particular circumstances and want to have two darts to finish off 50. A possibly safer line is the t19, s15, d16 option. If you should miss on either side of the 19, into the 7 or the 3, you still have a two-dart out shot. Up at the 18, a miss into the 1 ends the chance of going out on that turn.

103 — Again, a similar philosophy, throwing at the t19 will allow for some escape clauses.

101 — With three darts, go with t20, s9, d16. Some players feel that, after hitting the t20, the s1, d20 is the shot to take. I recommend t20, s9, d16 due to the advantage of the d16 breakdowns.

90 — The orthodox way is t18, d18. If in fact, you're in a game situation where you need two singles to leave a double, shoot the t20 first to give you the escape clause of s20, s20, dBull.

88 — I throw at the t20 first for a d14 finish, which is really not a bad shot. Many players go t16, d20, but this does not give you the option of throwing two singles to allow for a dBull finish. The shot you play should depend on the game situation you are in.

82 — With three darts in your hand, there's nothing wrong with throwing the dBull first to leave d16. A miss into sBull leaves 57, to finish the game with 17, d20. This finish uses two singles to set up the double instead of requiring a triple. Keep in mind that with two darts, always throw the t14 first.

81 — Most players throw the t15, d18. I think the shot should be t19, d12. You play the 19 more often and the d12 has better breakdowns.

80 — This is a nice, clean shot. Your first dart should be at the t20 followed by d10. If you hit the fat 20, another s20 leaves the d20.

79 — I throw at the s19. If you hit the t19, of course, d11 is not the most popular out in the world, but if you single the 19, you're left with the good, clean 60. With

just two darts in hand, head for t13, leaving d20. With three darts, I recommend s19, s20, d20.

77 — I recommend t19, d10, but many players go the t15, d16. The only problem with t15 is, if you hit the single, you need another triple to get to a double, or you have to use the s12 for a dBull finish. A s19 leaves 58, requiring only a s18 to get to d20.

75 — I go with the t17, d12. In a crucial situation and holding only two darts, there's nothing with keeping your opponent in suspense while you're at the line and throw for the sBull, dBull.

72 — The orthodox way is t12, d18. I normally play it t20, d6. I like the d6 and really don't mind the d3. Still, others will play it t16, d12. Overall, I'd say that most players use the t12, d18 combination.

70 — This really depends on which out you like. If you're a d16 player, I recommend the t18, d8. If you like double top, the t10, d20 would be your shot.

66 — Two options with this one, but most players today have switched to the t14, d12 based on what is on either side of the 14 versus the t10, d18 combination.

65 — I used to play it t11, d16, but, like many players, I didn't throw at the 11 that much. I now recommend the t15, d10 along with its bullseye escape clauses should you hit the s15.

Many players know these following combinations, but for shooters just starting to play the '01 games, these should be helpful.

52 — A s20, d16 is the option most players take. But if you are in a crucial game situation, you could finish with a s12, d20. The alternative gives you the option of hitting t12 without busting.

46 — This can be played many ways. A s14, d16 gives the magic maximum number of breakdowns. Using the fat 6/10 wedge, you would have a shot at either d20 or d18.

42 — Go for the s10 on this one to leave d16. A slip up to the s6 doesn't hurt (d18 to do), so play it on the high side of the 10 wedge.

39 — Shoot for the s7 wedge, keeping in mind that s19 still leaves a nice out.

35 — This is similar to the 39, but shoot for the 3/19 area. Either one leaves an excellent out.

33 — A s1 will leave the most breakdowns with d16, but it depends on how you feel about the 1. There's nothing at all wrong with a s17, d8 finish. If you choose this line, shoot your 17 towards the 3 side.

25 — This can be played s9, d8 or, if you want to be a little safer in having a shot at an out, go for the s17, d4. A slip into a s3 would leave an unpopular d11, but remember any double shot is better than no shot at all.

17 — This is normally played s1, d8. But in crucial situations, consider the option of s9, d4, giving you maximum flexibility.

Naturally, nobody will agree with every one of these shot combinations. If you have a different option of a particular number, write it down and explain the reasoning behind it and send it in to:

Out Shot Options
 c/o Bull's-Eye News
 P.O. Box 2551
 Columbus, Ohio 43216

In a later issue, I'll update the out-chart according to the dart players' responses.

THREE-DART FINISHES

170 - t20 t20 dB	129 - s19 t20 dB
167 - t20 t19 dB	129 - t19 t12 d18
164 - t20 t18 dB	129 - t20 s19 dB
161 - t20 t17 dB	129 - t20 t19 d6
160 - t20 t20 d20	128 - t20 t20 d4
158 - t20 t20 d19	128 - t20 t12 d16
157 - t20 t19 d20	128 - s18 t20 dB
156 - t20 t20 d18	127 - t20 t17 d8
155 - t20 t19 d19	127 - t20 s17 dB
154 - t20 t18 d20	126 - t19 t19 d6
154 - t19 t19 d20	126 - t20 t10 d18
153 - t20 t19 d18	126 - t19 s19 dB
152 - t20 t20 d16	125 - t18 t13 d16
151 - t20 t17 d20	125 - t20 t19 d4
150 - t20 t18 d18	124 - t20 t16 d8
149 - t20 t19 d16	123 - t19 t14 d12
148 - t20 t20 d14	122 - t20 t10 d16
148 - t20 t16 d20	122 - t18 s18 dB
147 - t20 t17 d18	121 - t20 t15 d8
146 - t20 t18 d16	121 - t17 t10 d20
146 - t19 t19 d16	121 - t19 t16 d 8
145 - t20 t15 d20	120 - t20 s20 d20
144 - t20 t20 d12	119 - t19 t10 d16
144 - t18 t18 d18	118 - t20 s18 d20
143 - t20 t17 d16	117 - t20 s17 d20
142 - t20 t14 d20	116 - t20 s16 d20
141 - t20 t19 d12	115 - t20 s15 d20
141 - t20 t15 d18	114 - t20 s14 d20
140 - t20 t20 d10	113 - t20 s13 d20
140 - t20 t16 d16	112 - t20 s20 d16
139 - t20 t13 d20	111 - t20 s19 d16
138 - t20 t18 d12	110 - t20 s18 d16
138 - t20 t14 d18	109 - t20 s17 d16
137 - t20 t19 d10	108 - t19 s19 d16
137 - t20 t15 d16	108 - t20 s16 d16
137 - t19 t16 d16	107 - t19 s18 d16
136 - t20 t20 d8	107 - t19 s10 d20
135 - sB t20 dB	106 - t20 s14 d18
135 - t20 t17 d12	106 - t20 s 6 d20
134 - t20 t14 d16	106 - t20 s10 d18
134 - t18 t16 d16	105 - t20 s13 d16
133 - t20 t19 d8	105 - t19 s16 d16
132 - t20 t12 d18	104 - t19 s15 d16
132 - t20 t20 d6	104 - t18 s18 d16
132 - t20 t16 d12	104 - t20 s12 d16
131 - t20 t13 d16	103 - t19 s14 d16
131 - t19 t14 d16	103 - t19 s 6 d20
130 - t20 t18 d8	103 - t19 s10 d18
130 - t20 t10 d20	102 - t20 s10 d16
130 - t20 s20 dB	101 - t20 s 9 d16
129 - t19 t16 d12	99 - t19 s10 d16

TWO-DART FINISHES

100 - t20 d20	53 - s13 d20
98 - t20 d19	52 - s12 d20
97 - t19 d20	52 - s20 d16
96 - t20 d18	51 - s19 d16
95 - t19 d19	50 - s18 d16
94 - t18 d20	50 - s10 d20
93 - t19 d18	49 - s17 d16
92 - t20 d16	48 - s16 d16
91 - t17 d20	48 - s8 d20
90 - t18 d18	47 - s15 d16
90 - t20 d15	46 - s14 d16
89 - t19 d16	45 - s13 d16
88 - t20 d14	44 - s12 d16
88 - t16 d20	43 - s11 d16
87 - t17 d18	42 - s10 d16
86 - t18 d16	41 - s9 d16
85 - t15 d20	
84 - t20 d12	
83 - t17 d16	
82 - t14 d20	
82 - dB d16	
81 - t19 d12	
81 - t15 d18	
80 - t20 d10	
80 - t16 d16	
79 - t13 d20	
79 - t19 d11	
78 - t18 d12	
77 - t19 d10	
77 - t15 d16	
76 - t20 d8	
75 - t17 d12	
75 - sB dB	
74 - t14 d16	
73 - t19 d8	
72 - t12 d18	
72 - t20 d6	
72 - t16 d12	
71 - t13 d16	
71 - t17 d10	
70 - t18 d8	
70 - t10 d20	
69 - t19 d6	
68 - t20 d4	
68 - t12 d16	
67 - t17 d8	
66 - t14 d12	
66 - t10 d18	
65 - t15 d10	
65 - t11 d16	
65 - t19 d4	
64 - t16 d8	
63 - t13 d12	
62 - t10 d16	
61 - t15 d8	
60 - s20 d20	
59 - s19 d20	
58 - s18 d20	
57 - s17 d20	
56 - s16 d20	
55 - s15 d20	
54 - s14 d20	

A 171 - 190 with one dart remaining (other than t20) showing result of singling the triple

189 - t19 (s,170)
 188 - t18 (s,170)
 186 - t19 (s,167)
 185 - t18 (s,167)
 183 - t19 (s,164)
 182 - t18 (s,164)
 179 - t19 (s,160)

B

Over 100 with Two Darts Remaining

110 - t20 dB
 107 - t19 dB
 104 - t18 dB
 101 - t17 dB

C

Under 170 requiring four darts to finish recommended first dart

169 - t20
 168 - t20
 166 - t20
 165 - t20
 163 - t20
 162 - t20
 159 - t20