

GREATER TRENTON DART LEAGUE

PLAYER ENHANCEMENT SERIES

Advanced '01 Strategy
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Author: Gary Yourman

This is a follow-up document to the original Player Enhancement Series where I discussed Basic '01 and Cricket strategies. Those documents date back to 2013 and in recent conversations with various people, more playing time, different leagues, etc... I have determined that it's time for an update, focusing on some more advanced concepts.

While the document can help players of all levels, it is really designed for those at a more advanced skill level, those who are more likely to be able to either hit their intended targets, move around the board with ease or even consider a three dart out just another shot.

Topics in this document include:

1. Plan your shot
2. Learn your outshot tree
3. Single target or moving around the board
4. Know the ranges and what's required
5. Using the bullseye
6. "Best miss" opportunity
7. How early should you worry about setting up your shot?
8. Shoot Ahead, Look Back

Let's get started

- **Plan your shots**

I wrote a little about this in the Beginner Guide. Once you shoot your darts and score your round, you can spend your time figuring out the next shot. Spend time behind the line to pick your shot. Go to the line with a plan! If you remove the impulse of the decision after your first or second dart, you'll do better with the rest of your darts. I'll go over some techniques for this later.

When planning – here's a good method:

- If I shoot 180, what do I have left?
- If I shoot 140, what do I have left?
- If I shoot 100, what do I have left?
- If I shoot 60, what do I have left?

If any of these don't leave an outshot or even a preferred outshot, consider when you should shift to a new target and what that target is. A simple example is starting at 268. If you shoot a T20 first dart you're going to stay there for your second shot. If you hit a S20 on your second, you'd move to the 18, leaving 170. Staying on the 20 for all three darts would leave 168, which has no outshot. We understand the 140 leaves an out, but what's the more

likely success, T20 or S18? Why not take the safer route to ensure you have a chance to end the game in your next turn,

- **Learn your outshot tree**

The goal here is to be able to adjust targets during your turn if you don't hit your intended one. Using 100 as an example, your plan is T20, D20. As you gain experience, or strive to get better, consider what happens when you hit the likely misses. Maybe you know one of them, maybe two. At some point, you should know them all and be able to seamlessly move to the new target and stay in rhythm. This also takes planning into account. When there's multiple choices, you can choose before your shoot which would be your preferred path.

If you hit and leave	What are your choices?
S20 leaving 80	D20, D20 T20, D10 T16, D16
D20 leaving 60	20, D20
S5 leaving 95	T19, D19 T15, DB
T5 leaving 85	T15, D20 T19, D14 T17, D17
S1 leaving 99	No out – what's your plan for the next round
T1 leaving 97	T19, D20
Something else	You'll have an outshot, adjust accordingly and shoot it.

The point here is that your outshot changes with every miss. Knowing the next shot, understanding the pattern and the "outshot tree" will help you know where to shoot next. Then it's just about execution. I think the example that comes to mind is 97. I've seen too many people think T19, D20 – hit a S19 first, then a second, then stop to think about it. After the first S19, the outshot for 78 is different, T18, D12 most likely. Know that, shoot that.

- **Single target or moving around the board**

This one is both about outshots as well as setup shots. It will also be discussed more as part of section 8. If you had a choice of shooting two or three darts at the same target instead of one dart at two or three different targets, what would you prefer? If multiple darts at the same target is your preference, consider when that could happen and when it makes sense. I'm going to use my favorite example, 259. You can shoot 20's. Optimally, 180 (79) or 140 (119) leaves you on an out, but 100 (159) leaves you on a bogey.

If you had planned correctly, your plan would either be to score 99 (160 left) or 95 (164 left). If you choose to shoot the 20s and switch to the 19s for a 99 score, you must hit the T20 first or second. But, if you choose to shoot the 19s, you can hit the T19 with any of your darts.

Similarly, there are shots where some might look at 20, 18, then a third dart. Why not shoot 19, 19 then your third dart?

- **Know your ranges**

This is all about setting up your outshots and getting to the 170 or below. It assumes you know the bogey numbers, so knowing when to shift to a different number is important. This isn't about which out shot, but just getting to them. I'll assume the success of hitting your target is high. Obviously, any miss could leave you on a bogey number, that's not what this is about. It's also not about which single, double or triple to shoot. Notice, using the bullseye removes, in some cases, the need for a second double or triple. The bullseye listed is an outer bullseye at 25. Lastly, anything you hit from a higher starting range would work for a lower starting range, so a triple and 2 singles (256-270) also work for anything before it on the chart. Note- not every shot is just 20s.

Starting Range	Minimum scoring to get to an out
171-230	
231-235	
236-240	
241-250	
251-255	
256-270	
271-275	
276-280	
280+	

SINGLE

DOUBLE

TRIPLE

OUTER BULL

- **Using the bullseye**

Continuing the above topic – when is the bullseye useful? The obvious choices are between 231-235 and 271-275. From the 230s, two singles and bullseye get you to an out. Now, you should learn that it's not always 20, 20, SB. That works from 235 (170) and 232 (167). But, from 234, its 20, 19, SB, and 233 is S19, S19, SB or S20, S18, SB (see number 3 above!) 231 – 20, 16, SB leave 170, 20, 19, SB leave 167. Don't assume the 20s is always the best route.

Form the 270s, it's similar, but your first dart usually needs a triple, and it's rare to be able to hit a single first then the triple, of course there are exceptions (see number 3 again). 275 requires 80 + 25, so it doesn't matter if the T20 is first or second. 271 requires 76 + 25, again, it doesn't matter if you hit the T19 first or second. But, if you're considering T20, S16, SB for 101 from 271 and hit the S20, you're left with 251, Now, instead of triple, single, bull, you need single, (and either) two doubles, or two triples or a triple and double. The bullseye is no longer an option.

Learning the oddities and the use of the bullseye when setting up your outshot is critical. At higher skill levels giving your opponent three free darts because you left a bogey instead of an outshot can cost you a game, a set or even a match.

- **“Best miss” opportunity**

I'll be up front here. I read about this many years ago – I think it was in “Fundamentals” by Frank Pratt. I'll also put my spin on it. The concept here is that the shot that leaves the optimal outshot (let's say its 32 as most beginners learn) might not leave a suitable outshot if you miss the target.

Let's look at 100, which other than one person I've ever talked to, everyone shoots T20. The S20 miss is explained above (learn the outshot tree) and your choice for second and third dart are yours. But a S1 bogeys you. One person, to remain nameless here, told me the following. If I have the match on the line with three darts in hand, I'm shooting four 19s and D12. There's no bad miss on the bottom of the board. You need the triple regardless. The tradeoff is that you're only getting one dart at the double with the 19s route. The opposite is that you can't bogey yourself after the first dart.

Let's look at some others. Everyone I play regularly knows that when I'm left with 104 and 108 with three darts – I'm shooting 16s. For the 104, four 16s leave 40 (which I like). More importantly though, the neighbors of 7 and 8 leave 97 and 96, T7 and T8 leave 83 and 80 respectively. For those who prefer T20 with 104, neither neighbor is

friendly, leaving 99 and 103 respectively. Four 17s to leave 36... the 2 is bad, the 3 is ok. Four 18s to leave 32? The 4 is friendly, the 1 isn't. The other safe shot is 19s. Four 19s leaves you 28 to win, but the 7 and 3 are both friendly. Also, if you do shoot the T19 first, you can adjust to shoot 7, D20 or 15, D16. Hitting the S19 leaves you with the T15, D20 route, T19, D14 or other choices. See sections 1 and 2 above. Have a plan, know the tree!

108 is another example I use. It's the same theory, the S7 and S8 both leave an outshot. 20s? The 1 is friendly (T1 isn't), the 5 isn't. 19s, the 3 isn't friendly, the 7 is. 18s, both the 1 and 4 are friendly. 17s, neither the 2 nor 3 is friendly.

The point of this section is that the obvious isn't always what you think. Would you rather shoot a more familiar number with the risk of not having an out, or a less common number, but guaranteeing that you'll still have a winnable combination of darts to shoot?

From the beginner guide, this is also described. Learning the double wedges (6/10, 4/18, 8/16) and 4 wide 7/19/3/17 lets you have larger target to get to multiple outs instead of forcing a single to a specific outshot.

- **How early should you worry about setting up your shot?**

This one is tricky. On one side of the argument, we're talking about advanced strategies with skilled players here, so why not worry about your first three darts (not rounds, darts!). The other side says I can probably worry about it near 250 or maybe 270, or some number in between. For me, it's a combination. Here's my thoughts:

I watched a Matt Edgar video years ago. The first shot is T20, S20 (BLOCKING the T20 now). Most people I see go to shoot the 19s. T19 leaves 364. More commonly, the S19 leaves 402. Matt shoots the 17. T17 leaves 370 and the S17 leaves 404 (that's the important number here). Let's focus on that third dart there. You're an advanced shooter. Is shooting 100 and 140 in a game reasonable? Very much so!

If I shot the S19: 402 >>> 302 >>> 162 -- NO OUT!!!

If I shot the S17: 404 >>> 304 >>> 164 -- OUTSHOT

More commonly, considering section 4 about the ranges, you want to give yourself the best chance to get into the under 230 range cleanly, or the 231-235 range. If you're on 295, shooting S20, S20 S19 (for some reason) to leave 236 gives you a next round setup shot requiring a double or triple. Shooting the S20 three times to get to 235, or even S20, S20, SB to get to 230 means no triple required to get an out next round. You're an advanced player, give yourself the best chance to get to outshots.

9. Shoot Ahead, Look Back

This is where I think most players miss the opportunities to train themselves. How many times have you hit a shot, left a bogey and then gone 'Oh yea, 18s there'? Another question to ask there was, should I have shot at a different target the round before? Would that have given me an opportunity to throw three darts at the same number in the current round and not move to a new target?

We've all seen the pros just pound the scoreboard. Some seem less worried about leaving a bogey. Remember all the pros we see are finishing just about every game in under 6 rounds and most (the PDC said in 2023 that more than 2/3 of legs finished in under 15 darts!) You and I aren't there (yet). Oddly, this does seem to contradict statements from earlier in the document. Those same players leaving 304 instead of 306 might have had a 12-darter instead of a 15-darter! We'll never know.

It is important for the skilled player, or one trying to become one to realize where they made mistakes in their strategy. Generally, that equates to their calculations or math skills or not adjusting early enough. By reviewing games (considerably easier with DartConnect now), taking notes, talking to others, you get different perspectives and opinions. Adjusting your plans and strategies while practicing or playing will allow you to get to outshots more regularly and hopefully win more games. Over time and through repetition, you'll get better at recognizing patterns and numbers better. Add better execution on top of that and you have nowhere to go but up.

For me, optimally, I'd like to stay at xx0/1/4/7 as I'm working down the scoreboard. That leaves me the best opportunity to hit a big round and have that 160/161/164/167/170 opportunity. Once at the 275 mark, the xx2/5 get added, as the bull can also get me back to the large outshots in the right combination. My least favorite choice on the way down is to be left with 3/6/8/9 as the last digit. That almost always forces me to adjust. Obviously, if I don't hit my target, I probably leave myself on something bad. But if I did hit my targets and still left me a bad number – it brings up the question – should I have shot something different last round.

In conclusion....

My experience tells me that...

- Most people would rather shoot the same number with all three darts. By adjusting early when the difference in a point or two might matter more in strategy more than the difference in two triples, make the switch.
- Many people learn bad habits and as they get better at execution, those habits can cost them more than bad execution.
- I still see many people with lots of skill who shoot their first dart, hit their intended target, then, they freeze. Have a plan. Know your misses, the setup options and outshot tree.
- Many players worry about out shots too late. Look at the rounds you've shot and left a bogey. What could you have done differently before that to minimize that risk?