

GREATER TRENTON DART LEAGUE

PLAYER ENHANCEMENT SERIES

EVENT 1, January 17, 2013 – Basic '01 Strategy

In the first event in the series of GTDL Player Enhancement Sessions, we'll focus on the basics of '01 strategy. This will encompass both 301 and 501, yet be almost exclusively about out-shots. We won't spend much, if any time on the strategy behind 'getting on' in a 301 game.

Some of the concepts we'll be discussing:

- Basic mechanics of the dart-shot
- Everyone is capable of hitting any target on the board at any time.
- If you have an out – shoot for it!
- 'Working it down' is a strategy built for misses, not succeeding.
- Out-shots change after each dart – you may have to change your target.
- Understand the prime outs and why they are the ones recommended by most.
- Give yourself the best chance to get to a double, even if it's not the recommended one.

Before we start, let's just say there are exceptions to every concept above. As you play more, gain experience, build your strategy and your execution improves, you'll start to find those out. You'll also see that some of the concepts overlap and in some cases are even contradictory. It's the concepts we want to promote, the decisions to use them are yours.

Basic mechanics of the dart-shot

While basic mechanics are important, like any sport, every person adapts their style to what suits them. Tall or short, lefty or righty, thin or not-so-thin, good balance or not, a lot of lean or a little lean, we all find what works for us. There's the right mechanical dart stroke, but hey, we're not machines, so we have the human dart stroke, and it differs for each of us. The basics however hold true. The more parts of your body that move during a stroke, the more parts there are to move wrong during that stroke. If you can limit the amount of motion in your swing to just the parts necessary, you'll likely find a more repeatable stroke, which will then help you be consistent as you get better.

Everyone is capable of hitting any target on the board at any time

Darts is just as mental as it is physical. If you go to the board thinking you can't hit something, you probably won't. If you go up positively, it will help, and if you miss, you'll adjust your target for your next shot. Don't defeat yourself before you even take your shot.

If you have an out – shoot for it!

It doesn't matter which out-shot you have left. If it's mathematically possible to get that number, go for it. If you don't hit it and then adjust, you'll be in no worse shape than if you didn't go for it at all. Remember, we've all hit, at some point or another, every single, double and triple segment on the board. Why can't it be with the dart in your hand? Don't be afraid of the number, just go for it. Oh, and by the way, the easiest way to win a dart game is with the darts currently in your hand. Every time you give the darts back to your opponent, you might not get them back.

‘Working it down’ is a strategy built for misses, not succeeding.

One of the most common things I hear from players as they are learning is the concept of ‘working it down’. They have 140 left, 130, 100, maybe 80 or even 65... but they insist on ‘working it down’. The reality of the game, as the previous two points highlight is that those outs are possible, but only if you shoot at them. If you choose to work down a number, you’ve most likely be giving your opponent a chance to win again.

Out-shots change after each dart – you may have to change your target.

Following the concept above, there are those who use an out-chart to guide them on what to shoot to win games. It is important to realize that after your first dart, the target might change. Combinations recommended with 3 darts in your hand might also be different with 2 darts in your hand, and some 2 dart out-shots become very different two dart out-shots based on the first result. Some examples:

Number	3 Dart Out Shot (or 2 if possible)	You shoot a ..., leaving	2 Dart Out Shot
111	T20, 11, D20	S20 91	T17, D20
95	T19, D19	S19 76	T20, D8
74	T14, D16	S14 60	S20, D20

There are countless examples... the bottom line is that your targets will change. Sometimes it’s dramatic, other times not so much. Some general rules – if you need an **odd** triple first, and hit a single, your next shot is almost always even (a few odd-ball exceptions).

Understand the prime outs and why they are the ones recommended by most

There are a few outs that as a beginner, you should consider your best option in most cases, and try to shoot your setup darts to get there. The first is 32. The reason is that if you need a D16, and hit a S16, you have D8. Then another single, D4, D2 then finally D1; so, you can shoot five darts over 2 turns all at a double (provided your missed shots are in the single). No setup dart, nothing else, just a shot at the double. That covers, 32, 16, 8, 4 and 2. Mathematically, it’s the perfect out. The next choice would be the numbers that offer three darts (there are none with four consecutive options except for 16 which is already in the 32 chain), like 40 (D20, D10, D5) and 24 (D12, D6, D3). Next are the numbers with two splits, like 36, 28, 20 (in the 40 chain) and 12 (in the 24 chain). Your last option would be to shoot a setup dart and setup numbers like 38, 34, 30, 26, 22, 18, 14, 10 or 6. All of these numbers give you one chance to hit the number, and a single, the most likely result, requires you to hit another setup dart before another out shot chance, not the optimal situation. As always there are exceptions to the rules.

Starting Number	Chain of outs	Starting Number	Chain of outs
32	D16,D8,D4,D2,D1	36	D18, D9, Odd
40	D20, D10, D5, Odd	28	D14, D7, Odd
24	D12, D6, D3, Odd	20	D10, D5, Odd

38, 34, 30, 26, 22, 18, 14, 10 and 6 only give you one chance before requiring a setup dart.

Give yourself the best chance to get to a double, even if it’s not the recommended one.

After that whole topic on prime numbers, this topic might sound contradictory, and we can understand why. The thought here is that you can only win games by having an outshot and both, shooting at and hitting it. So, with three or two darts in your hand, often, you’ll find that shooting at a bigger target is easier and gives a chance at any double, than trying to force the preferred number for a ‘better’ double. The easiest example of this is 46. The out charts will all say

S14, D16, and as above, a S14 sets up the perfect 32 for maximum opportunities to split evenly. However, if you miss the S14, you'll likely hit the 9 above or 11 below. That leaves 37 or 35, each requiring a setup dart before your next out shot. Let's look around the board. Over on the right is a double wedge (the 10 and 6 next to each other). That means twice the target area to hit. If you hit the 6, you're left with 40, and if you hit the 10, you're left with 36. While not 32, both of those give you at least two chances at a double before a setup dart is required. Not a bad option – double the size of the first target to get a chance, and then have one of two good doubles left. Another example is 25. Most out charts will again point to the 32 chain, so S9, D8. Look at the misses near the 9, a 12 and a 14, leaving 13 or 11. It's the same theme, one miss, one setup, one miss. Why not give yourself the best chance to have a double on your shot without shooting a setup dart every other dart. Look at the bottom of the board, 7, 19, 3, 17, a four wide wedge! That's 20% of the board available (minus the T19 or T17 areas) to get you to a double. They aren't all the best, but they are all an out. From left to right, a S7 leaves D9, S19 leaves D3, S3 leaves D11 and S17 leaves D4 (D2, D1). While not the outs you'd try to leave normally, you have a much higher chance of throwing for an out than if you tried for the S9, even if it is the D9, D3 or D11.

While discussing the best way to get to a double, a simple rule to remember is this: if you're shooting 61-70, you have a single dart at 11-20 to leave you a double bull to win. (See concept 2 – everyone is capable of hitting any dart at any time! – so shoot the bull to win!) The next rule is 53-60, shoot a single dart to leave you D20. Again, big target for your first shot to leave an out shot. 51 and 52 are exceptions, as you can shoot either a 19 or 20 to leave 32 or an 11 or 12 to leave 40 – you're choice.

Some other concepts that are helpful when shooting your '01 games.

- Know the layout of the board. There are a two spots where 2 even numbers touch (8/16, 6/10 and 18/4) and the 4 odd number wedge (7/19/3/17). Use these larger targets to your advantage.
- Know when to change your targets based on the darts you've already thrown.
- Learn the patterns and series of out-shots. Setup darts to get to 32 include 74, 77, 80, 83, 86, 89 and 92 (T14 through T20). The setup darts to get to 40 include 82, 85, 88, 91, 94, 97 and 100. The more recognition you have of out-shots, the more comfort you'll have shooting them.
- Know what you're shooting when you shoot. Many players shoot one dart and then figure out the next. If you know the 3 dart (or 2 dart) combination you need, you should strive to just keep shooting. Stopping and starting kills your routine and rhythm. As you gain expertise in both strategy and execution, you'll start recognizing and being aware of the various combinations that are likely when you miss your initial target.

That's really it in a nutshell. Shoot to win. Shoot the darts that give you the best chance to shoot at a double. Be confident in shooting the setup darts and the corresponding doubles. Lastly, remember this- If your opponent doesn't get the darts back, they can't beat you. The faster you get to and hit your doubles, the more games you'll win.