

THINK ABOUT IT – PART 6

INTRODUCTION

This article will focus on two shot selections; blocking bowls and reverse bias shots.

BLOCKING BOWLS

Firstly, a confession. I was never a fan of blocking bowls until this last season. Like many of my views on the tactics of the game, that's probably a hangover from my outdoor bowling days. On an outdoor green or an indoor long mat it is very easy to counter a blocking bowl simply by playing a different weight or changing your hand. Hence, I never felt they were worth it.

My conversion to a believer came in the county match at High Wycombe. Holding 2 shots at a vital stage of our triples game, my number two suggested I put a bowl in the way. "If I do that, he'll just change his hand" I said. "Well block the easier hand and make him play the difficult side" was the reply. It was one of those light bulb moments when, suddenly, it all becomes clear. Bless you, Alan S. Sure enough, I played a short bowl to cover the forehand weighted shot. It wasn't a particularly good blocker but it was enough to make my opposite number play the more difficult backhand. He hit the block.

There are good blockers and not so good blockers. You often see a player plant their foot forcefully on the mat 6 inches short of the head demanding "put a bowl here". See Figure 1 where B is the blocking bowl. A bowl in this position covers only the shot and the jack. It is close enough to the head that the opposition has a good chance to push the blocker onto the jack for shot. They could even play for the outside bowl where the plant would give a similar result. Worse still, if the attempted blocker is slightly tight or wide, it just makes your opponent's shot easier by giving them an edge to use.

A blocking bowl in a position some distance short covers a wider portion of the head. Think of it as a shadow cast by the blocker. In Figure 2 a bigger portion of the head is covered. But the shorter the bowl needs to be wider to block the line to the head. If the mat allows it, the blocking bowl can be played by going close to the edge of the mat. But, on a big swinging mat, it might be necessary to play the shot tight across the mat from the opposite hand.

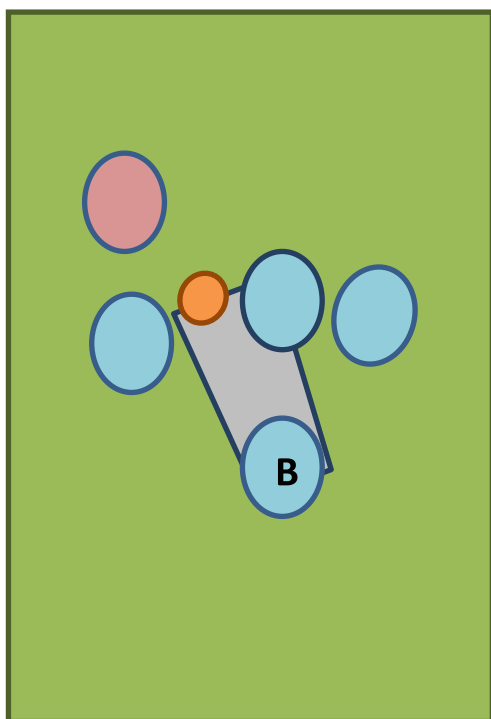


Figure 1: close blocker

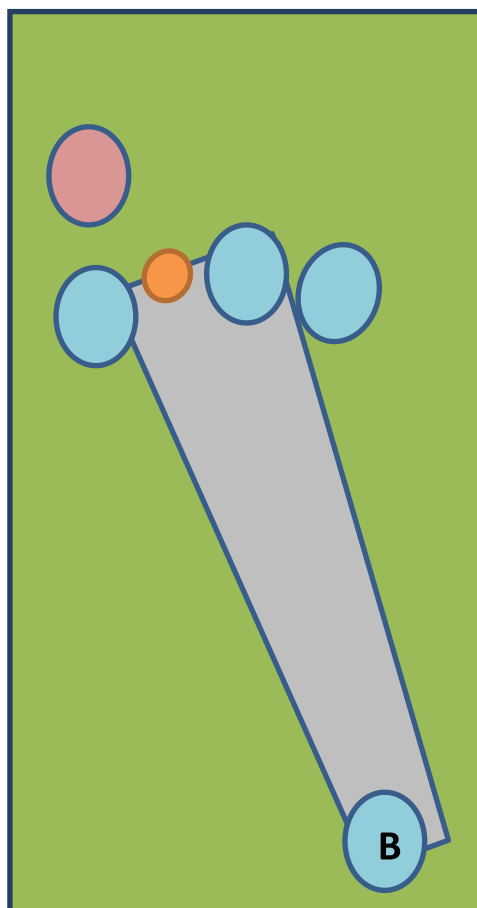


Figure 2: short blocker