Other Games People Play:
There's a New Game in Town

By Al Horton

During my last business trip to Las Vegas, I found some free time and decided to visit one of the local darting establishments. After finding Marcki's Happy Valley Inn, I decided to stop and throw some darts. Soon there were players arriving and warming up, since almost every night of the week is league night there. Like always, I started listening and asking questions. Some of the things I heard were comments such as, "I've got to practice more on my doubles," "I need more work on my outs," and "My grouping needs HELP!" My questions were, "How are you going to practice your doubles? Work on your outs? Get help with your grouping?"

There were quite a few different approaches to these problems with each being turned into a challenging game for one or more players. Most of these games have no name or they have several names, so I just selected the name that reflected both the attitude of the person relating the game to me or the area the game concentrates on the most.

For example, this first game I call **Now try and finish that!**. There are two separate parts to play here. If you play alone, you must play both parts. Let's go through this game with two players to avoid confusion. The object of player #1 is to reach a specified goal or target. 200 is a good target to start with. It can be modified to suit the combined ability of both players. The second player has a target also; it is zero. Now for the game. The first player takes his turn and throws the highest score he can on his way to reaching his target of 200. The second player takes his turn and tries to reduce the score of the first player to exactly zero. This must be accomplished by taking the score out by finishing on a double. If the second player can not finish the score (such as 159) then he tries to reduce it to the lowest number possible without busting. If he does bust, then the first player starts his next round adding on to

his original score. The game is over when the first player reaches 200 or the second player finishes the score and when both players had the opportunity to shoot in both first and second positions. Here is a sample of the game to help clarify the action.

Player #1 / Player #2

45	Player #1 threw a 45 on
10	his first attempt to reach his
51	goal of 200.

Player #2 threw a s5, s20, and a s10. This reduces player #1's score to 10.

Player #1 now throws to increase his total score. His throw of 41 is now added onto his score of 10, giving him 51 points.

Player #2 must now finish a 51 or again reduce it to a low score. He must also be careful not to bust or player #1 will start with 51 when his turn comes.

This is a terrific game. It can be played by yourself, one on one, in teams. For the average player like me, I win only 10 percent of the time as player #2, so I count darts. If I beat my opponent in 25 darts when I am player #1 and he beats me by 19 darts when he is player #1, we consider him the victor. With this game, I am improving my finishes and also my ability to score.

A similar game is **Point-to-Point**. This game creates a battle of scoring between two players or teams. There is only one column of scores kept. This will either be in the positive or in the negative range. I will discuss this game as if two players were playing to help avoid confusion. It can, however, be played as a solitary game. The first player to start will always be the positive player and the second player will always be the negative. As in the previous game, set a goal to shoot for. I highly recommend that the first goal be low (somewhere between 100 and 150). This is so that the game will not drag on forever if both players are equal in ability. The object is to have the score reach the

goal that has been set. The first player tries for the positive goal and the second player tries for the negative goal. Let's follow a sample game to become better acquainted with the rules.

If the first player throws a 41, the scoreboard will read: +41 +41.

Now the second player throws a 45. this must be subtracted from the 41. The new score is now on the negative side in -45 -4 favor of the second player. This will seesaw until someone throws consistently good scores and wins. Here are a few more examples to ensure you understand the game:

1st player throws 26.	+22
2nd player throws 85.	-63
1st player throws 55.	-8
2nd player throws T40.	-148
1st player throws T80.	+32

This game improves concentration on scoring and helps to monitor the throw of each dart. You will notice your darts start forming tighter and tighter groups after just a few sessions of Point-to-Point.

Do you want a game that requires you to practice all the numbers on the board and not just a select few? **I've Got It** can do just that. The game can be played using the singles, doubles, triples, or any combination of them. For the sake of describing the game, I'll use the singles to describe the action.

Going in numerical order from 1 through the bull, the object is to capture as many numbers as possible. Capture is accomplished by scoring exactly 3 of a target number during 1 turn. Once a number has been captured, it remains the possession of its captor throughout the remainder of the game. There are several ways to set this game up. You could write the numbers 1 through 20 and bull on the board then cross them out if player #1 captures it or circle it it player #2 captures it. The method I prefer is to remember what number is open to my attack and if I capture something, mark it down under my name on the chalkboard. This method allows a player who wasn't paying attention to see which number is open for attack without wasting darts at a number that has already been captured. Here's a

few rounds to explain the game further.

Player #1 / Player #2

1   Player #1 starts by attacking the number 1. He throws a t1, s2, s2. The first dart captures the 1. With 2 darts still in his hand, he attacked the number 2. Since he only scored 2, the 2s remain open for capture.

2   Player #2 starts with the 2s since the 1s have been captured. His throw nets him a t2, s3, and a t3. He only captures the 2s because he scored more than the required 3 of a number.

3   Player #1 returns to the oche and produces a s3, d3, and a s4, capturing the 3s. Player #2 throws a s4, s4 and a s18. No capture this turn.

    Player #1 returns to throw at the 4s. Even though he threw a s4 during his last turn, he must again try and capture the 4s by scoring exactly 3 times this turn.

That should cover all the basic rules for the game. If you decide to go for the doubles or triples, you might want to change the number of hits per turn to 1 or keep a running total with the first person to hit 5 doubles captures that number. If you use the shangai format (1 single, 1 double, and 1 triple) you will have to keep a running total unless you are one of the top pros in the world.

Playing this game will help to improve your accuracy on a wide range of numbers. It will also help you focus your desire to win and intensify your concentration. If you play this game enough, you will learn how to avoid or ignore all those little distractions such as conversations nearby, glasses hitting the table, the chalker moving, someone coughing, and many more. Comments from others will not unnerve you because you know your ability and have become accustomed to these minor distractors.

Have you ever played the age old game of **Horse**? It has now been put to darts with several ways to play. As on the basketball court, an order of throw must be determined with the first player setting the initial target. The next player has 3 darts to achieve the target set by the first player. Let's stop here for a minute and discuss the targets. Before the game starts, you must decide on how to set the target. Are you going to follow along the lines of "Little and Large" or "Loops" and use only 1 dart as the target? Or, are you going to specify doubles, triples or bulls only! What about the total score of all 3 darts or the total score of the best 2 darts? Think of what you want to do, then start.

If you play the total of all three 3 darts, if that is achieved by a player, then he gets another throw to set a new target. But if he misses, are you going to revert back to the original score or use the new score as in the game of Boxes? Decisions, decisions!! These are not the only ones that have to be made. What if you are using a single dart as a target, do you get 3 darts to set the next target if you reach the target on your third dart or do you only get a chance to set a new target if you have darts in your hand? More questions! Horse is not that difficult. The way I play it is shooter's choice. The person setting the target has the choice. If he says total score, the next person must beat his total score. If he says doubles and does not hit one, then he gets a letter. This keeps the game as close as possible to the one played on the basketball courts.

Another old-timer's game that has been put to darts is **Hangman**. This requires you to designate each letter of the alphabet to a corresponding position on the dartboard. One person decides on a word or phrase and puts spaces on the chalkboard to indicate each letter in the word or phrase. The other player(s) then guesses letters by throwing at the dartboard. Each time a dart lands on a letter not used in the word or phrase (or one that has already been used) the hangman marks you one step closer to losing. If you are using a stick figure to count the chances, this includes the head as 1, the body as 1, the arms as 1 each and the legs as 1 each. If you want to make things a little more difficult, make the doubles, triples and bulls the vowels. This creates a lesser opportunity to guess vowels. Just because someone knows what the word is does not mean they are finished with the game. They must first hit all the appropriate letters without being hung. I use the following chart when I play Hangman:

A triples	F 13	K 2	P 7	U 20
B 1	G 6	L 17	Q 16	V 9
C 18	H 10	M 3	R 8	W 12
D 4	I bull	N 19	S 11	X 5
E doubles	J 15	O dbull	T 14	Y, Z Any number

These are just a few of the games I picked up from the Southern Nevada Darts Association. I would like to thank all my friends out there for their patience in teaching me these games.—Al

Reader Input

Dear *Bull's-Eye News,*

I haven't noticed any "Games People Play" articles lately, so I decided to submit one in case it's due to lack of ideas.

I play in what's called the "Pro League" of the Austin Darts Association on a city league team called the Little Brown Jug X-Outs on Tuesday night. We play a format of all '01 games (301, 501, 601) straight in, so the only darts thrown at doubles are for outs. I've noticed our team had trouble winning games on the double outs, although we're usually ahead in getting to them. Therefore, I devised a practice game that I call Ton-Fifty Doubles. Scoring begins with 150, as in a 301, but only doubles count, and each player can only hit each double once in a game.

Diddles are normal; closest to cork goes first. From there on, only doubles score. Singles, triples and outside don't count and end play for the turn. A larger double than needed for an out will bust and end the turn. A perfect game is 4 darts, using dbull. Any other combination takes a minimum of 5 darts. If you hit a double that leaves an outshot possible only on a double already hit, it's a bust (i.e., you hit a d1 earlier trying for d20, and have 40 left, then hit a d19, it's a bust.)

So it's a good idea to leave the doubles 1 to 4 or so to take out. A combination such as d20, d19, d11 will leave a dbull for a 4-dart game.

		150
Example.	d20	110
	d19	72
	d14	44
	d17	10
	d5	

After six misses or so at dbull, I go for something like d18, d7 to finish. It's a good practice for outs and forces you to shoot precisely. Doubles come in handy for outs, double-in games, and when only a double is needed in Cricket and points aren't.

Hope you like it.

—*John Newnam*
Austin, TX