

'01: A Survival Strategy for NonExperts

By John Bruman

During the many years I have played darts—and watched other competitors—I learned that game winners are not necessarily the most accurate, or even the most consistent, shooters. Winners are usually the players who are able to combine reasonably accurate and consistent shooting skills with a highly developed sense of game strategy. And, although almost everyone recognizes the value of strategy in a typical Cricket game, few people—especially beginners—are aware of the value of a sound strategy when playing '01.

Most people think of '01 as a type of horse race, with the shooter that averages the highest points the usual winner. In reality, winning consistently at '01 requires a “pre-emptive” strategy that will reduce the possibility of making the game more difficult than it needs to be.

For example, how many times have you “shot yourself in the foot” trying to set up a 74 out by aiming at the t14, only to see your dart stray into the 9 or 11 segment?

Another one: how about the ever-popular s9 to set up a 25 out? The 9 is flanked by even numbers, and a stray in either of these obviously results in another odd number.

The setups I described can make a simple game difficult for most '01 players. Yet, many of the typical outcharts list them as the best combinations. It's ironic that most outcharts are designed by experts who don't need them.

To prove the point, here's a simple drill you can use in your next practice session: Start with the 20 and throw three darts at each number segment all the way through 1. Count each double and triple the same as a single. Add up your total number of hits. Now, compare your score to the following:

50 or Better—Call yourself an expert, get on the tournament trail and seek fame, wealth, and glory. This article is probably not for you.

49-40—Call yourself a talented, competitive league player, but keep in mind that you missed an entire number segment once in every five or six tries. What happens if you miss?

39-30—Call yourself a solid average league player. You will also probably miss a number segment target about once every two or three tries. Think about that the next time you draw a bead on that s9

or t14. Where is that “one out of three” stray dart going to lead?

30 or Below—Call yourself “needs advice.” This article is definitely for you, so pay close attention.

Most of us will miss an entire number segment about once in every three to five tries. What does this mean? Even though the t14 will indeed give us a 32 outshot from 74, the odds are one in four that we will miss the entire 14 segment.

What we need then is an outchart and some general, easy-to-remember rules which will provide the safest outshot combinations (not some “expert's” personal favorites). The following rules of thumb are very general things to keep in mind when playing '01.

Rule 1: Plan your outshot setup early.

Many times, I have seen otherwise good players continue to blindly flail away at the t20 when a different shot may have handed them a quick setup and game win. In other situations, players pass up an opportunity to set up a safe outshot only to later find themselves staring straight at potential disaster.

Consider the player who shoots at the t20 with his first dart from 126. He hits it. Then, he returns to t20. He is now at 66. If he hits the t20 again, he is left with a d3 with his last dart—which he usually misses or singles. Suppose he hits a s20. Now he is at 46...with only one dart...and no possible way of winning in that round.

On the other hand, what would have happened if he stopped after the first t20? Realizing that he had 66 left, he could throw a t16. If he hits, he has a d9 for an outshot. If he singles the 16, he still has a chance to win with a double bull on his last dart. Actually, in this case, he probably shouldn't have started with the t20 in the first place. Usually, a double bull, or even a t19, is a better start from 126.

Learn to accept the fact that high outs are no more difficult than lower ones if they are planned carefully. High outs just make the game quicker, easier to win, and more exciting for the average darter.

Rule No. 2: Avoid deliberately setting up on doubles of small odd numbers

More games have been lost than won on these numbers. It's a simple fact of life, no matter what your level of ability.

I recently watched a TV match between

the great Cliff Lazarenko and John Lowe. Lazarenko—with three darts—faced a game win with a d5 outshot. Rather than risk a miss into the s5, he went straight to the s2 to set up a d4. Even I have won games shooting at the d5. But, I must admit, the thought of a s5 sometimes affects my concentration, and I would probably be better off switching to 2/4 as Lazarenko did.

Rule No. 3: Take advantage of all number segments where odd and even numbers are paired together on the road.

Some examples of the above are the 7, 19, 3, and 17 segments across the bottom as well as the 6/10, 18/4, and 8/16 pairings.

Rule No. 4: Memorize and use your “eights” from your third grade multiplication tables, better known as the Rule of Eights.

Most larger numbers that can be evenly divided by eight should be set up by aiming directly at the short piece of wire between the t8 and the t16. For example, from 88, a t16 leaves 40, while a t8, a s16, or a s8 all lead to other even numbers which are again evenly divisible by eight. You cannot possibly get into trouble hitting these numbers.

Rule No. 5: Don't overlook the double bull as a possible outshot game winner.

Especially for you Cricket players (Cricket players are bullshooting experts, aren't they?), the double bull can be a quick win, and sometimes the safest shot. Consider the 50 Out. Most people think immediately of the s18/d16 combination as the conservative approach. Actually the safest shot is probably the double bull, due to the possibility of busting with an inadvertant t18.

Rule No. 6: Memorize and use the wire shots listed here(Refer to Rule 3):

47 = 7/19
42 = 10/6
46 = 6/10
39 = 7/19
45 = 17/3
37 = 17/3
44 = S8/S16
35 = S3/S19
43 = S3/S19
25 = S17/S3

Note: For these, simply take your first shot at the wire separating the various single/single combinations; hitting either single gives you a good out. This effectively doubles your chances for a good outshot.

Rule of Eights (#4)

For any of these remaining scores, a dart anywhere in the 8-16 area will leave a good out, or a good out setup:

96 S8 = 88	72 T16 = 24
96 T8 = 72	72 S16 = 56
96 S16 = 80	64 T8 = 40
96 D16 = 64	64 T16 = 16
88 D16 = 56	64 S16 = 48
88 T8 = 64	64 S8 = 56
88 T16 = 40	64 D16 = 32
88 D8 = 72	56 T8 = 32
80 T16 = 32	56 T16 = 8
80 T8 = 56	56 S16 = 40
80 S8 = 72	56 D16 = 24
80 S16 = 64	48 S8 = 40
80 D16 = 48	48 S16 = 32
72 T8 = 48	48 D16 = 16
72 S8 = 64	48 T8 = 24

Rule No. 7: Use Your Normal Cricket Numbers To Set Up Your Outs

By using Cricket numbers, you shoot at numbers you are familiar with and accustomed to hitting. Why try to hit a t13 or t14, if you are able to consistently score on other numbers? Use what is comfortable for you.

Now for the outchart. Several years ago,

some of our local darters came up with a customized outchart. It provided a "second chance" for a good out if the lead-off triple was singled.

I used that concept to develop what I call an outchart for Cricket players. It uses mostly Cricket numbers for setup shots. This takes advantage of the psychological "comfort factor," using numbers most Cricket players are accustomed to shooting at. I adhered faithfully to the rules of thumb in this article, in an attempt to provide the safest combinations for the average player.

You will notice in studying the chart that some of the combinations don't specify a final double. That's because the preceding shot was at a wire offering either of two good outshot possibilities.

This chart has worked very well for the majority of average to expert players.

Like any outchart, however, it may not suit your personal preferences. Make any changes you wish, but be advised to review the rules of thumb as well as your overall accuracy from the practice drill before you do so.

Remember to become totally familiar with whatever outchart that you use. This way, you won't risk a lapse of concentration while you stop to plan your

Safe Wire Shots (#6)

For any of these remaining scores, aim at the wire separating two adjacent number segments:

7 / 19 WIRE	3 / 17 WIRE
47 - S7 = 40	45 - S3 = 42
47 - S19 = 28	45 - S17 = 28
39 - S7 = 32	37 - S3 = 34
39 - S19 = 20	37 - S17 = 20
3 / 19 WIRE	25 - S3 = 22
43 - S3 = 40	25 - S17 = 8
43 - S19 = 24	8 / 16 WIRE
35 - S3 = 32	44 - S8 = 36
35 - S19 = 16	44 - S16 = 28
	6 / 10 WIRE
	46 - S6 = 40
	46 - S10 = 36
	42 - S6 = 36
	42 - S10 = 32

next shot. Knowing exactly what you're doing during the entire game helps concentration, increases accuracy, and most important, allows you to maintain an "edge" over a less-prepared opponent.

And whatever you do, if you ever compete with *me*, try to forget it all. Nobody likes to be beaten by their own strategy.



Outs for Cricket Players (#7)

130 T20-T18-D8	116 T20-T16-D4	102 T18-S16/S8	88 T16-D20	74 T18-D10
S20-T20-DB	S20-T20-D18	S18-T20-D12	S16-T16-D12	S18-T16/T8
129 T19-T16-D12	115 T15-T18-D8	101 T17-DB	87 T17-D18	73 T19-D8
S19-T20-DB	S15-T20-D20	S17-T20-D12	S17-T18-D8	S19-S18-D18
128 T18-T18-D10	114 T18-S20-D20	100 T20-D20	86 T18-D16	72 T16-D12
S18-T20-DB	S18-T20-D18	S20-T16-D16	S18-T20-D4	S16-T16/T8
127 T20-T17-D8	113 T19-T16/T8	99 T19-S10/S6	85 T15-D20	71 T17-D10
S20-T19-DB	S19-T18-DB	S19-T16-D16	S15-T18-D8	S17-S18-D18
126 DB-T20-D8	112 T20-S20-D16	98 T16-DB	84 T20-D12	70 T18-D8
SB-T17-DB	S20-T20-D16	S16-DB-D16	S20-T16/T8	S18-S20-D16
125 T15-T16-D16	111 T17-S20-D20	97 T19-D20	83 T17-D16	69 T19-D6
S15-T20-DB	S17-T18-D20	S19-T18-D12	S17-T18-D6	S19-DB
124 T20-T16/T8	110 T20-DB	96 T16-S16/S8	82 DB-D16	68 T20-D4
S20-T18-DB	S20-T18-D18	S16-T16-D16	SB-S17-D20	S20-S16/S8
123 T19-T18-D6	109 T19-S20-D16	95 T15-DB	81 T19-D12	67 T17-D8
S19-T18-DB	S19-T18-D18	S15-T16-D16	S19-T10-D16	S17-DB
122 T18-T20-D4	108 T20-S16/S8	94 T18-D20	80 T16-D16	66 T18-D6
S18-T18-DB	S20-T16-D20	S18-T20-D8	S16-T16/T8	S18-S16/S8
121 T17-T18-D8	107 T19-DB	93 T17-S10/S6	79 T19-D11	65 T15-D10
S17-T18-DB	S19-T16-D20	S17-T20-D8	S19-S20-D20	S15-DB
120 T20-S20-D20	106 T20-S6/S10	92 T20-D16	78 T18-D12	64 T16/T8
S20-T20-D20	S20-T18-D16	S20-T16-D12	S18-S20-D20	S16-S16/S8
119 T19-T10-D16	105 T15-S20-D20	91 T17-D20	77 T19-D10	63 T17-D6
S19-T20-D20	S15-T18-D18	S17-T18-D10	S19-S18-D20	S17-S6/S10
118 T20-S18-D20	104 T18-DB	90 T18-D18	76 T20-D8	62 T10-D16
S20-T16-DB	S18-T18-D16	S18-T16-D12	S20-T16/T8	S10-S20-D16
117 T19-S20-D20	103 T19-S6/S10	89 T19-D16	75 T17-D12	61 T19-D2
S19-T16-DB	S19-T20-D12	S19-T18-D8	S17-S18-D20	S19-S10/S6