

CARROM TECHNIQUES AND SKILLS

Written By



Shri. Arun Deshpande

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MANTRA

Dear Reader,

I would like to tell you this "MANTRA" before you actually start reading the technique in this book. Be sincere with carrom. Treat it as your very close family member. Do not commercialize it. Do not gamble on it. Just as your quarrel with a close family member, which is of a very temporary nature, treat your defeat in this game as a temporary setback. Do not be angry with carrom board or striker because of the defeat. Remain faithful to carrom and you will then get the expected best results.

--Author

Arun Deshpande

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What exactly is "Carrom"

Equipment -

Carrom board -

Plywood - The playing surface of the carrom board is made of plywood and it is 29 inches square. The thickness is generally from 12 mm to 16 mm

Frames - There are four frames on four sides of carrom board. The size of the frame is three inches in width. The thickness of the frame is two inches.

Pockets - There are four pockets on four corners of the carrom board. The size of every pocket is 4.45 cms in diameter.

Base lines - There are four base lines. The distance between these two lines is 3.18cms.

Base circles - There are eight base circles measuring 3.18 cms in diameter and painted in red colour.

Centre circle - There is a centre circle in red colour which is 3.18 in diameter.

Outer circle - There is outer circle of 17cms in diameter.

Coins - There are 9 white, 9 black and one red coin. Red coin is called Queen.

Total there are 19 coins. The diameter of each coin is 3.18 cms. They are between 5.25 cms to 5.50 cms.

Striker - The weight of the striker should not exceed 15gms. Maximum diameter of the striker is 4.13cms.

Stand - The height of the stand is between 63 cms to 70 cms.

Stool or chair - The height of the stool or chair should be between 40 cms to 50 cms.

Lamp - Lamp with the shed should be hung at the center of the carrom board in such a way that the naked light should not fall on the eyes of players.

Sitting position - In singles players sit opposite to each others.

In doubles Partners sit opposite to each others.

Basic rules –

Arrangements of coins – Red coin (Queen) should be placed in the centre circle. Then black and white coins are placed alternately adjacent to the queen making a small circle. Then make the other circle in such a way that white coins will look like a letter 'Y'.

Turn of play. As long as a player pockets his/her coins, the turn of the player shall be continued.

Game – The game is of 25 points.

How to score – Each coin has one point and the Queen has three points. The player who pockets all of his/her coins he/she wins the board. The player gets points equal to his opponent's coins on the board plus three points for the Queen if he/she has pocketed it.

Queen – Queen has three points. After pocketing Queen a player must pocket his/her coin. It is called cover. If a player does not pocket coin after pocketing Queen then Queen is taken out of the pocket and placed in the center circle by the umpire.

Fouls – There are two types of fouls, Simple foul and technical foul. A technical foul is a foul before pocketing coin. In technical foul player's turn continues. Simple foul is when a player makes foul after or during pocketing coin.

Dues – If while pocketing coin, only striker is pocketed it is called a due. One coin of the player who makes a due is taken out and is placed by the opponent in the outer circle. Player loses turn. If the player pockets striker with the coin then it is called a double due. In this case two coins are placed by the opponent in the outer circle. Player's turn is continued

Other Rules –

A player should touch both the lines while playing. Red base circle should be fully covered while playing from it.

While playing elbow should not come on to the playing surface.

While playing feet should not cross the imaginary lines.

If a coin is jumped out of the carrom board then it is placed in the center circle by the umpire. If the coin is in standing position, it is kept as it is. Overlapped coins are kept as it is.

Grips

Grip is very important in the game of carrom. You should develop a natural grip.



NATURAL GRIP

There are many types of grips. The most common grip is the combination of the index finger and the thumb. See the above photo. This is a very easy grip and requires less practice. In this grip all other fingers rest on the plywood. This

grip has many advantages. With this grip a player can keep maximum control over the striker. This grip remains steady and firm as all other fingers get the support of the plywood. A player of this grip can play with minimum space.

Sometimes when there is insufficient place available for placing grip a player can play with the index finger lifting all other fingers from the plywood. With this grip a player can play with equal ease on both sides (left or right) of the carrom board. Therefore player's game does not remain weak at any side. In this grip the nails of all fingers touch the plywood. Therefore if any one nail has grown more than usual, there will be change in the grip. Such minor things are very important in carrom. .



SCISSOR GRIP

It is used basically for the break in India. It is used as a natural grip in Sri Lanka and Maldives. In India only Ivon Marquis and Kadir Khan used this grip as natural grip. There are many disadvantages in this grip. It is very difficult to play from the right side



LOCKING GRIP

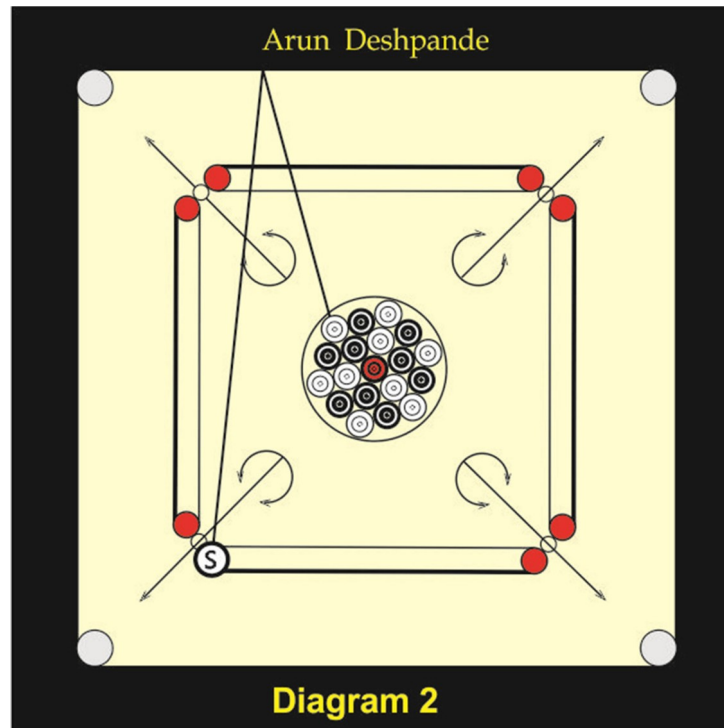
You should learn this grip if you don't have locking grip as your natural grip. With this grip you can get a power to play powerful strokes. I was with Suhas Kambli in 1982 in Delhi for one month and we were practicing hard to play demonstration games in Asian games when I observed Suhas Kambli playing many powerful strokes with his natural locking grip. His natural grip is a combination of thumb, first finger and little finger, but whenever he required extra force he was changing his little finger to third finger. I just tried it and began to hit hard with this grip. I enjoyed using it and then whenever I got a chance to use it, I used it. Suhas was laughing at me because I couldn't aim properly with this grip. I had to put all my efforts to get mastery in this grip. You have to lock your first finger between thumb and third finger for this type of grip. Generally in this grip first finger by which, stroke is played, does not touch the playing surface.



MIDDLE FINGER FLAT GRIP

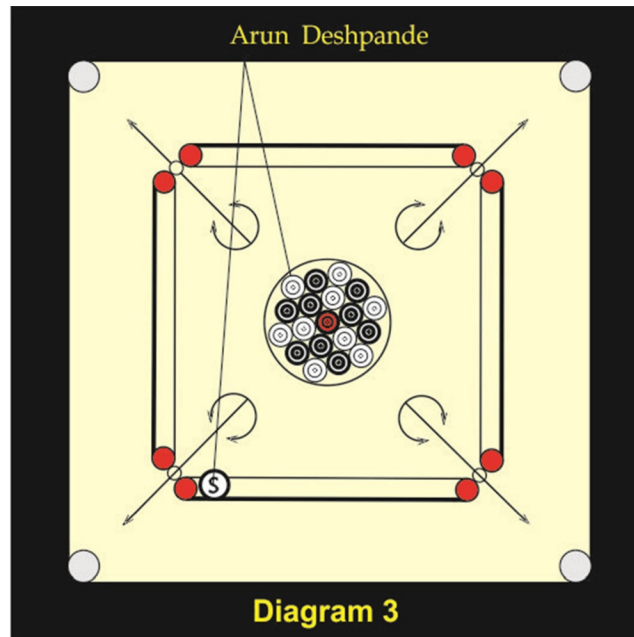
This grip gives spin to the striker. There are many positions on the carrom board where without spin you can't play the stroke successfully. In this grip you don't have to make an effort to create spin, it is automatically created.

Therefore it is called natural spin. The spin is anticlockwise. You should develop this useful grip. You can play it with the left hand also to play the strokes on the other side.



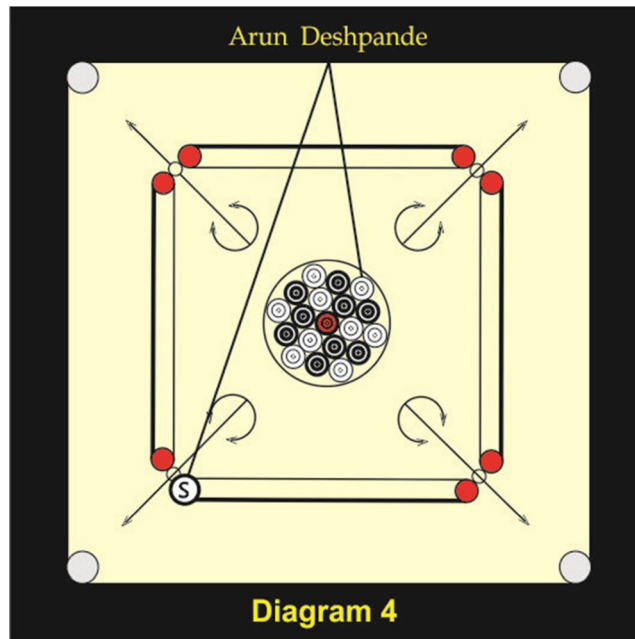
Break from left base circle

This method is the best method and is used by majority of the players. Many players take blind aim from the opposite frame for the break. If you place your striker on the left base circle then your striker should pass through the first arrow of the opposite left half circle as shown in the above figure. You can see the actual point from where your striker should pass and therefore you can play the stroke accurately. If you don't use this method and try to take an imaginary point on the opposite frame then there is a chance of varying this imaginary point resulting in failure of the break. This break should be made preferably by scissor grip or by any flat grip.



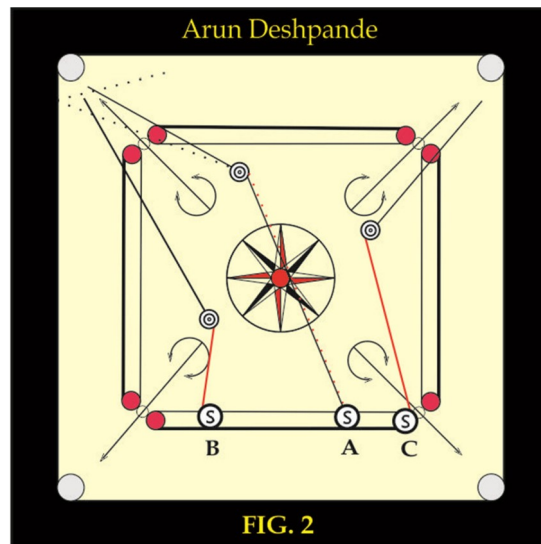
BREAK FROM NEAR THE LEFT BASE CIRCLE

If you are afraid of playing the stroke from the left circle due to a possibility of making a foul then you can play from near the base circle. In this method your striker should pass through the second arrow of the opposite left half circle as shown in the above figure. This break also should be made by scissor grip or any flat grip.



Reverse break- In this type of break you can arrange a shot of the break to your left pocket and break from the left side. If you break accurately then you will notice that there remains a bunch of four coins in such a way that you can play a touch stroke and open the board thereby getting a chance for a white slam. The disadvantage of this break is that if you fail to break correctly, then either you may hit the other coins or your striker may just touch your aimed white coins resulting bad break.

SHOWER OF STROKES



A- CUT B - STRAIGHTCUT C- CROSS CUT

CUT -

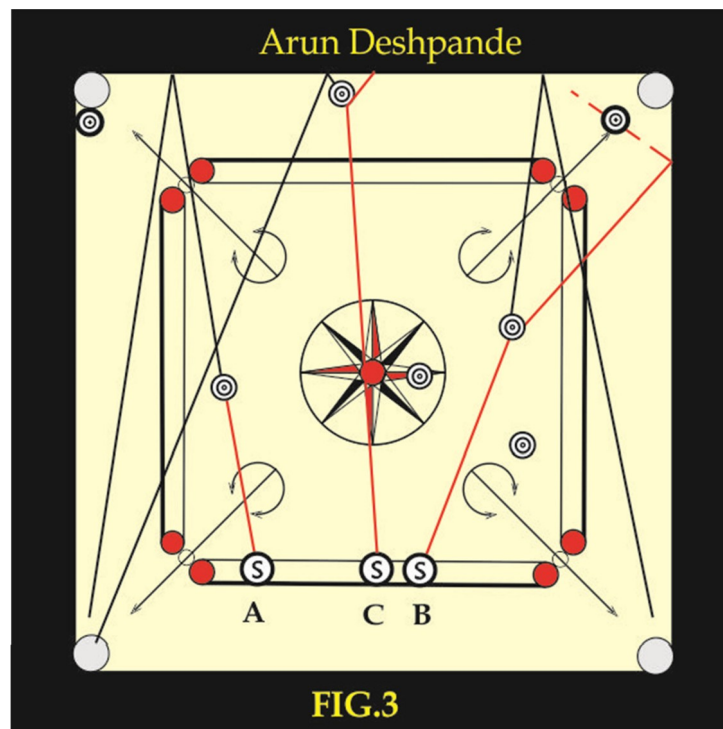
As shown in the diagram, a striker A of fig. 2 if a coin is pocketed by keeping the striker in a cross line the stroke is called a cut. The striker should not be released hard while playing cut. If striker hits hard beyond the aimed point of the coin then there is every possibility that, the coin may go to the opposite frame and away from the pocket making it difficult for the player for next turn. (a dotted line in figure 2-A shows how the coin becomes difficult if hit hard and wrong). While playing a cut if the striker is controlled, then even if the stroke is wrong, the coin remains near to the pocket area and becomes easy for next turn.

STRAIGHT CUT:

As shown in figure 2 B, if a coin is pocketed by keeping the striker in a straight line with coin the stroke is called a straight cut. Difficult coin from the opposite frame can be made easy by playing straight cut. The coins which are near to the left or right side of the frame and which cannot be pocketed into the front pockets can also be made easy by straight cut. If this stroke is accurately played a player can apply maximum force for dragging other coins from the bunch. Often there is such position that by playing a straight cut, a player can pocket two coins simultaneously in two pockets.

CROSS CUT OR MINUS CUT:

As shown in figure 2 C, If a coin is pocketed keeping the striker in a cross [minus] line, the stroke is called cross cut or minus cut' when there is no possibility of removing coin from the opposite frame or from side frames by playing a straight cut due to the coin not being accessible to the striker a minus cut can be played, thus such coins are removed and made easy for the next stroke (A player should hit the striker to the point where the imaginary lines from the center of the pocket and the center of the coin intersect).



A & B- DOUBLE C- CROSS DOUBLE

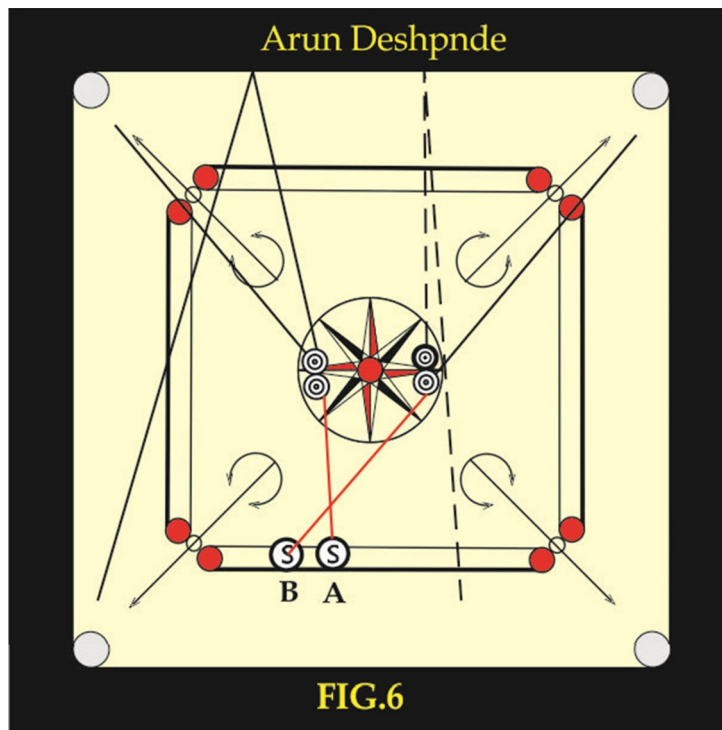
DOUBLE:

As shown in figure 3 A, if a coin is pocketed in the base pocket by hitting it on the opposite frame, the stroke is called double. When the opposite pocket is blocked by the opponent's coin this stroke is useful. Sometimes, there are some coins near the opposite frame which cannot be played by cut. Such coins should be pocketed by a double. Sometimes difficult coins near the opposite frame cannot be made easy by cutting coin which is in the straight line with that difficult coin. Our coin can be then played by a double, removing difficult coin from the opposite frame. If a coin near the opposite frame is to be played double then the stroke should be such, that the striker, after striking that coin

should go in the direction opposite to that of the coin otherwise, the striker will touch the coin twice and the coin will not come out of its difficult position (See figure 3-C).

CROSS DOUBLE:

If a striker is placed in a cross line and the coin is pocketed by double, then the stroke is called cross double because the coin crosses the path of the striker. This stroke is played when the opposite pocket is blocked by the opponent's coin which can be removed by playing this stroke and pocket can be opened for any other coins which are blocked. (See figure 3-B) The coin which is 2 or more inches away from the side lines and is blocked by the opponent's coin near the pocket, can be pocketed to the base pockets by cross double (See figure 4-B). If such a coin is 6" to 12" away from the opposite pocket, then while pocketing it by a cross double, other difficult coin from the opposite frame also can be made easy by the striker (See figure 4-B). If the coin is 8" to 12" away from base pockets then while playing it by cross double, difficult coin from the bunch also can be made easy (See figure 4-A). If two coins of a double due are placed in the inner circle touching each other and parallel to the opposite frame by the opponent, then one of those coins can be pocketed by cross double without disturbing other coin from the right base circle, the left coin can be pocketed in the left base pocket by a straight grip and from near the left base circle, the right coin can be pocketed in the right pocket by a flat grip (scissor or any other flat grip) (See figure 5-A). With the flat grip the left coin cannot be pocketed due to the spin in the striker. Hence, the player having such a grip should not try to pocket the left coin. They can pocket the right coin very easily. As shown in figure 5-B coin in thumbing position which is difficult due to a blocked pocket it be pocketed by hitting it on the side frame. It is a variety of a cross double though it is called a cross second.



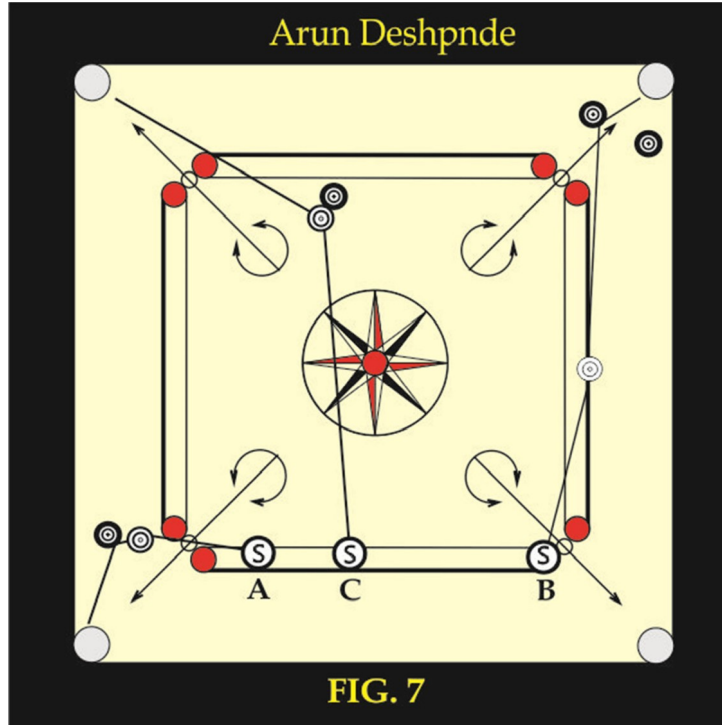
A & B- PRESS

PRESS:

As shown in figure 6 if two coins are touching each other and are in a straight line parallel to the side frame, the coin which is nearer to us can be pocketed in the front pocket is called a press. A little more force should be applied than that required for pocketing a single coin.

From where this stroke is to be played depends upon the other (second) coin. As shown in fig. no. 6 A, if both the coins are ours, then striker then striker should be placed in maximum cross line with the coin and should and should hit the coin at center point. The striker should travel to the side frame. By such a press, our coin goes into the opposite front pocket and the opponent's coin comes to our base frame.

If the second coin is of opponent as shown in figure 6-B (Black coin) then the striker should be placed in maximum cross line and should hit the coin at the center point. The striker should travel towards the side frame. By playing such a press, our goes into opposite front pocket and the opponent's coin comes to our base frame and becomes difficult for the opponent. In this stroke, even if our coin is not pocketed, the opponent's coin becomes difficult and we get one more turn for it. Even if there is a distance in between these two coins the press stroke can be played. In this position, a player has to apply more force and should hit at the center. Here the opposite coin cannot be pocketed. A heavier striker is always better for this stroke (of course as per rules the weight of the striker should not exceed 15 gms.)

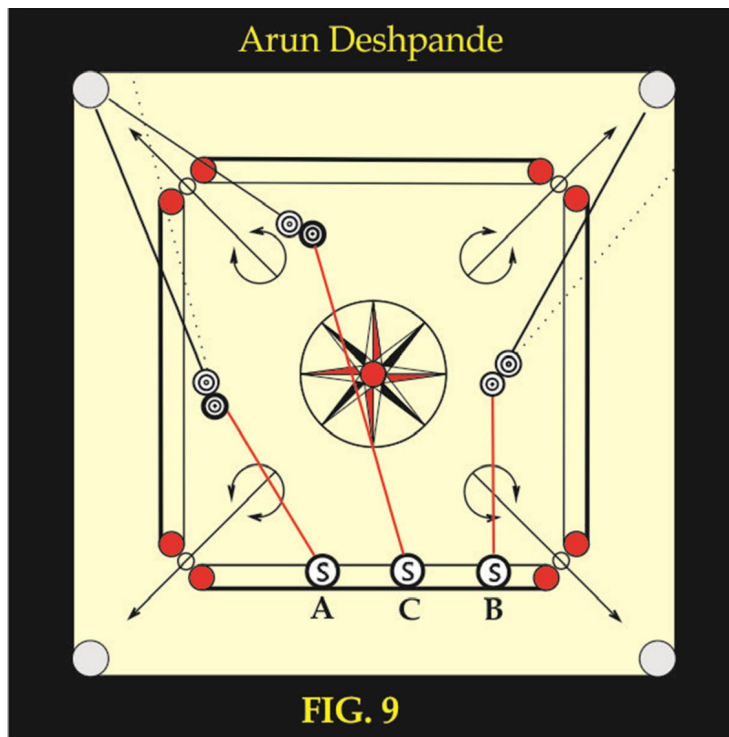


A, B, C- TOUCH

TOUCH:

When a player pockets his own coin by touching it to the another coin, the stroke is called touch. As shown in Fig. 7-A if the opponent's coin is near the left frame and our coin is near it, the touch can be played. By playing a touch stroke in this position, not only will our coin go into the pocket but the opponent's coin also comes near our base frame and becomes difficult for him. As shown in figure 7-B, if there is an obstruction for our coin and if any coin is near the opposite frame near the pocket, then our coin can be pocketed by the touch stroke. By using this stroke, the path of the coin can be changed. As shown in figure 7-C, if two coins are touching each other and they are in a cross line, then the first coin can be pocketed very easily. The striker should hit the first coin at the center point. If these two coins are away from the pocket (the pocket in which the first coin is to be pocketed) and from the striker (base lines) then these coins should be in less of a cross line. If these coins are near the pocket or the striker, the coin should be in more of a cross line. e.g. If there is a coin at the center of the opposite base line and the other coin is touching it from the opposite end then these two coins should be in a straight line perpendicular to the opposite frame. Only then can the first coin be pocketed by a touch stroke. The point where the striker should hit depends upon the

position of these two coins e.g. if these two coins are at the center of opposite base lines perpendicular to the opposite frame, striker should hit slightly at right side if the coin is to be pocketed to the opposite left pocket and striker should hit slightly at the left side if the coin is to be pocketed to the opposite right pocket. A player should try many such positions only then can he will understand the exact position of these two coins and the point where the striker should hit. Most of the players think of pocketing in the front pockets and therefore even if there is a possibility of pocketing coin into base pockets, they do not think of it. e.g. As shown in figure 8-A two coins of the opponent are blocking the possibility of our coin going to the front pockets but if you observe, our coin can be pocketed to our base pocket by a touch stroke as shown in figure 8-A. Like-wise there are many chances of touch stroke in a bunch of coins by rebound, whereas the player does not play this stroke and drags the bunch blindly. Many a time there remains a bunch of four coins after the break as shown in figure 8-B. From this bunch a white coin can be pocketed by touch in the front pocket. A player who breaks from the right side should try to pocket such in the opposite left pocket and a player who breaks from the left side, should try to pocket the coin in the opposite right pocket. While playing such a stroke the striker should hit the lower portion of the black coin with medium force. As shown in fig. 8-C if the opponent's coin blocks the way of our coin then our coin should hit the frame in such a way that while returning from the frame it should touch the opponent's coin and should travel towards the pocket. While playing such a stroke the striker should follow the coin up to the frame where coin strikes it.



A B C Wrong shot

SHOT:

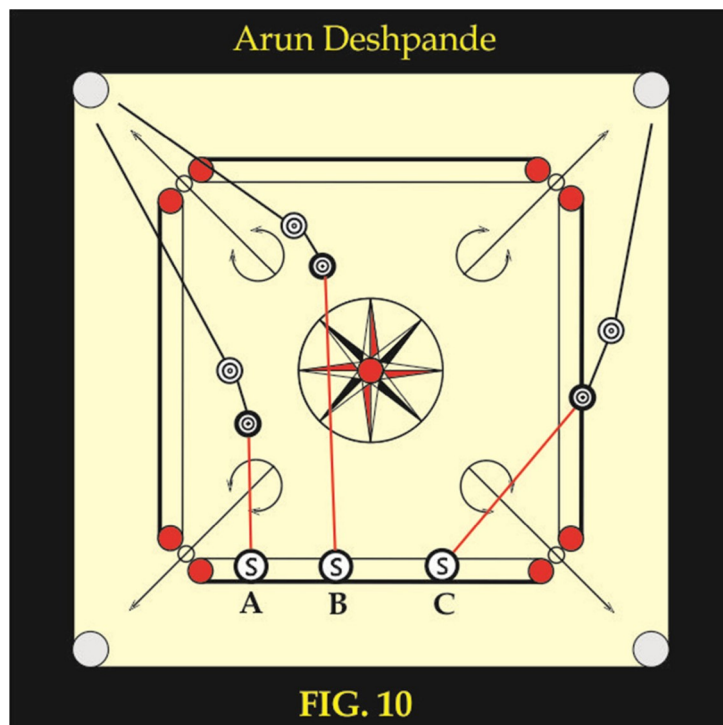
As shown in figure 9, if two coins are touching each other and the coin in front is pocketed by hitting striker to the coin behind it, then it is called a shot. If this shot is in the straight line of the pocket then it is very easy to play. But one cannot get

straight shots all the time. How to play these shots when they are not facing the pocket in a straight line, should be noted.

As shown in fig 9A, this shot is not facing the pocket but facing the opposite frame this shot seems to be difficult but it is very easy if played properly. For playing this shot take an imaginary line from the pocket passing through the second coin where it ends is the hitting point in all such shots. As these shots are not facing the pocket they are called wrong shots. (See figure 9-A). In fig. 9-B the shot is facing the right frame. For playing this shot the striker should be placed in the straight line with the first coin and should it hit straight. (See fig. 9-B)

In figure 9-C, the shot is facing the left frame. For playing this shot, the striker should be placed in a slightly cross line with the first coin and should hit the first coin at 1/8 the portion. The position of these shots is more and more towards the opposite frame and away from the pocket it should be viewed more and more in a straight line with the opposite frame. e.g. A shot which is near to the opposite frame in the middle, then it should be parallel to the

opposite frame, only then can this shot be played. From this it can be easily understood that when a shot is facing the opposite frame on the left or right side, the shot should be played by placing the striker in a cross line and when the shot is facing towards the left or right frame then it should be played by placing the striker in a straight line or slightly cross line with the first coin. A player should try to take advantage of these shots for making difficult coins easy and to create better positions by playing the striker at the different place and hit the coin at the same point where it is to be hit for pocketing it.



A, B, C- PAIR

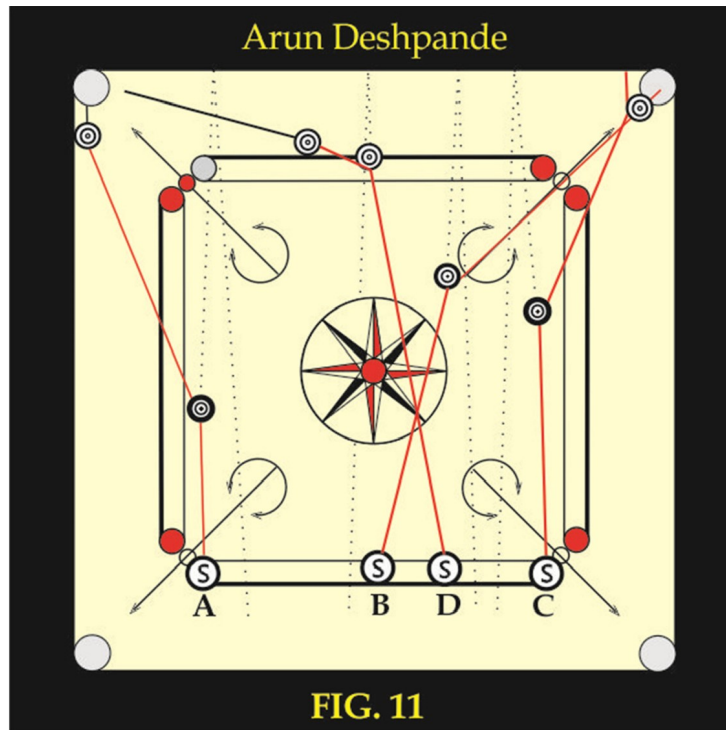
Pair:

If there is a gap in between two coins of shot then it is called pair here exactly the reverse principle of that used for the shot should be used. As shown in figure 10-A and B the direction of the pair is towards the opposite frame. In this case as shown in the figure the striker should be placed in a straight or slightly cross line as the case may be, and should hit the first coin. The pair of figure 10-B should be played with a little more force. As shown in figure 10-C if the direction of the pair is towards the side frame, then the striker should be placed at a deeper angle and should be released with a medium force. In all

cases the first coin should hit the second coin at the point where an imaginary line from the pocket intersects it.

CANON:

When there is considerable distance between two coins of a pair it is called canon. A canon may consist of more than two coins. It is very difficult to play a canon because there is considerable distance between the two coins and therefore the stroke requires great accuracy.



A,B,C,D- GLANCE

GLANCE:

As shown in figure 11-A, a striker is released on the first coin and the second coin is pocketed while the first comes near the base frame by hitting opposite frame. This stroke is called a glance. While playing a glance care should be taken. Many

Players do not take the position of the coin into consideration and play the glance. After getting bad results, they blame their fortune.

After glancing the first coin when the striker reaches the second coin the direction of striker should not towards the pocket but should be towards the opposite frame or side frame after hitting the second coin.

See figure 11-A. Here after hitting the second coin, the direction of the striker is towards the side frame and therefore there is no possibility of a double due.

In figure 11-B, there is every possibility of double due as the second coin is at the center of the pocket and direction of the striker is towards pocket, after hitting second coin.

In figure 11-C the position of the second coin is the same as that in figure 11-B But the position of the first coin is changed Therefore, for Playing glance the striker should be placed on the base circle The direction of the striker after hitting the second coin in figure 11 - C, is towards the opposite frame and therefore there is no possibility of a double due.

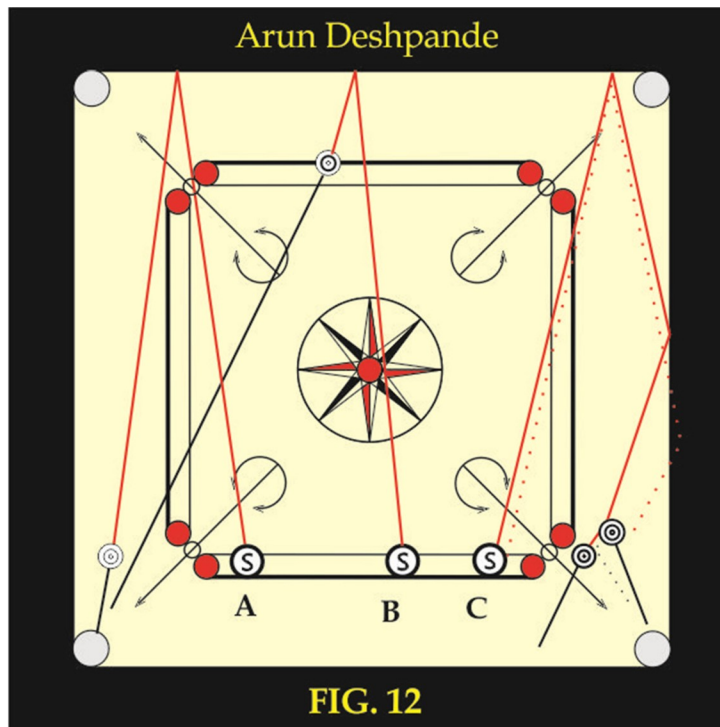
One can see from the above fig. that the position of coin for the glance is very important. Unless a player gets a better position for playing the glance, it is useless to play such a stroke. This stroke can be used more in a defensive game. By playing a glance, the opponent's coin can be brought to our base frame, pocketing our own coin and thus making opponent's coin difficult for him. For playing this stroke, it is not necessary that our coin should be near the pocket. To bring the opponent's coin towards our base frame and away from pocket, a glance should be played by placing the striker in minimum cross line with opponent's coin. The use of this stroke can also be made to make our coin easy. As shown in fig. 11-D, our coin, which is near to the opposite frame, can be made easy by bringing it nearer to us by a glance. Thus by a glance, our coin can be brought near the base frame thereby making it easy for us. This stroke can be used in offensive game too.

DOUBLE GLANCE:

Sometimes the position of the coins is such that a player cannot aim the striker on the intended coin by glancing one coin. Thus, if there is a chance of glancing two coins one after the other, this stroke is called a double glance. A triple glance is very rare occurrence.

BRUSH:

This is just like a glance. The difference is that the coin which striker hits first, goes to the opposite or side frame instead of coming to the base frame. This stroke does not require much force. For playing a brush the striker should hit the first coin at side point. This stroke is easier than glance. If there is any obstruction for our coin, it can be removed by brushing it and pocketing our coin. This stroke is used in offensive game. By playing the brush the position of the coin on the board always changes and therefore the opponent finds it difficult to anticipate any thing and he cannot plan for his next turn. This stroke is very essential because a player can create a lot of favourable positions by applying this stroke.



A- REBOUND B- HOOK C- LANGDA REBOUND

REBOUND:

If a coin near our left or right frame is pocketed by hitting on the opposite frame, the stroke is called a rebound.

SIMPLE REBOUND:

As shown in figure 12-A, a coin near to the left frame is pocketed by hitting the striker on the opposite frame. For aiming, two straight imaginary lines can be drawn from the coin and the striker position can be chosen as a point for aiming rebound. There should not be powder near the opposite frame, while playing rebound. The striker will return slowly if there is powder near the opposite frame as it does not get a stroke. If there is powder near the opposite frame which cannot be removed in a current board, then the rebound should be played with a little more force.

LANGDA REBOUND OR OFF THE SIDE REBOUND :

As shown in figure 12-B, when a coin is pocketed by hitting the striker on the opposite and side frame the stroke is called langda rebound. There should not be excess powder near the opposite or side frame when this stroke is to be

played. If there is powder near the side frame the striker will not get a deflection, will not hit the outer portion of the coin will hit the outer portion of the coin but will hit its inner portion and there will be every chance of a due. After deflecting from the inner portion of the coin the striker will travel towards the pocket.

If there are two coins as shown in figure 12-B this stroke is advantageous. There are three advantages to it.

i) If striker does not take a proper angle after hitting the opposite and side frame and hits the inner portion of the coin instead of hitting the outer portion. Even so there is a chance of pocketing the coin due to the touch of the other coin [Fig. 12 -B - 2)

2) If these two coins belong to us then by playing this stroke one coin can be pocketed and simultaneously the other coin can be made easy because it comes to our base frame.

Sometimes there is a different position. The striker touches the opponent's coin first, brings it to our base frame and deflects on our coin to Pocket it [Fig. 12 B-3)

As shown in figure 12 - C, when a coin is pocketed by a rebound except on the left or right frame side, the stroke is called a hook. When there is a obstruction for our coin to travel to the front pocket or the base pocket by double, this stroke is used

Arun Deshpande

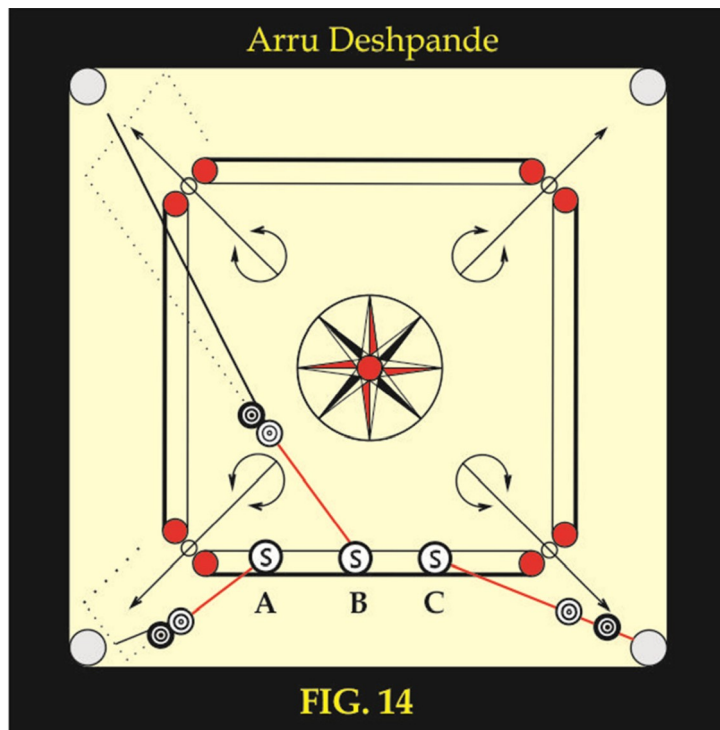
FIG.13

THIRD POCKET:

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CROSS THIRD POCKET:

As shown in figure 13-B, a coin near the side frame can be third pocketed by placing the striker in cross line and hitting the coin in such a way that the striker gets a deflection and rebounds by hitting the opposite frame. The stroke is called cross third pocket. By playing this stroke, many times our difficult coin in the path of rebound can be made easy or can be pocketed. When there is no coin in the rebound path and cross third is to be played, and then the direction of the striker after hitting the coin should not be towards the pocket while rebounding from the opposite frame. Otherwise there is a chance of a due or double due. Sometimes by this stroke, a front blocked pocket can be opened. When a double due is placed as shown in figure 13-C then by hitting hard on the quarter portion of the right coin the left coin can be pocketed into the opposite right pocket. If there is a gap in between these two coins, however small it may be, this stroke cannot be played. While playing this stroke [shown in, fig.13-C] care should be taken that the striker should not come in the way of a coin which is returning from the left frame. You should hit in such a way that the striker should hit the opposite frame after hitting the coin and should come before the coin returns.



A,B- TURNING C- FOLLOW

TURNING:

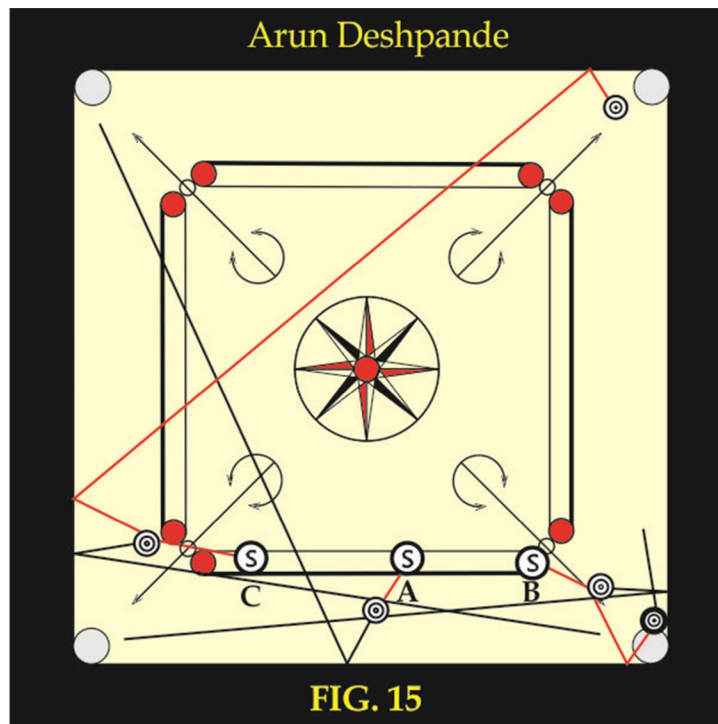
As shown in figure 14-A and B, if the opponent's coin is in front of our coin and these two coins are joint together then by hitting our coin at the center point with medium speed, placing the striker in a straight line with these two coins, our coin can be pocketed. In this case the opponent's coin strikes the side frame and is removed thereby giving way to our coin to move into the pocket. This stroke is called turning. Near our base frame even if there is a gap in between these two coins this stroke can be played. There should not be much gap in between these two coins in front of our base lines.

As shown in figure 14-B, the direction of the two coins is towards side frames. It is very easy to pocket the second coin. in such a position because the opponent's coin does not block our coin after hitting the side frame. But if the direction of these two coins is towards the opposite frame, the first coin blocks the second coin after hitting the opposite frame and therefor. In such a position it is difficult to play this stroke. For playing such coin the striker should be placed in a straight line with first and the second coin.

Sometimes there is a position where both coins are in the direction of the pocket. In such a position, both coins can be pocketed by a stroke called follow.

As shown in figure 14- C there is a gap in between two coins

Here the striker should be placed in a straight line with these two coins and the pocket. The speed of the striker should be such that our coin replaces the opponent's coin by pocketing it and then the striker follows and pockets our coin. If there is powder in between these two coins there is a chance of a double due because both the coins get pocketed without the follow of the striker and when the striker follows there is no coin left to stop the striker going into the pocket.



A, C SECOND B- CROSS SECOND

SECOND:

As shown in figure 15-A the opponent's coin is near the pocket, blocking the way of our coin. In this position, the striker can be placed in cross line with our coin and coin can be pocketed in the opposite pocket by hitting the base frame. This stroke is called a second. This situation arises often and therefore this stroke is very useful. This stroke is not so difficult if the proper angle is taken. The nearer the coin is to the base frame the straighter should the angle of the striker be with the coin the striker should go in the direction opposite to that of the coin.

As shown in figure 15-C if coin is in the path of rebound and if it is pocketed by hitting it on the side frame to the opposite base pocket then this stroke also is called a second.

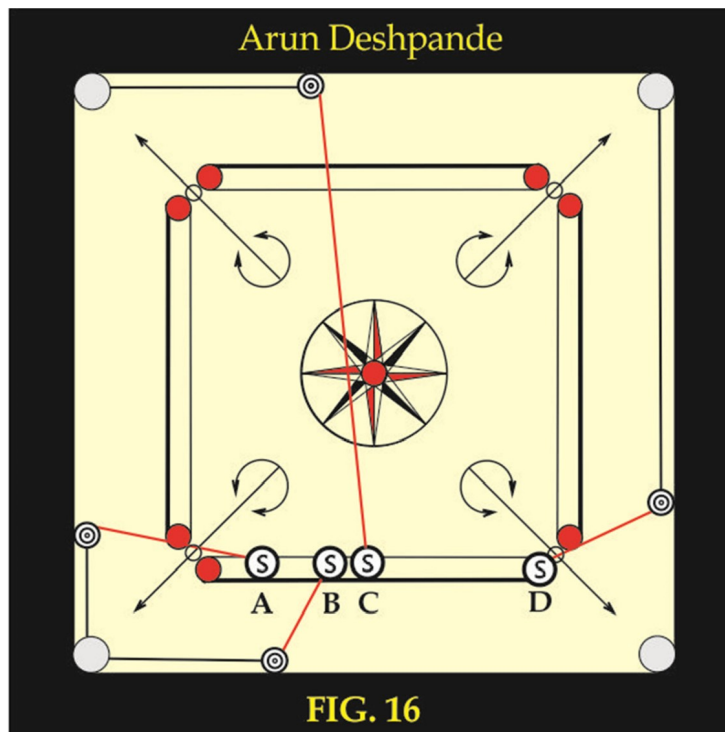
There are three advantages in playing this stroke.

- 1) The position of the other coin at the middle of the board can be changed.
- 2) Opposite blocked pocket can be opened. If the coin is near the left hand frame then the opposite right pocket can be opened and if coin is near the right frame then the opposite left pocket can be opened.
- 3) The difficult coin at the opposite frame can also be made easy. The coin at the opposite frame can also be made easy. The coin from the left frame can be very easily pocketed with any flat grip which gives natural spin to the striker.

CROSS SECOND:

As shown in figure 15-B the opponent's coin is on the pocket and our coin is behind it. In this position the striker should be placed on the base red circle and should hit our coin at a lower point, so that this coin will hit the side frame and will go into opposite side base pocket and the striker will strike the lower portion of the pocket removing opponent's coin from the pocket.

This stroke is called a cross second.



A, B, C, D- SLIP

SLIP:

As shown in figure 16-A, if coin touching any frame is pocketed by hitting on its quarter point, the stroke is called a slip, punch or quarter.

As shown in figure 16-A, if a coin is 5 inches or more away from the base pocket, and then a player should try to pocket it into the opposite pocket.

As shown in figure 16-B and C if a coin is at the base frame of opposite frame then by placing the striker slightly in a cross line with the coin the player should hit at the quarter portion of the coin with medium speed.

As shown in figure 16-D if a coin is near the base pocket then it should be slipped to base pocket. In such a position a rebound should not be tried as such a coin cannot be pocketed so easily by rebound. Sometimes there is a danger of a due if the rebound is not accurate thereby turning the coin from the frame and following the striker into the pocket.

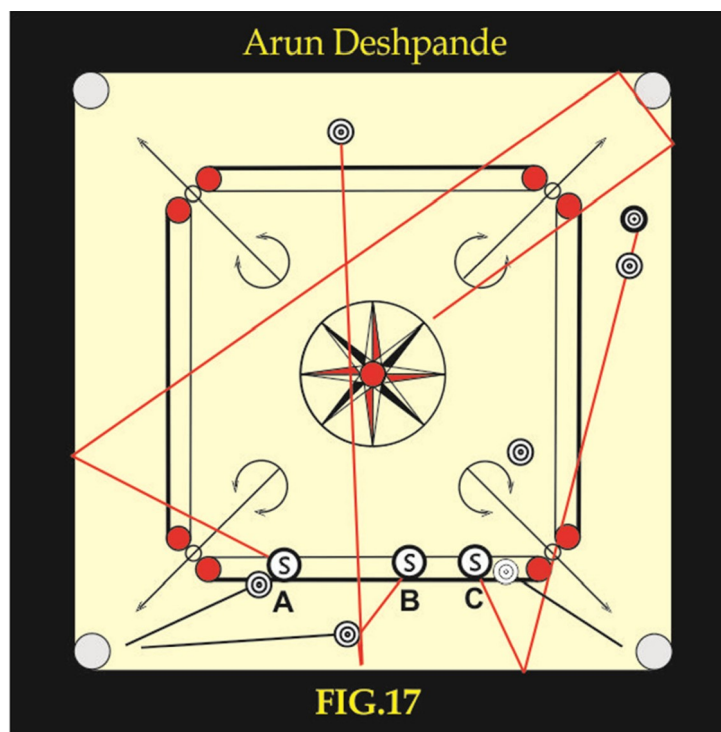
THE STRIKER SLIP:

Many times there is a position as shown in fig. 16-F. One of our coins is stuck up to the frame and the other is away from this coin and also slightly away from the frame.

Normally we shall require two strokes for playing these two coins. If you play the stroke which is shown in fig. 16-E your striker will slip from the sticking coin and will strike the coin which is little away from the frame and will be pocketed and the coin which is hit first will be removed from that position and will become easy for us. There are rare occasions when these two coins go into the pockets in the same stroke. For playing this stroke you should apply little more force than that applied for the stroke of slip.

DOUBLE TOUCH:

If the shown in figure 16 is a little away from the frames the striker should be released in such a way that it touches the coin twice and the coin is pocketed, this stroke is called a double touch. Often a player has to play double touch for the coins which are near the side frames. If these coins are more than half an inch away from the side frame only then should this stroke be played. If coins are less than half an inch away from the side frame then a rebound is easier than double touch.

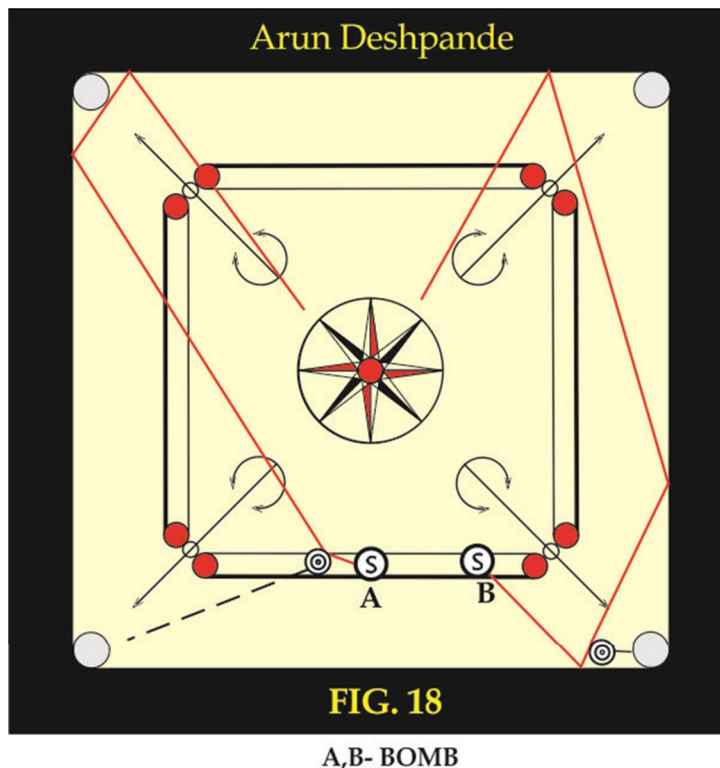


A,B,C- BOMB

BOMB (BUM):

As shown in figure 17-A and B if our coin is on the base lines and if while pocketing it, the striker is released against the side frame or the base frame very hard, the Stroke is called the Bomb. Bum is called in hindi. By this stroke, the position of all the other coins on the board can be disturbed. Therefore this stroke should be played in such a way that the coins so disturbed should not go to the opposite frame but should come near us. As shown in figure 17-A a player should hit the striker on side frame in such a way that it will strike the opposite frame at the pocket area and will return in a circular path towards the inner circle. Thus the coin from the inner circle can be brought near us. While playing such a stroke, the direction of the coin should not be towards the pocket but it should be at the base frame at least half an inch away from the pocket depending upon the position of the coins.

As shown in figure 17-B the striker is placed near our coin which is on the base line and while pocketing it, the striker is driven to the opposite pocket by hitting the side frame. By this way the coin is removed from the opposite pocket area, thereby making the pocket open for our coin. While playing this stroke the direction of the coin should be towards upper portion of the pocket. As shown in figure 17-C our coin is hit very hard in order to remove the coin from the opposite base by the striker. This stroke is also called a bomb. To play this stroke a player requires accuracy and perfection. Therefore for this stroke a lot of practice and tremendous strength in the hands is required.

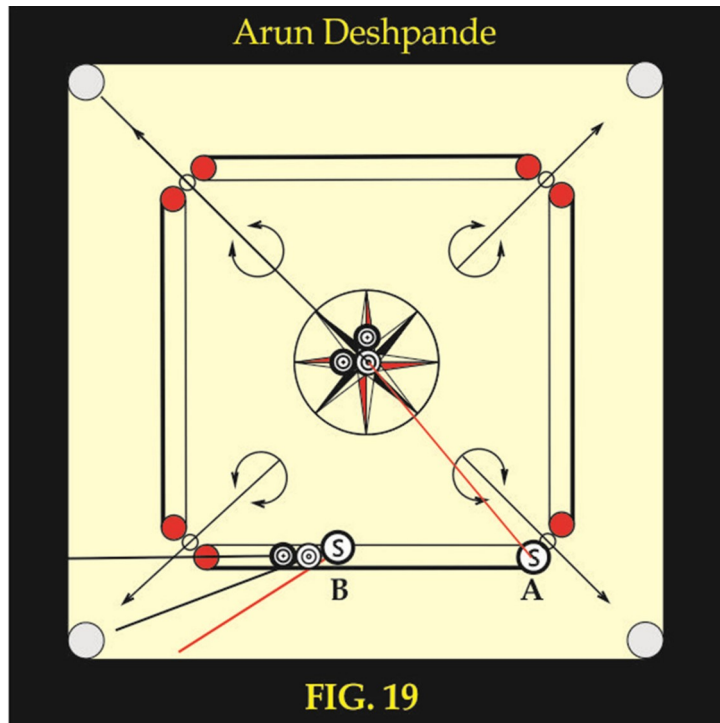


As shown in figure 18-A if a coin is in the middle of the base lines or above the base lines the striker should be placed little away from it in such a way that, after cutting the coin, the striker will deflect off the side frame at the pocket area. In this stroke, the striker can be brought into the inner circle area, thereby dragging coins from this area towards us.

By a bomb, coin from the opposite frame can be made easy. While playing a bomb, if a proper angle is taken, the striker can be driven to any part of the carrom board to drag difficult coins towards us. If a coin is touching our base frame, then instead of playing a slip, a bomb can be played as shown in figure 18-B. For this stroke, the striker should be released hard against the frame very close to the coin and not directly on the coin. For this stroke, great accuracy and tremendous strength in the thumb is required. Even though there is a gap between coin and frame, this stroke can be played. If our coin is near the base pocket and the opponent's coin is on the base lines, then a bomb can also be played by hitting opponent's coin on our coin which is on the pocket. Many players do not know this type of bomb.

If our is above the upper line of the base lines then by placing the striker near it and adjusting proper angle, this coin can be pocketed and the striker can be released hard at any point of the opposite frame. By this bomb a player can drag coins to his side as well as he can make difficult coins easy from any point of the opposite frame. If our coin is on the front pocket and opponent's coin is

above the upper line of the base lines then also this stroke can be played by releasing opponent's coin on our coin which is on the pocket. Sometimes by a stroke of touch a bomb can be played. For all above bombs a simple principle is to be kept in mind that while playing a bomb, coin should travel with a minimum speed and striker should travel with the maximum (determined) speed by adjusting a proper angle.

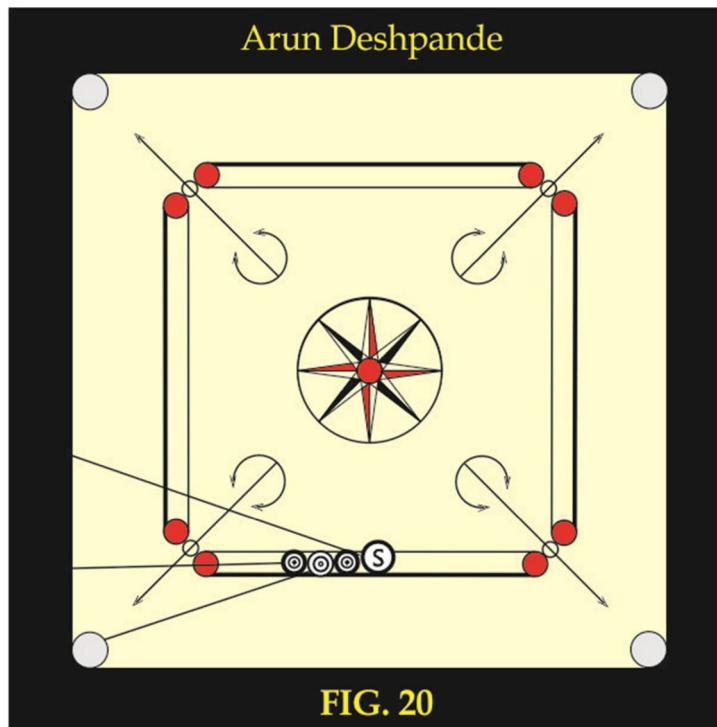


A,B- FORCE

FORCE:

As shown in figure 19- A Queen is at the center circle and two coins are touching the Queen at an angle of 45 degree from the path to the pocket. In this position if the striker is released on the Queen at quarter point hard then Queen can be pocketed by removing opponent's two coins in two different directions. In this stroke the principle of equal force is applied.

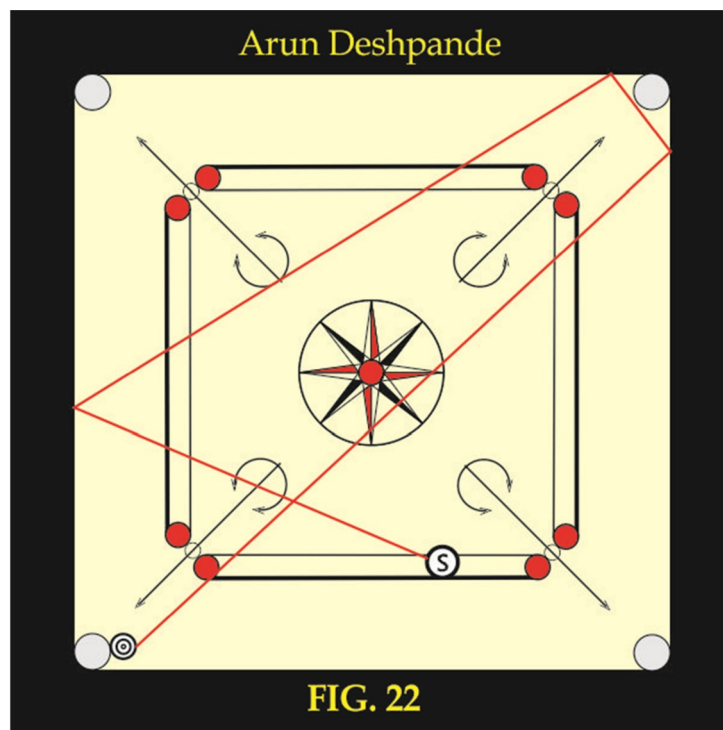
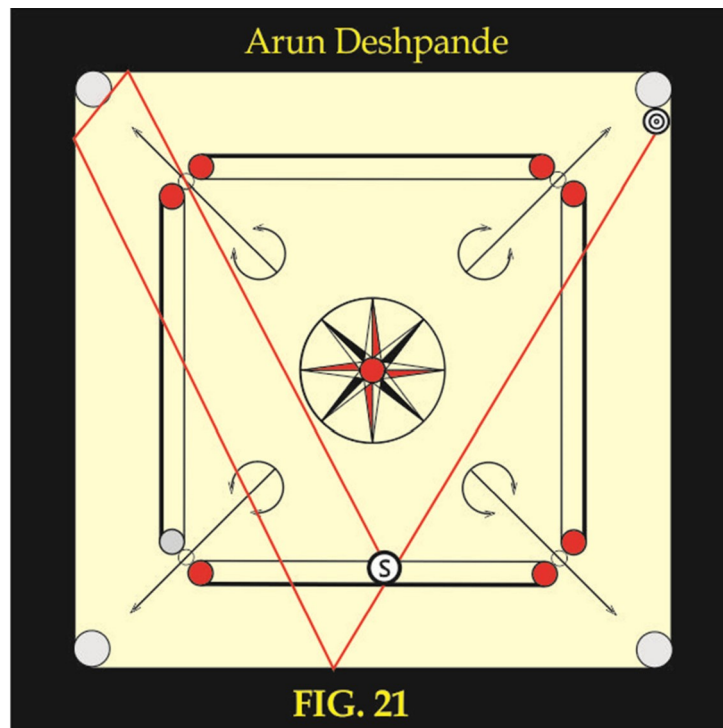
As shown in figure 19-B, on the base lines the opponent's coin is in front of Queen, touching or at some distance from it. By placing the striker very near the Queen (as near as touching) and hitting it near pocket towards the base frame, the Queen can be pocketed by driving the opponent's coin in a straight line. In the above position even if two or more coins of the opponent are in front of the Queen, the Queen still can be pocketed with the above principle but with a little more force. Many times instead of Queen our coin is there and it can be pocketed in the same manner.



FORCE

See figure 20. Here the Queen is in between two coins of the opponent and is slightly below them. It seems to be very difficult to pocket the Queen but to do it in this position is so easy that a player can pocket it even by closing his eyes. As shown in figure 20, if a striker is placed very close to the last coin and it is released towards the side frame, then Queen can be pocketed by removing the opponent's first and the last coin in a straight line.

See figure 21 to 27. In these figures some exhibition strokes are shown. For playing an exhibition match these strokes are useful. Spectators are astounded to see these strokes. A player aims at a point other than the coin and striker touches the expected coin after hitting three or more frames. As shown in figures 21 to 26 just as the striker can be brought to an expected coin (As shown in figure. 27) similarly the coin can also be moved in the same direction.



Arun Deshpande

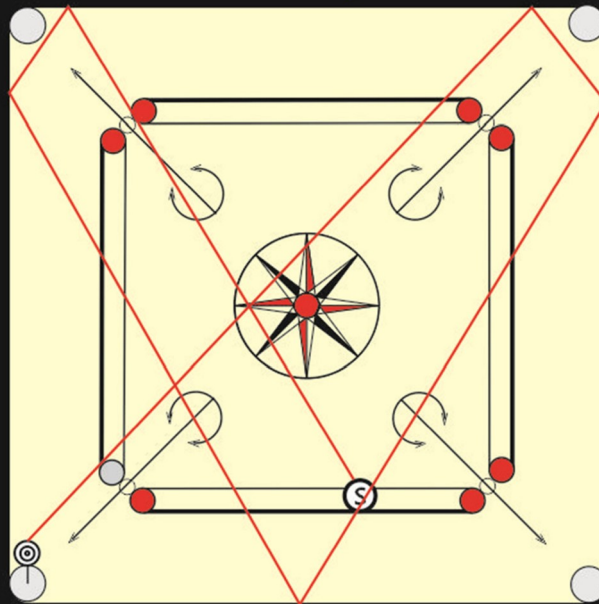


FIG. 23

Arun Deshpande

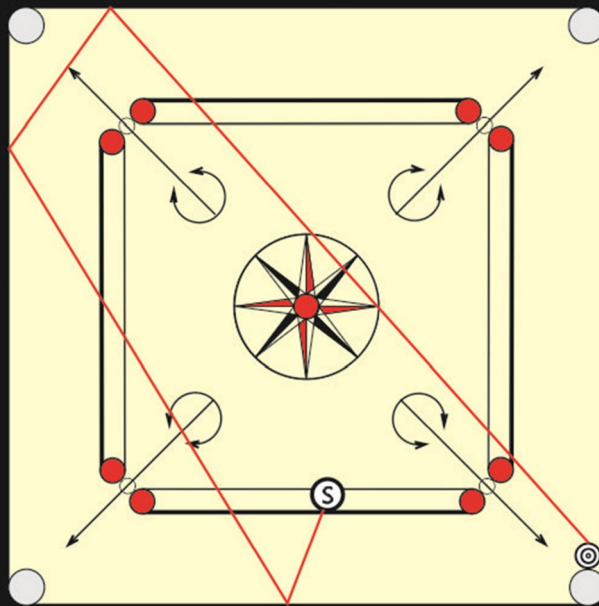
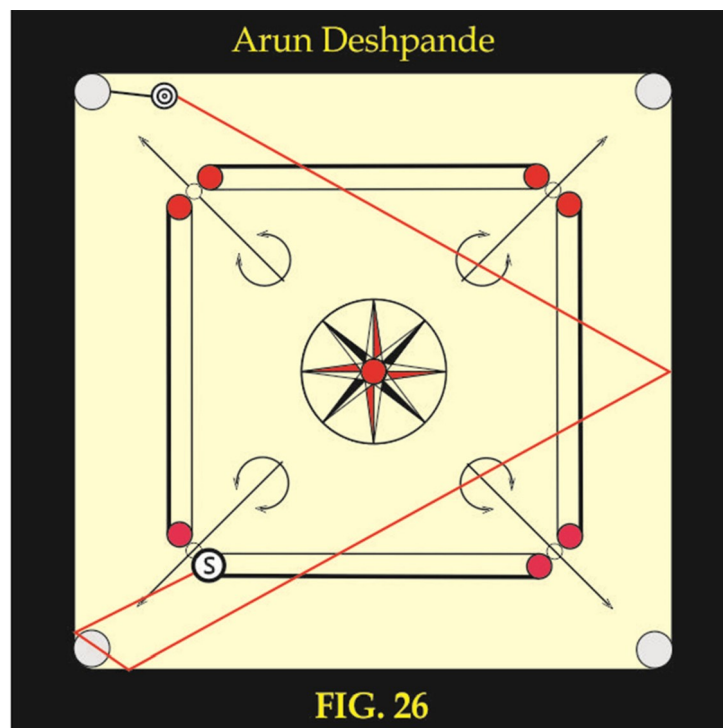
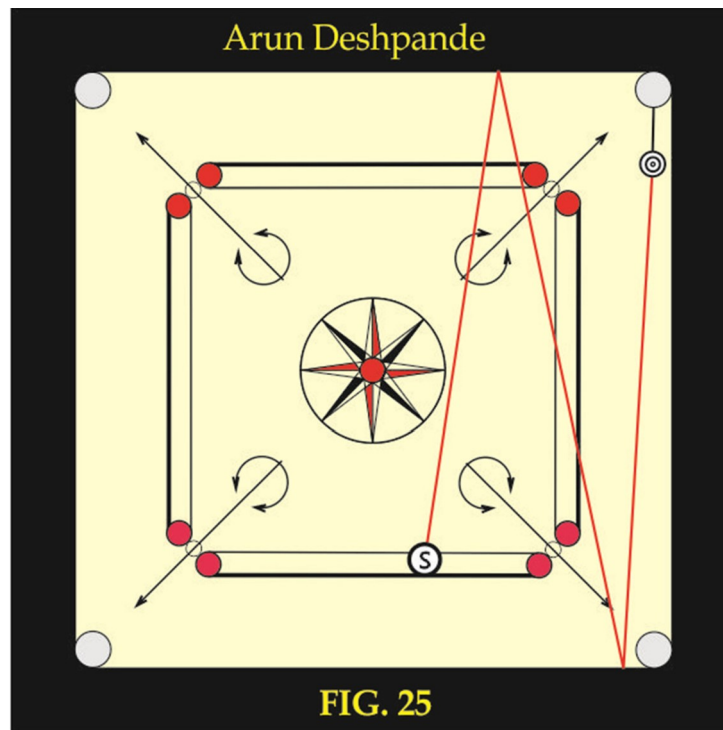
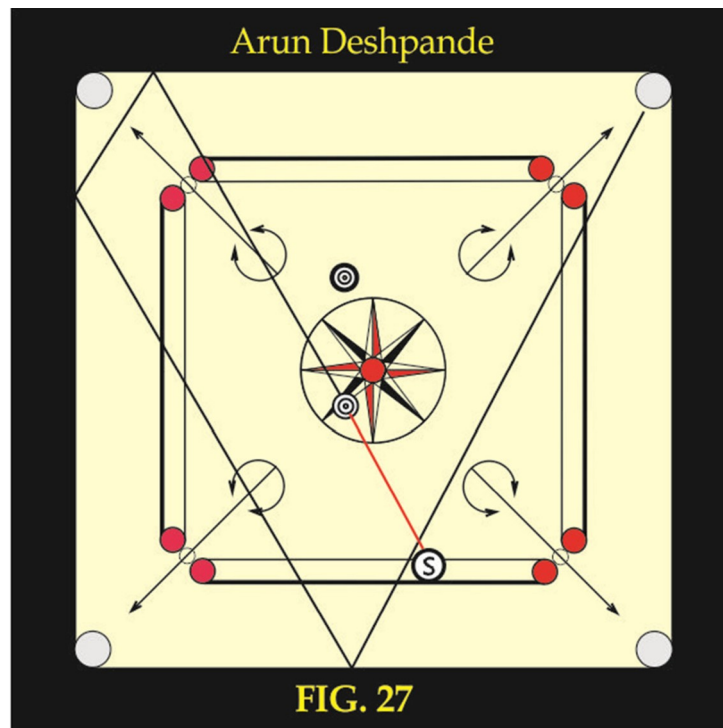


FIG. 24





Chapter 5

DEFENCE AND OFFENSE

Most people get annoyed when they hear about defence in carrom. Many of them say 'Why should such a dirty game be played'? Defence and offense are part of sports, major or minor, indoor or outdoor. Most people think that a defence in carrom is simply employed to disturb the opponent's coin. But this thinking is wrong. They realize the importance of this principle when they see the champions in action.

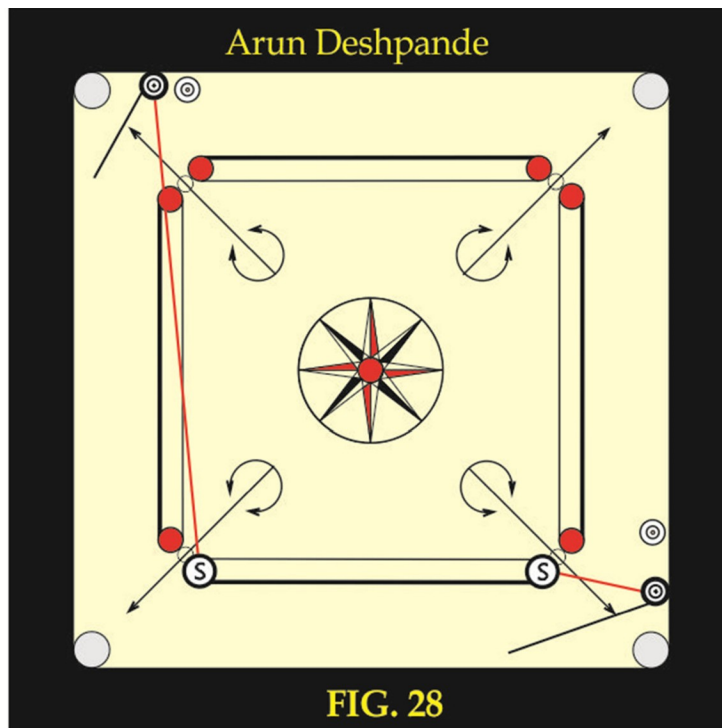
In carrom there are two types of defence

1) Direct defence 2) Indirect defence.

DIRECT DEFENCE:

When a coin of the opponent is made difficult without touching our coin the defence is called direct defence. This type of defence is used more often in doubles than in singles. This type of defence apparently seems to be very easy but while using it, a player realizes that it is not as easy as it seems. In this type of defence opponent's coin should come to the intended position. To be able to do this, a player should have control over the speed of the striker. At the same time he must know what point of the coin, the striker should hit. For

hitting a striker on the particular point he must have accuracy. In short, defence is not so easy and it requires mainly two qualities (1) Accuracy and (2) Control over the speed of the striker. In singles the opponent's coin should be brought to our base frame or at a rebound spot of the opponent. In doubles as a player on our right hand plays after our turn his coin should be brought to our left frame (opponent's opposite frame) or at the rebound spot of the opponent. Often the coins of the opponent have to be brought to his rebound side. Bringing a coin in such a position, requires tremendous control over the striker because if such coin comes very near to the frame then a rebound becomes easy for the opponent or if in such a stroke of defence if the stroke is hard then the coin after hitting on the opposite frame comes out and becomes easy for the opponent. In doubles if one coin of each pair remains on the board, then every player tries to make the coin of his opponent on his right difficult, if his own coin is not easy for him to pocket. While using such defence one should bear in mind that his opponent will also play similar defence. Therefore he should see that the coin which he is making difficult for the player on his right the same coin should be in such a position that his partner also can make it difficult for his opponent. In such type of defence, players who have control over the speed of the striker and who have patience, can only use such tactics and win the board. Now the question is in singles why is such defence necessary? The player loses his turn in making his opponent's coin difficult. As here player's coin is also difficult, his opponent gets a turn to pocket his coin. The purpose of making the opponent's coin difficult is when opponent tries to pocket difficult coin sometimes it becomes difficult for him again thereby giving a player an extra turn to pocket or remove his difficult coin. While pocketing his coin a player should see that it does not become difficult for him again or otherwise, the purpose of making opponent's coin difficult is defeated. e.g. If opponent's coin is brought to our base frame he will try to pocket it by a double. When, playing a double, if the stroke will be slow, the coin will become difficult remaining on the rebound side. Even if the stroke is hard but inaccurate the coin after hitting his base frame comes to rebound spot. Of course, for playing such defence one should have a lot of patience because sometimes, the same coin has to be made difficult for more than one turn. Sometimes spectators hoot out a player who uses such direct defence technique. At this stage a player should not lose his concentration. The same spectators praise or appreciate the player when he wins that board by employing direct defence.



As shown in figure 28, A and B a coin touching the opposite frame and side frame near the pocket can also be made difficult by hitting at its center point with more than medium force.

Many people assume that when champions are playing in doubles the fourth player will not get his turn. But this assumption is wrong. The player who has a break plays in such way that his partner can finish the board. But everybody forgets that there is an opponent in between the two partners. This opponent pockets coins which are easy for him and afterwards, he makes one or more coins difficult for the player on his right. Thus he gives his partner one turn. Thus, this cycle goes on. In doubles every player should see that he finishes the board or makes it possible for his partner to finish the board.

When players are playing doubles they should always think of their partner. Some players play a selfish game not taking their partners into consideration. Ultimately it results in a quarrel. There should be perfect understanding between the two partners. This understanding is very rare in pairs where both the players are champions. The reason is nothing but selfishness. Now the question is what is a selfish game? Often when a player plays good strokes, the spectators applaud. A player becomes somewhat over confident and flattered and tries to play coins which are difficult for him and easy for his partner instead of giving to his partner a turn. He rides high on the wave of appreciation and tries impossible strokes and loses the match. This question of understanding arises when two champions are playing because there is an ego

clash between them. In fact, if they win the match the credit goes to both of them no matter who played better. The player who is playing a good game should get maximum turns from his partner to finish the board himself when it is possible for him to finish the board. While playing in doubles a player should understand his partner. Even if his partner makes any mistakes, he should not pull him up during the board. If a player fires his partner all the time for making mistakes, then their opponents get more confidence from it and at the same time his partner loses confidence.

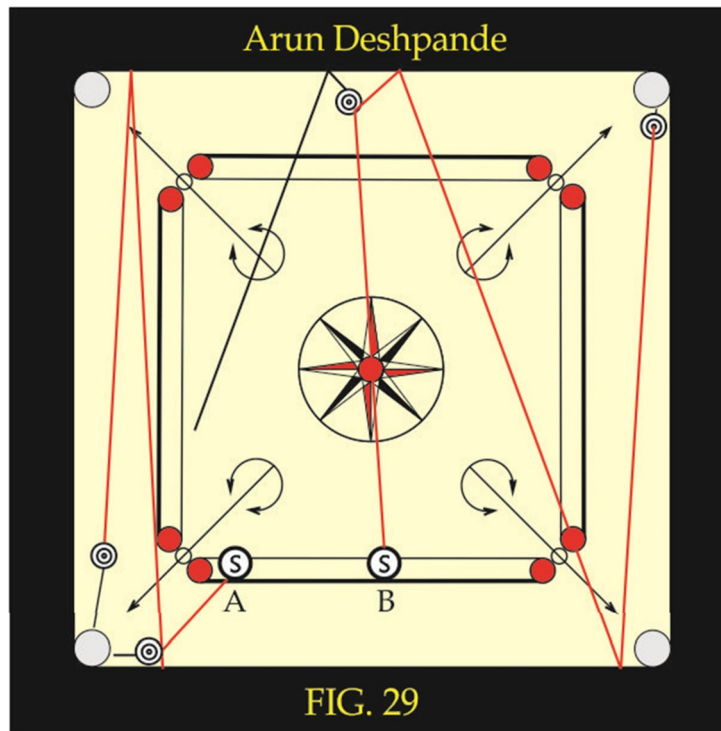
EXPERIENCE IN MADRAS:

From my Madras experience, one can understand how players lose their confidence, if their partners have a tiff with them and one can understand how a lost match can be brought back with a perfect understanding amongst the partners. Ramesh Chitty and I met Sunderraj and Shivlingam in the semi- final of National carrom tournaments conducted in 1970 at Madras. Sunderraj was playing in superb form and Shivlingam was also was giving him good support. They won the first game in just three boards without conceding a single point to us. There was a buzz of excitement all over the hall because ours was the only pair from Maharashtra who could take part in the tournament and we were very famous for our perfect understanding. Even though Sunderraj and Shivlingam were well known to the Madras spectators they had not had good record on national level. Ramesh adopted a defensive technique. In my opinion he is the best doubles player today. He blocked Sunderraj but the latter started to pocket the coins which were accessible to him and started to use defence when there was no position for a finish. It was necessary to break their understanding. Cunningly, Ramesh changed his game and he started giving Sunderraj chances to finish the board but at the same time Ramesh used to keep at least one coin away from Sunderraj which was tempting. Sunderraj was baited into finishing the board. At the same time, Ramesh used to keep an easy finishing position for me. Baited into the trap, Sunderraj missed the last twice or thrice and I got the opportunity to finish the board. We won the board. Shivalingam lost his temper with Sunderraj. He did not allow him to play a free game. He compelled him to play a defensive game. As a result, we won that game. Before the start of the third game, we got 10 minutes rest. In that period Shivalingam was pulling sunderraj up all the time. Ramesh then said, "Arun, their understanding has come to an end and now we must take advantage of the fact."

When the third game commenced, all of a sudden Ramesh started playing an offensive game and told me to do likewise. Naturally Shivlingam and Sunderraj adopted a defensive technique. In doing this, they lost confidence and failed to

pocket the coins. Thus, we got an advantage and we started playing with more offence and controlled the situation fully. We won that game in three boards without conceding a single point to them. We won the doubles National Championship by beating Y. Lazar and S. Dilli of Tamilnadu in the finals. In the singles, Suhas Kambli of Maharashtra won the National Championship by beating S. Dilli of Tamilnadu in the finals.

The methods of direct and indirect defence can be seen in further figures.



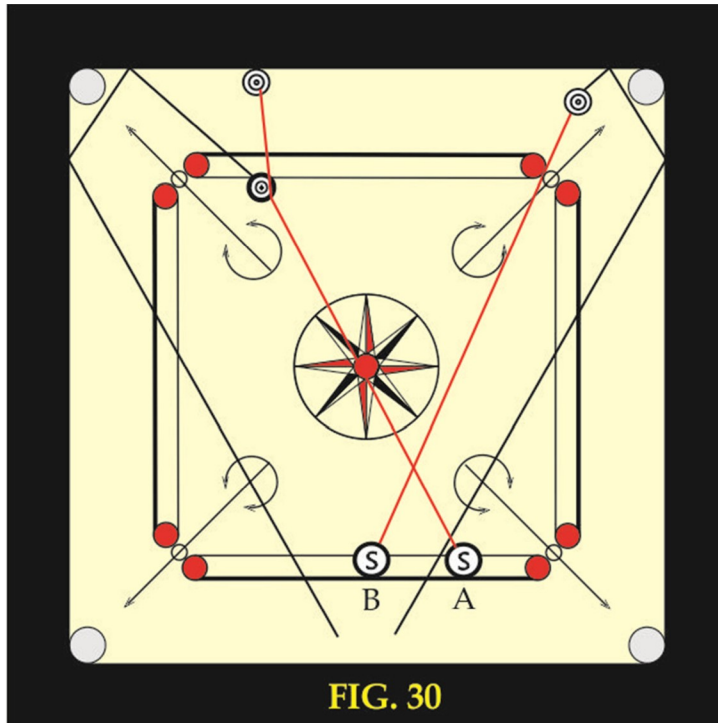
As shown in figure 29-A, one white coin is near the opponent's base frame and one white coin is on the pocket. If you hit the striker very hard on the white coin which is near the opponent's base frame at the point shown in the figure 29-A the

striker will return and it will hit your base frame near the pocket and it can pocket the white coin which is at the opposite right pocket making your difficult coin easy.

As shown in figure 29-A, if a coin at our base frame is cut hard our difficult coin at rebound position can be made easy.

As shown in figure 30-A, our coin is touching the opposite frame and the opponent has an easy coin for him. Since our coin is touching the opposite frame, it cannot be cut and the opponent's coin cannot be dragged. At the same time, the opponent's coin is in a straight line with our coin and therefore a glance also is not possible. In this position, as shown in fig. 30-A if the

opponent's coin is hit against the opposite frame near the pocket area, driving the striker on our coin the opponent's coin comes to our base frame after making a particular angle with the opposite frame and our coin goes into the pocket or comes out from that position and becomes easy for us for the next turn. This stroke looks very easy but it is not. A lot of practice is required to make such defense. By making the opponent's coin difficult the striker can be driven to different points of the opposite frame to make our difficult coins easy.



As shown in figure 30-B opponent's coin which is at his base pocket also can be made difficult by bringing it near our base frame. In these two methods, accuracy and good control over the speed of the striker is required. In this way any coin near the opposite frame can be brought to our base frame. By practice one can understand which point of the coin is to be hit to bring it to our base frame. Many a times a position comes which is shown in figure 31-A the opponent's black coin is blocking the way of our white coin of the players make efforts to pocket it with a hard rebound. They think that by hard rebound opponent's coin can be removed and their coin can be pocketed. The simple and best method is the opponent's coin should be hit in such a way that it will come to our base frame and at the same time the striker should be driven to our difficult coin to make it easy. While playing this stroke care should be taken

that the opponent should not get a position for the glance to make our coin difficult for us.

As shown in figure 31-8, while cutting our coin, the opponent's coin can be brought to our base frame to get one more turn. This game is called cut back game. It is a very useful game because by playing such a game the opponent's coin can be made difficult, our difficult coin can be made easy and a difficult bunch can be opened.

WRONG DEFENCE AND ITS RESULT:

Many players do not understand what to play at critical moments. I was playing with Kadir Khan in the finals of Nagpada Neighborhood House open carrom tournament. Kadir Khan's last coin was near my left pocket and my last coin was near the opposite pocket. It was Kadir Khan's turn, The Queen was near my base frame. Kadir Khan played in such a way that the Queen came in between our two coins at the side frame. That was the third and deciding game. The score was 28 all. Therefore the winner of that board would win the match. In this position I pushed the Queen a little further. Kadir also pushed Queen from his side. This happened three or more times. I removed the Queen from that position in such a way that Kadir was in two minds whether to defend it or to pocket it. The Queen came into position for a cut for Kadir Khan, therefore he intended to cut it, on the other hand, he was inclined to defend it because if he would have missed the Queen while cutting, then he would have lost the match. In this dilemma Kadir tried to cut and missed, I got the Queen very easily and therefore I got an opportunity to win the game and the match. He had made a mistake in defence. If he would have played correct defence I had a very rare chance of winning that match. My coin was so close to the opposite pocket that if I would have merely touched it with the striker, it would have fallen into the pocket but Kadir Khan's coin was not so near the pocket. Hence he should have removed his coin from the pocket which was block for the Queen. Then he would have got two sides for defence 1) His base frame 2) side frame where my coin was on the pocket. For me only one side would have remained for defence and that was my base frame. Therefore he had more chances of winning that board and the match if he would have played perfect defence.

INDIRECT DEFENCE :

Indirect defence can be made by many strokes which are shown in the chapter 'Shower of strokes'. The main strokes for indirect defence are a glance and a brush. Most of the time direct defence is made at the time of finishing the board while indirect defence can be made at any stage.

OFFENSE:

One can understand from the chapter 'Shower of strokes' how these strokes are useful for offense. Offense is a very important technique of the game. Only defence cannot serve the purpose of winning the match. A player must have both defence and offense. A player should try to play offense at start of the game. A player gains confidence by an offensive game and he feels that every coin on the board is easy for him. Lack of offense undermines his confidence and a player feels every coin on the board is difficult for him. In offense, it is very important to have a strategic plan regarding a coin to be played and coin to be made easy. Many players do not think of this and play an unplanned offensive game in which they fail; e.g. when the opponent's coin is blocking the way of our coin we remove it by playing the other coin. But while removing such a coin we do not think about, the position that it will reach, and therefore, sometimes it becomes an obstruction for our other coin. Therefore, before removing the opponent's coin a player should visualize its movement and see that it will not be an obstruction for his other coin. If that coin is bound to block other coin then a player should play those other coins first and then he should remove such a coin. So we need perfect planning in the game.

Often an opportunity to finish comes our way. In this position a player should perfectly plan and he should play the coin in sequence. Suppose there are five of our coins on the board and we have a finishing position but one of our coins is blocking the way of the opponent's coin. If we play that coin first and miss one of the other four coins, then our opponent finishes the board and unnecessarily we blame our luck. But if the coin which was obstruction for the opponent would have been played last, then in spite of missing the previous coin, we would have got one more chance. Therefore, a player should always plan in such a way that even if he misses his coin, he will get a turn again. We should calculate accurately the number of turns we shall concede to our opponent. We should always try to get one more turn from the opponent; e.g. if our opponent has one coin difficult whereas we have two and we have a turn then we should not try to pocket any single coin but we should try to pocket one and remove other or we should try to remove both of our difficult coins. When opponent gets a turn he has one coin difficult for him which he will try to pocket. If we get a turn the two coins are easy for us and thus we can win the board. Sometimes more of the opponent's coins are on the board and we have a game chance. In this position we should always try to finish the board by an offensive game instead of trying to win the board by defence. If we succeed, our opponent does not get an opportunity for the next board.

Ramesh Chitty and I were playing the finals of the Maharashtra state championship against Suhas Kambli and Vijay Sangam. Both pairs were reputed and therefore there was a crowd of spectators. That crowd was a rare experience. We had never had such an experience with spectators. Our chairs were pushed below the stand due to an excessive pressure of the spectators. We were helpless. There was no possibility of starting a match. When we requested them they moved back a little. Even then when we used to receive a tum we had to request spectators to move back so that we could position our chair every time. It was not a deliberate action on the part of the spectators but there was such a crowd that every man held on to the other to hold himself upright. I was reminded of a human pyramid. In the first row chairs were arranged in ascending order in height for the spectators to see the match. The match started. Suhas and Sangam won the toss. Sangam started the first board. He pocketed eight white coins and the Queen. He made the last coin easy for Suhas and he looked at Ramesh quizzically. The spectators also applauded Sangam for his game. When Ramesh got his turn he finished the board. The game became so interesting that spectators were eager in match. There was applause for every good stroke. We all were finishing boards after boards but nobody could predict who would win. It was a virtual shower of strokes and at the same time the tussle of technique and tactics was in full swing. Nobody was ready to give up. The scores ran over. Both pairs won one game each. Due to rush of the spectators it was impossible to go out to take rest. The match was started without taking rest. In the third game also there was a tough fight. Spectators were enormously excited. Every player was waiting for his rival to make a mistake. Ultimately both pairs scored 28 points each. Spectators held their breaths. Suhas had a turn to start the board. He started the board. As it was the last board he adopted a defensive technique. In that board, I too brought off two or three good strokes. Ultimately, both the pairs had one coin each left on the board. Every one tried to give full chance to his partner. It was really a tough game. We had to keep a firm control on the striker and were also expected to play correct strokes. Simultaneously we had to keep our patience. Ultimately Ramesh played spectacular defense and the coin became difficult for both Suhas and Sangam. Suhas then made his last defence and made our coin difficult for me. I was sure that their coin was also difficult for them. So I attempted to pocket my coin into the third pocket. It was such an excellent hit that my coin correctly went into the pocket and the spectators were overwhelmed with joy. That match had its own importance, as it was our hat-trick win in state level doubles. We could do it and so far, no other pair has succeeded in doing it.

Chapter-6

QUALITIES OF THE PLAYERS:

A player of any game must possess certain qualities and a carrom player is not an exception to it.

The first and most essential requirement is self-confidence. Nothing is difficult for any player who has self-confidence. He can then learn easily. But once he loses his confidence, the simplest task becomes difficult for him. So also a carrom player sitting with extreme confidence can make his difficult coins easy. While playing he can foresee the ways and means to play start to finish. If however, he lacks self-confidence, even his coin at the pocket becomes a challenge to him. One has therefore to create self-confidence by constant practice making full use of the grip and with utter devotion to the game.

Let me give below a few instances witnessed by me where the players with confidence gave a great performance.

In one of the open semifinals of the carrom singles, conducted by Jaihind Sports club, Bombay, Apparao from Andhra Pradesh and Ramesh Chitty of Bombay reached finals. The winner of the final was to be awarded a gold medal. Apparao had already scored a hat trick by winning the National championship in the previous three years, while Ramesh Chitty had a record of bagging all Gold Medal competitions. The game started and Apparao easily pocketed the first game. Ramesh, however, leveled by winning the second game. After the second game, a

Usual ten minutes break was given. While they were taking tea, Ramesh with full confidence, told my brother that he would win third game, even if Apparao took a lead. The spectators were enjoying the game and were eagerly waiting to see Ramesh win. However to their utter disappointment, Apparao showed superb form to reach 27, the game was, therefore, one sided and was completely in favour of Apparao. At this juncture, Ramesh, blessed with his confidence started his real game astonishing not only his supporters but also the opponent Apparao.

Ramesh leveled the game 27 all. The spectators were overwhelmed with joy and Ramesh conquered the last board and with it, the game and the match. He was abundantly congratulated.

In other match played at Vanamali Hall (Bombay) Suhas Kambli and Azimuddin Shaikh were facing each other. In third game Suhas took the lead and was 27 against Azimuddin's 16. In the last board, Suhas was to break. He opened the board classically by pocketing his first. He saw that his other coin was near the pocket. He then dragged and brought all his coins to his side. In these

circumstances, Azimuddin played a spectacular game which was unparalleled. He then did not allow the striker to go into the hands of his opponent. He took all the nine coins with the Queen in only one spell and won the match by taking 13 points.

In the National Championship competition in 1970, a match played at Madras between Suhas Kambli of Bombay and Satyanarayan Dilli of Madras again brought out the great determination and self-confidence in both the players. In the final Suhas took the first game easily. In second game too, he led 28-6. The spectators were thus watching a one sided game, but here, Dilli stopped Suhas and leveled the game 28 all. He played superbly in the last board to win the game, In the third

and final game the position was just the reverse. Dilli was encouraged by his supporters and he took the lead 28-6. The spectators were thinking that Suhas was finished as he lost the second game. Suhas was however fully confident and gracefully he leveled the score 28 all. The spectators were watching with delight and Suhas forced his win by winning the final board and the match.

CONCENTRATION:

If we read a book with concentration we remember most of what we read. Similarly if we concentrate in on carrom, we are able to observe the changing position of the coins and we can thus rearrange and manipulate our game.

Concentration of mind can help us to fix a point on our coin where we have to strike for pocketing it. If a player does not look outside and concentrate on the board only, his eye sight gets set and in the process he gains confidence.

OBSERVATION:

Players never think of observing the game. They can learn only by observation. One can learn and improve if one's observation is keen. An opponent can also be judged by observation of his game and his deficiencies can be best exploited to our benefit.

In an International First test against SriLanka I was playing against Fernando. I lost first game. I was observing Fernando's game keenly and I noticed that Fernando was making maximum use of brush and glance. While playing the second game, I played in such a way that Fernando could not get opportunities

to use his weapons. He then lost his confidence and yielded second and the 3rd game in my favour.

In Bombay I met an opponent whose game on his right was weak. He was playing well on his left side. I therefore played in such a way that his maximum coins were brought to his right side. Even I shifted my placement of striker to right for the break.

Improper observation or no observation also results in misguiding the strokes; e.g. if there is some powder near the coin the player does not notice it. He plays as usual and finds his coin not reaching the pocket.

In a match Played at Nagpada Neighborhood House, Ramesh chitty was playing against kadir khan in the quarter finals, Kadir Khan's last coin was near the front pocket. Kadir, however, failed to observe a lump of powder near the border. He had to only pocket that coin to win the match. The way in which Kadir gripped the striker, Ramesh being a seasoned player understood that Kadir would make a double due. Kadir really did so, and lost the match because of his failure in making a proper observation.

NEVER HAVE OVER CONFIENCE:

However, confident a player may be, he should never be over confident. Generally a player becomes over confident when he takes a formidable lead. I shall now quote an instance of players losing the match because of over confidence.

In the state level final, doubles match played between Ippakkayal and Kairamkonda of Bombay Amateurs club and Suhas Kambli and Devji Sumra, a well-known pair in Bombay, the latter pair won the first game easily in just three boards. In the second game also they reached again in 3 boards and were just one point short of winning the game and the match, Kambli and Sumra then became over confident and Started playing with at most ease trying to pocket easy coin by exhibition strokes. The amateur pair, however played cautiously and won the second game thus making Kambli and Sumra lose their confidence in the third game. They lost their control on the striker and lost the third game and the match only because of their overconfidence.

In one such match played at state level Suhas Kambli underestimated the performs of Sumra although Sumra was playing extremely well in that tournament. In the quarter final match played between Ramesh and Sumra, Ramesh lost and admitted that, despite the best ever game played by him Sumra exhibited excellent form to defeat him. Ramesh, therefore, advised Mohamed Tahir to play a watchful semifinal game against Sumra. Tahir also replied that with a proper defense, he would play against Sumra and he was

over confident that Sumra would not be in a position to win against him. However, in that match, Sumra showed superb form and Tahir was taken aback. Sumra easily won the match against Tahir despite of the good defense by the latter. In the final, Sumra

was to play against Suhas Kambli, the other players advised Suhas to be watchful as Sumra was initiating the break with a fine display. Suhas was overconfident and said that he too could make a good break and could also put up a solid defense. However Sumra, from the beginning dominated the game and before Suhas could put up any resistance, Sumra won both the games in just 25 minutes; Suhas could gather just five points in one game and could not get a single point in the other game. Tahir and Suhas thus lost to Sumra, because of their overconfidence.

I also fell to overconfidence once at Madras. Suhas Kambli and I reached the singles final by defeating Satyanarayan Dilli and Lazar respectively. I took the first game. The thought struck me that Suhas had rarely faced any defeat at the hands of any player from outside Bombay and I thought of defeating him. I became slack as I had won the first game. Suhas however played correctly and I then had to accept the worst ever defeat as a carrom player. I lost the second and third game 29-0, 29-0. This is the fate of an over confident player and was a lesson for an over confident player and was a lesson for me.

STABILITY OR PATIENCE:

A player should not lose his temper at any cost. Even if an opponent is left with the last coin to win the board, the game or the match one should not accept defeat till the coin is actually pocketed by his opponent. I have seen a few players accepting defeat at this stage and conceding the match. This is absolutely incorrect.

In Nagpur, in a quarter final match played between me and Stephenson of Coimbatore, we both won the first and second games respectively. In third game, we had a neck to neck fight. Stephenson was 28 while I was on 27.

Stephenson practically cleared the board and ultimately, only one of his coin was on the board, that too at distance of just 1" away from the right hand pocket. My defeat was imminent. I could have accepted defeat and left but I quietly remained in my seat. Stephenson because of his over confidence arranged his stroke wrongly and instead of pocketing the coin easily, made a double due. I placed both his coin in the outer circle and he could not pocket any of them. Ultimately I cleared all my five coin to win the game and the match.

In Madras, I had to play against Apparao in semi-finals. Apparao, as stated earlier, had a record of a hat trick in the National Championship. We both took

one game each. I was playing a wonderful game and the spectators were also full of praise for me. I, therefore, played an offensive game and made 27 points against only 2 by Apparao. Despite the situation, Apparao was very calm. Slowly and steadily, he started reducing the gap and won the third game and the match. I am sure he could do it only because he was patient throughout.

I had seen a superb combination of confidence and patience in the game of Ahmed Ansari of Bombay. I played a match against him in the Nagpada Neighborhood House tournament at Bombay. We both pocketed one game each and in the third game, I increased my lead to 27 Nil.

Thereafter, Ansari played a wonderful game. He opened the board and cleared it in one spell, thus made 14 points. In the board played subsequently, I got one point and my score reached 28. He again opened the Board and gave a repeat display to make 14 points and leveled my score 28 all. The spectators gave him loud applause. In the board, although I had a break, he got the point and won the match. This was the only example in the history of carrom that where a player played two consecutive break to finish games. The record was equaled by v. Lazar of Tamilnadu in the Madras Nationals against Kadirkhan of Bombay but he lost the match. He had made white slam in the last board of first game and first board of the second game.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE OPPONENTS:

Never underestimate your opponent. I had once committed this blunder in the Kurla Sports club open competition. I was playing against a boy Balu Iyer. As Balu was a regular player of Kurla sports club, I was well acquainted with his game. It was the first round of the match. I had decided that I would make an attempt to pocket all the coin in one spell. I started my attempt from the very first board but I could not achieve what I had intended to. In the second game, I started with the intention of getting a full board but as I could not get it. I allowed Balu to win the board. He thus won the second game. I thought that I would certainly get a break to finish in the third game. However, the third game started in such a manner that my coin became implicated and I lost all my concentration. Balu made full use of the situation and took the lead 23-0. As it was the first round, 8 boards limitation rule was applicable to it. Only 3 boards were to be played and it was obligatory on me to take the game in remaining three boards only. Realising the situation, I changed my game and then only the situation turned favourable for me. I could reach 29 in these 3 boards to snatch the match. Ultimately I won the tournament.

But I could not forget the first round in which I was about to be thrown out only because I underestimated the opponent.

Another experience I had in the Bandra Open Carrom Competition. During these days Abdul Jabbar had created a sensation in Carrom competitions. He was to play against Devji Sumra. Sumra was very junior and to reach the board comfortably, he had to take support of a couple of pillows on the chair. Jabbar was therefore least worried and was playing an irresponsible game. However, before Jabbar could visualize the situation, Sumra pocketed the first game in just four boards and within hardly seven minutes. Jabbar immediately came to his senses and understanding the situation played cautiously. He won the second and third game by virtue of his experience and using all the tactics that he had. Jabbar had to fight hard to win that match had he continued to underestimate Sumra he would have been defeated. A few years after, the same pair fought again at Vanmali Hall, Dadar. It was an unforgettable match. Both played extremely well in the first game to score 28 all. The last board was to be opened by Jabbar and taking advantage of the position, he pocketed all the coin with the Queen to win the game. He repeated a similar feat in the second game to win the match. When the score was 28 each again. Thus Jabbar made break to finish in the last board of each game. (a record).

AN OPEN MIND:

A few players after playing well start thinking that they are the champions and now there is nothing left to learn. They conveniently forget that knowledge is a vast ocean and whatever we learn is only a microscopic part of it. Every player should always bear in mind that he has to learn more and more. No sooner do these players complete their scheduled matches then they leave the hall and do not take interest in watching the game of others. They never wish to learn from others. Every stroke on the board changes the position of coin on the board and under such odds how others play and what they achieve is worth watching. We can only learn from such experiences. A wonderful stroke, cut or glance played by a player can make us think of using it in our game, provided we give due attention to the game of the others. A player should have creative mind. He should always be in search of new strokes or combinations of different strokes.

PRACTICE:

Practice is a necessity for any game. It can be had by various ways and means. One can have it alone by attempting various strokes, cuts and glances himself. A few players play with comparatively less skilled players. They naturally dominate in such a practice but this method is of no benefit in the long run. As far as possible, one should practice with a better player or at least with a player of one's own standard. One should practice with players having different styles in order to get in touch with a qualitative game. If we play with same players again and again our game becomes stereotype and monotonous. For continuous practice, one should have patience and concentration. The combination of these qualities is admirable in case of five times National champion Suhas Kambli. He spends hours together practicing all alone. In 1959, Suhas and I were selected to play in the Junior National Championship to be played at Hyderabad. During those days, the National competitions were played on 32"x32" boards. We were accustomed to play on board having dimensions of 29"x29". All the players in Bombay therefore had to practice on a board of 32"x 32" and one such board was made available to us at Ghalib Club Bombay. I used to go and practice in the club. To my surprise, I never met Suhas in the club as he was busy 'kite flying'. I think, God has gifted this player amply since he is expert in all sorts of games. Once he visited Galib Club and played against me. Prior to that, I had no opportunity to witness his game. Suhas naturally lost against me in just 3 boards and without a single point against his name. He took this defeat so badly that thereafter, he practiced on that board for 36 continuous hours without even food or drink. He is a unique example of such concentration. He then entered the competition to become a

sensation at Hyderabad. Of course, it is up to every individual player as to how long and in what way the practice should be had. It all depends on one's grip. I have a different method. I never practice on the day I have to play a match. I sit at the carrom table with as earnest desire to play since I have deprived myself of this pleasure throughout the day. I think that is why I can put up a very good show. In case, I have to play daily in some competition, my game on the earlier day is my practice. I do not practice in between my two matches. Of course, my grip is simple and my heart and soul in the game is my might. Carrom has therefore never interrupted my routine. In one of the National competitions I met Suhas Kambli in quarterfinals. The match was in the evening and as per my routine, I did

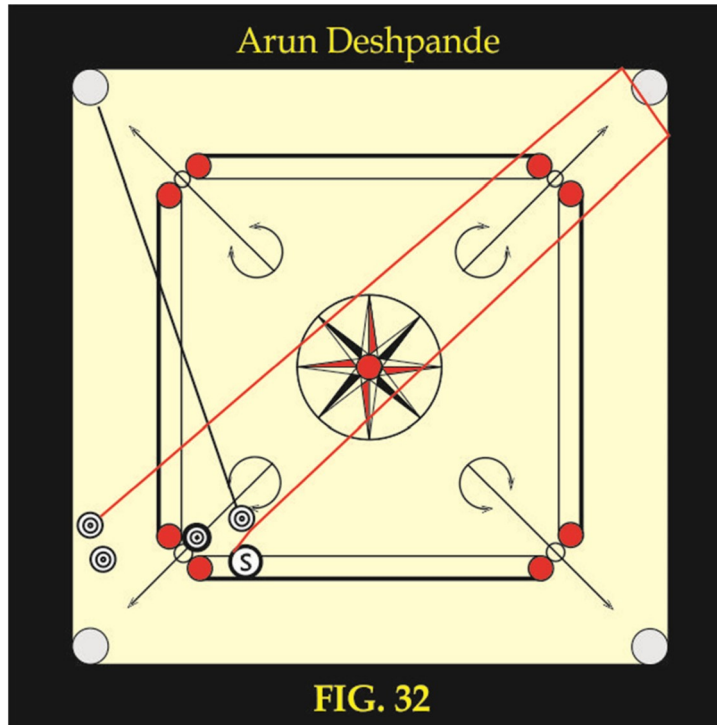
not touch carrom during the day. As against that, Suhas was practicing throughout. The official of the Association asked me to have a bit of practice. He was wondering whether I had come for play or rest. I turned a deaf ear and was eagerly waiting for the evening to come. Because of my earnest desire to play, I gave an excellent performance. In the first game, although Suhas never allowed me to pocket the Queen even once, I won the first game. The second game was also easily taken by me to win that match. However, I strongly feel that a player should be in a position to play for longer durations. In National competitions, about five matches are required to be played daily and the player has to play continuously for 10 to 12 hours a day. Ramesh Chitty, a stalwart in Bombay needs less practice but he is unable to play for hours together. As a result of this, while he dominated local tournaments he had to accept defeat at the hands of unseeded players in the National Championships. A few players practice on 'Bulldog Carrom board'. The frames of such boards are broader as compared to 'Champion Boards', Players practicing with bulldog boards find it difficult to play on a champion board which is used for the matches. The players practice on Bulldog board which has broad border than champion board and therefore their grip changes. This change is so minor that an amateur may not even be aware of it. Ultimately, when they lose the match, they blame the atmosphere in the hall. Their persistent defeat sometimes disheartens them in competitions.

Some players deliberately prepare boards with smaller pockets. This is done with a view to augment the accuracy of the game. The player practicing on such a board has to pocket his coin in a straight line only as the pockets are just sufficient to accept the coin. Ultimately, the player is not accustomed to use such strokes which are otherwise needed. It is not true that he who pockets coin in straight line is a champion. There are several players who are able to use correct straight strokes. They are unable to win the championship as they fail to use other possibilities. Some players practice in commercially organized

clubs. In these clubs, the loser is required to pay some amount to the club owner. The owner in his turn provides materials like carrom board, coins, striker, powder, electrical fittings etc., pays rents for the place, and keeps the balance as his profit. In such clubs, a player tries to play against an inferior player in order to avoid payment of fees. Gradually the weak players gain the advantage of improving their game. Some of us feel that, in a way, it is proper to play in clubs, as the player tries his best in order to not to part with his money. I, however do not concur with this idealism. I feel that these players play with defensive tactics. While playing bet games and money making becomes one of their aims. They are constantly under pressure not to lose, they ultimately become victims of shivering, trembling losing their grip, not positioning, reeling backward and so on because of fear and panic. This is the end of their game. Some who still survive cannot maintain their form. Some spectators take bidding in favour of certain players. As the player has nothing to lose in it, he plays dashing game but ultimately, he too gets frustrated when a major share of his win is swallowed by the bidder. Finally he tries to bet independently. As money making becomes his business, he never participates in competitions and is not able to win the favours of the spectators who are real admirers of the game.

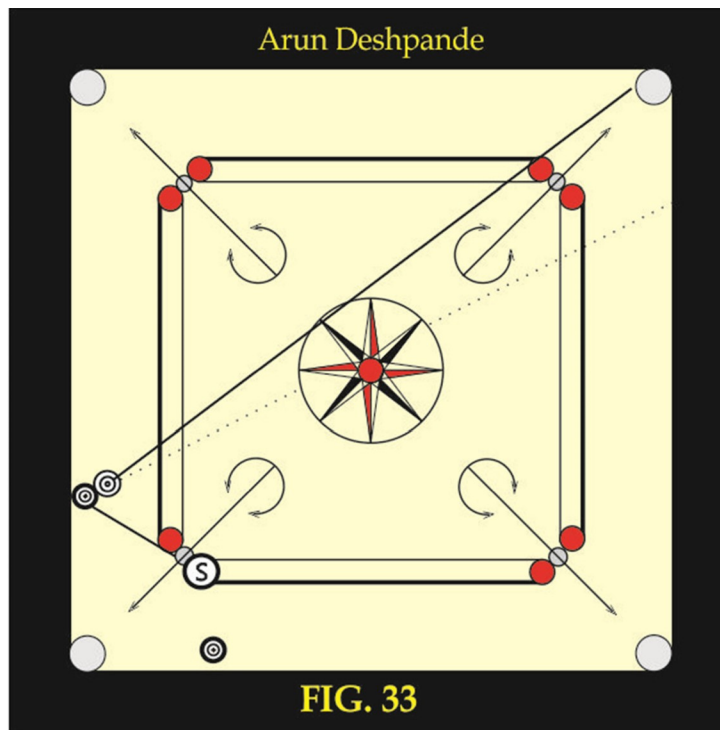
Chapter-7

ADVANCED STROKES

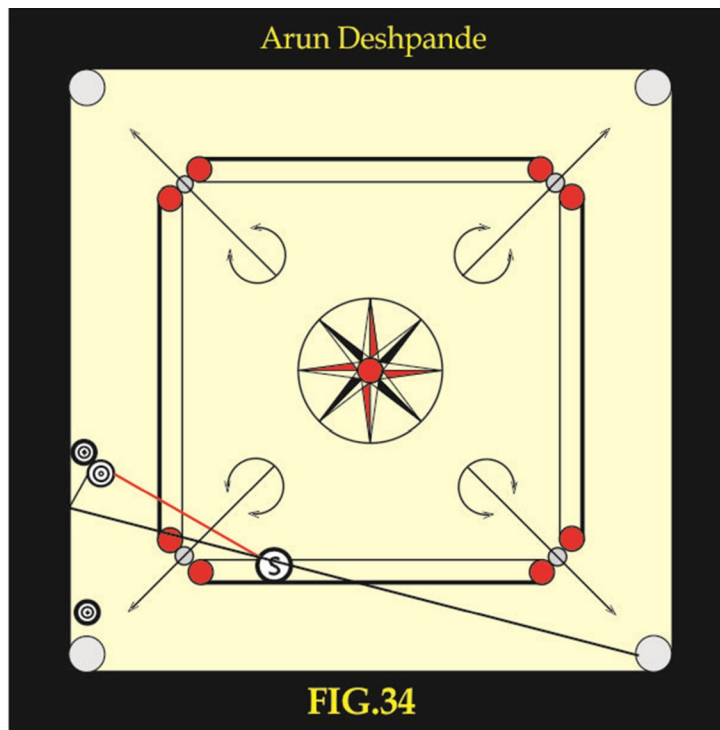


In fig.32 there are three white coins and opponent's one black coin. Our two coins are difficult at rebound position. The position of these two coins is difficult for rebound and therefore some other stroke should be tried and finish the board otherwise the opponent will win the board by pocketing his only coins on the board.

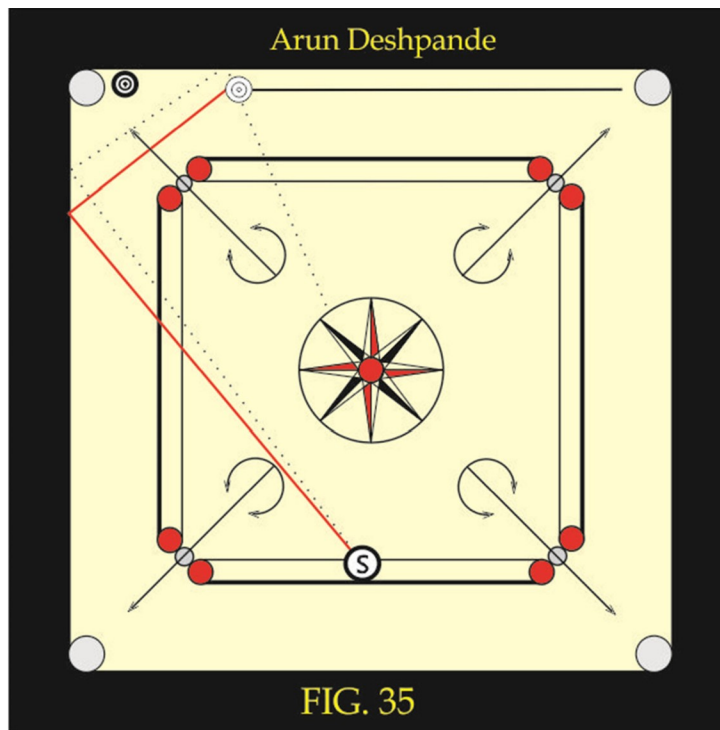
As shown in Fig. 32, striker should be placed in the straight line with the white coin and we should cut it with force. The striker will hit the opposite right side pocket area and will return to release the two difficult white coins and enable us to finish the board.



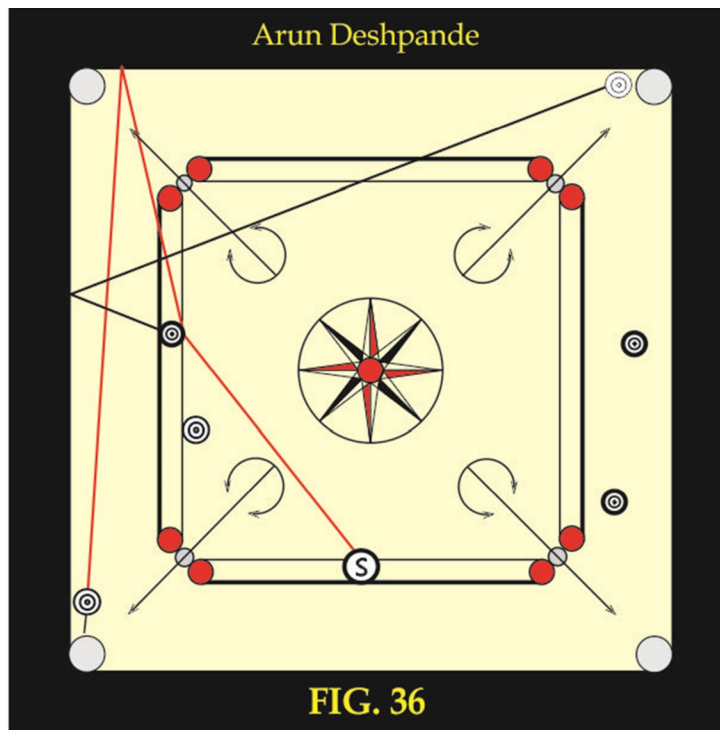
The position shown in fig. 33 looks to be difficult. There are opponent's two black coins and our one white coin. This white coin can be neither cut nor pocketed by a rebound. As shown in fig. 33 the striker should be placed on base circle and hit the black coin at the point shown in diagram. The white coin will be pocketed to the opposite right pocket. This stroke is very easy as compared to all other strokes. Observe the position of these two coins. If you take a straight line from the center of these two coins you will find that the straight line does not meet the pocket but it meets the right frame near the pocket area. If this straight line meets at pocket the white coin cannot be pocketed in this manner.



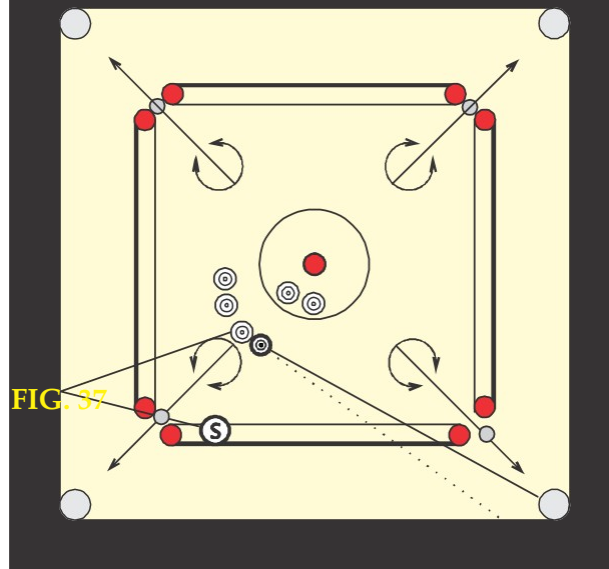
There are two black coins and in between those two coins one white coin is there. This coin is difficult to be pocketed. The striker should be placed as shown in figure 34 and should be hit at the point slightly above the center. This white coin will touch black coin then will hit left side frame and then will come to the right base pocket. This is difficult stroke but can be played after practice. Even if the position of these two coins is at different place above or below this position the white coin be pocketed.



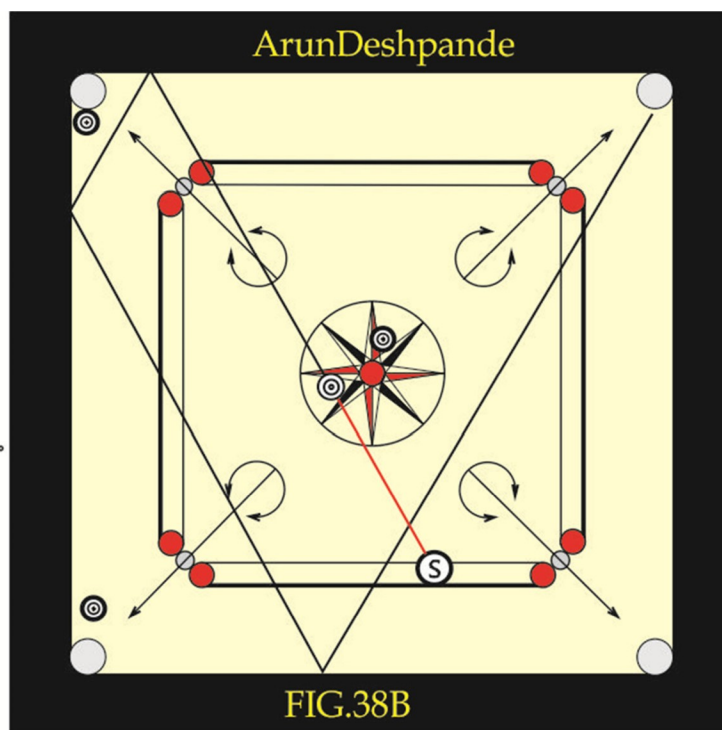
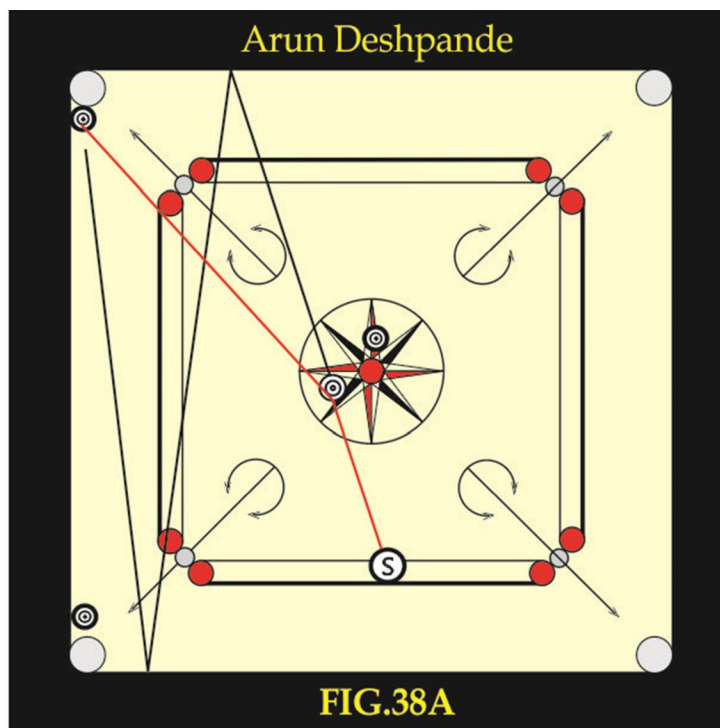
There are two black coins and one white coin. One black coin is very easy for opponent but the other coin is difficult for him. It can be made easy with the help of the black coin which is at the pocket. In this position the white coin is difficult. If you observe you will find that the white coin is slightly away from the opposite frame. This white coin can be pocketed as shown in this figure. There are two chances in this stroke. If the striker hits at the correct position as shown in fig 35, the coin can be pocketed or if even the striker hits the opposite frame near the white coin first and then hit the white coin at the correct point to pocket it. (See dotted lines)



It can be seen in fig. 36 that there are opponent's three black coins and our three white coins. One of these three black coins is blocking the way of our one white coin. Here we can take advantage of opponent's black coin as shown in fig. 36, striker should be placed at the center of the base line and should hit on black coin at the point shown in the diagram with little more force. There are three chances in this stroke. 1) By cross third pocket the black coin will strike white coin on the opposite right pocket and this white coin will go into the pocket. 2) Black coin will be removed and striker will strike white coin on the left base pocket and this white coin will go into the left base pocket. 3) Both white coin will be pocketed. one with the striker and other with the black coin.

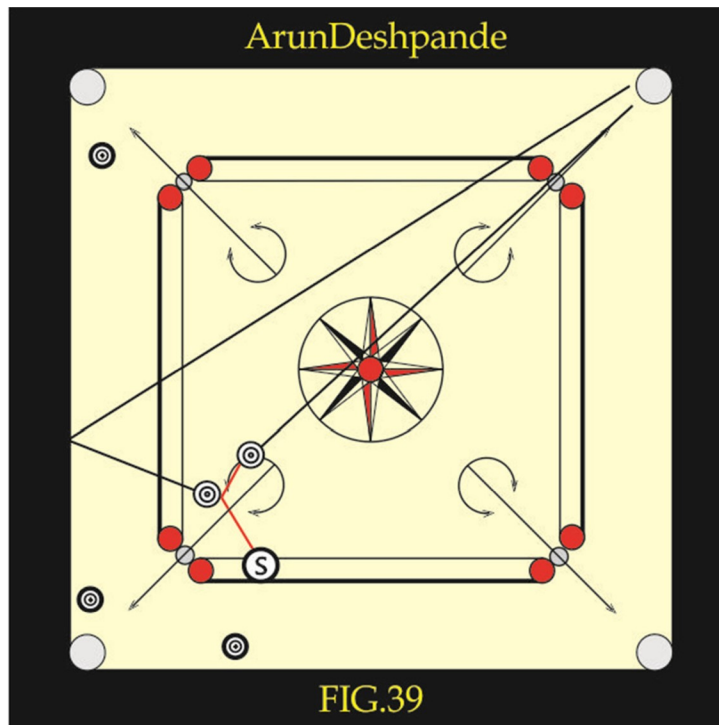


In fig. 37 black coin is in between opponent's four white coins. This black coin cannot be pocketed to the opposite left or right pocket. If you observe the position of shot of Black and White you will find that the direction of this shot is not at the pocket but it is at the base frame near the pocket. Here the rule which is stated in fig. 9B can be applied. Therefore this shot cannot be played by rebound as the striker cannot hit the point shown in the figure. Hence there is only one way to pocket this black coin and that is the striker should be hit on the left frame from where it will return to the shot and black coin will go to the right base pocket.

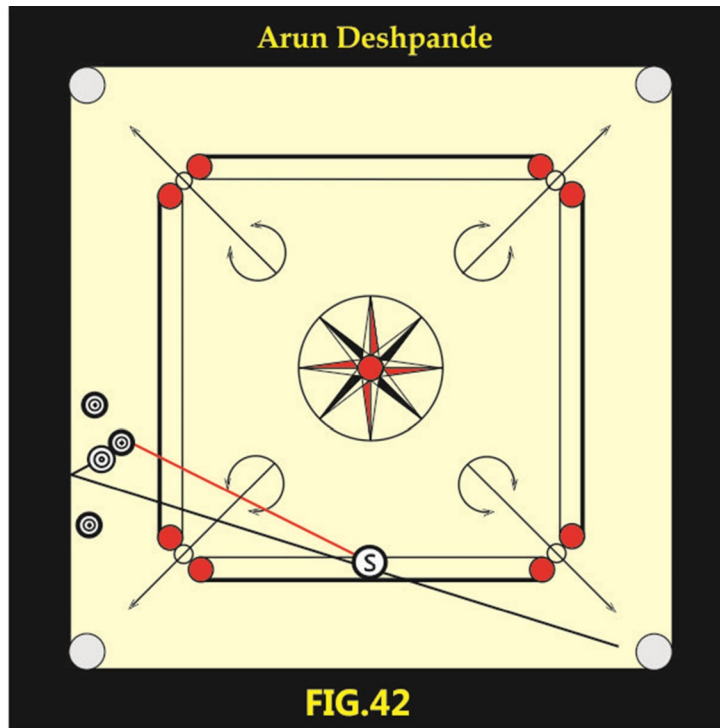


In fig 38 there are opponent's three black coins blocking the way of white coin. Initially if you see the position you will feel that there is no way for the white coin. There is one possibility. Play hard cross double to white coin in such a

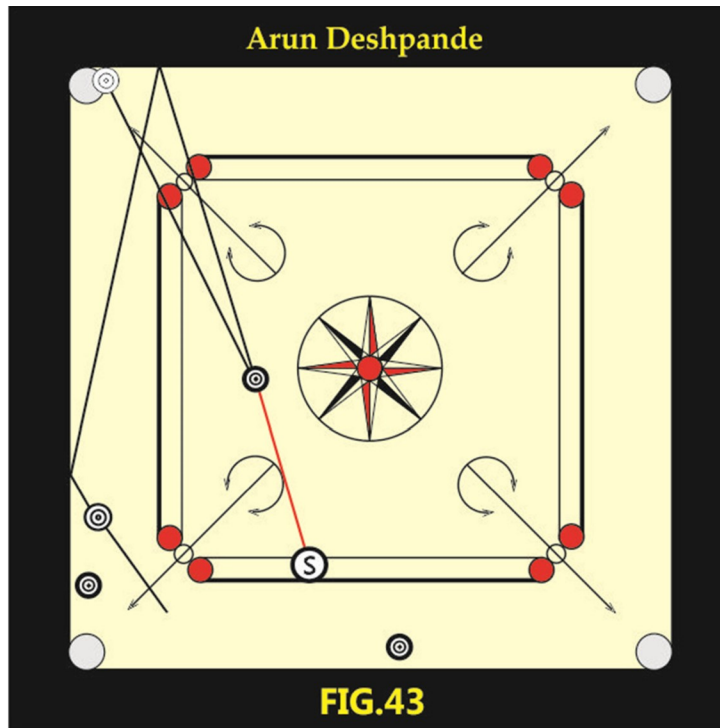
way that the striker will hit black coin at the opposite left pocket and will remove it from that position. In the meanwhile white coin should hit the opposite frame and then our base frame and should travel to the opposite left pocket where the black coin obstruction was there. (See fig. 38-A). There is one more possibility of pocketing this coin to the opposite right pocket. (See fig. 38-B) (Refer dotted lines)



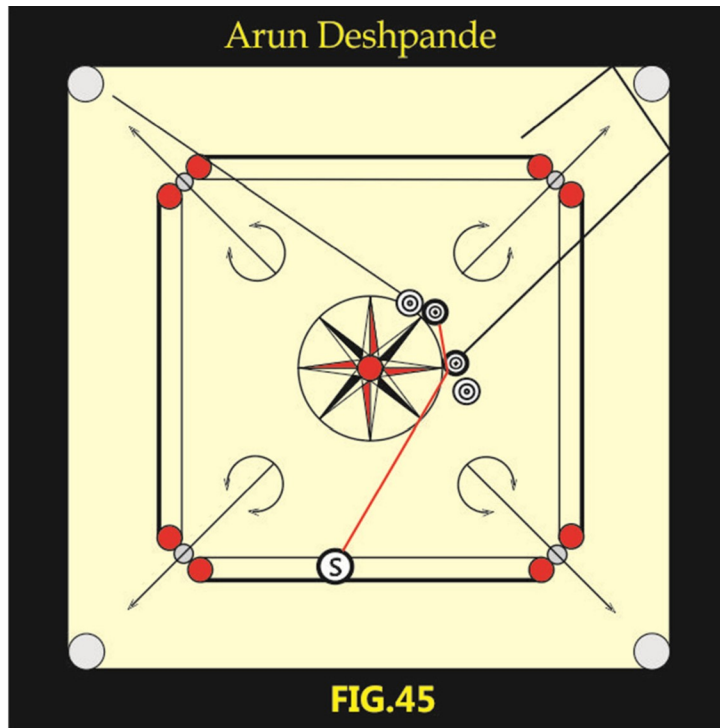
In fig 39 there are opponent's three black coins, the queen and our two white coin. We can play very good stroke here. Play the white coin third pocket in such a way that the striker will deflect on the Queen and the Queen can also be pocketed. There are three possibilities. 1) White coin and the Queen can go into the opposite right pocket simultaneously. 2) The white can go into the pocket making the Queen easy 3) The Queen can go into the pocket making the white coin easy. Therefore there are good chances of finishing the board.



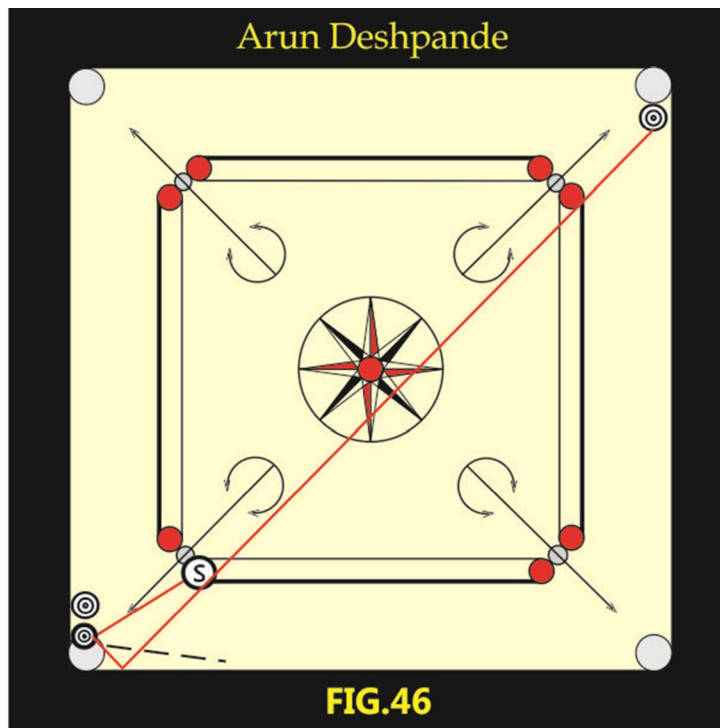
In fig. 42 One white coin is in between three black coins. This white coin can be pocketed as shown in fig 42. Observe the position of these two black and white coin. If the angle of these two coins with left frame is more only then this white coin can be pocketed. Only if this angle is there this stroke should be played or otherwise unnecessary all the black coins will become easy for the opponent. If this stroke is not to be played due to wrong angle then black coin which is near pocket, should be removed from its position thereby not allowing the opponent to take advantage of this black.



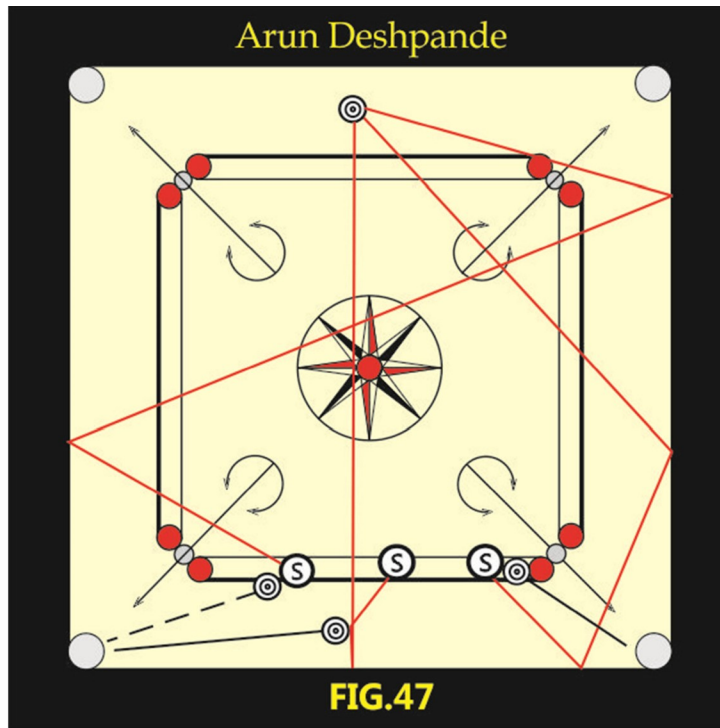
In fig 43, One white coin which is on rebound position is difficult whereas the other coin which is on the opposite left pocket is very easy. The difficult white coin can be made easy by doubling the black coin on the white coin and simultaneously driving the striker on the white coin which is on the opposite left pocket. With this stroke the board can be finished. This stroke is not so easy and therefore requires practice. Little more force is to be applied for this stroke and then the striker and the black coin will not clash.



As shown in fig. 45, the black coin which is an obstruction for the white coin, can be removed by striking the striker on it and deflecting the striker on the Queen thereby pocketing the Queen in the opposite left pocket. If you observe the shot you will find that the shot is not facing the pocket but it is facing the left frame and therefore the striker after receiving a deflection from the black coin should strike black coin of the shot at the point shown in this figure.



In fig.46, there are two white coins and there is only one black coin, is on the pocket. Suppose the score is 24 each and you have to play the white coin. Place your striker position on the left base circle and hit the lower portion of the black coin, with little more force. your striker will strike the black coin, your base frame and then it will go and strike white coin which at the opposite right pocket. The white coin will go into the pocket and the black coin will come to your base frame and thus you can pocket the other coin also. In this stroke there is an advantage that white coin does not go into the pocket, the black coin will come to your base frame and will become difficult for your opponent.



As shown in fig.47, A, B and C you can observe the various positions of the bomb stroke and how the striker can be driven to the white coin which is at the opposite frame. Observe carefully the positions and angles at which the striker can reach the difficult coin.