

Lift leaves I – after the first break by Chris Dent

- Once you are able to take breaks round much of the time, the next step is to be able to pick up a second break immediately. This requires the construction of good lift leaves. In these notes I'll look at leaves when stopping at 4-back (i.e. at the end of the first break.)
- The key is to start planning the leave as soon as the break is under control. Decide then what leave you wish to create (usually Diagonal Spread, reverse DS or New Standard Leave) and which way round you wish to place Oppo's balls (e.g. if Oppo is for 2, you might put that ball near there in a DS. Alternatively, make his most attacking shot the one where a miss gives the most away.)
- Here, I assume that you're playing Red with partner Yellow, and that you want blUe near hoop 2 in a DS or NSL with blackK at peg or 4 respectively.
- For the DS, I like to make 6 off U, with Y in place as an early pioneer at 2-back, and K as my 1-back pioneer.
 - To create this, ideally I would make 4 off U and 5 off Y. If this doesn't work out, swapping the pivot is pretty easy after 4 – what would you do if you make 4 off Y? See also my notes on the early 2-back pioneer.
 - After 6, croquet U to NW of the peg going to 1-back. After 1-back, send K just E of peg getting a rush on U to NW of 2-back, and place it as the 3-back pioneer (when playing the rush don't let hoop 5 get in the way of this croquet stroke.) After 2-back, rush Y to near the peg and croquet it a couple of feet ESE of the peg getting a rush on K to just ESE of peg, then take off to U, the 3-back pioneer. Play the approach so as to get a useful forward rush and croquet U into position near the W boundary going to K. After placing K by the peg, rush Y to the E boundary.
 - Micro-positioning of pioneers – the split shot before 2-back is easiest if the pioneer is NE of the hoop. Less can go wrong at 3-back if the pioneer is (say) 3 feet S of the hoop, and maybe a little W.
- For the NSL, when running 6, I again like to have Y as an early pioneer at 2-back, and like to make 6 off K and have U as my 1-back pioneer.
 - After 6, rush K to near 1-back. If placing U on the wire, you want the escape ball (K) just SW of the hoop. If placing U near the boundary, K should be further E. After running 1-back, roquet U again and place it for the leave, getting a rush on K to NW of 2-back, then place it as the 3-back pioneer while going to 2-back. After 2-back, rush Y across to 3-back, placing it NE of the hoop as an escape ball. After 3-back, place K near the wire and lay up near the boundary.
 - If U is on the wire of 2, leave a cut rush (no doubles from anywhere!) to hoop 1. Otherwise leave the rush to U.
 - It helps to approach 3-back from the SE as it is then easy to rush K into position. K should therefore be placed close to 3-back as the pioneer.
- The mechanism for the reverse DS is the same as for the DS. This is a very good leave if partner is for 3 or 4.
- If everything goes wrong there's always the Old Standard Leave to fall back on. Leave one of Oppo's balls west of 2 and the other somewhere ENE of the peg.
- If everything goes badly wrong, then leave your balls wide-joined on the boundary as a defensive measure. This will often discourage Oppo from taking an attacking lift shot, and at least allow you to keep the innings.