

Openings

An analysis of Round 1, 10 Games, predominantly Japanese

Balls	Games1-10									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ball 1	G2 Side	G2 Side	G2 Side	Miss	G2 Side	G2 Side Outball	G2 Side	G1 Out	Off	G2 Side Front
Ball 2	2nd Line Edge	G2 Fail	Miss.	G2 Side	2nd Line Edge	G2 Side	Miss	G2 Side	Off	Off
Ball 3	Side 2	G2 Fail	G2 Side Behind	Takes 3	G2 Fail	Off	G2 Take 3	G2 Take 3	Off	Off
Ball 4	G2, Touch 3, Bomb 'd 1. F Takes 3	Off	G2 Fail	Miss	Miss	Off	2nd Line Edge	G2 Spark 2 to G2 front reception	Off	2nd Line Edge
Ball 5	Miss	G2 Fail	Miss	G2 Takes 3	Off	G2 Fail	Miss	Corner 2	Off	Japanese
Ball 6	Miss	G2 Sparks out 3. Misses 5	2nd Line Edge	G2 Fail	Miss	G2 Takes 3	G2 Side behind	G2 Fail	G2 Side	Off
Ball 7	Miss	Off	Off	Takes 3	G2 Takes 3	Off	Miss	G1 Out	2nd Line Edge	Miss
Ball 8	G2	Off	G1 Out	Miss	G2 Fail	Off	2nd Line Edge	Off	Off	Off
Ball 9	Off	4/5 Helper for 1	Off	2/3 Goes to 3	G2 Fail	Off	Side 2 Helper Outball	Off	Off	Off
Ball 10	Bridge for 2	Miss	Attacks 1,3	G2 Fail	Shot at R1,3 Fail	Side 2 Helper	G2 3 out G2 behind G2	Off	Helper 2	Off

An analysis of these ten rounds has been mapped against the Opening Strategies section in Gateball Australia's *Gateball Information Pamphlet 008, Strategies and Tactics*. The full document is available for download at the bottom of the *About Gateball/Tips and Strategies* page on www.gateball.com.au

Opening Strategies for the Leading Team

Tactic 2 – Gate 2 Side Strategy G2 Side

The traditional response is to place the first red ball very close to Line 2 but in a gate running position for the beginning of the second round. This standard opening is not used so frequently overseas. Increasing accuracy by the following team may result in this ball being attacked by incoming white balls.

Teams may increasingly decide to sit on or very close to Line 2, in line with the gate or up to a metre behind. A later ball may be placed in position for this ball to regain the front of the gate.

10 Game Analysis: Red does this 7/10 when first on court. White takes this position when red fails ie ¾

Tactic 3 –Gate 2 Side Strategy + G2 Side+

If Gate 2 is covered with one ball placed very tight to Line 2, a team may decide that another ball can be placed there too. Balls really tight to the line like this can carry out some powerful plays at the beginning of the next round. It was success with this strategy that led to one of the two victories by Australian teams at an Australian Gateball Championship.

10 Game Analysis: A second ball is played to this position on 5 occasions, later balls, on two occasions are placed as helpers rather than tight to the line

Tactic 4 – Placing a reception or connecting ball on Line 3

If Gate 2 is covered by a ball in a gate running position, a later ball may be placed close to the middle of Line 3 so that the first ball can connect with it on passing Gate 2. This ball is then in position for the gate running ball to slide off or spark to another position. Some players refer to this as the Japanese position as this technique was usually employed by Japanese players who first came to Australia to educate players about the game.

10 Game Analysis: Balls placed here on 2 occasions, once after passing G2

Tactic 5 – Double Gate Grab

Play a ball or balls to Gate 3 after placing a ball at Gate 2. This approach can be a counter to a team that aggressively attacks as the following team. The aggressive approach succeeds if balls pass Gate 2 after passing Gate 1. Teams that play this tactic to an extreme are said to be using "Blitzkrieg Strategy" A Double Gate Grab is a means of countering this approach as balls at Gate 2 make it more of a challenge to blast through Gate 2 and then to blast through Gate 3.

10 Game Analysis: Only used once by a following team but balls attacking G2 were placed here on 5 occasions having passed G2

Tactic 6 – Partial Holdback

The leading team should also consider holding balls back after another strategy has been attempted with the opening two balls. This is especially the case where the following team is known to be proficient at using the holdback strategy. Balls that are held back can always be played in to slide off balls placed behind Gate 1. A ball sent as a pioneer or pivot ball can also be sparked where it can attack opposition balls or run a gate when a holdback ball enters a court.

10 Game Analysis: 41/100 balls missed G1 or were held back

Tactic 7 – Third Line Attack Strategy via G2

Leading teams will often attempt this aggressive move especially with later balls. An attack is made on Gate 2 with the intention of the ball coming to rest near L 3. Control of the length of the Gate 1 pass should be considered so that the ball can either connect with another team ball on passing the gate or being in a position to be touched and sparked by another team ball that passes Gate 2

10 Game Analysis. Gate 2 attempts. 20/100 in total. Interestingly about half the balls passing G2 with a round 1 longshot, were later played to G3

Opening Strategies for the Following Team

Tactic 9 – Second Line Edge Strategy

The following team may decide to bring on ball 2 with a long cross shot and tuck really tight to Line 2 about 3-4m towards Gate 2. If this ball is not tight to the line, there is a good chance this ball will be made an outball by ball 3. If this happens, ball 4 can be held back and benefit from Ball 2 being played into a slide position at the beginning of the second round.

A possible result of this play is that there is an attack by red 3 on white 2 which misses. This can leave a two ball target for ball 4. Ball 4 enters play with a long cross shot, touches on of these two balls and cleans out the opposition at Gate 2.

10 Game Analysis. Used by 6/10 teams when the opposition has already taken the G2 Side position

Tactic 10 – Third Corner Swift Attack Strategy via G2

Teams will often attempt this aggressive move. A controlled cross shot through Gate 1 will finish in a position where a long shot at Gate 2 will sometimes pass Gate 2 but at least end up in a defensive position in Corner 3 or tight to the far end of Line 2.

If Gate 2 was run, this ball can sometimes attack red balls at Gate 2, tuck in near the line or move to gate 3 to adopt a position where its path through gate 2 can control the area behind gate 3. Possibilities open up of being able to set up a gate touch or post gate slide for this ball

Some teams will aggressively attack Gate 2 with most of their balls after passing Gate 1. This is sometimes referred to as the *Blitzkrieg Strategy*. Of the strategies referred to in this document, this strategy has had the least success when playing overseas teams.

10 Game Analysis. Gate 2 attempts. 20/100 in total. Successful passes 9, failed to pass G2, 11.

Tactic 11 -Take 3

Many Australian teams have previously placed their first and second white balls at gate three. Originally these were placed just in front of Gate 3 and tight to line 4. Others prefer placing the balls between the gate and line and some migrate to a position behind the gate. During the second round, these balls were used to set up an aggressive slide to attack red's control of gate 2 or, at some point, an opportunity may arise to spark a ball over to Gate 2.

Placement of balls 2 and 4 together in order to mount an attack can be set up in other parts of the court instead of at Gate 3, for example:

-Playing a short reverse cross shot towards line 1 Ball 2 is then played into corner 1 in an effort to group at least two balls together (2,4.) This can be highly effective as it is the largest distance that can be created between the white balls and the red balls at Gate two. This strategy is used best against a team which is highly defensive as they are unlikely to attempt to go through gate 1 and attempt to attack balls in front of Gate 1

A riskier approach is playing to Corner 2 – A long reverse cross shot through Gate 1 can position the ball in Corner 2. Playing the ball extremely close to or on the line in corner 2 is highly effective against more offensive teams. Playing a ball to this corner will allow for the 2 ball to have a relatively straight shot at Gate 2 before ball 3 plays This can be an advantage if it can be run with control to take advantage of a misplaced ball 3 if it so exists.

10 Game Analysis:41/100 Only applied once in the games analysed Worth noting that of the balls successful passing G2 in the first round were later played to G3

Tactic 6 – Partial Holdback.Applies to following team too

10 Game Analysis:41/100 balls missed G1 or were held back