

Managing the End Game

“If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,

But make allowance for their doubting too;”

Rudyard Kipling

There are three elements that combine to give victory in a game of gateball.

When my team has more points than your team... at the end of the game.

Managing an end game is about making sure all three of these things come together. You can win by influencing any of the three elements.

You can win by simply scoring more and scoring very frequently. Gain a lead and maintain the lead. (part 1).

You can win by blockading the opposition and preventing the opposition scoring. If you have more points and don't let them control the gates, they will find it hard to score (part 2).

You can win by making sure the game ends at an opportune time (part 3).

End games are all unique. There's no magic formula. But there are a set of principles to keep in mind.

- Near the end of a game, gateballs come in PAIRS.
 - Each time a red ball is called, another two balls earn the right to play.
 - There's no point playing quickly to allow 7 to score two points, if 8 then scores three.
- The aim is to have more points than the other team, not the largest number of points.
 - There's no point playing quickly to allow 7 to score two points, if 8 then scores three.
- Remembering the three elements of a victory, consider which ball you want to end the game about at about the 25 minute mark.
 - Consider how many points is the maximum the other team can score, taking into account out balls, etc. Can you blockade a gate to prevent the other team reaching your score?
 - That will give you time to finesse things, by playing slowly or quickly.
 - Communicate this to your team!

- You can affect time legally, through tactics.
 - Playing deliberately quickly.
 - Playing deliberately slowly (within reason – and your 8 second count).
 - Playing unnecessary shots to create extra touches. Each touch can take 20-25 seconds if you want it to. (Remember there's a spark after a touch.)
 - Deliberately ignoring unhelpful shots. Tapping balls on the head, leaving balls behind. Don't make a touch just because you can.
 - Deliberately playing long balls that end just out of bounds.

- There's no bonus points for positioning of balls after the end of time. Spend all your bullets during the game.
 - Bombard with your own balls, if it helps.
 - Spark your own balls through gates hard, to leave them out of bounds if they aren't going to play anymore.
 - Consider putting your own balls out of play for no reason other than scorched earth tactics - it prevents the opposition making a miracle cross-court shot if there's no ball to touch.

- Consider where each ball will score the most points for the team, not for the ball itself.
 - Ball 1 touching ball 7 and ball 9 and putting them both agari scores more points than ball 1 scoring gate 2.

- Try the miracle shot – you never know your luck.
 - But don't leave a ball in the gate for the opposition to use as a gate and touch.

- Don't cheat.
 - Cheating is just uncool.
 - Deliberate time wasting is outside the spirit of the game. Making your turn take as long as legally possible is fair. Deliberately committing fouls or hitting balls away from the court is not fair.
 - The spirit of fair play is explicitly written into the rules of gateball. Article 4 clause 4.2.
 - The referee has extremely powerful rights to take action if you are playing outside the spirit of the game. If referees believe you are acting outside the spirit of fair play, referees have the right to:
 - End your turn.
 - Make you an outball.
 - Disallow gates or finishes.
 - Eject a player from the game.
 - Disqualify a team.