

# AUSTRALIAN EIGHT BALL FEDERATION INC



## INTRODUCTION TO EIGHT BALL COACHING MANUAL

© coaching.aebf.com.au 01/2012

## INDEX

- **Introduction** 3
- **Gripping the Cue** 4
- **Correct Stance** 6
- **Bridges** 9
- **Cue Action** 18
- **Aiming and Sighting** 22
- **Cue Ball Control** 25
- **Striking the Ball** 30
- **Potting Angle** 31
- **Fact Sheets** 33
- **Work Sheets** 51

## Introduction to Eight Ball

The main point to cover while learning to play eight ball is the eight ball cueing. The perfect eight ball cue action tips involve knowing how to hold the cue, the grip, the stance and the line of sight. Once the cue action is perfect, it is rare that the shot goes wild. To have a proper cue action you need to be confident and have patience and concentration. In fact concentration is the main thing when you are holding the cue for a shot.

### The Cue Grip

The first tip of eight ball cueing is the way you are going to hold the cue. This is called the grip. It's about how tightly or loosely to hold the cue so that the cue is in the straight line with the shot. The cue is placed on the 'v' formed by the thumb and the forefinger. There should be enough grip from the thumb and the forefinger. The other fingers should be tight enough not to let the cue butt swing from the butt. In case you are holding too tightly it may put tension on your cue arm and on the bridge that is the 'v' which may lead to your shot missing the mark.

### The Approach

An important eight ball cue action tip is to know and plan what kind of shot you are going for. Your stance, delivery and approach should be well thought out. You should have a confident approach only when you have made a shot selection and know the outcome of such a shot. There are times when players are not sure about which shot they are going to take. This results in inconsistent body and cue action. This kind of eight ball cueing leads to unreliable line of the shot with the cue which leads to a missed shot.

### The Bridge

Another eight ball cue action tip is how to form the bridge with the thumb and the forefinger. The 'v' formed is a channel which provides space for the cue to act. The cue should be at a perfect height with the ball, so the bridge has to be in an ideal position. A good bridge would be where the fingers are straight, spaced out well and at a desired height. The bridge should be made to go higher or lower to depending on the kind of shot you want to take. It should have flexibility to make a central strike or screw or top spin. Also you must check the distance of the bridge from the ball depending on your shot selection and backswing required for such a shot.

### The Stance

The stance is another requirement for successful eight ball cueing. The right foot should be in place near the shot the left foot should be ahead of the right foot and the hips should swivel. The right leg is to be straight and left leg bent at the knees. The whole stance should be comfortable so that you can hold it easily till your shot is over.

### The Feathering

The final eight ball cue action tip is doing a bit of rehearsal known as feathering to get the eye in line with the ball and the pockets and after a steady feathering the final shot should be taken. This way you can have a perfect eight ball cueing.

## Gripping the Cue

**Cue Hold:** The seemingly mysterious and fascinating effects obtained by a skilled professional stem from his hold on the cue. Rarely do spectators watch the hand that holds the cue, but rather the end that propels the cue ball into action. Not that much would be seen anyway, so quick and slight are the squeezes and little flicks of the wrist that spin the ball on its way. So much do the fingers holding the butt and the wrist work in harmony to get the desired effects that I find it hard to separate them in describing their respective functions.

The hold must be soft but firm, working in conjunction with a supple wrist, if and when required. The correct cue hold is made by holding the butt softly with all the fingers, keeping the little finger in constant slight pressure, gradually easing off on the remaining fingers so that the forefinger is merely a cradle. This way you will find that your wrist will be a little more controlled in its back and forth motion for the various screw and side effect shots. There is a general tendency to hold the cue with the forefinger and thumb far too severely which cramps cue delivery, particularly the follow-through. The thumb merely acts as the door to the hand, closing it to keep the butt in position without any pressure.

The wrist needs to move forward with the forearm in delivery adding that extra thrust. This flick in the delivery can be varied with great control when mastered and the effects can be seen to advantage in slow screw and very deep-powered screw shots. To the experts, and the not so expert, these little movements are accepted and probably never thought about. However to the not so lucky and believe me there are plenty of them explanation so often brings results much sooner.

**Power From the Wrist:** In order to play a really deep screw shot the cue hold must be momentarily transferred to the forefinger and the thumb allowing the little finger and hand to open on the last backward delivery before striking. The hold returns to the back of the hand on the forward stroke, which then produces far more thrust from the wrist. The cue is virtually wedged into the back of the hand at the end of the stroke – it is not suddenly gripped tightly as this can create an early snatch effect and ruin the stroke. With this additional power combined with a smooth follow – through, the cue ball can really be made to fizz in a backward spin as it is propelled forward until it touches the object ball. It is when you get a full and accurate contact that your screw effect is greatest. Have you ever in your younger days, thrown a hoop forward with a flick of the wrist and tried to make it return to you? Well that is the sort of action required for screwing a ball.

The straighter you can keep your wrist in line with your forearm the better your chance of keeping a supple wrist with good control and accurate cue ball striking. I know from experience many players seem to have to cock the wrist out of line and bad habits are hard to break. At all costs at least try to soften the hold otherwise your wrist will remain too tight and touch is lost to a very large degree.

In order to emphasise the need for a relaxed hold I have used the word ‘hold’ and not ‘grip’ throughout this section. Grip could mislead you into thinking that contact with the cue butt must at some point be tight. The billiard player is renowned for the general sweetness and softness of his play, indeed, the game demands it. While eight ball may call for many screw, spin, and stun shots, these are not achieved any easier or better by adopting a different hold from that recommended.

## Gripping the Cue (2)

Photographs 5 (a) to 5 (d) show the type of hold that I find most successful and that players generally seem to accept as normal. Control of the cue comes from the back of the hand, and pressures are usually firm but light.

It is this softness in the hold that helps the cue to follow through in its delivery. A gentle hold keeps the wrist soft and flexible, and when you are following through it allows the wrist to give power to your hand. The shoulder is not pushed up on the forward thrust to cause any unwanted movement of the cue off line.

Much of the result of every shot depends on the feel and the touch contributed by the butt hand. Hold is a very important factor and should be well studied.



← 5 (a)

The photo shows the cue butt hold in the normal position. Note the little finger is slightly pressing on the butt with the third finger showing slightly less pressure, the middle finger less still, and the forefinger acting as the cradle, with the thumb hanging loose merely to close the door.



← 5 (b)

The photo shows the hand turned over without altering the hold in any way. This gives a better view of the fingers, so that you can see how the pressure eases off to the front of the hand. I have taken away the thumb from the side of the cue merely to give a clear view of the fingers.



← 5 (c)

The photo is a view of the other side of the hand in the same position and shows how soft the pressure is when the cue is held normally.

(Here the thumb is tucked out of the way so that you can gauge the pressure of the fingers on the butt.)

← 5 (d)

## Stance

The purpose of the stance is to form a consistent, comfortable and solid base from which to deliver the cue on line of the shot with minimum movement in the body. The right foot (for right handed play) should be comfortable on or near the line of the shot and the left foot comfortably square or ahead of the right foot. The hips should swivel (left hip forward and down) and the right leg straight (or near straight) and the left leg comfortably bent.

This allows room for the cue to pass above the right foot and alongside the right hip. The cue placed on the bridge hand and the chin and chest laying as flat to the horizontal cue as the table and position of the balls allow.



← 6 (a)

**Correct Stance – Feet Positions ✓**

Right foot on line of aim.  
Left foot parallel to line of aim.

Note the distance you feel that slightly exerts you when you twist to get down to the shot.  
Firm and solid.



← 6 (b)

Left foot too close to line of aim.

Common fault. Loss of balance.



← 6 (c)

Both feet wrong.

Too close together.



← 6 (d)

Both feet wrong.

Left foot especially.

Very bad balance all round.

## Stance and Forearm Position



↑ 7 (a)

Shows the well – stretched bridge arm extended to the full and all the weight and pressure is taken by the bridge hand alone as there is no part of the forearm on the bed of the table. Very often the shorter person can adopt this stance and find it quite satisfactory. The taller, or rangy person, very often benefits from having his forearm on the table as shown in 7 (b).



↑ 7 (b)

He can cuddle up to the stroke a little and get that crook in the arm rather than extending it really stiff and rigid and pushing himself too far away from the shot. Resting the forearm on the table can also be suitable for shorter players. If you are only 5ft. 9in. and have short arms, you will find that on many occasions by resting your arm slightly on the table you will get a feeling of added security and steadiness in your stance.

## Stance and Forearm Position (2)

You will now feel the firmness on your body, while maintaining that twist, bend forward on your left knee, and place your hand on the line of aim.

Keep your right leg stiff and you will find that as long as you have kept the twist on your body there will be tension on your left knee.

↓ 8 (a)



↓ 8 (b)



The twist and strength of the stance are apparent from photos. You are now ready for the shot assuming your feet are correctly placed.

### The Approach

The approach to the table should be a well drilled routine which brings the cue in on the line of shot and delivers the player into the stance in a reliable and consistent manner. The approach should only be initiated when the player has made a confident shot selection and visualised a successful outcome of the shot.

Common faults include an inconsistent approach which denies the player the opportunity of a reliable cue action because the body and the cue do not start from the same position. A hurried approach, often involving the player turning into the shot rather than walking down the line of the shot, also reduces the player's chances of reliability getting the cue on the line of the shot.

## Bridges

The bridge hand however it is made must be firm and un-moving until the shot is completed. The way a player puts his hand on the table is very revealing to an expert eye. One might liken it to a hand-shake when socialising. So often one sees the nervous uncertain player with a soft fidgety bridge hand and vice-like grip on the butt. Precisely the reverse is necessary for smooth relaxed play.

Much to my surprise, bridge hands seem to create many problems for players so that I feel it is worth showing them in some detail. It is the business end of the cue and plays as important a part as the other components in keeping the cue on line besides adding stability to the whole body. The following photographs will convey more than words. So I will only comment briefly on the different bridges shown.

- 1) The normal bridge hand. The fingers should be evenly spread and the thumb should be well cocked to make a secure groove for the cue. It is important to keep the thumb fairly tight to the forefinger for smooth running especially for players with moist skin. A little experimenting will soon tell you just where to hold your thumb to ensure this.
- 2) The low bridge. Merely turn the hand over, lowering the forefinger, raising the little finger and applying pressure to it to keep the hand firm and strong. You will need a low bridge for shots requiring well below centre striking of the cue ball.
- 3) The looped bridge. This can be very useful when playing forcing shots or on many occasions when you feel your cue may escape in a tricky position. I find this especially useful when the cue ball is in that awkward spot off the cushion where there is not enough room for the hand to be placed. Always make sure your fingers are well braced with these bridges.
- 4) For playing alongside a cushion. The recommended bridge is extremely satisfactory when used correctly. Do not be satisfied with something that looks like it but does not do the job. Remember, like stance these factors are important and must not be skipped over as not so important.
- 5) The most difficult cueing position, if that phrase need apply, is when tucked up tightly on the cushion. When this happens it is best to shorten your butt hold, slightly restrict your back-swing, and endeavour not to raise your head or move on the stroke. This of course applies all the time but in this particular case you may find that all these things seem to be more difficult to control and this is caused by anxiety to perform the stroke with so little of the ball to strike. If power, or a fairly strong shot is needed, raise the butt slightly, brace your fingers on the cushion rail, and play as smoothly as possible.

When playing over the balls pay attention to your feet for balance, as you are not only generally stretched in body but also your fingers will be on their toes, if you see what I mean! Badly positioned feet because body movement in this stroke resulting in the cue ball being struck in the wrong place and the shot will be missed. Place your left or forward foot a little wider than for normal shots so that the leg will have the strength to resist the push of the opposite shoulder which rises as does the cue butt for this type of shot.

## Bridging Normal

The purpose of the bridge is to form a solid channel for the cue to pass through on the line of the shot. The forefinger and thumb should form a "V" to form this channel. The fingers should be straight, well spread and braced at a suitable height to deliver the cue tip at the desired height on the cue ball.

For central striking this would mean sufficient room under the bridge hand to cover a cube of eight ball chalk. To achieve top spin or screw, the bridge should be raised or lowered by bridging the fingers in towards the base of the hand or spreading them further out, respectively. The bridge arm can be braced out straight or bent at the elbow to suit the physics or comfort of the player. The distance of the bridge from the cue ball should be dictated by the amount of the backswing required for the selected shot.



### ← 10 (a)

- To form the basic bridge, stand sideways to the table and place your left hand on the cloth, spreading the fingers wide and cocking the thumb (see diagram).
- The cocked thumb and the first finger form a channel, through which the cue can pass, gently, back and forth.



### ← 10 (b)

- Bend forward from the waist, as well as the front knee, so that the cue remains parallel to the bed of the table.
- When settled to play the shot, the cue should be brushing your upper chest or underside of the chin.
- **IMPORTANT:** Level cueing is the basis of attaining any degree of skill at the game.



### ← 10 (c)

- Common faults include movement in the bridge hand and poor formation of the "V". Movement can be reduced by ensuring a firm grip of the cloth. This can be achieved by watching for the amount of pressure required for the skin under the finger nails to turn pink to white at the ends.

## Bridging Normal (2)



← 11 (a)

Photos 11 (a) to (d) show different views of the same bridge. The essential points are shown in detail because they are so important.

In this photo you will see the palm of the hand nicely placed on the table, the clear knuckles showing the pressure of the finger pads on the cloth, and a well cocked thumb. Note that the wrist is also bearing on the table



← 11 (b)

In this photo the palm is shown pressed into the cloth, and you can see the firmness in the fingers, which are nicely spread. Note here that the fingers tend to arch not by bending but by pressure against the joints.



← 11 (c)

This photo shows the top of the thumb, which is pressed well against the forefinger enabling the cue to run on the firmer part of the Flesh rather than on an open thumb where the skin may drag on the cue, particularly in moist conditions.



← 11 (d)

This photo makes this even clearer. I think it is a point worth noting because it is often a problem for the beginner.

## Bridging for a Screw Shot



← 12 (a)

Photos 12 (a) to (d) show the type of bridge needed for screw, deep – screw, and heavy side shots combined with screw.

Note that the hand is turned over, more pressure being put on to the thumb and forefinger



← 12 (b)

This photo was taken from the right-hand side shows the thumb being pressed well down on to the bed of the table but still tight to the forefinger. Note the tension applied by the little finger – again you can see the knuckle of the little finger standing out. A good bridge this.



← 12 (c)

This photo was taken from the left-hand side, shows the little finger pulled into the hand to apply pressure. Note the knuckle and the slight raising of this side of the palm of the hand in order to press the palm on the thumb side on to the bed of the table.



← 12 (d)

When playing a screw shot, lower your bridge so that your palm is flat on the table, drop your back hand so you are cueing straight through the ball, and aim to push 3 or 4 inches past the white ball after contact – depending on how much screw you want.

## Bridging ‘The Loop Bridge’

The looped bridge is a favourite of US nine ball professionals. It is a very sound bridge that does not allow the cue to wander off line particularly in strong forcing shots, and at those times when your bridge hand is in such an awkward position that the cue can escape from the groove of the thumb and forefinger.



← 13 (a)

This photo shows the hand flat on the table, fingers well extended, and the forefinger holding the cue quite firmly so that you have to push the cue backwards and forwards through the loop and can feel the friction.



← 13 (b)

This photo shows the right hand view of this bridge. The forefinger is looped and pressed well against the thumb to make a strong hold. People with long fingers often find they can complete the loop with their forefinger, but my fingers are too short to do this.



← 13 (c)

This photo shows a looped bridge that is very useful when the cue ball is in that awkward position from the cushion where you cannot quite get your bridge hand on to the bed of the table, and if you keep your hand on top of the cushion you have too much overhang of cue before you touch the cue ball. Note the fingers pressed into the cloth and the comfortable support that the rail gives to the wrist.



← 13 (d)

This photo shows a another type of bridge.

## Bridging along the Cushion

Cushion rail shots always make problems particularly for beginners who have extreme difficulty in getting hold of the cue in a comfortable and steady position. The different bridges shown in this section are the right ones for each situation and you will find they will strengthen your whole approach to difficult shots.



← 14 (a)

The bridge to be used when you cannot make a normal bridge on the table. (If the cue ball is just a little further away from the cushion then it is necessary to use the looped bridge already illustrated.) In the bridge shown here the cue runs between the forefinger and middle finger with the thumb pressed against the edge of the cue for smooth running.



← 14 (b)

The right hand view of this bridge. The forefinger is looped and pressed well against the thumb to make a strong hold. People with long fingers often find they can complete the loop with their forefinger, but my fingers are too short to do this.

This variation can be used when the cue ball is near the cushion and there is insufficient room to place the hand on the bed of the table.



← 14 (c)

This variation can be used when the cue ball is near the cushion and there is insufficient room to place the hand on the bed of the table.



← 14 (d)

With the cue ball under the cushion this bridge will facilitate a more forceful shot.

## Bridging along the Cushion (2)

Cushion rail shots always make problems particularly for beginners who have extreme difficulty in getting hold of the cue in a comfortable and steady position. The different bridges shown in this section are the right ones for each situation and you will find they will strengthen your whole approach to difficult shots.



### ← 15 (a)

This photo shows the front view of this bridge. You can see the thumbnail contact with the cue. Note how firmly the cue is held by the forefinger, with the pad of the middle finger pressing against the cue. I cannot emphasise too strongly the usefulness of this type of bridge. There are so many slight variations depending on the angle of the cue as it runs along the cushion. Once you have mastered the bridges shown here they will unfold a hundred variations.



### ← 15 (b)

This photo shows a good example of what I mean. Here we have the cue which has to be held almost parallel to the face of the cushion. This can be extremely difficult but by improvisation and applying pressure with the little finger along the cushion rail, the other fingers can drop on to the bed of the table and the forefinger can be hooked around the cue. You can see that virtually the same bridge is made to give good strong support to the cue.

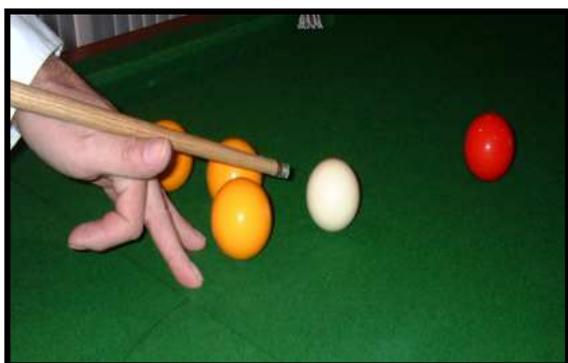
### ← 15 (c)

## Bridging Over Balls (3)



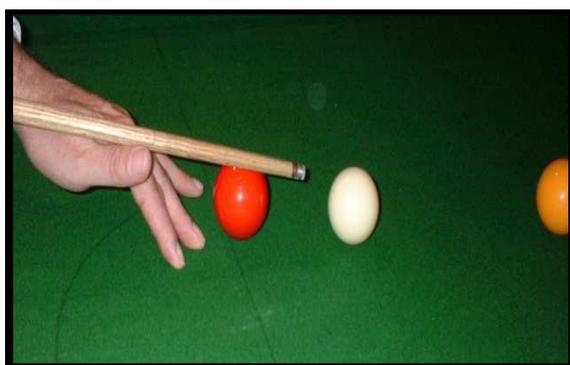
← 16 (a)

This photo shows the cue a little further away from the face of the cushion than in 43 so the loop is rather difficult to make because you cannot quite reach the cue without having a very wide spread of the hand. Therefore instead of making the loop you place your fingers further into the table getting support off two fingers on the cushion rail and making a cocked thumb. You then have what is virtually a normal bridge, half on the cushion rail and half on the bed of the table.



← 16 (b)

This photo shows one of the most awkward positions - playing over a cluster of balls when you have to come up to maximum height on your fingertips. The shorter forefinger cannot reach the cloth so you tuck it out of the way, at the same time making a well-cocked thumb to give you a good deep groove for the cue to run in. Note the pressure of the finger-tips on the cloth for overall knuckles-signs of a good solid bridge.



← 16 (c)

This photo shows a good action shot playing over a ball which is an inch or two away from the cue ball. In this bridge all the fingers can be placed on the table. This helps to keep the angle of the cue nearer to parallel with the table and gives a much firmer bridge hand. Again note the well-cocked thumb, pads of the fingers pressed into the cloth and shiny firmness of bridging.

← 16 (d)

## Bridging using the Cue Rest

### Using the Rest

The main point I want to illustrate when using the rest is that you must not let your elbow drop and bring your shoulder into the stroke. By holding the cue with the thumb and forefinger, rather than with the whole of the hand as many beginners do, you get more flow into the stroke and it becomes a much more delicate operation than a thrust from the shoulder, which is the surest way to miss. Using the rest is the one time when everybody can do the right thing in sighting that is to look right down the cue from as far back as possible.



← 17 (a)

Use of the rest makes this much easier to do. This is ideally how sighting should be done when you play normal strokes.

The photo shows a slightly exaggerate height of the right elbow and by doing this it puts a little more pressure on the shoulder and gives extra freedom to the elbow movement.

Many players do not seem to be aware of the special construction of the rest. The below photo illustrates clearly the different cue ball address when using the rest on the shallow 'V' and the high 'V'. Note that the angle of the cue is exactly the same in both cases. The shallow 'V' gives centre cue ball striking and the high 'V' above centre cue ball striking. It is only when you need to raise the tip of the cue for above-centre striking that you use the higher 'V' – normally the correct way to use the rest is with the shallow 'V'. In the average stroke the rest head should be about 8 in, from the cue ball.

↓ 17 (b)



## Cue Action

The purpose of the cue action is to deliver the cue in a straight, level action along the line of the shot. Everything covered above this section comes together in the cue action. The cue action requires that the player has a correct, well drilled approach to the table and adopted a comfortable solid stance.

The cue action also requires that the bridge has placed the first "V" on the line of the shot and the grip has the second "V" on the line of the shot. The cue action involves a rehearsal (called feathering) of the moving the cue back and forth keeping the second "V" of the grip (and therefore the cue), on the line of the shot.

The feathering should adopt a rhythm and length in keeping with the shot about to be played. During the feathering, the eyes will be alternating between the cue ball and the object ball (and possibly pocket) to provide reassurance that the cue in on the line of the shot. On or before the final backswing, the player's eyes should fix on the intended point of contact on the object ball.

On the final backswing there should be a momentary pause, providing the player with the final opportunity to be focused on the object ball. The player then delivers the cue along the line of the shot by moving the second "V" (of the grip) directly towards the first "V" of the bridge.

↓ 18 (a)



↓ 18 (b)



## Cue Action (2)

How to maintain a correct stance. It may sound insignificant, but even the slightest movement in the body can impact upon the line of the shot. In order to minimise movement of the body, you need to maintain a firm stance at all times. If you cue with your right hand, you should keep your right foot in line with the shot.

The right leg should be kept straight, as long as this is comfortable. The left foot should be square or just ahead of the right foot. The left leg should be bent at a comfortable angle. When you pass the cue through the channel formed by the bridge, ensure that your chin and chest are as close to the cue as the table and the position of the balls allow.



↑ 19 (a)



The stance forms a perfectly Straight line. From the point of the right elbow. Through the shoulder and along the cue.

↑ 19 (b)



← 19 (c)

It is a good idea to stay on the shot and watch the object ball drop, even the more advanced players often jump up on the shot and ruin their cue action.

One small tip for the more advanced player is when you are playing from tight on the cushion there is a tendency to cue down on the ball. Try not to do this too much.

Try to lower your cue arm so that you strike along the ball more. This may seem hard and you may miscue more at first, but if your action is good you can achieve this. It helps the white leave the tip more cleanly and stops ball bounce. This exercise also helps with your timing.

## Cue Action for a Power Shot

The power that the wrist contributes in screw and forcing strokes can be seen in this series of photographs. Note the position of the cue, which at all times is parallel to the bed of the table; the significant difference in the line of the knuckles, showing the pendulum movement of the hand on the cue; and the flick of the wrist that is employed. It is the opening of the hand on the backward movement that permits full power to the flick of the wrist as you go through on the delivery to forward position. Note also the alignment of the hand, wrist, and forearm (all in a straight line), for all positions of the stroke.



↑ 20 (a)



↑ 20 (b)

(1) The backward position. The back of the hand opens transferring the hold momentarily to the thumb and forefinger. The hold is a relaxed one, with no sign of tension – the cue is nicely cradled in the fingers. The forefinger shows a little, confirming that it is cradling not gripping the cue.



↑ 20 (c)



← 20 (d)

(2) Halfway through. There is no tension in the hold on the cue, which is now transferring to the back of the hand. The cue is still doing the work. The thumb is hanging relaxed and is not exerting any pressure on the cue. Note here the line of the knuckles compared to the backward position.

## Cue Action Technique



### ← 21 (a)

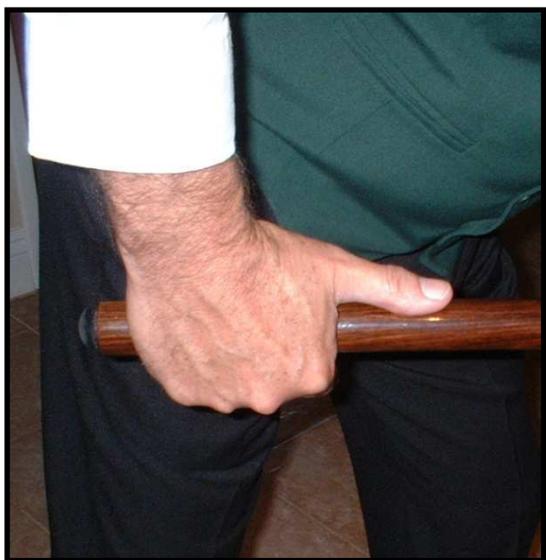
Stroke completed. The hold on the cue is still relaxed – it is not tensed. The forefinger can be seen sticking out slightly, proving the softness of the hold. Notice the shoulder has allowed the arm to drop a little permitting more forward thrust of the forearm.



### Hold – What Not To Do

#### ← 21 (b) ✘

This photo shows many things that are wrong, and they are very common faults indeed. I know many good players that play like this but it certainly limits their possibilities. The cocked wrist, the elbow pulled in, the body a bit offline, are faults that players with ambition must correct.



### Hold – What Not To Do

#### ← 21 (c) ✘

This photo shows exactly what not to do with the butt hand and yet it is surprising how many players do this. If they do not have their thumb on the top of the cue they have it on the side. It can never be right. The wrist is tight, there is not freedom in the action whatsoever; it is not the way to play. The thumb should hang free and lightly close the door of the hand.

## Aiming and Sighting

Anyone beginning to play eight ball or snooker will attest that shot making, and more specifically billiard shot aiming technique, is one of the more difficult skills for a beginner to master. This article is written for the beginner who knows nothing about billiard shot aiming, and has simply played a few games in the past for fun without any real thought about technique. The goal is to become consistent with your shot, and to master your shot aiming techniques so that you can make conscious shot decisions with some degree of accuracy. It is one thing to have a great game, but it takes a special skill to have great games consistently. It is said that consistency and shot aiming are two of the most important skills to master. To help you with these, we will discuss three important aspects of improving your aim:

### Eight Ball Shot Aiming Technique

- \* imagining the shot paths and points of contact
- \* aiming the billiard shot with your dominant eye
- \* proper shooting posture

Once you have assessed the table and made your shot decision, you need to analyse it and aim the shot properly. To begin, imagine the straight line from the object ball to the middle of the opening to the pocket and extend that line through the object ball to the side opposite the pocket. Where this line intersects the edge of the object ball is where you must hit the ball in order to make it go in that exact direction.

Next, you must determine the exact point on the cue ball to match up with the point you have identified on the object ball. It may not be visible to you since you will be standing behind the cue ball, but you will learn to visualize it. The key point you must imagine is the cue ball contacting the object ball at such a point that during the exact moment of contact, the two balls will be perfectly lined up toward the pocket. Note that this should match the imaginary line that you visualized earlier.

Notice in the diagram that once the cue ball travels to the object ball, the cue ball and the object ball will be perfectly aligned with the pocket at the exact time they come in contact. Once you wrap your head around this concept, only practice at the table can help you get better. You can try our aiming billiard drill for practice on this billiard shot aiming technique.

To determine which points should meet, you will have to make sure that you are aiming the shot with your dominant eye. Estimates show that 95% of humans have a dominant eye, meaning that one is stronger than the other. You need to ensure that you are using your dominant eye to aim all of your shots or else your practice sessions may prove frustrating. See our finding your dominant eye for billiards article for determining which eye you should be using to aim your shots. Once you have determined which your stronger eye is, you should align your body position in such a way that your dominant eye is perfectly aligned with the shot. With that, your body posture is instrumental in getting your dominant eye as low as possible and aligned with your shot.

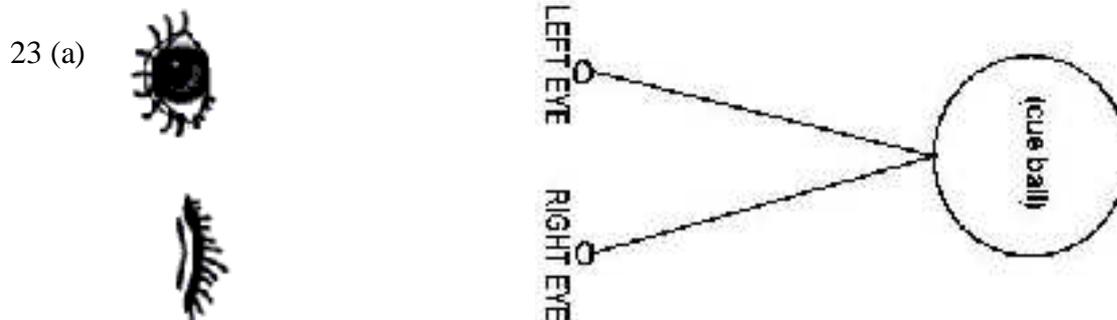
A final note on this billiard shot aiming tutorial; don't give up before you have a chance to become enlightened with this information. You can read it over and over, but one day when you are at a table it will just click and you will finally get it, as though you were born with this skill. Once you reach this point, consistency will start to set in and you'll do better in competitive eight ball matches.

## Aiming and Sighting Dominant Eye

The position of the eyes is vital in the stance and cue action. The eyes will provide constant feedback during the approach, stance and cue action that the cue is being delivered in a straight plane on the line of the shot. For normal vision, the eyes should automatically be placed either side of the cue as a natural consequence of placing the chin on the cue. There is a scope for accommodating a dominant (or master) eye during head positioning and sighting and this is covered under master eye.

The important aspect of sighting to focus upon is the need to look alternately at the position of the cue addressing the cue ball and the point of impact on the object ball. Only the combination of these two sighting points can confirm the line of the shot. Crucially, before the cue is delivered, the eyes need to be focused on the object ball during the execution of the shot. Some players, additionally, get their eyes to the pocket as a third sighting point. This is not essential and is entirely down to personal preference and routine.

A common fault (in fact, the most common fault during my time coaching) is for players to be looking at the cue ball during the execution of the shot. The single biggest improvement that most players can make is to address this fault. It is quite a radical change to undertake and is best done during a close season break for competition players. This is because they are probably competent enough in other aspects of their game to play a reasonably well with their eyes close during the execution of the shot! But it is obviously better that the eyes are open - and it is better still if they are looking at the object ball during the execution of the shot.



The dominant eye is the eye that looks directly at an object, while the non-dominant eye looks at the same object at a slight angle. Understanding and recognizing this concept can aid in correcting potential sighting and aiming flaws. Here is one very basic way to determine your dominant eye:

1. Choose a stationary object that's approximately 10 feet away from you.
2. Stare at the object and then point to it with your finger.
3. When your eyes are focused on the object and not at your finger, you should see two blurry fingers in your line of sight.
4. Now, close one eye. Then, close the other eye.

5. Notice that with one of your eyes closed, your finger will point exactly at the object. Now, when the other eye is closed, your finger will point at an area shifted slightly from the object. The eye with which you see your index finger pointing exactly at the object is your "Dominant Eye."

It's possible that you may see two fingers and have trouble pointing your finger at an object. In this case, you might not have a dominant eye.

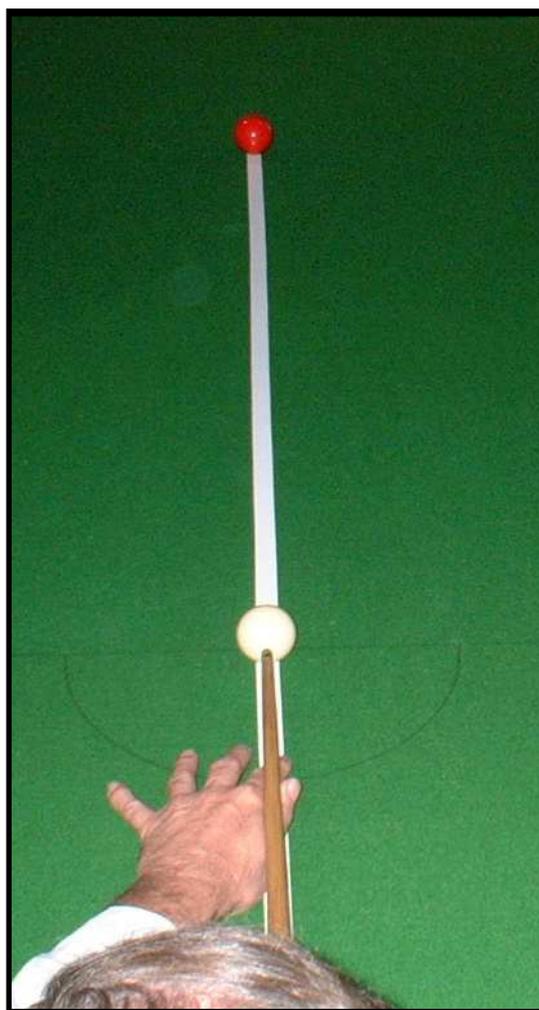
## Aiming and Sighting Technique

The bridge hand with the crook of the thumb and the forefinger precisely on the line of aim create the channel for your cue to address the cue ball in the centre. Provided you have placed your feet in the correct position in relation to the line of aim, your cue will be a continuation of that line.



↑ 24 (a)

Note how the tape in the photo is obscured by the cue, which is running directly over it – that is dead on the line of aim.



↑ 24 (b)

The Jack Karnehm method works very well for all types of people irrespective of their height or length of arm, because it covers all elements of stance and gives a clear understanding of what is required. Of course there will be very slight variations in the distance between the feet and how far to one side the left foot is placed. (The principles of this method apply equally to left-handed people and there are no complications whatsoever.)

A little practice and perseverance with this method can save many hours of struggle and effort in trying to discover by trial and error what is correct.

## Cue Ball Control

Control Cue ball control is all about influencing the path of the cue ball, generally speaking, after the point of contact with the object ball. There are three main groups of factors to think about:

- (a) Follow-through, stun and screw---by striking the cue ball on the top, middle or bottom;
- (b) Side---generally used to influence the angle of travel from a cushion but the effect on the baize also needs to be considered;
- (c) Strength of shot---by striking the cue ball harder or softer depends on how far the cue ball needs to travel.

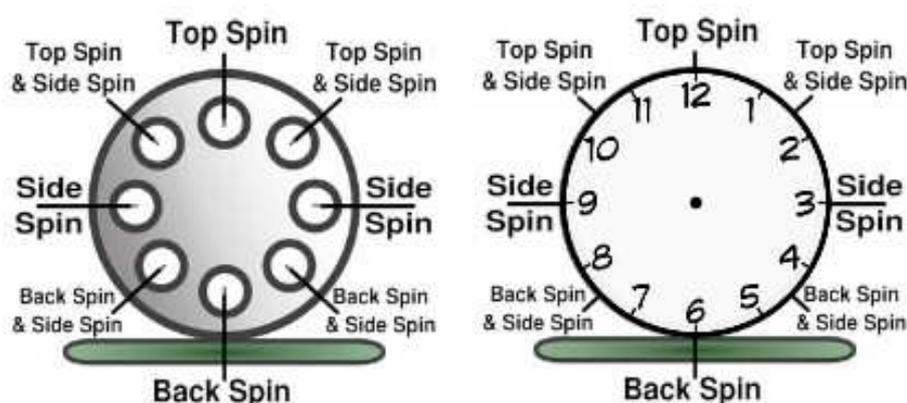
It's best to learn the basics of these factors in simple practice routines before introducing them into your game. One tip I've always found to work quite well is encouraging the right stroke is to envisage the cue ball as being like a hardboiled egg!! The stroke should break the shell on the near side and go through the shell on the other side. This sets the right visualisation to ensure you follow through with your cue action, regardless of the effect you are putting on the cue ball. It sounds wacky, but gives it a try.

Side is perhaps best attempted at first with no other balls on the table. Place the white on the baulk line centre spot and play it down over the spots. Vary the amount of side and aim to get the cue ball into each of the baulk pockets--and even the middle pockets if you are looking for a stretching challenge. The practice routine called "Getting Away from a Ball Over a Pocket" is a good one to introduce side into because the pot is less likely to be affected and the side can really help to control the cue ball into position.

Strength of shot is also best practiced with just the white, at first. Start with the cue ball on the baulk line centre spot and play it up the table to touch the top cushion; and then aim to play it to the top cushion and back to land touching the baulk cushion. You can then introduce a pot to the challenge. A good one would be a cut into the middle pocket with the cue ball in the "D". Aim for a position on the black after bouncing on the top cushion or, played stronger, back for the blue.

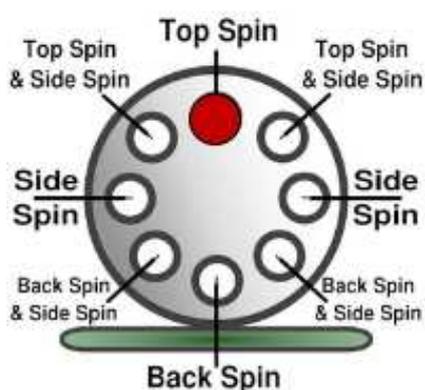
Hope this tutorial will help you to start playing eight ball..

↓ 25 (a)



## Cue Ball Control : Top Spin

In order to put top spin on the cue ball, you will need to strike it above centre and follow through properly with the cue. If you imagine the cue ball to be a clock face, strike the ball at the position of 12 o'clock. Striking it at the position of 10, 11, 1 or 2 o'clock will apply side-spin as well as top spin. Striking the ball at 12 o'clock will cause it to spin forward rapidly. Always consider the position of the cue ball with regards to the object ball. If there is little space between the two balls, more top spin will be required. It is important to keep the cue as straight and level as possible so that it does not strike downwards. If the position of the balls on the table forces you to raise the butt of the cue, you must make sure that the centre of the tip is beneath the highest part of the cue ball. This will ensure that the tip is positioned in such a way that will prevent side-spin being applied to the ball.



← 26 (a) ("12 o'clock" on the cue ball)

By addressing the cue ball above centre, topspin will be added to the strength of the shot and will increase the distance that the ball travels. It is a vital shot - which should be in every player's armoury.

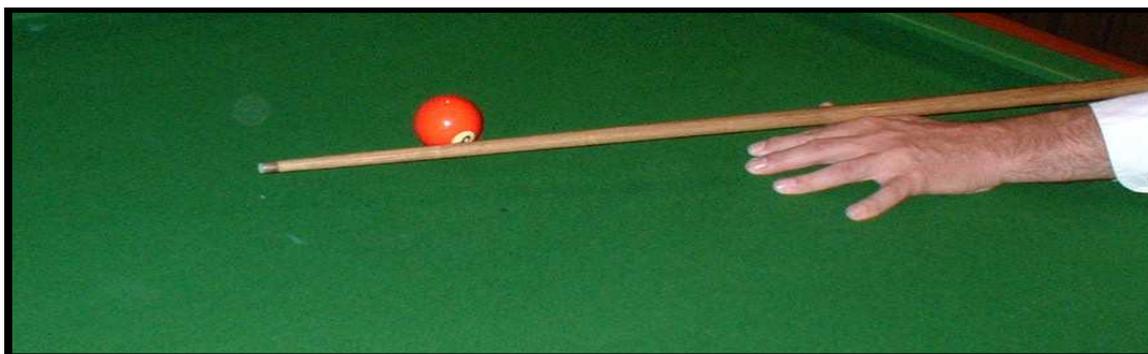
Topspin is particularly useful when it is necessary to open a pack of reds. There will be more displacement with spin on the cue ball than without it.



↑ 26 (b) before

These two before and after photographs show the position of the bridge hand and cue when addressing the cue ball. The amount of follow through on the cue after the white has been struck, was 7 inches

↓ 26 (c) after

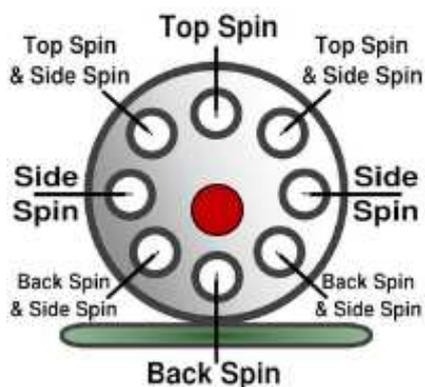


## Cue Ball Control : Stun Shot

On a straight shot, hit the cue ball forcefully just beneath its central point. This will cause the ball to skid across the table without adopting the usual rolling motion of a standard shot.

When the cue ball strikes the object ball, all the power of the shot is transferred to the object ball. The cue ball is effectively stunned and stops on the table.

When striking a stun shot, make sure that you hit the cue ball forcefully enough so that it is still skidding when it reaches the object ball. If you strike the ball too softly, it will roll after the object ball rather than stopping. ↓ 27 (a) (Clock Cue Ball)



← 27 (a) (The "clock" on the cue ball)

Remember that the bridge hand changes shape when striking below centre.

Ensure that your bridge is firm and solid for all shots of this kind.



↑ 27 (b) before

Stun plays an important part in break building, enabling accurate cue ball control in and around the reds. It is also extremely useful when playing cannons or otherwise trying to disturb balls into potable positions.

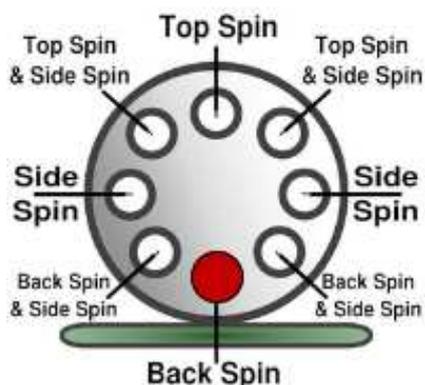
↓ 27 (c) after



## Cue Ball Control : Back Spin

Back-spin can help you to keep control of the cue ball. Successful back-spin will force the cue ball to move back the way it came after striking the object ball. Back-spin is applied by striking the ball below centre. If you imagine the cue ball to be a clock face, you should be striking the ball at the position of 6 o'clock.

To improve your shot, you should lower your bridge so that the tip of the cue is able to hit a lower position on the cue ball without actively pointing downwards. Do not hit the cue ball too forcefully as this will ruin the accuracy of your shot. Furthermore, ensure that you follow through your shot in an exaggerated but smooth manner, keeping the cue level at all times.



← 28 (a) ("6 o'clock" on the cue ball)

What is needed is a smooth cue action and a clear pause at the end of the back swing before driving the cue through.

Striking the cue ball below centre, as marked back spin in 28 (a), and following through on a straight line.



↑ 28 (a) before

The lower you strike the cue ball, the more back-spin (screw) will be imparted to it. To find out what happens is a case of trial and error. If you strike the cue ball just below centre and for the purpose of this exercise the object ball is no more than a foot away, the cue ball will come back only a short distance once it has made contact.

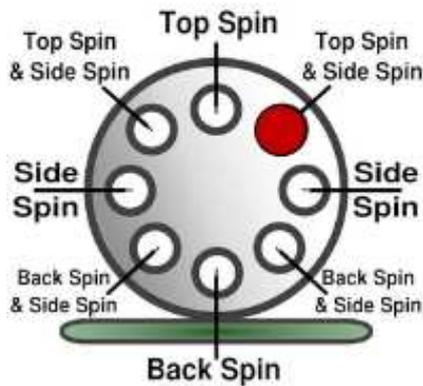
↓ 28 (b) after



## Cue Ball Control : Side Spin

Side-spin is an extremely difficult shot to master. Even professional players have trouble with this particular skill. It does not impact upon the direction of the cue ball after it strikes the object ball. After the initial contact, the cue ball will follow the tangent line. Furthermore, the speed of the cue ball is not impacted upon by side-spin. However, side-spin will alter the point of contact required to pot the object ball.

To put side-spin on the cue ball, strike it to the left or right of the central point. Some players wishing to place extreme side-spin on the cue ball choose to raise the butt of the cue. Whilst this is not essential, ensuring that you follow through in a smooth manner is imperative. Once you master this skill you can use it in a variety of tricky situations.

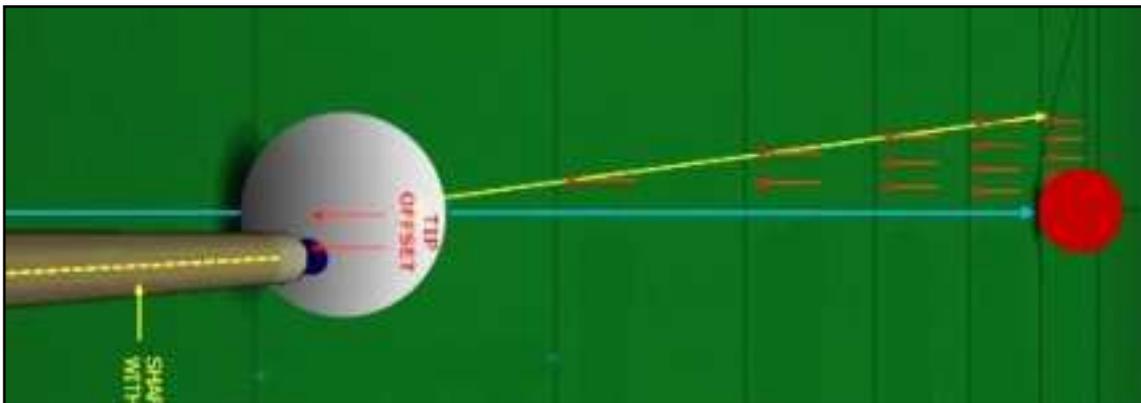


← 29 (a) (The "clock" on the cue ball)

The effect of side spin on the cue ball's desired travel path is also difficult to measure.

Too heavy a hit, or too far to the side, and you will see the cue ball deflect far from its intended path, resulting in a very inaccurate shot.

Try swerving the ball to get out of a snooker.



↑ 29 (b) before

Further things to take into consideration are;

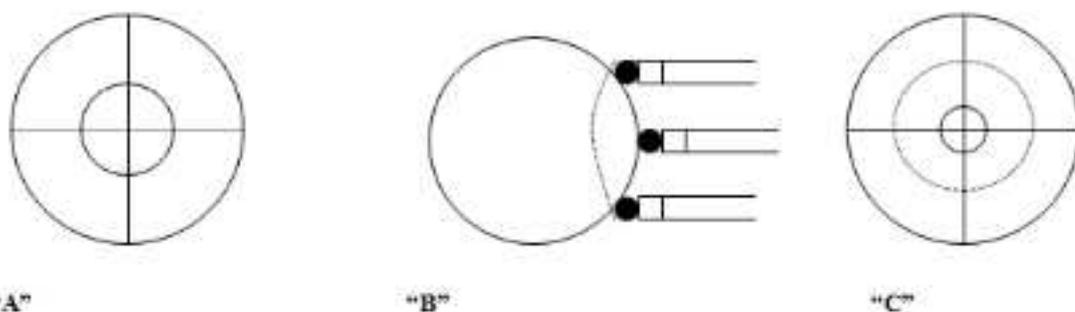
How much side spin is being applied as you strike the white just left (or right) of centre, or alternatively on the extreme edge of the white ball? What is the distance between the white and the object ball? How hard has the shot been played?

↓ 29 (c) after



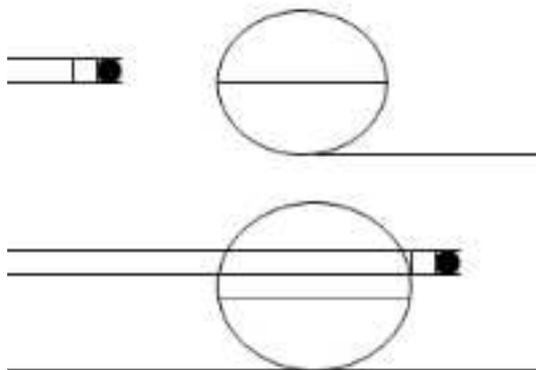
## Striking

- As the surface of the Ball is round, the tip can only strike a certain area of the ball (as shown by the inner dotted line of Diagram “A” and side view of Diagram “B”).
- Your tip should be slightly dome shaped, which is attained by sandpapering.
- For true and accurate cueing, the Cue ball should be struck slightly below centre on the horizontal axis and dead centre on the vertical axis (see Diagram “C”).



↑ 30 (a)

### NORMAL STRIKING



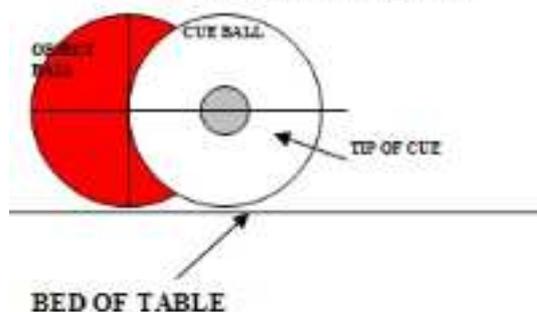
← 30 (b)

No shot can be played effectively if the cue has not been chalked correctly. It should be sufficient to give your tip just one firm wipe with the Chalk.

If it takes any more than that, either your tip is “not holding the chalk as it should OR the chalk you are using is too greasy”. A shiny tip can be remedied with sandpaper.

### EXACT

#### HALF BALL STRIKING



← 30 (c)

General Hints:

Keep your head down when playing the shot. Have firm grip on the Cue, but not a stranglehold.

Walk to the table on the line of the shot to be played.

Decide what shot you are going to play, before you get down for your shot.

## Potting Angle

It is very important to hit the ball straight, but it is also equally important to time the ball. This is to say that you strike the ball at the time you are supposed to. To achieve good timing is to strike the ball sweetly. Many shots can be missed just because your cue action is all out of time.

The potting angle is the angle between the line along which you need to strike the cue ball and the line that the object ball takes to the pocket. Two mental images can be helpful:

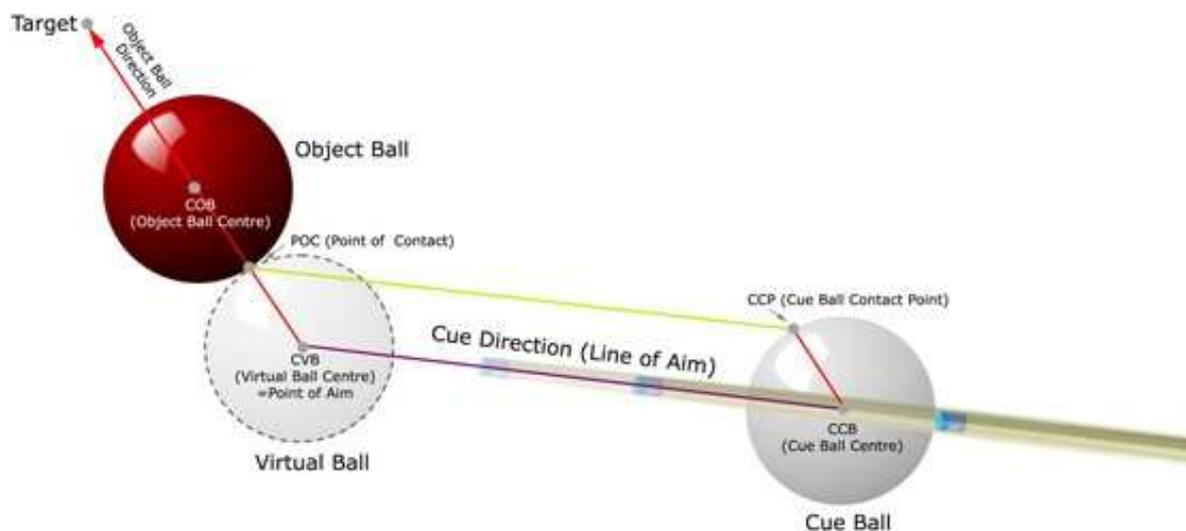
- (a) the point on the object ball that needs to be struck to pot it is the point furthest away from the pocket (the point you would strike with your cue tip if hitting the object ball into the pocket with your cue); and
- (b) place a ball touching this point on the object ball. The line of the shot will be through the centre of the cue ball and through the centre of the "dummy" ball. The line of the pot is through the two touching balls to the pocket.

Recognition of potting angles is best achieved by practice alone and by visualising the "dummy" ball described above, as a guide. You may find benefit in practicing the four shots that many text books quote (quarter ball, half ball, three quarter ball and full ball) although, because there are obviously potting angles that fall between these, a random approach can be more realistic.

Recognition of the potting angles is best by practice alone and by visualising the "dummy" ball described as above, as a guide.

You may find benefit in practicing the four shots that many text books quote (quarter ball, half ball, three quarter ball and full ball) although, because there is obviously potting angles that fall in between these, a random approach can be more realistic.

↓ 31 (a)



## Potting Angle

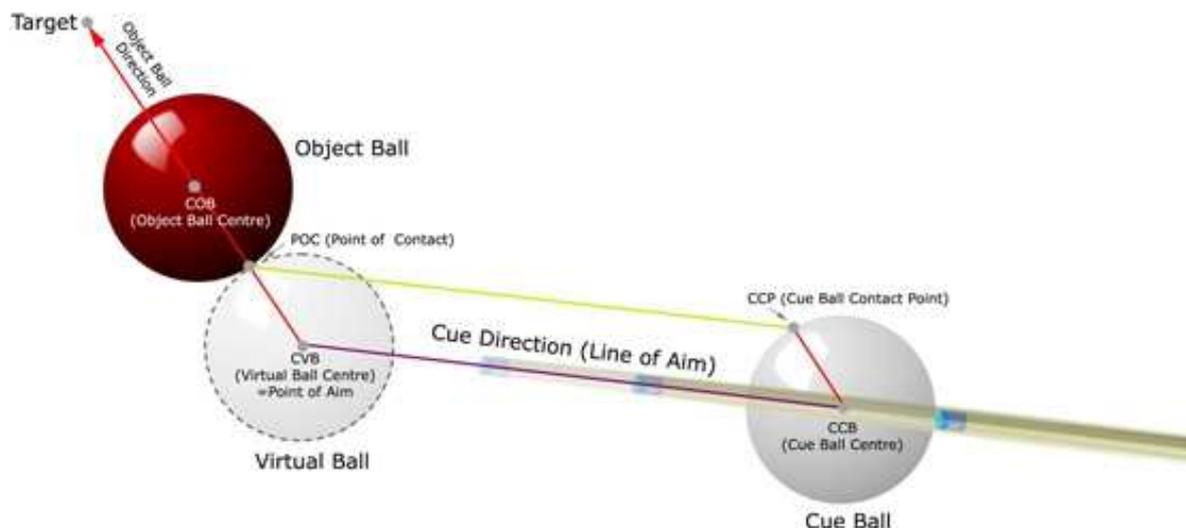
Knowing how to pot a ball is something you either have or you do not have. Of course practice can help but you really need an eye for it. When walking to the table after your opponent has missed it seems he has left you an easy pot on a straight red followed by an easier black. You get down and miss the red! How frustrating. I have done this so many times and so do many people.

There are some things you can do to correct this problem. When walking to the table always walk in to the shot, never approach the table and then slide round to the shot. This is so you see the real angle of the shot. Also when you are playing position for the next ball remember that although it is important to get position, the worst position you can end up in is in your chair, watching your opponent! Work out the angle for the pot decide your position, but the last thing you think of is pot pot pot. That is to say that if you at least pot the ball and run out of position you can still play safe. When playing eight ball for the first time do not try to go all out to beat an opponent. Try out different things, even if you try things in practice they still end up different in a match.

Playing eight ball is all in the head. If you are confident then you play better. Be positive, make your mind up what shot and play it 110%. A question I am asked many times is what ball do you look at when you strike the white. The answer is always the object ball. This is always for every player. You do not look at the white or the end of your tip, just the cue ball. In fact if you look at Hendry if he is trying to pot a vital ball, he will often watch the ball until it reaches the pocket. This also helps him stay down on the shot. Mind you though, Hendry is one of a few players who, although he looks at the object ball last, watch his eyes when he is cueing up. He keeps looking at the object pocket as well.

As a routine for this lesson place a Red about two feet from one of the bottom pockets, leaving the black on its spot. Then try to pot the red and vary the shot between making it back to baulk and staying for the black. This shot is one of the most common you will come across. To be good at eight ball you must play shots like this in practice time after time. Another routine is to see how many times you can pot the black without missing and without moving the cue ball between shots.

↓ 32 (a)



# FACT SHEETS

## Eight Ball Terminology

Although practical coaching can help you improve your own game more than the written word, that doesn't mean we can't help anyone looking to know a bit more from a spectator's perspective! Although the regulations cover most of the basic terms you'll encounter, a few hours watching tournaments live and you'll notice the commentators using a fair bit of jargon. As a result, here's a list of commonly used phrases and their meanings to get you clued up fully:

**Backspin** - Keeping control of the cue ball is one of the fundamental parts of succeeding at any cue sport, and backspin is one of the most commonly used methods. By angling the cue in such a way as to hit the cue ball lower, players are able to bring the cue ball back the way it came after making contact with the object ball.

**Baulk Line** - a line 1/5 of the table length where the cue ball is played from.

**Bridge** - This both references the piece of ancillary equipment known as the 'mechanical bridge' and the hand used by a player to rest the cue on. You'll notice professionals also rise up their 'resting hand' to get over certain obstacles when attempting shots.

**Cannon** - Refers to a stroke where the cue ball hits more than one object ball in the process.

**Check side** - Refers to a type of spin (either left or right) imparted on the ball which is apparent after the ball hits a cushion, coming off at a more acute angle and at a slower pace.

**Clearance** - When a player pots all their colour balls and the 8 ball in 1 visit on the table.

**Double-kiss** - Can be either fortunate or unfortunate, the double-kiss is when the cue ball hits the same object ball twice.

**Follow-through** - Any good snooker stroke should hit the cue ball cleanly with the cue following through the line the ball travels, hence the term.

**Full ball** - A shot where the player strikes the cue ball in such a way that it hits the object ball totally straight, with no angle.

**Half ball** - A shot where the player strikes the cue ball in such a way that it hits the outside edge of the object ball and creates a sharp angle.

**In-off** - Pocketing the cue ball after making contact with an object ball.

**Kick** - One of the great phenomena of snooker. The kick is where either the cue ball or the object ball literally jumps in the air slightly after receiving contact from the cue or the cue ball respectively. The effect is nearly always negative for the striker, as the angle on either ball is disturbed and contact is rarely clean. Many attempts have been made to explain why kicks occur, the most frequent explanations being friction from the table surface and, more commonly, a bit of dust or chalk on either ball when there is contact.

## **Eight Ball Terminology cont...**

**Quarter ball** - A shot where the player strikes the ball in such a way that it just catches the edge of the object ball, creating an even more pronounced angle.

**Rest** - A cue-like piece of ancillary equipment with an X-shaped area at the end for the cue to 'rest' on. This enables cueing in tricky positions, although at the expense of some control over the cue-ball and the cue itself.

**Safety shot** - A stroke which attempts to put the balls (in particular, the cue ball) in a difficult position for the opponent to pot anything. This is an attrition tactic which is hugely important at professional level.

**Shot to nothing** - Refers to a stroke where a pot is attempted, but the safety shot is of far greater importance and the angle takes the cue ball into the Baulk area. As a result, if the pot goes in, position on a colour is rarely guaranteed but, if it stays out, the opponent will have nothing to aim for.

**Sidespin** - Spin imparted on the cue ball by striking it left or right of centre. The effect is only really felt after hitting a cushion at an angle, and usually causes the cue ball to speed up dramatically (in contrast to 'check side').

**Spider** - An elevated rest used by players to reach over obstructions and play a shot. The 'spider' name is in reference to its long legs.

**Swerve** - By striking the cue ball down and to the left or the right of centre, the natural path of the ball will be somewhat curved. This is used by players when attempt to get around balls that are only slightly obstructing the line to the ball on.

**Trick shots** - An exhibition shot which is pre-defined and extraordinary in its nature. The first true trick shot maestro was the billiards player Francois Mingaud, who toured Europe in the early 19th century, and the fad is still very much alive today.

## Eight Ball Equipment Specifications

- a) Object balls shall be, 2 inches (50.8 mm) diameter and weight of 116 grams, + 2 grams.
- b) Cue ball shall be, 1 & 7/8 inches (47.6 mm) diameter and a weight of 94 grams.
- c) Maximum playing surface to be, 7 feet x 3 feet 6 inches (213.36cm x 106.68cm)  
(playing surface being the flat slate area between the cushion faces)  
(the cushion faces being the part of the cushion that the ball(s) contact).
- d) Minimum playing surface must be, 6 feet x 3 feet (182.88cm x 91.44cm)  
(playing surface being the flat slate area between the cushion faces)  
(the cushion faces being those parts of the cushion that the ball(s) contact).
- e) Cushion faces to have a narrow flat face.
- f) Table height to be between, 31½ inches & 33½ inches (80cm & 85cm).
- g) The playing surface and cushion cloth must be a 'nap' cloth, 30 oz. The nap to run from baulk to pyramid.
- h) Pocket size and cut to be as per WEPF agreed templates.  
Depth of pockets to be, 85mm (3.35 inches /approx. 3 & 11/32") corners and 95mm (3.74 inches / approx. 3 & 3/8") centre's, minimum measurement.
- i) Lighting to be three shades, one over the centre of the table and one shade 20 inches (50.8cm) either side of centre. The height to be 32½ inches (82.55 cm) from the playing surface of the level table to the bottom of the shade.
- j) The baulk line to be positioned 1/5th (20%) of the length between the face of the end cushions.
- k) The pyramid spot to be in the centre of the top half of the table.

REFERENCE: WWW-WEPG-ORG

## Eight Ball Equipment ‘Balls’

Aramith; Perfectly round and balanced - uniform weight and hardness - brilliant colours - friction resistant roll and reaction - are just a few of the key features that have earned Aramith its worldwide reputation as the premiere ball. Aramith balls are internationally approved for tournaments and championships.



### Aramith Balls

- Aramith balls are used in virtually all of the professional tournaments worldwide.
- The extra hard surface of Aramith balls drastically reduces wear on both balls and cloth, guaranteeing long term value.

### A QUALITY INVESTMENT

#### A LIFETIME INVESTMENT

A lifetime investment Aramith phenolic balls last up to 5 times longer than other balls made from polymers or polyester. The billiard-play simulator leaves no doubt: Aramith phenolic balls are still perfectly playable even after 400,000 hits, whereas others were rendered unusable. No wonder they are the logical choice for commercial and private table-owners.

#### THE ULTIMATE IN BALANCE

The ultimate in balance Constant density and balance are of the essence to control speed, direction, spin, impact and rebound in the game. Through-hardened phenolic resin offers the unique advantage of a completely stabilized material with homogeneous density dispersion throughout each Aramith ball. With the centre of gravity at the centre of the ball, the resulting ultimate balance guarantees perfectly true and accurate roll.

#### PERFECT REBOUND

Far more important than ball tolerances are the balls rebound capacities. Only predictable rebounds allow strategic repositioning of the cue ball to optimize the following shot. The unique elasticity of the phenolic Aramith resin has been calibrated to offer the optimal level of rebound to allow players to fully control the effect of every shot.

#### WORLDWIDE ENDORSEMENT

The exclusive use of Aramith phenolic balls by most professional tours, federations and amateur leagues in championships and tournaments worldwide is an indisputed endorsement of the quality reputation and superior performance of Aramith

## Eight Ball Equipment ‘Chalk’

We have put together this short guide which should help you keep chalk on your cue tip.  
What's your personal preference?



Master blue billiard chalk is usually a preferred chalk since it adheres well to the pool cue tip, it isn't messy, and it generally achieves the purpose of billiard chalk.

Master green billiard chalk covers the pool cue tip well, and adheres equally as well. It is less messy than master blue but it has a propensity to cake, which forces a little mid-session cleaning.



Triangle billiard chalk is similar to master billiard chalk since it is made by the same company, although it feels a little harder or firmer. It has trouble sticking to layered tips.

Triangle Chalk is one of the most popular chalks today for use in competition playing, has been around for 75 years and has been formulated for players who chalk up before every shot. It coats the tip evenly and smoothly without caking or flaking off.



Pioneer Tournament Quality Billiard Chalks are found in many coin operated pool tables as it is readily available. Pioneer chalk for pool, snooker and billiards players. Increase your ball control and direction by using this highly regarded trade quality chalk.

Pioneer Chalk is one of the most popular chalks today for use in competition and tournament playing. It coats the tip evenly and smoothly without caking or flaking like some cheaper imports

## Eight Ball Equipment ‘ The Cue Handle’

The majority of the weight of the snooker cue or pool cue is carried in the Handle (aka butt). Butts come in many different designs and materials with the finest snooker cues and pool cues being constructed from exotic hardwoods and hand spliced to the shaft of the cue. At the end of the butt is the bumper constructed from either wood or leather and designed to protect the cue from impact with the ground.



- Bumper:** The bumper protects the bottom of the cue.
- Butt Cap:** The butt cap protects the cue when you are chalking.
- Butt Sleeve Inlay:** Again, the inlay on the butt sleeve is where the money is.
- Butt Sleeve:** The butt sleeve usually has a good looking piece of wood. Again, more expensive cues use more exotic woods.
- Linen Wrap:** A lot of cues have the handle area covered with a Linen material. Some more expensive cues use a Leather wrap and some cheaper cues have the handle wrapped with Nylon.
- Handle:** The handle is where you put your hand.
- Forearm Inlay:** The inlay in the forearm also contributes to the price of the cue. Exotic materials and intricate work makes the cue more expensive. Cheaper cues use decals
- Forearm:** The forearm of a cue is usually where the money is. Cue forearms can use Birds Eye Maple or Ebony, Cocobolo, some other exotic woods.
- Trim Ring:** The trim ring is used to protect the wood at the joint. The trim ring is usually made from high impact plastic or stainless steel and if you hit the edge of the joint you do not dent the wood and damage the shaft.
- Joint:** The joint is used to take the cue apart for carrying. Joints come in many different styles and configurations. The object of all the different types is to join the 2 cue pieces firmly and accurately.

## Eight Ball Equipment ‘The Cue Shaft’

Shafts are generally constructed from straight grain hardwood such as maple or ash and a tapered towards the tip. The two most common types of taper being the pro taper and the European taper. The pro taper has the same diameter from the tip to 30-35 cm (12-14 inches) toward the joint, at which point it begins to widen. The European taper widens continually and smoothly from the ferrule toward the joint.



When making a cue the choice of timber for the shaft is paramount. Most factory made cues use poor quality ash that can warp and deform over time whereas quality handmade cues, such as those from Wright Cues, are constructed from hand selected hardwood so only the straightest grained wood is selected.

Tips are constructed from leather and glues onto the ferrule. Tips vary between 9-14mm in diameter dependent upon player preference. The tip is designed to transmit the power of the shot to the cue ball with the greatest friction which also allows the ball to be struck off centre in order to spin the ball. Chalk is generally used to improve the contact friction between tip and cue ball.

- Tip:** The pool cue tip is made of leather.
- Ferrule:** The ferrule protects the wood on the top of the cue. The ferrule material can range from Ivory to a specially engineered material that the manufacturer uses to give the cue a special hit.
- Pro Taper Shaft.** The shaft of the cue is usually made of maple. Maple is very hard and is used because it can take years of use without damage.
- Trim Ring:** The trim ring is used to protect the wood at the joint. The trim ring is usually made from high impact plastic or stainless steel and if you hit the edge of the joint you do not dent the wood and damage the shaft.
- Joint:** The joint is used to take the cue apart for carrying. Joints come in many different styles and configurations. The object of all the different types is to join the 2 cue pieces firmly and accurately.

## Eight Ball Equipment ‘The Cue Tip’

We have put together this short guide which should help you select a cue tip..

What's your personal preference?

### **BLUE DIAMOND** by Brunswick

Blue Diamond® leather cue tips provide superb performance and playability. Blue diamond cue tips are made from hand-selected water buffalo hide infused with velvet-grade silicone and formed under 40,000 pounds of pressure to ensure the tips have a perfectly uniform density.



### **Blue Diamond Road Test**

1. The Blue Diamond tip is medium hardness and uses specially selected leather that is pressed to form the tip. This leather is then infused with chalk to help the leather grip fresh chalk and therefore the cue ball.
2. As this tip is medium hard it gives a reasonable amount of control when playing general shots around the table. The cue tip is designed for a very accurate player and this is never more so obvious as when playing with a lot of power.
3. With this tip the amount of spin generated is often to do with the player playing the shots, because it is a medium hardness, spin shots at slow speeds do not take as well. A bit more pace is needed to create the spin required.
4. Wear is not a massive problem with this cue tip. That is not to say that it won't wear but with quite heavy use it will not wear as quickly as a soft tip.

**ELK MASTER** by Tweeten – definitely the most common and most popular tip and if you get a good one they are capable of producing the full range of for the British games, however they are also the softest tips and wear out pretty fast if you play a lot. Very good tips for people who use a lot of screw or side in their game.



### **Elk Master Road Test**

1. The Elk Master tip is a soft tip again created from pressed leather and then infused with chalk. The thing that creates the softer tip is using hide from a different animal or from a different part of the animal.
2. The control that you get with this cue tip is unbelievable. The softness of the tip allows you to control the white ball a slow and pacey shots. Because of the softness of the tip the accuracy of the player when cueing does not need to be pinpoint.
3. You can generate a lot of cue ball spin with an elk master tip. This is because the softness allows a longer contact with the cue ball as its shape does not return to normal as quickly. Spin takes on soft shots and when a more powerful stroke is required.
4. As the cue tip is softer it will wear more quickly than the Blue Diamond. This means replacing it more often.

## Eight Ball Cloth ‘Strachan®’

Strachan cloth has been made in the West of England since 1890. Strachan English pool cloth is regarded around the world as the leading brand in its market.

The choice of table manufacturers, operators, fitters, players, pubs and clubs, its superior nap provides players with unrivalled ball control, speed and positional accuracy. For operators, pub and club owners, Strachan are a brand that can be trusted. It looks great from the moment it's fitted, will continue to perform over its lifespan and will outlast its nearest rival.

And for manufacturers, the Strachan name, classic appearance, lustre and sheen will greatly help to sell your table. Strachan is the official and exclusive cloth of the International Pool Players Association and the World Eight ball Pool Federation and is endorsed by Heywood Pool and Snooker, DPT and other leading manufacturers of English pool tables. The Strachan range of English pool cloths are all made in England. 100% Pure New Wool.



**6811 Tournament** 744g/m (24oz/yd) @ 162cm (64") Width 162cm (64")

The World Eight ball Championship cloth (WEPF). Tournament quality, fast and accurate. Treated with SpillGuard™ to protect against stains and spills.

Available in a range of 16 colours Show / Hide Colours  
Olive, Blue, Burgundy, Black, Red, Purple, Navy, Slate Blue,  
Spruce, Grey, Gold, Chocolate, Electric Blue, Paprika, Bronze and  
Beige

**6811 Pool** 899g/m (29oz/yd) @ 219cm (86") Width 110cm (43") or 219cm (86")

Premium grade, fast, league quality pool cloth. Good control and response. Treated with SpillGuard™ to protect against stains and spills.

Available in a range of 4 colours.  
Olive Blue Red Burgundy

**6811 Club** 713g/m (23oz/yd) @ 155cm (61") Width 155cm (61")

High quality, long lasting pool cloth designed for the small table market in China.

Available in traditional Olive Green

## Eight Ball Equipment ‘Rests/Bridges’

We have put together this short guide which should help you select a rest..  
What's your personal preference?



A cross rest is a stick that has an X formed head which supports the cue to reach the cue ball when it's beyond a participant's regular attain, in order that he can't make a shot in comfort through the use of his/her hand bridge.



A spider is like the normal snooker rest, nevertheless it has an arch shaped head, used to lift and assist the cue tip above the highest of the cue ball.



A swan neck spider or just swan, consists of a rest which has an prolonged neck with a fork formed prong at its end; that is used to give the participant additional cueing distance above a bunch of balls. The swan neck is used by a player to shoot above a ball standing in the finest way of the cue ball.



An extended spider is actually a hybrid of the spider and the swan, used to bridge over large teams of red balls. It's less generally used in professional billiards these days. It is mainly used to place the remainder over a ball. The hook rest is one of the latest creation among snooker rests.

## Eight Ball Equipment ‘Other’

We have put together this short guide which should help you select other equipment..  
What's your personal preference?



Ball Sets and Triangles  
Chalk and Chalk Holders  
Clam and Blister Packs  
Clocks and Novelties  
Cue Cases and Cue Covers  
Cue Racks and Cue Stands  
Cue Repair & Cleaners  
Cue Rests  
Cue Tips and Parts

Gloves and Apparel  
Pool Table Kits  
Rules Sheets and Books  
Scoreboards  
Table Brushes  
Table Cloth  
Table Covers  
Table Lights

## Eight Ball Table ‘Table Care’

We have put together this short guide which should help you keep your pool and snooker tables running like new for a long time to come.



HOME STYLE EIGHT BALL TABLE



PUB STYLE EIGHT BALL TABLE

### **Chalk** - Too much is devastating

There may be nothing that looks cooler than the absent-minded way a pro chalks up between each shot, but the lingering dust is playing a deadly game with your table felt. The chalk is abrasive; it gets into the cloth and destroys it.

**Brushing** the table frequently - even after every session - is a good start, but realise that 50% of the chalk dust actually gets brushed into the cloth. Suction with a small vacuum is the only way to go. Otherwise, you could end up with a layer of dust thick under your felt. This would create the impression that the table was uneven. But too powerful a vacuum could lift and stretch your fabric. We suggest using a brush with soft bristles for daily use. Always brush in the direction of the Nap.

### **Clean Balls** = Clean Table

Balls pick up dust and chalk and then reapply them to the table and cushions. It would be wise to clean your snooker balls after each session and the cue ball after each game. Also, be aware of the intense heat that is briefly generated by a ball after it is struck and is skidding along the felt.

### **Sitting** on the Table

The no. 1 one thing people do with their pool table is sit on it. This will cause the rubber to fall off the cushions. They are typically glued to the cushion bodies and can only take so much weight before breaking off. Sitting on the table can also make the legs become loose and eventually cause the table to wobble.

### **Keep Pets** at Bay

Urine is one of the most corrosive things on the planet. So, keep your pets away from your table. In addition, you might want to keep water away from the wood. A caution that includes keeping all drinks off the cushions. Hard woods are much less conductive to absorption, whereas soft woods expand and contract more easily. In the case of unavoidable spills, it might be wise to apply a fabric sealant like Scotch Guard to your felt for protection.

### **The Woodwork**

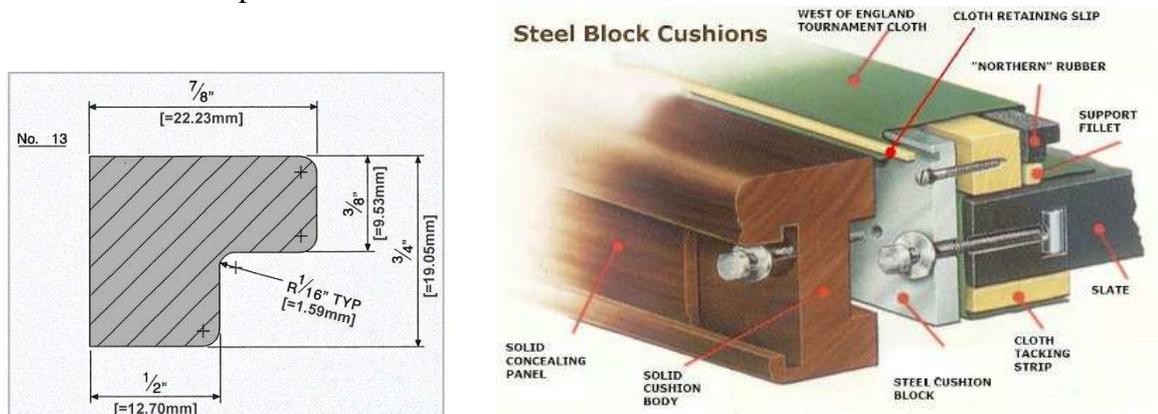
Protect your finish. For a hard, lacquer finish - including polyester, urethane or catalysed varnish finishes - use lemon oil applied with a soft cloth. DO NOT a silicone-based consumer product such as Pledge, which can eat into the finish. For a painted finish use paste wax made with carnauba wax, which provides a thin coating to protect the wood and finish. For leather pockets apply saddle soap with a soft cloth, letting it dry for 15 or 20 minutes, and then brushing it with a shoe or billiard brush.

## Eight Ball Table ‘Construction’

Before you buy your pool table, you have to know exactly what it is that you are buying. Here are the parts of a eight ball table that every pool table shopper has to familiarise themselves with before they buy.

**Cloth** - This part is sometimes erroneously called a "billiard felt," even though technically speaking it isn't felted at all. This is the cloth that the ball actually rolls across. In order to get the best performance from this material it has to be smooth and consistent. While the most popular colour for this cloth is classic green, it can come in just about any colour you can imagine in order to match the decor of your game room.

**Rails** – Cushion Rails are the rubber rails that run all along inside the billiard table that allow you to do bank shots. These always have billiard cloth installed over them. Eight Ball Cushion Rubber has "profiles" known as: L77.



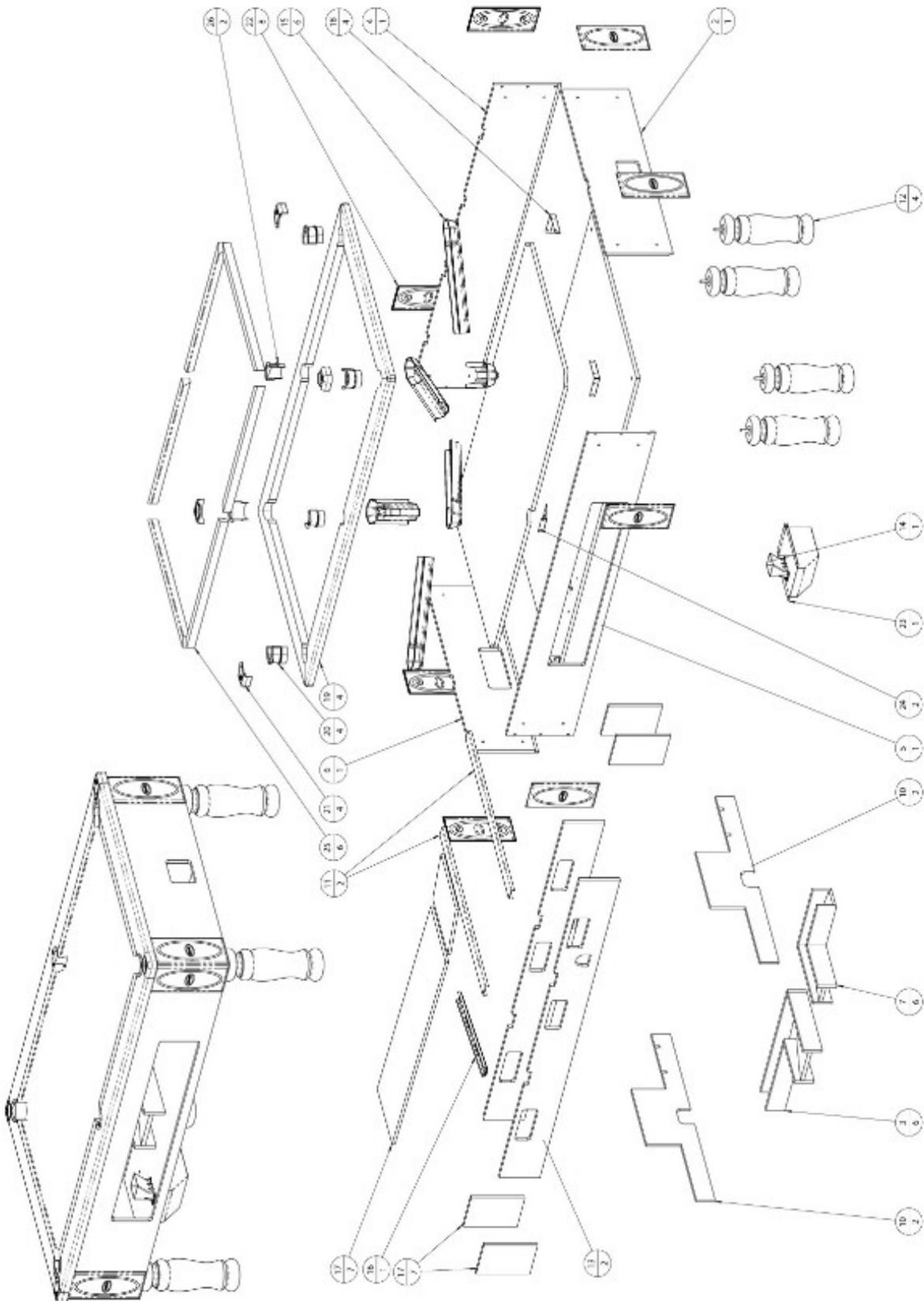
**Slate** - Most eight ball tables are slated. That is, they have a layer of slate that has been sanded smooth right underneath the billiard cloth. The reason slate is chosen is because of how perfectly even you can make it. This allows for a nice even roll all over the table. Slate come in either three pieces, which have to be put together when you get the table, or one solid piece on a 7 x 3.6 table.

**Legs** - Your eight ball table is going to have to stand on something, and that's where the legs come in. Legs on eight ball tables can be divided into two main categories: antique and modern. Antique legs are simple in design and often made of hard wood. Modern legs are made of carved wood and are designed to look more classic. The style of these legs can range from square, round to tapered and beyond.

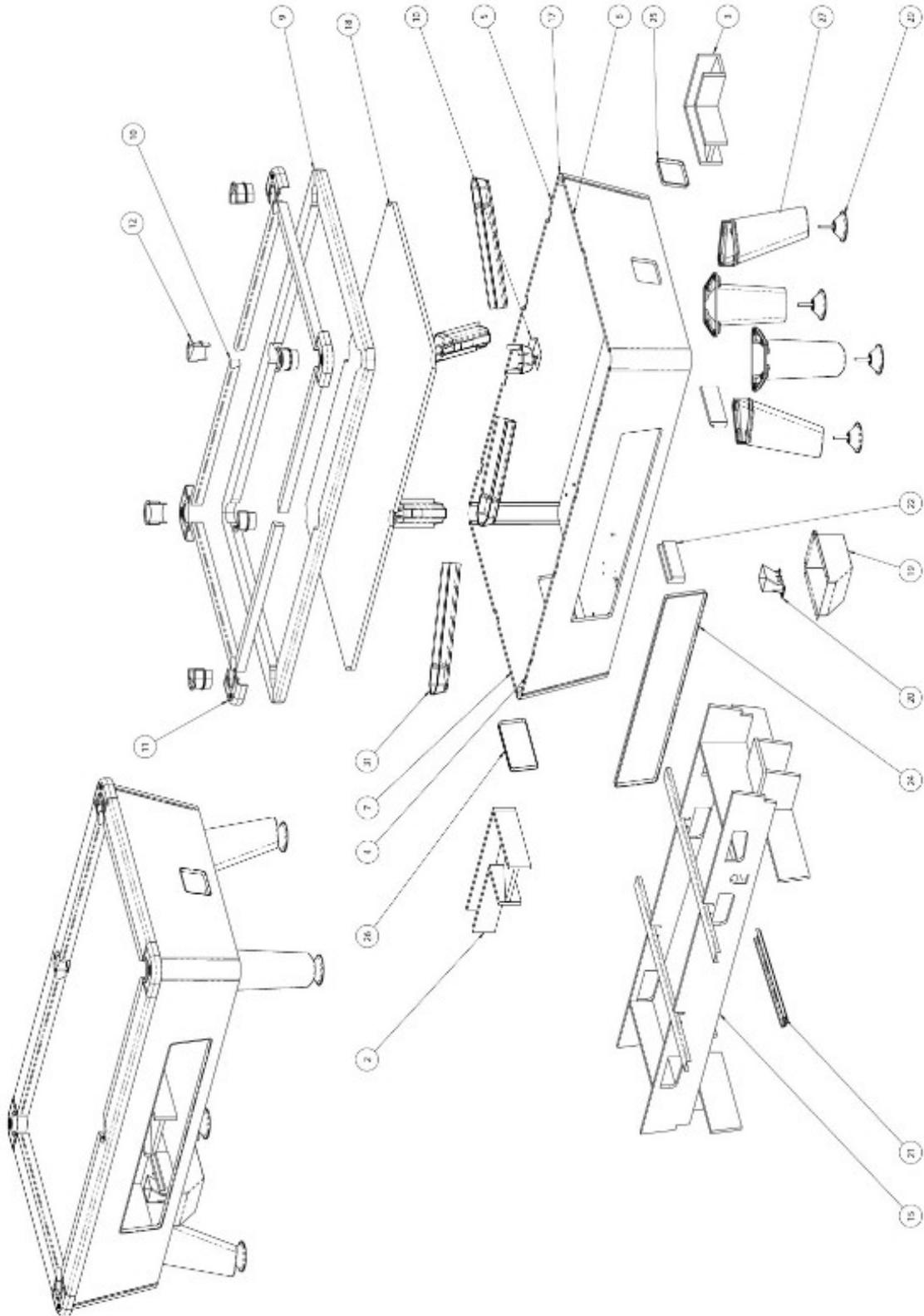
**Pockets** - This is where the balls drop into. In most tables, these are just leather mesh bags, but on kiddie tables they can be made of plastic. Some eight ball tables have these parts covered by a strip of leather, but other times they are just left exposed.

**Ball Return** - Other pool tables don't actually have pockets that drop into leather bags, but rather they are all collected into compartment on one side of the pool table. This is what you see on all bar or pay tables. However, there is a nice selection of this style of pool tables that you can get for the home that have this bar style feature.

## Eight Ball Table 'Components One'



# Eight Ball Table 'Components Two'

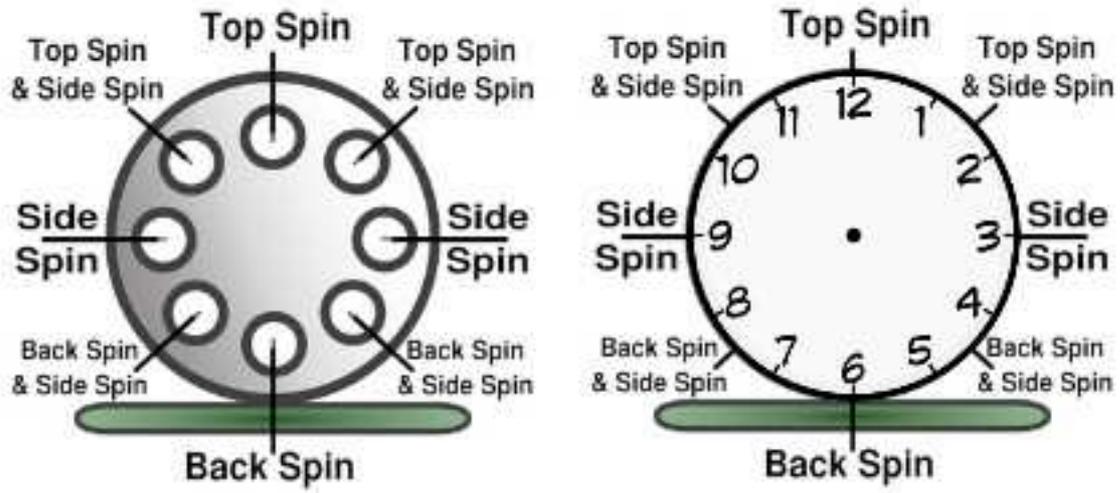


BLANK

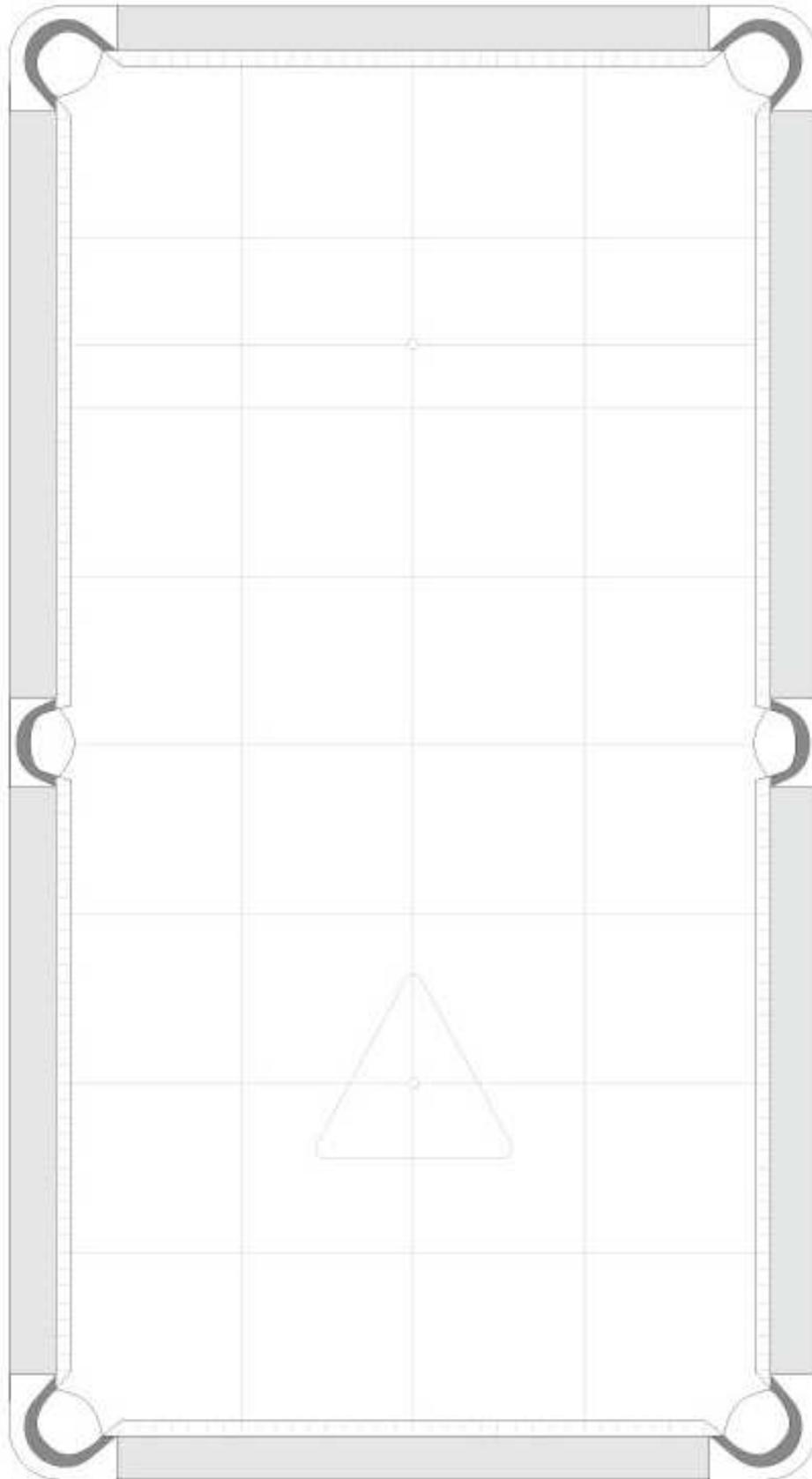
BLANK

# WORK SHEETS

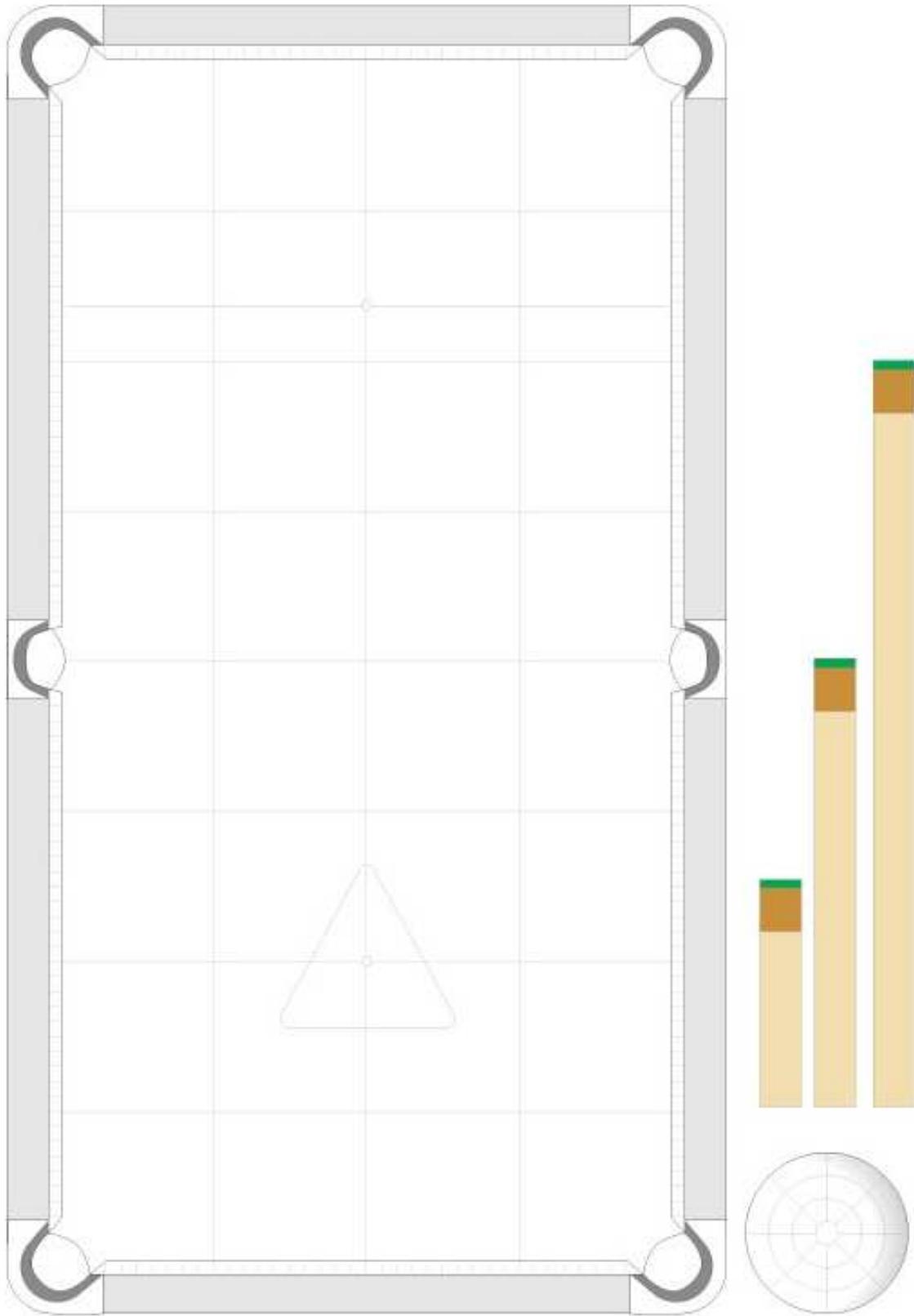
## CUE BALL DIAGRAM



## Eight Ball Table: Exercise #



# Eight Ball Table: Exercise #



(Indicate the cue ball position and strength of the shoot)

## Players Feet Positions (1)

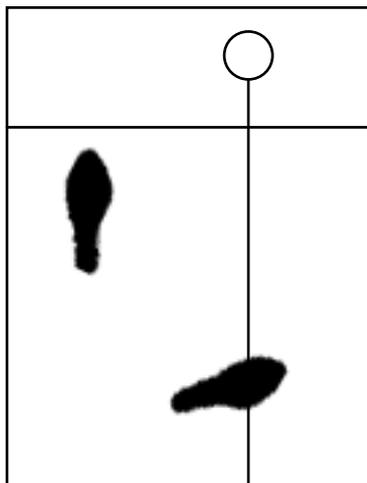


DIAGRAM (1)  
John Campbell.  
Australian Professional  
Snooker Champion.



DIAGRAM (2)  
Walter Lindrum.  
Considered by most to be  
the greatest cueist ever.

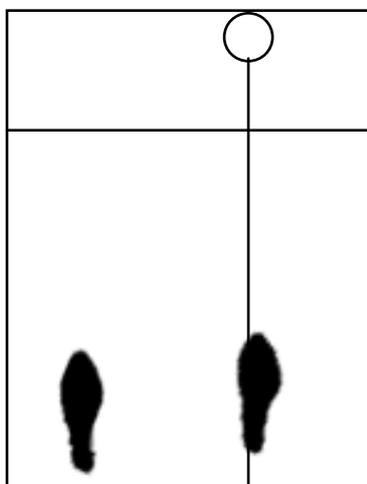


DIAGRAM (3)  
John Parrot.  
One of snookers most  
promising players.



DIAGRAM (4)  
Tony Meo.  
Highly rated world snooker  
star and dual Winfield  
Masters winner.

## Players Feet Positions (2)

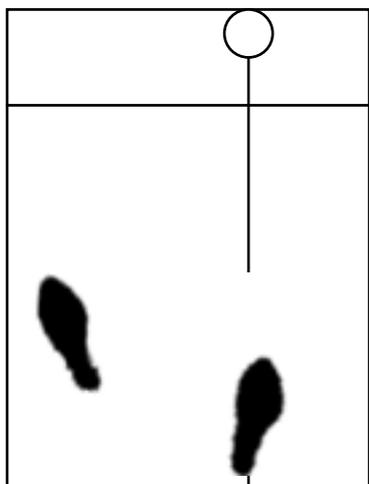


DIAGRAM (5)  
Steve Davis.  
Argued as the greatest  
Snooker player of all times.

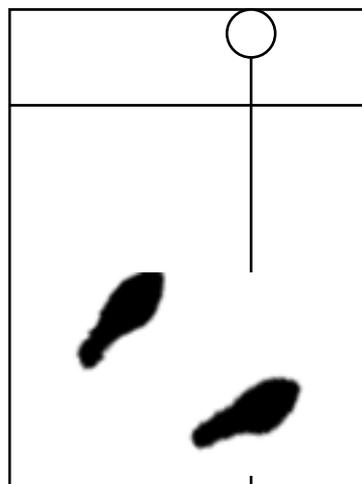


DIAGRAM (6)  
Willie Mosconi.  
Is he the greatest pool  
player of all time?

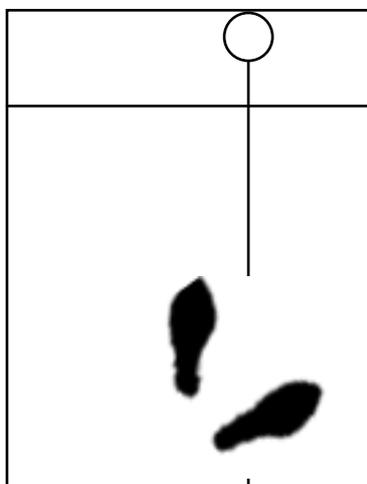


DIAGRAM (7)  
Joe Davis.  
Snooker champion of the world  
For 20 years and the other half  
Of the greatest snooker players  
argument.

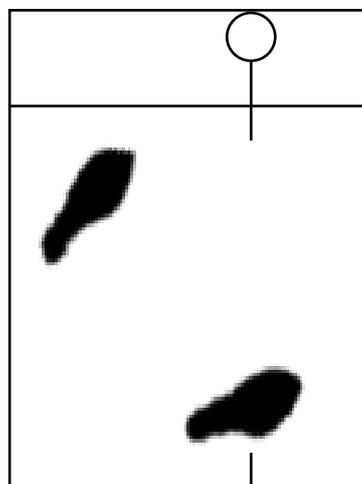
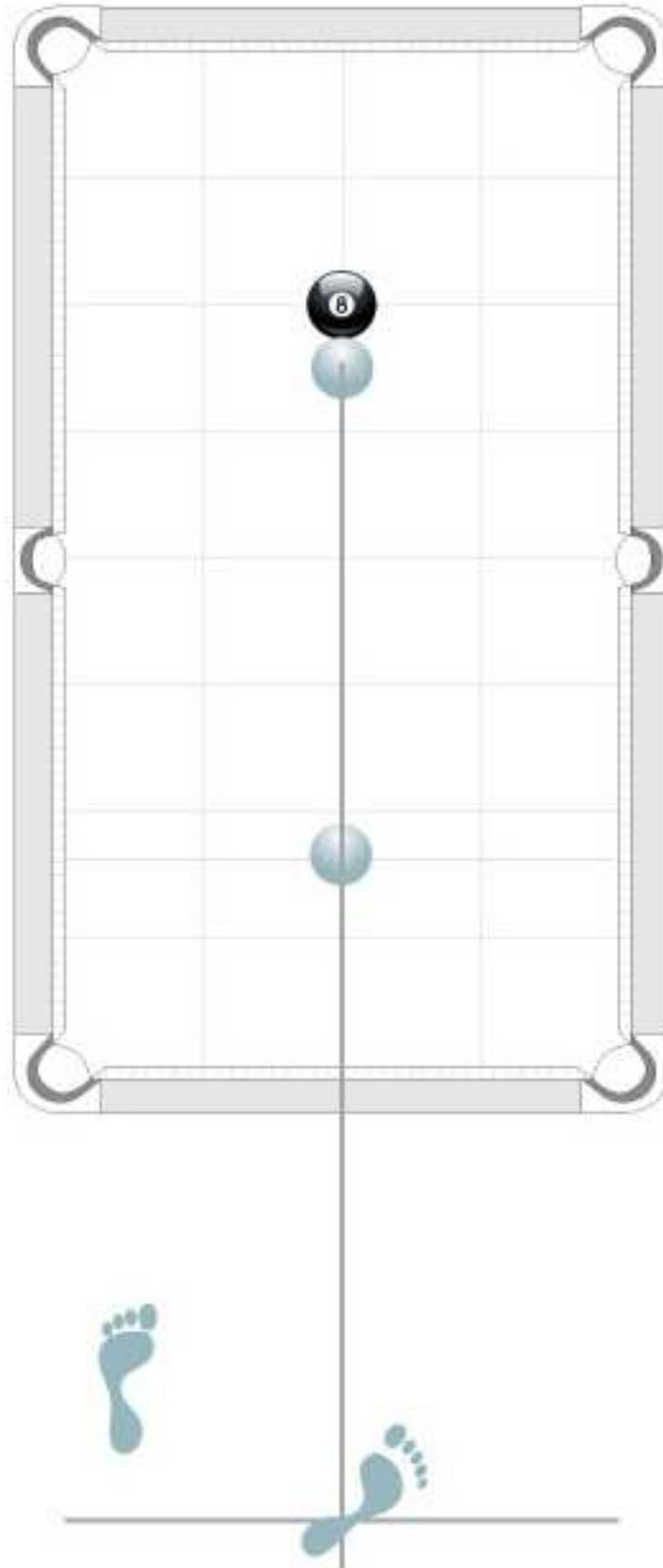


DIAGRAM (8)  
Jim Rempe.  
Winner of more pool  
titles world wide than  
any other player.

## The feet position that best suits me!



(cut out the two feet a stick them in the position that best suits you)