

Get the Right Shot on the Second Ball

by "The Monk"

Contributing Writer • www.monkbilliardacademy.net

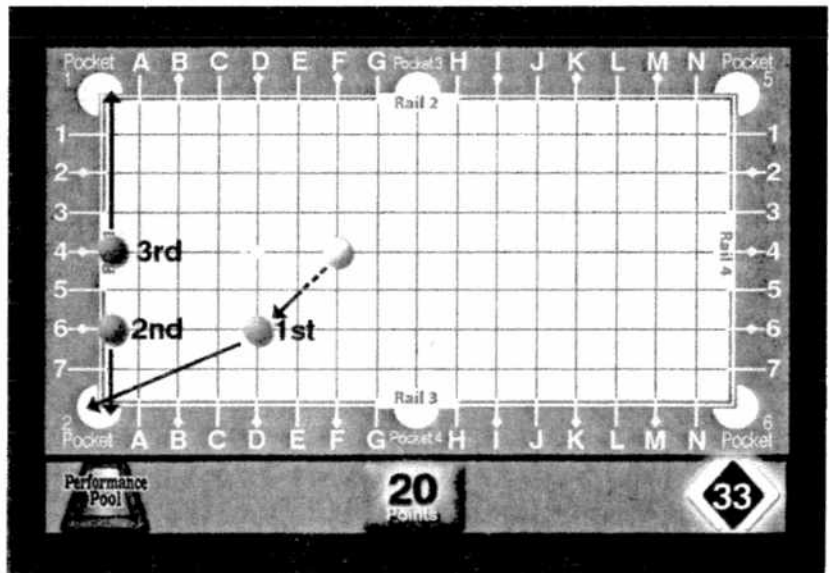
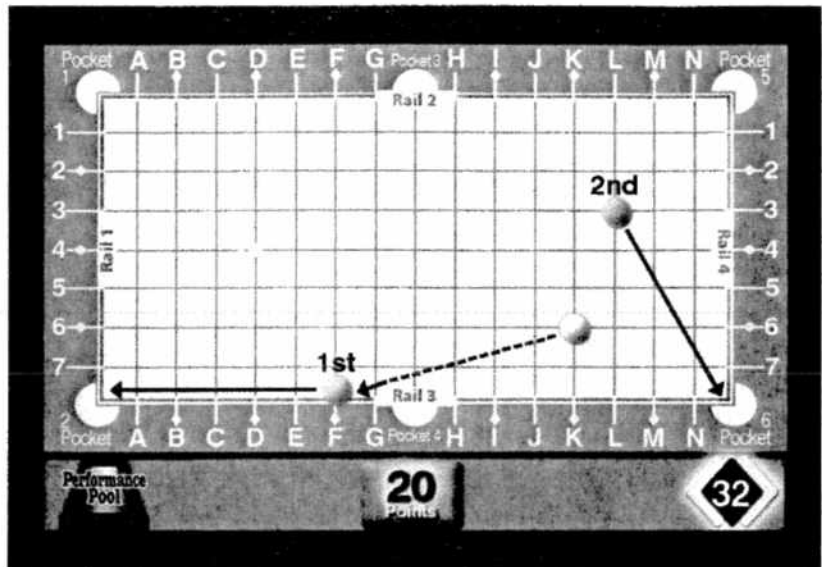
Here are two shots I would like you to master. I was competing in Performance Pool and these two cards were my last chance to take the match. I had to hit both of them twice to gain eighty points. The first shots in all my card disciplines are the key to success. It is the same with nine ball, or eight ball so this game will help you set up your run out. Performance Pool was designed to help you master the four strokes of pool and cue ball speed. With card number 32 you simply need to avoid the scratch in the side pocket as you set up for your second shot. Not an easy task when you are under pressure. This is a shot I always demonstrate in my personal appearances. On the first shot on card number 33, make sure you use a soft follow stroke with inside english and bring the cue ball across the table for a clear shot on the second ball. If you come up short, you will have to deliver an "up and down" two rail position on the second ball to get the third ball. If you go too far, you are in trouble.

In dealing with these Performance Pool shot disciplines you need to develop strong instincts with cue ball speed. I have an exercise I designed for my Master Players that helps you gain great instincts and I will be glad to email it to you at no charge. Just drop me a line at monkbilliardacademy@yahoo.com and I will send it over to you right away. Instincts are vital to skill development. You will never develop instincts banging balls around. You need a training program that is specific and deliberate in order to bring your game to its highest level.

My workshops are affordable and I will be in many places this summer. Each weekend is booked until July 26th. Log on to www.monkbilliardacademy.net and make plans to spend a weekend working on your game. This is my last trip around the country so join me in sharing The Monk 101 program. You will be glad you did.



The Monk



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Safety or an Out

by Willie Jopling
Contributing Writer

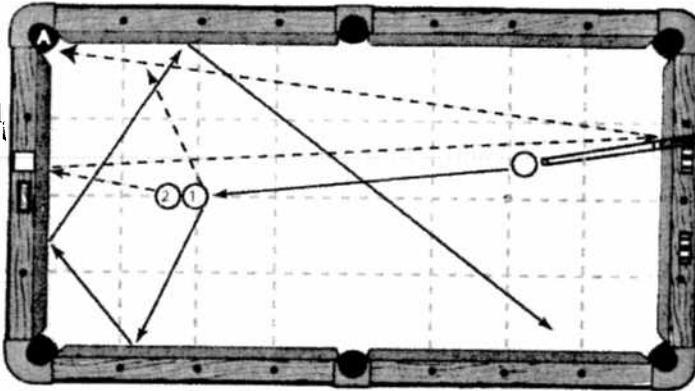


This is a shot I showed Allen Hopkins back in the seventies when he came down here to Lynchburg to do an exhibition in our pool-room. Then when he played our best one pocket player money Allen made this same shot on him his first try.

When this shot comes up playing one pocket you may have cue ball in hand because your opponent scratches when he pockets a ball. He has to spot a ball for the scratch and also the ball he made. Now this is when you have a chance to try this shot because you have cueball in hand.

This is what I do. After the two balls are spotted I walk around to the foot of the table chalking my cue while checking to see that the balls are frozen and straight up and down table. Then I put the piece of chalk about 1/3 the distance between the center and right hand diamonds on the foot rail. Then position the cueball

about the same distance from the head spot. Now, aim to hit the 1 ball towards the chalk with top right English. This shot can be seen on my Ultimate trick Shot tape or DVD.



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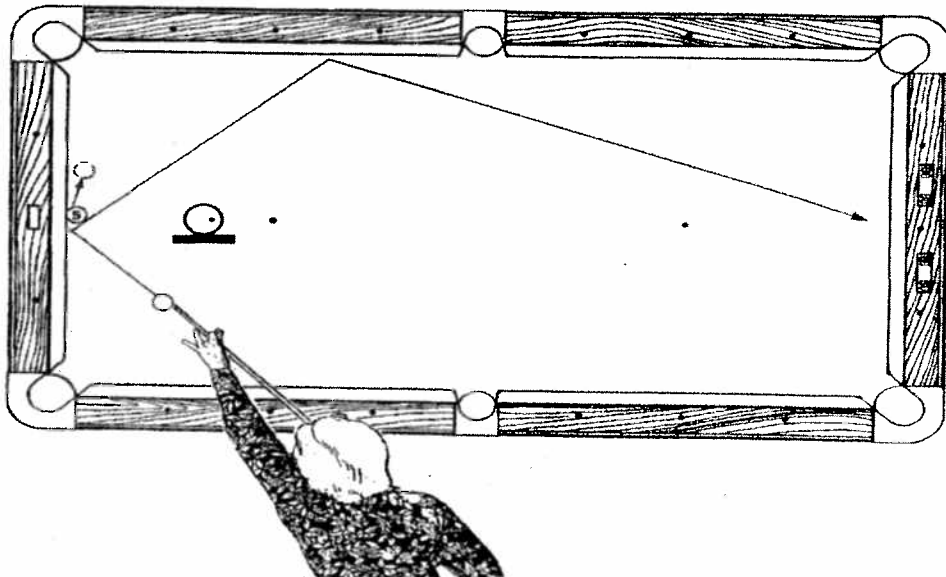
Rail First Safety

by Robert Byrne

From "Byrne's Complete Book of Pool Shots"
with permission



Try this safety shot with the balls placed exactly as shown. It takes practice to hit the 5-ball thin enough to keep it from moving more than a few inches. Shoot softly with maximum sidespin. On your first attempt you are likely to use too much speed and hit too much of the 5-ball.



Run a Rack of Balls

by Tom Simpson • PoolClinics.com
Contributing Writer

Recently, a player asked for advice on reaching his goal of running his first rack of balls. He has not been playing very long, but has been to pool school, so he has a clear understanding of ball behavior, and his ball pocketing skills are coming up. Naturally, he wants to run some balls and see some improvement. To help reach this goal, and to become more comfortable running balls, here's the approach I outlined: *I suggested he set the goal as run a random rack of 15. Eightball has blockers. Nineball has snookers. Running 15 balls in any order you like gives you a more freedom of shot sequence and a more forgiving challenge. And it's running a rack!*

Practice #1: Improve Your Stroke Fundamentals, so you can deliver more precisely and consistently. Find ways to make your swing smoother, straighter, simpler, more fluid. Deliver more accurately. The primary exercise here is straight-in shots, observing closely. Stay down and watch the cueball. Then check out your tip. Where is it? Did you stay down and finish the shot? Did you get through the cueball well? Did you swerve?

Practice #2: Three Ball Patterns. The fundamental concept of position play is that whenever possible, we play at least three balls ("How can I shoot the current shot in such a way that I get an angle on the next shot that takes me to the one after that?"). Three Ball Patterns is the mother drill for running balls. Throw three balls out on the table at random. Take cueball in hand and execute the simplest run-out you can. No funny business. No fancy shots. Simple. Make it embarrassingly simple. Devise a complete plan before you shoot, as best as your current understanding and skills can support. Adjust the plan as necessary to recover position after each shot. Shoot hundreds of these.

Practice #3: Three Ball Patterns with Commitment. Same as above except before each shot you place a small piece of paper where you're planning to leave the cueball for the next shot. It doesn't matter what size your paper target is. Big targets are awkward to place. Make it small and see how close you can come to it. Pool is a game of close, and of endless recovery. Perfect only happens sometimes. Placing the target will force you to plan ahead. Observe your results closely. Think about why whatever really happened on each shot occurred. This exercise will, very clearly and painfully, show you where your thinking & execution are on or off.

Practice #4: Play Bowliards. Play by yourself. You're practicing and working toward a goal, so keep score and track your scores over time. Play hard. No cheating. Bowliards is a terrific game for building your confidence and getting comfortable running balls. There are only 10 balls on the table, so there

usually aren't many cluster & pocket-blocking problems.

Here's how it works: Rack up any 10 balls in a triangle (just leave the back row off).

Break any way you choose and spot anything that goes in. Then take ball in hand behind the line and try to run out. If you miss, you get one more chance to get the rest of the balls. Start where the cueball is. Score the game just like bowling – a run-out of all ten is a strike and getting out in two innings is a spare. If you've missed twice and there are still balls on the table, your score is the number of balls made in your two innings. Rack them and play 10 racks this way. If you don't know how to score bowling, please have someone show you. This approach to scoring gives tremendous weight to getting out, and thus gives the game some pressure and excitement.

If standard Bowliards is a little too difficult, play that you are allowed to begin each frame with ball-in-hand after the break. If it's still too frustrating, take 3 whacks per rack (instead of 2), for a while. That way, you'll get all the way through more racks, and not have to rack as frequently. Take ball in hand after each miss. As you improve, give up ball in hand and/or give up the third whack and start playing standard Bowliards.

When you get opportunities to get input from advanced players, break the rack and then discuss with them what they suggest as the run-out sequence and why. As your scores improve, and you are clearly getting a better feel for simple, smart shot sequences, try calling the next two balls in advance before each shot. This will make you remember to think about your three ball patterns before every shot. Your patterns will get simpler, easier, more natural (fewer difficult shots, less CB movement, landing for position on the "correct" side of the next shot line, etc.).

Milestones: Score a spare. Score a strike. Score over 100. Once you are getting several strikes per game, you are probably ready to start taking some whacks at running a rack of 15.

After you've spent a lot of time running through racks of Bowliards, you'll believe it – and achieve it. A one-whack rack!



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Mastering Follow

by Tom Ross

Contributing Writer



Almost all of our work so far has focused on developing feel for working the lower half of the cue ball. This month however we shall move upstairs to work on the follow shot and our feel for a cue ball that is behaving more naturally or rolling forward as it moves forward.

Despite that the draw shot requires more manipulation of the cue ball to apply the spin necessary to make the ball draw back, my experience shows that many somewhat accomplished players have more trouble executing a strong follow shot. One reason for this may be that from the first time someone sees a good player draw the cue ball over the length of the table, he begins to apply all of his efforts to imitating or reproducing what he has just seen. Everybody wants to draw the cue ball.

In their early attempts to draw the cue ball many beginners apply a great deal of unneeded effort, usually gripping the cue too tightly at impact and sometimes gritting their teeth and contorting their bodies to put a little backspin on the cue ball. This phenomenon of trying too hard is precisely what keeps many players from executing strong follow shots when needed. Consider now that making the cue ball follow requires no effort or force.

Without any balls on the table get into your stance and raise your bridge to put your tip just higher than the cushion; this is where the top of cue ball is. Relax your shooting hand until you can feel every thread of your cue's wrap in your fingertips. Now begin practicing a long,

smooth, flowing, level stroke. Make sure to bring the tip all the way back to your bridge and then move it forward well past where the cue ball would be. Practice stroking smoothly with the same speed forward as back and no stop in front or back. Immerse yourself in the flow of this movement.

Is your cue level? Focus on your tip throughout the stroke; if its height over the table changes your cue is not level. Look back at your shooting hand; if it is moving up and down end that now. Check the clearance of your shaft over the rail; if it is more than a quarter inch

Everybody wants to draw the cue ball.

your cue is not level. Ask someone if your cue is level. Find a carpenter and borrow his level. Make your cue level.

Put the cue ball in place now and shoot it down the table with a gentle, medium speed while focusing on your tip, which should stay at the same height over the table throughout the stroke. Without bursting any blood vessels shoot a few more with some speed, adding speed gradually but keeping the stroke smooth and level.

Now set up and mark the shot in the diagram with the obstructing striped ball in place as indicated. Pocket the object ball with a soft follow shot, rolling the cue ball forward inside of the obstructing ball. You will find that on soft shots do not need to hit the top of the cue

to accomplish this. As you add speed, your tip must move to the top of the cue ball, and more important, your stroke must remain very smooth and level while accelerating gradually. Any jabbing or punching the cue ball on this shot will cause it to drift sideways and hit the obstructing ball. The same goes for the slightest downward hit. Continue shooting the shot until you can hit it with enough speed to make the cue ball cross the table to the opposite rail.

If you are a beginning or intermediate player this exercise has arrived just in time for you to develop a strong follow stroke, which is completely different from the stroke used for draw and stop shots. If

you are an advanced player you may be surprised to learn that you do not always apply a level, smooth stroke to your follow shots and you can use this exercise to hone your follow stroke.

Because the cue ball will roll forward naturally many players neglect to work on the follow shot concentrating instead on the flashier and more difficult draw shot. A powerful draw shot is very appealing and certainly worth working to develop. However a great player knows the distinction between the two strokes and owns both shots at equal strength.

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