

SEEING IS BELIEVING

With a video as an aide, you can see how to approach rail shots.

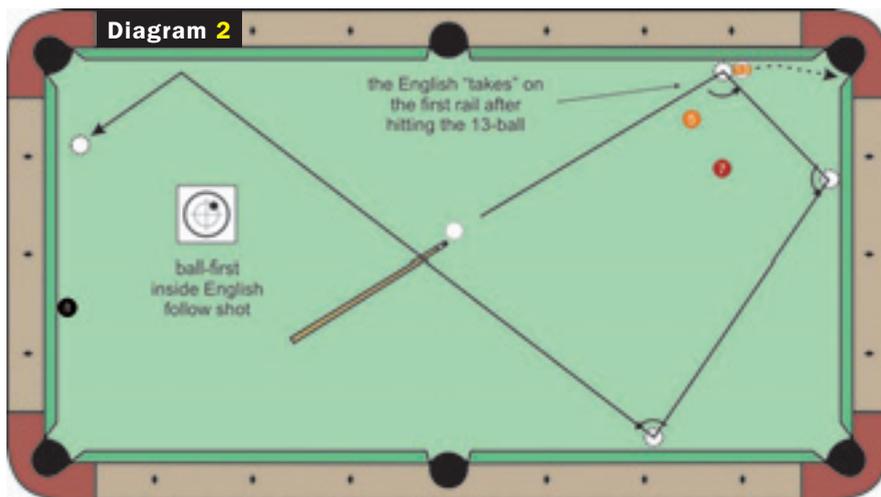
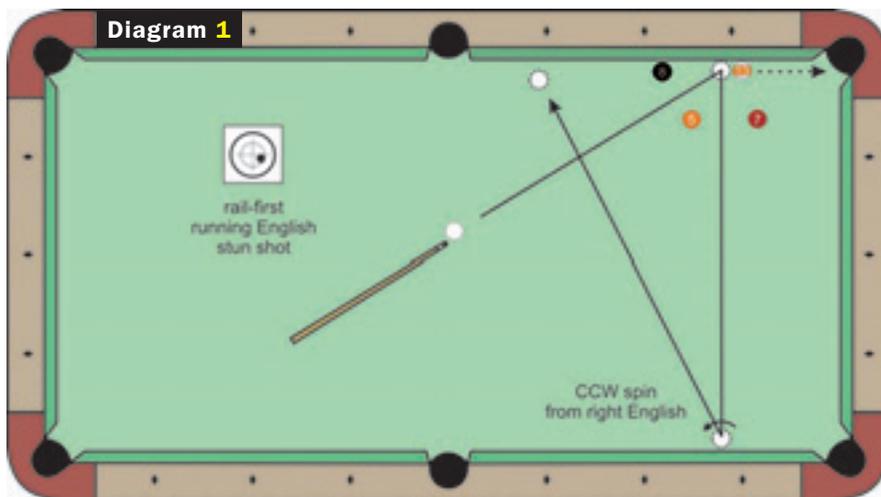


[Note: Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, and technical proofs (TP) can be accessed and viewed online at billiards.colostate.edu. The reference numbers used in the article help you locate the resources on the Web site. You might want to view the resources on a CD-ROM or DVD. Details can be found at dr-dave-billiards.com.]

THIS IS the third article based on the “The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots (VEPS),” an instructional DVD series I recently created with past BD columnist and good friend Tom Ross. VEPS contains over 750 shot types within 50 main categories and 5 major areas. Many clips in the series are designated as “gems,” indicating shots or concepts important to know as a pool player, whether understood explicitly or in a more intuitive way. Last month, we looked at some gems from the first DVD: “VEPS I: Basic Shot Making and Position.” This month, we’ll look at selected gems from the second DVD: “VEPS II: English and Position Control.”

Diagrams 1 and 2 illustrate a few cut shots along the rail where English is required to get position on the next ball, and where the outcome very much depends on whether you hit the ball or rail first. The first example, Diagram 1 (VEPS Shot No. 226), calls for a rail-first hit along with running English and stun (no follow or draw). With the rail-first hit, the cue ball (CB) comes off the tangent line of the 13 ball nearly straight across the table. Upon reaching the second rail, the counterclockwise spin from the right English then sends the cue ball slightly up-table for excellent position on the 8.

With the layout in Diagram 2 (VEPS Shot No. 227), the 5 ball and 7 ball obstacles force us to use a ball-first hit. Hitting the 13 ball just before the rail allows the English to “take” after contact, sending the CB well forward of the 7 ball and up-table for position on the 8 ball. Because the 13 ball will be cut slightly



into the rail, this shot would not work if the pockets were really “tight,” or if the 13 ball were farther from the pocket. See NV B.72 for demonstrations of the shots in both Diagrams 1 and 2, along with other rail-first versus ball-first examples. Also included are slow-motion clips and detailed explanations that help you understand how and why the shots work. (If you want to learn more about rail cut-shot CB control, my HSV DVD has a feature on this topic as well.)

Diagrams 3 and 4 show gems related to position routes through the center of the table. Diagram 3, in particular, illus-

trates a very useful principle I call the 45° rule. If the CB rolls into the short rail at roughly a 45° angle, it will head fairly close to the center of the table after contacting the long rail (see Shot No. 290 in NV B.74 for several demonstrations). With the layout in Diagram 3 (VEPS Shot No. 291), stun off the 13 ball sends the CB into the short rail at the necessary 45° angle to create the table-center route for position on the 8 ball. There are at least two important reasons for learning how to send the CB on a path through center table. One is that the CB cannot head straight for a pocket (i.e.,

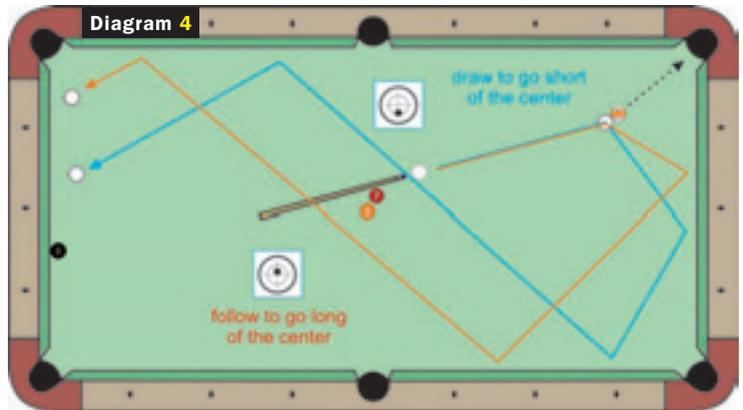
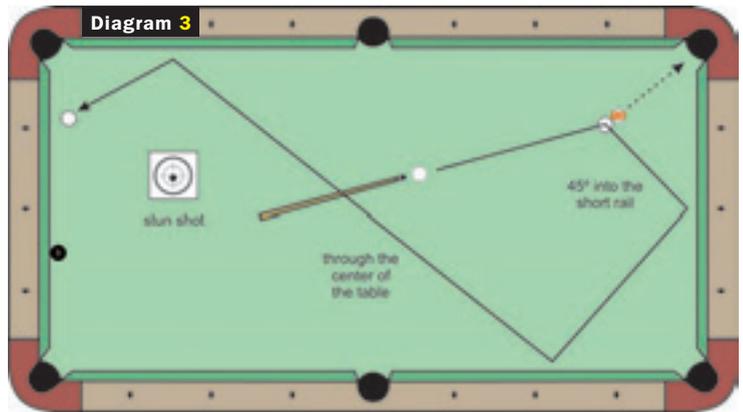
scratch) after coming off a cushion to the table center (see NV B.74 for more info), and the other is illustrated in the next example.

Once you've acquired the skills and are comfortable sending the CB through the center of the table, it is relatively easy to make adjustments to that route. Diagram 4 (VEPS Shot No. 342) shows two ways to do this for multiple-rail position on the 8 ball, where the table center is blocked by the 5 ball and 7 ball. The tangent line off the 13 ball is approximately 45° into the short rail, so a stun shot would send the CB into the obstacle balls. We don't want this, but this route is a useful reference. Relative to stun, using a little draw allows us to avoid the obstacles on the short side of center table, while a little follow has the CB passing on the long side.

Example gems from the second VEPS DVD, including the ones discussed above, can be viewed on the VEPS Web site or at billiards.colostate.edu under NV B.70 through NV B.74.

I hope you enjoy and benefit from my series of articles highlighting some shots from the "Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots" series. Next month, we'll look at selected gems from the third DVD: "VEPS III: Safety Play and Strategy."

David Alciatore is a mechanical engineering professor at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colo. He is also author of the book, DVD and CD-ROM, "The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards," and the DVD, "High-speed Video Magic."



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