

The P.J. Nolan Coaching Guide 2005



The P.J. Nolan Snooker Coaching Guide



**Written and
Designed
by P.J. Nolan**



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WHY DO I NEED A SNOOKER COACH ?



Effective Coaching helps the player gain improvement and therefore more enjoyment in playing snooker.

Coaching can benefit everyone, Whatever your level.

As your Coach I will identify your skills and weakness and work on both with you through planned coaching sessions.

I will enhance your awareness of your own individual technique.

If you are going to play competitive Snooker I will help you with all aspects of the game like: Concentration, Discipline, and Preparing for tournament.

As well as working on motivating you and getting you to play with more confidence.

**There are many myths and misconception about coaching
Here are just a few examples,**

“ I am too old “

You are never too old to learn. You may have been playing for years and never improved. With coaching you will improve your technique and knowledge and enjoy your game all the more.

“ I am not good enough “

How do you know ? A coach will work with you improving your basic technique so that your practice will be constructive and you will become more positive about your abilities.

“ I am a better player than the coach “

But are you a better Snooker Coach ?

Is Frank Callan a better snooker player than Stephen Hendry ? Answer NO

“ I am playing well I don 't need a coach “

It is often hard to admit that you might benefit from Coaching. Every player needs somebody to seek help from Stephen Hendry & Steve Davis have received Coaching, and in all sports like Golf Tiger Woods receives Coaching to cope with difficulties that may arise in his game.

“ I only play for fun “

A vast number of people have a game of snooker with a friend for just fun

A coach will work on your game so that you will know immediately why you missed that shot or that you have not got the desired position, so that you will be able to get it right next time.

For More Information

E / Mail : PJCOACH147@ hotmail.com

The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide



Introduction

Before you become a good snooker player you must first learn a variety of shots.

There are millions of different kinds of shots.

Every good shot you play in a tournament depends on how much ground work you have done on the practice table.

Having a qualified snooker coach to monitor your game and practice will make the player more successful.

Before you start to play consistently, you must first develop a good stance, bridge hand, learn proper cueing and be able to control the path of the cue ball whether it is full ball, half ball or the control of side, screw and stun.

Over the years I have been coaching I have learnt every player have their own individual style of play and no two players are alike.

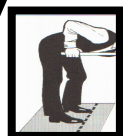
As your coach I will fine-tune your technique and work on your weak points through planned practice sessions.

I have designed specific Training routines for Concentration, Cue ball Control, Tactical and Technique.

The shots I have selected will improve the player and help him understand his cue action and teach him how to control the cue ball, because if you control the cue ball, you will control the match.

The Learning Route For A Snooker Player

**The P.J. Nolan Snooker
Guide**



**Putting all the
pieces together
is vital
in becoming
a Snooker
Player,**

The Pause

**The
Backswing**

**The
Follow
Through**

**The
Cue
Action**

**Aiming on
the Line
of Aim**

**The Timing
and Pause**

**The
Cue Arm**

**The
Rest**

**The
Head Down**

**The
Address
Position**

**The Master
Eye**

**The
Approach**

**The
Bridge
Hand**

**The
Cue
Grip**

**The
Stance**

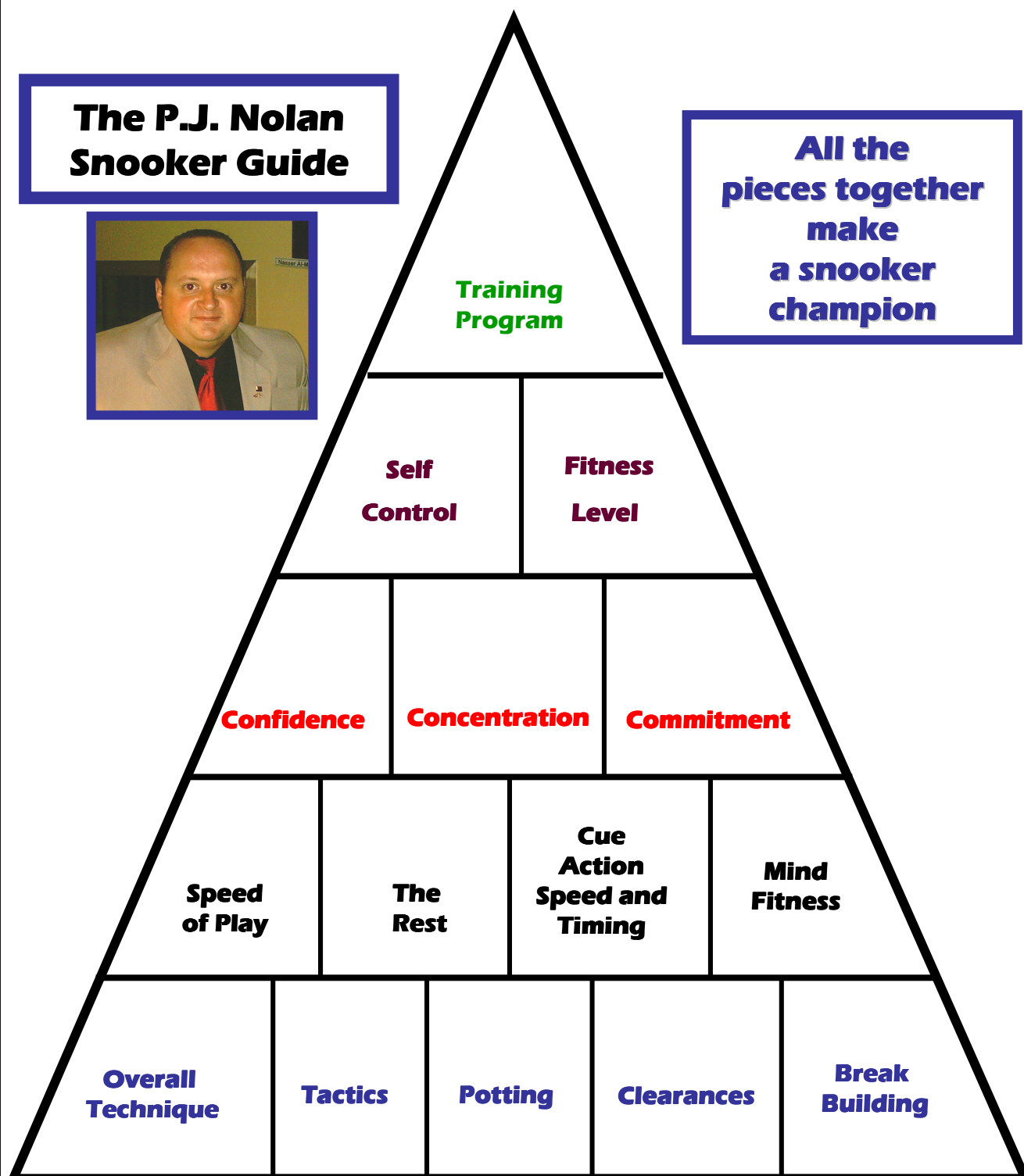
What Makes A Snooker Player

The Route To Be A Snooker Champion

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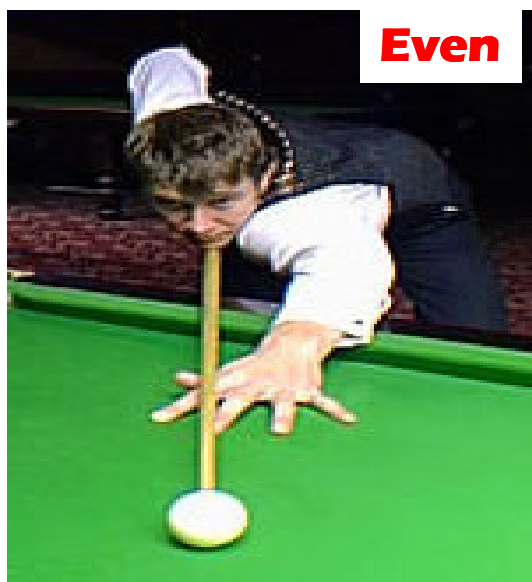


**All the
pieces together
make
a snooker
champion**



What Makes A Snooker Champion

The Master **Eye**



Even

Even Sighted Players

**Cue Under
The
Master Eye**

Right Eyed Players



Right

Left Eyed Players



Left

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The Master Eye



The first decision a player must do is, find out which eye is his master eye, because this will determinate the style of technique which will suit him.

Whatever eye is your master eye, you will need to cue from under that eye and adopt the proper stance.

80% percent of players are Right Eyed, the rest are Left Eyed or are Even Sighted.

If the eye that is doing the sighting is not directly over the cue ball, then the player may have the tendency to hit across the ball.

After you find your master eye, you must get your eyes on the object ball before you deliver the cue,
The main fault in most players is looking at the cue ball or the pocket when they are hitting the cue ball.

Having selected the line of the shot, flick your eyes backwards and forwards in sequence with your cue action from the white to object ball to the pocket to check the line.
After you make the pause focus only on the object ball before delivering the cue.

It is important to fix your eyes on the object ball because you will automatically send the cue in the direction you are looking.

To determine which eye is your master eye.

Place a piece a chalk at one end of the snooker table and stand directly in front of it. With both eyes open point your forefinger at the chalk and close your left eye, and see if your finger is still pointing at the chalk.

If it is the player is a Right Eyed player.

Common Faults

- 1.** Not cueing from under their master eye
- 2.** Not making the correct stance

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The Approach

1. Get your body behind the shot



2. Visualize the shot you want to play



3. Come in on the line



4. Finish on the Line



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The Approach



The Approach Drill is very important and it starts when you get up from your chair or when you are walking to the table.

If you practice this drill during your training it will help you in your tournament matches and help you concentrate more on the shot and make your technique and game more consistent.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. See the line of the shot. | = 20 |
| 2. Come in on the line, and get your tip up on the cue ball | = 20 |
| 3. Smooth Cueing and Back swing and Follow Through. | = 20 |
| 4. Make slight back Pause and get eyes on object ball. | = 20 |
| 5. Finish down on the shot and on the line . | = 20 |

Total = 100

This total of 100 down on the shot and feel one aspect is not right, then you must get points is only a guide, but if you are 100% confident you have completed all aspects in your approach drill before hitting the ball then play the shot, but if you are up and start your drill again.

When you get to the table get your body behind the line of the shot and put your two feet together and visualize the shot your playing.

When you decided on the shot, come in on the line and get your tip of the cue up on the cue ball where you want to hit it..

Always address the cue ball where you want to hit, and think smooth when making your cue action, this will help you deliver the cue smooth along the line every time.

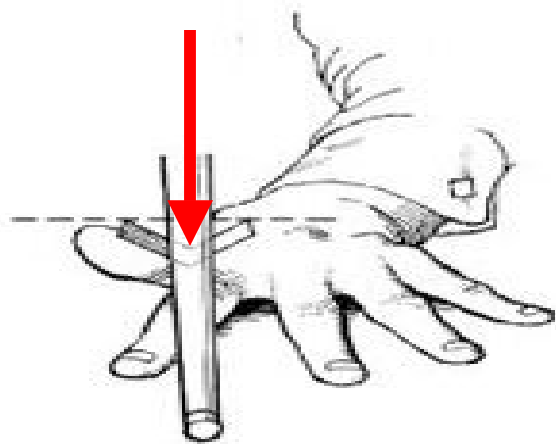
Common Faults

- 1. Playing the shot and knowing the drill was not done perfect.**
- 2. Not coming in on the line.**
- 3. Not getting your tip to the cue ball.**
- 4. Not checking the line of the shot before you get down .**

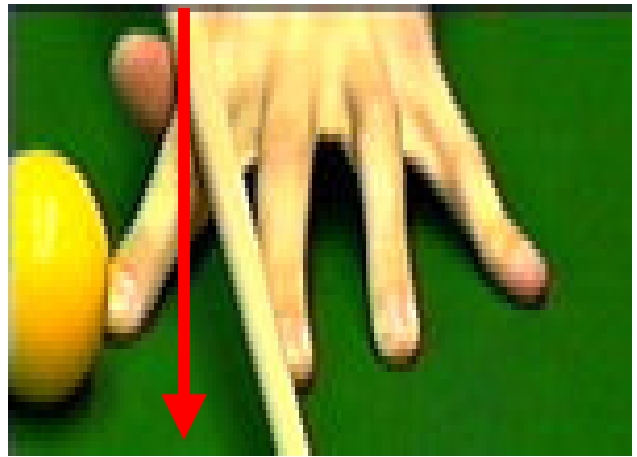
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The Bridge Hand

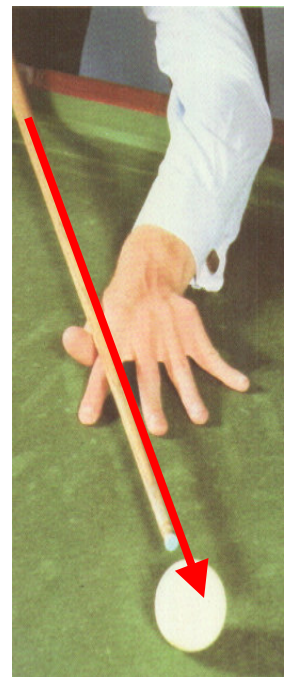
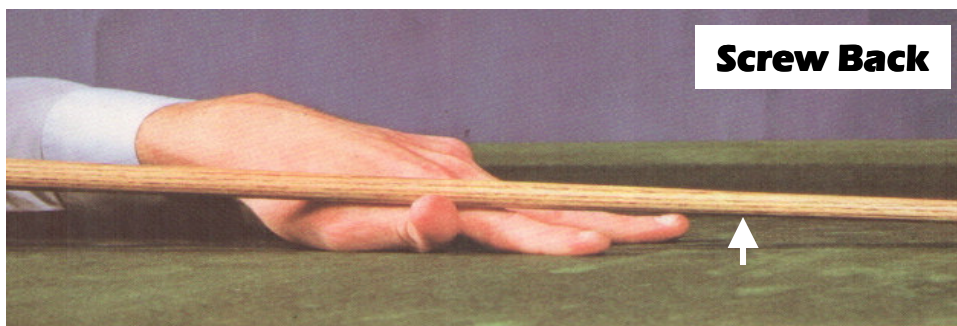
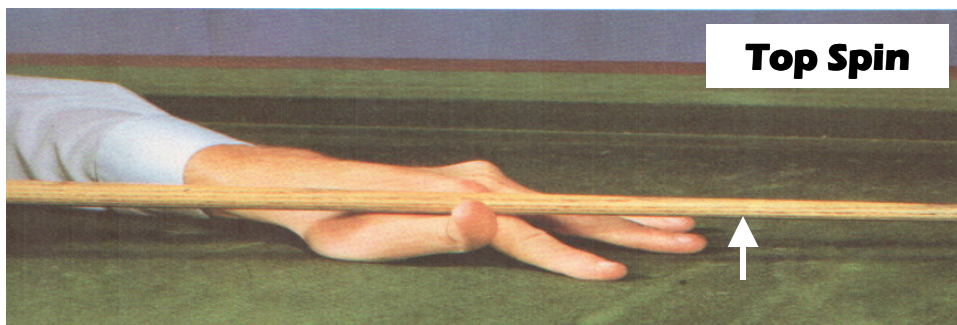
Bridge Hand On Line



Bridge Not On Line



The Top Spin Bridge & Screw Back Bridge



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The Bridge Hand



The formation of a strong bridge hand is a very important part of your overall technique.

We are building it to support the cue on the line of aim.

Place your hand on the table and spread your fingers, and press the pads of your fingers to grip the cloth, this will automatically lift the knuckles on your hand.

Bring your thumb tight against the first finger to form a groove or channel for the cue to slide through.

This groove on the bridge hand must be on the line of the aim.

The Bridge should be between 9 – 12 inches away from the cue ball depending on the kind of shot.

You can check the distance from the ball by placing the cue ball on the brown spot and line up to hit the black spot.

Your finger tips should be slightly inside the “ D “ on the table.

Always keep the base of your bridge hand on the table because the more contact with the cloth the stronger the bridge will be and always remember to drop your bridge hand for screw shots and raise your bridge for top spin shots.

To check your Bridge Hand line of aim :

To check your bridge hand line place the white on the brown spot and cue along the baulk line, Now remove your cue and check if the groove on your bridge hand is running along the baulk line.

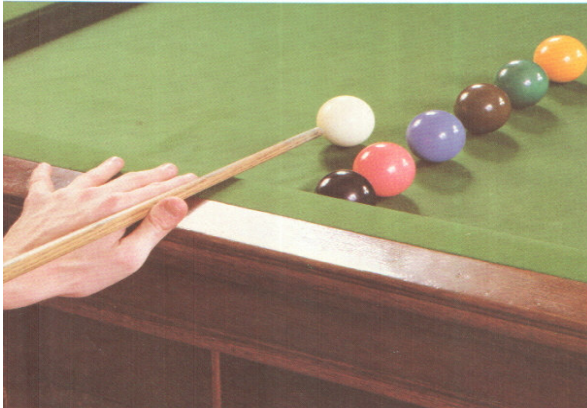
Common Faults

1. Bridge fingers bunched together.
2. Not remembering to Drop and Raise the bridge hand for top spin and screw shots.
2. Thumb badly cocked and the groove not on the line.
3. Bridge too near or too far away from the cue ball.

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Off The Cushion Bridges

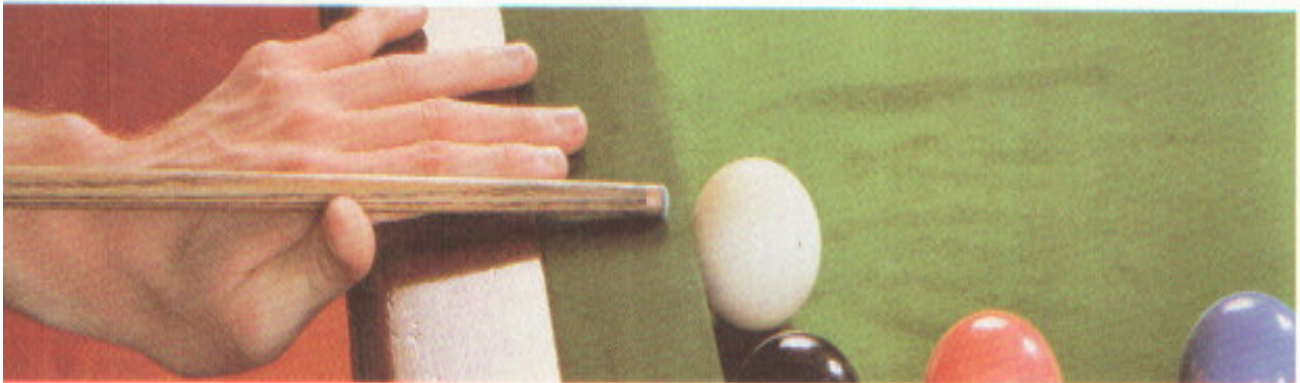
The Flat Bridge



The Thumb Bridge



The Side Bridge



The Loop Bridge



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Off The Cushions



Striking the cue ball accurately when it is near or tight under the cushion places great demands on your overall technique and cue action.

It forces you to hit the top of the cue ball which in turn could lead to unwanted side.

Bridging on the cushion cuts down the length of back swing available, which can lead you to delivering the cue too fast.

On top of all this you can only hit the top of the cue ball so control is limited.

The Most Important Aspect :

The most important aspect is to deliver the cue smoothly through the ball and to get your eyes up on the spot on the object ball before you strike the cue ball.

You must practice your potting and safety from near the cushion and then from tight on the cushion.

The Cushion Bridges

- 1. Drop your wrist down on the side of the cushion, leaving only the fingers on top, and cue smooth through your fingers.**
- 2. Put your hand flat on top of the cushion, place your cue between your first and second finger. Put your thumb in line with the shot and cue along the thumb and through the fingers.**
- 3. Hold the cue slightly shorter when you are playing from the cushion and think smooth.**

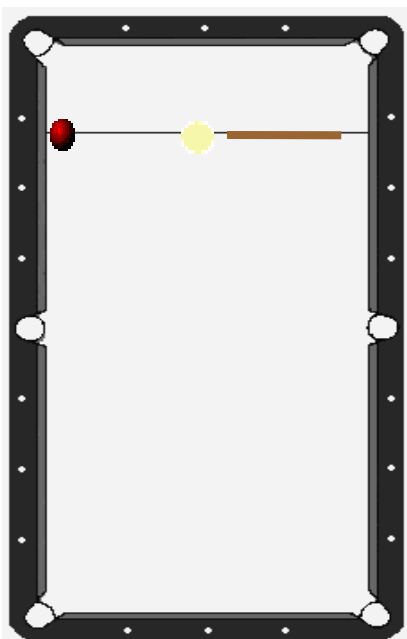
Common Faults

- A. Delivering the cue too quickly & Eyes not up on Object Ball**

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The Bridge Test



Check if the bridge hand groove is on the line of aim.

Put the red on the Baulk Line cushion and put the white on the Brown Spot.

Make your normal cue action and cue up to hit the middle of the red.

Now remove your cue from your bridge and see if the groove on your bridge hand is lined up with the red ball.

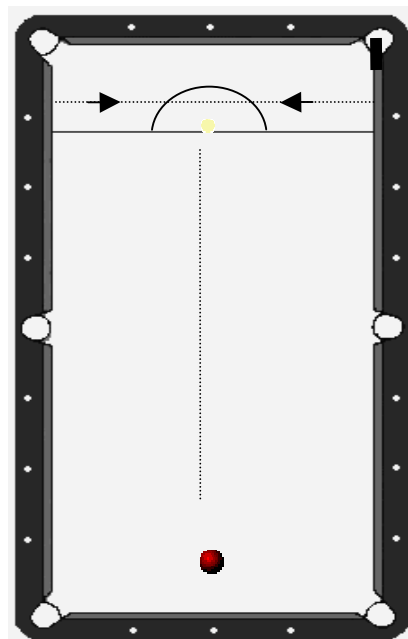
If your not on the line, twist your hand until the groove is in the same direction as the shot,

Check the bridge hand distance from the cue ball.

Put the cue ball on the brown spot and cue up to hit the red on the black spot.

Your bridge hand finger tips should slightly inside the "D"

You will now know if you hand is too close or too far away from the cue ball.



The Cue

Grip

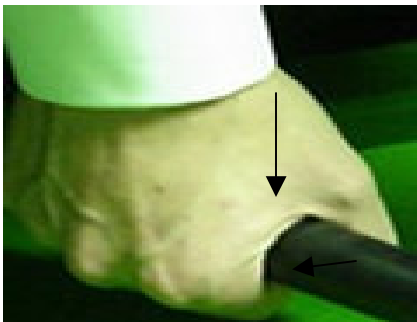
1. Loose Grip at Start



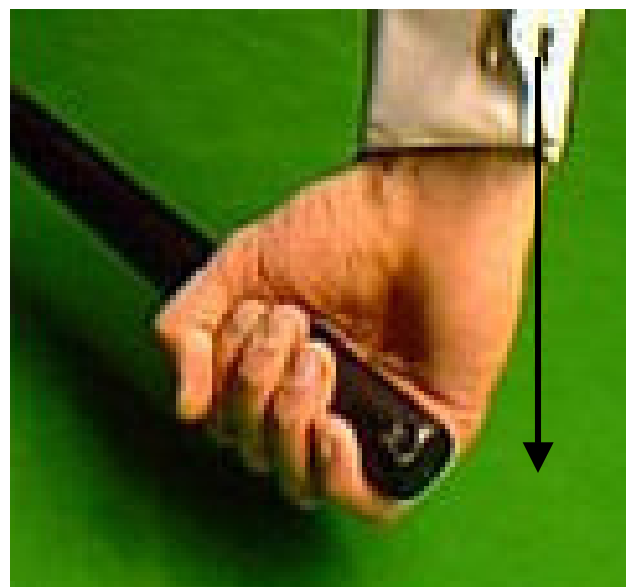
2. Straight down from the wrist



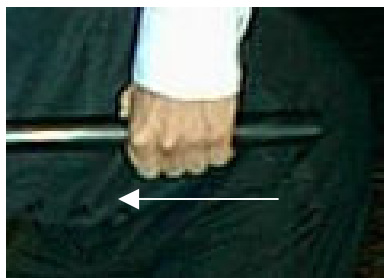
3. Never grip "The Ring" too tight



4. Never turn your wrist



5. Keep your Knuckles parallel and tighten the grip on impact



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The Cue Grip



A good grip is to hold the cue with the thumb and first two fingers, the other two fingers are just supporting the cue.

The first two finger and thumb form ‘ The Ring ’ and the knuckles should be parallel to the ground and in the same direction as the shot.

The strength of your grip should be only firm enough to stop the cue sliding through your hands.

At the moment of impact the grip will tighten. But if your grip is too tight at the start, you will not get the ‘ Snap ’

The Most common fault in players is to grip too tightly.

If you keep a tight grip and do not open your grip during the back swing, you will automatically lift the end of your cue, which will produce a scooping motion instead of level cueing.

The secret to this is to allow the little finger on your grip to initiate the back swing by loosening your little finger first, followed by the other fingers to open the grip.

Do not open your grip too much, because you will loose control of your cue . Only open the grip slightly and keep all fingers in contact with the butt on your cue at all times.

This will keep your cue level during the back swing and help you achieve a level swing in your cue action through the ball.

Your wrist should be straight and thumb hanging down in a straight line from the elbow, make sure there are no movements in your wrist other than the forward and backward motions.

Common Faults

- 1. Gripping too tightly or having the Thumb on the butt**
- 2. During the opening of the grip, fingers not in contact**

The Cue

Arm

Cue Arm Slightly Behind at the Address Position.



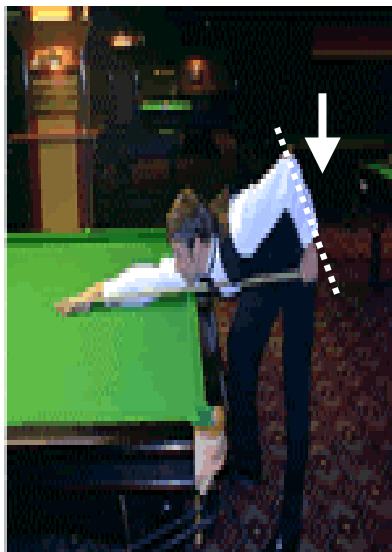
During your cue action keep your arm vertical.



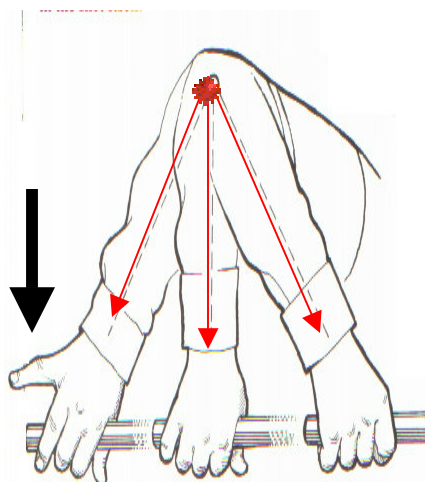
At the front pause the cue arm is straight down.



During the final Back swing don't allow your cue arm to go beyond vertical.

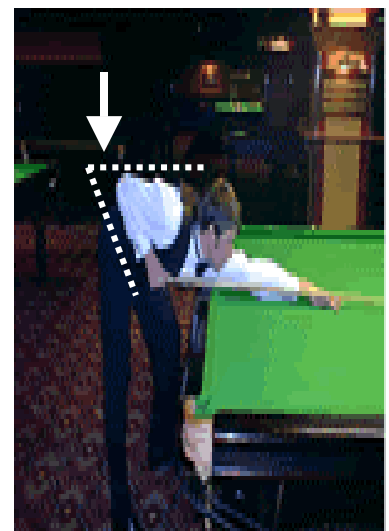


Start the back swing with your little finger



Keep it in the Zone

When you follow through hit your chest and keep your elbow in the same position. Do not finish with grip under your body.



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The Cue Arm



The Cue Arm is the part of your body that delivers the cue to hit the cue ball. If there is any movements in the arm you will have the tendency to come across the shot and play unwanted side.

Your cue arm should hang vertically and be lined up with your cue, which will help you achieve straight cueing.

If your elbow is sticking out to the left or right you will find difficulties in cueing straight, Because the simpler your technique the more consistent your play will be.

Starting the shot with your cue arm slightly behind vertical is important because this gives you time and room during the shot to hit your chest moments after you hit the cue ball.

If you do not start slightly behind vertical, your backhand will hit the chest and restrict you from making a smooth follow through.

The cue arm should be a smooth piston or pendulum action. This piston action works on the principle of consistent backward and forward motion on the line of the shot.

Pivot the elbow and only move the cue arm, Keep your elbow in the same start position and hit your chest when completing the shot. Never drop your elbow or your arm will over follow the shot and you will finish with your grip under your chest

Never over do the follow through or over do the back swing, during any shot keep it in the pendulum

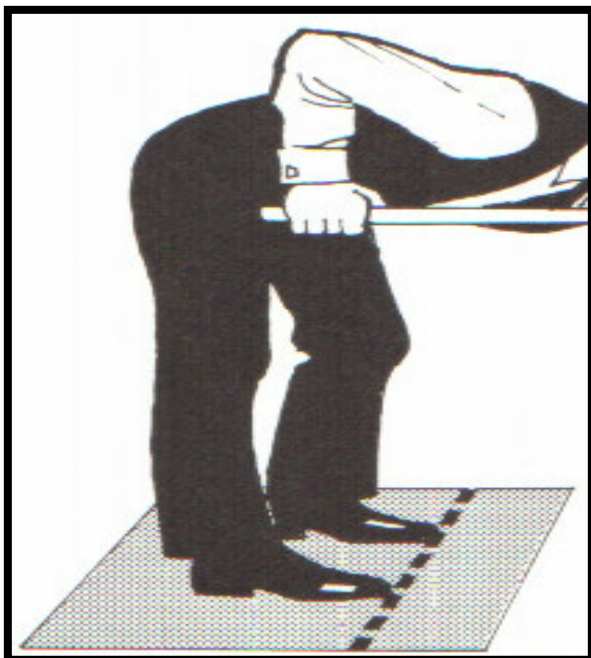
Proving you only have to move your cue arm to hit the ball.

Common Faults

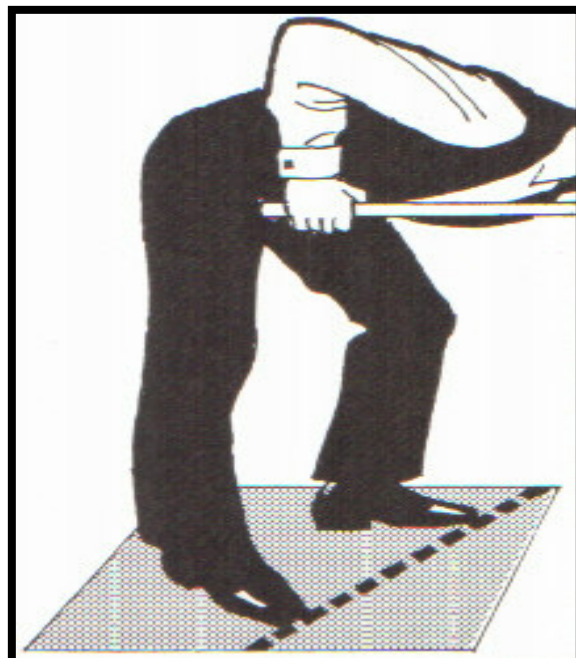
- 1. Not hitting the chest**
- 2. During the Back Swing the cue arm is almost straight**
- 3. Dropping the elbow and grip finishing under the body**

The Stance

The Square Stance



The Boxer Stance



Feet Position



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The Stance



The most important part of your stance is to be comfortable and balanced on the shot, and have your master eye under the cue so you will be able to deliver the cue straight through the ball.

There are two ways you can Stand: One is the Boxer Stance and the other is the Square Stance.

The Square Stance is recommended for Even Sighted and Right Eyed players, and The Boxer Stance is for Left Eyed Players.

The Boxer Stance : The Right leg is at an angle to the shot and the left leg is in front. The hips and chest are at 45 degrees angle to the line of the shot and the player is leaning forward into the shot.

The Square Stance : The Right leg is on the line of the shot and your left leg is straight and parallel to the table.

The right leg is bent and the weight is distributed so the player is leaning forward into the shot.

The width of the stance is important and should be around the width of your shoulders, this is to spread the players weight so the body does not move during the shot.

That is why every player will have a slightly different stance.

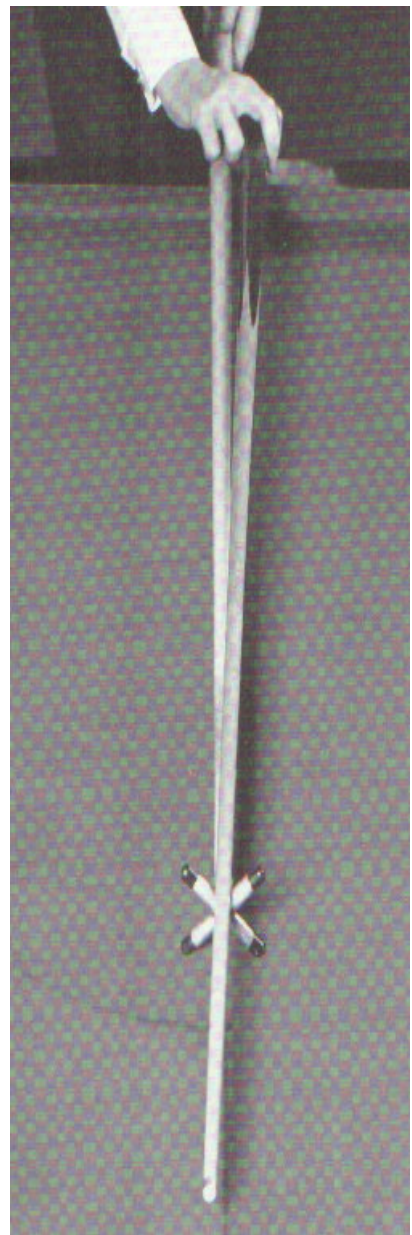
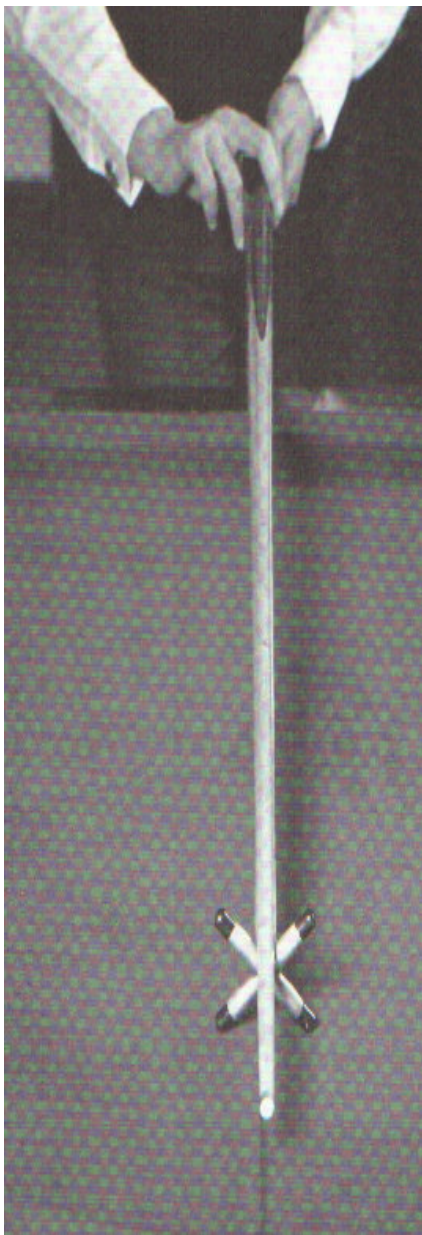
The Boxer stance and Square stance are only a guide, because the most important aspect of your stance is to be comfortable on the shot.

I cannot over emphasize the importance of learning to make the same stance and to put your feet in the same position every time you play a shot. Do not change your stance for different kind of shots.

Common Faults

1. Both Knees Bent.
2. No Balance on the shot.

Using The Rest



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Using The Rest



When using the rest the most important aspect is to get the head of the rest properly positioned and to make a good action to deliver the cue smoothly through the ball.

Most players do not like using the rest. All players practice their potting but few practice using the rest, but with good practice you can develop a solid technique and become more confident.

There are two different heights on the rest head, I recommend you use the lower side for screw and stun shots, and the higher side for follow through shots.

This will help you avoid razing the butt of your cue too high because this downward motion will create unwanted side.

All players grip the cue different but it is important to hold the butt firm enough that it does not move, and that your confident that you can deliver the cue with a smooth stroke.

When addressing the shot, your elbow should be parallel to the bed of the table and the same height as the butt on your cue.

To sight the shot properly your chin should be slightly above the cue when your down on the shot.

Get your eyes on the object ball before delivering the cue, and never over follow through, because the tendency is for the forearm to pull the cue across the shot.

Whenever possible keep the shaft of the rest on the bed of the table, Only move your forearm and keep your shoulder rigid, use the shaft of the rest to help you line up the shot.

When possible the head of the rest should be between 8 – 12 inches. The same distance you use for your normal bridge hand.

Common Faults

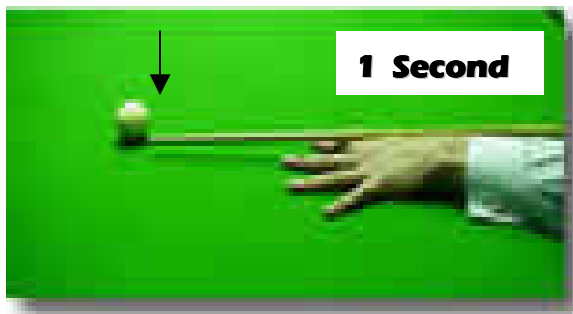
1. Not cueing up to the ball properly
2. Elbow facing the bed of the table instead of parallel.
3. Over doing the follow through to coming across the shot
- 5.. Body movement and Over stretching playing the shot

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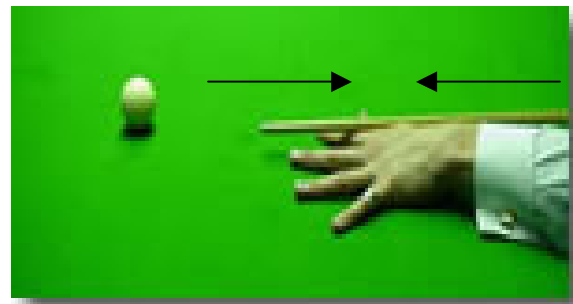
The Cue

Action

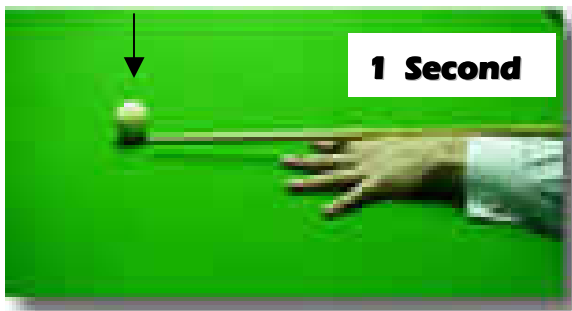
1. Tip to Ball



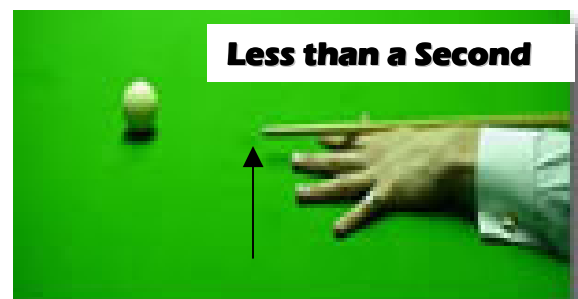
2. Straight Cueing



3. Front Pause at cue ball to Check the line of the shot

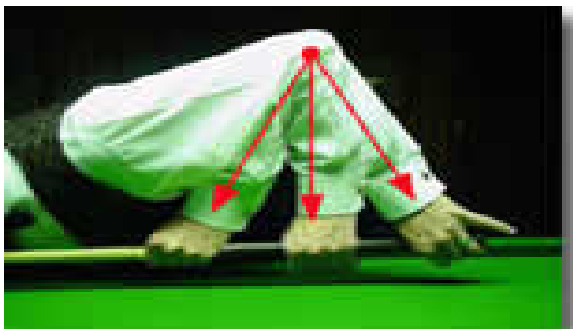


4. Smooth back-swing make natural slight back pause



5. Accelerate Smoothly Through

← 20 ← 10 ← 5



6. Finish on the Line



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The Cue Action



All the top snooker players have different types of cue actions but the one thing they have in common is a smooth delivery through the cue ball.

Every player has their own individual way to cue up to the ball. Some snooker players cue up to the ball 2, 3, or 4 times, some do no cue actions.

The cue action I recommend has both a front pause and natural slight back pause, it is not the only way you can do it, but you will achieve good timing, and develop a smooth cue delivery every time.

The fastest point of your cue action is at the moment of impact with the cue ball.

The Cue Action Drill

1. When you get down on the shot. Get your tip of your cue up to the white ball and line up the shot. (**1 Second**)
2. Make your own individual style of cue action (But make it straight cueing)
3. Pause your cue action at the cue ball and check the line of the shot. (**1 Second**)
4. Bring your cue action back smooth, and make a natural slight back pause, and accelerate smoothly through the ball (**Less than 1 Second**)
5. Achieve the fastest point at the moment of impact.
6. Finish with your cue on the line of the shot.

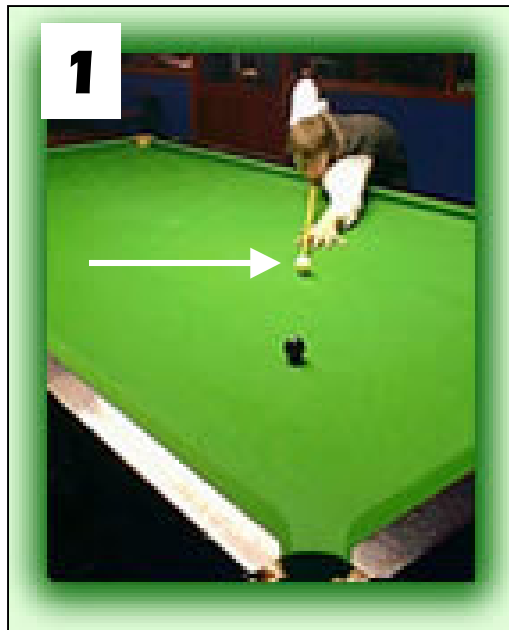
Common Faults

- A. Not getting tip to cue ball at the beginning.
- B. Cue Action rushed during the follow through.

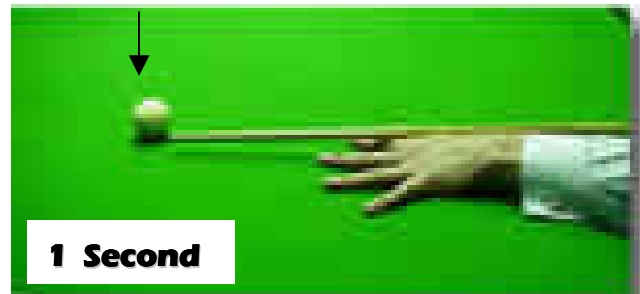
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The Pause

“ Front & Back ”



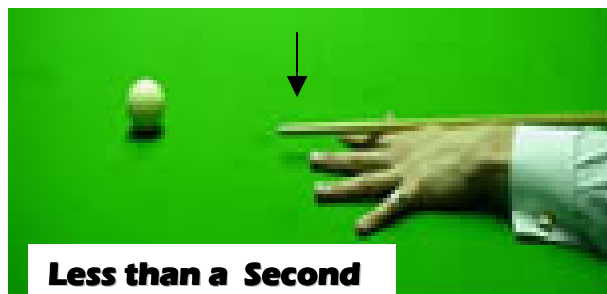
The Front Pause



- 1. After you complete your cue action, Pause at the cue ball to check the line.**

The Back Pause

- 2. Bring your cue action back smooth and make a slight back pause.**



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The Pause



The real benefit of a Pause is to give your cue action a smooth rhythm. Which gives you time to get your eyes up on the spot where you need to hit on the object ball.

The Front Pause

The Front Pause is : **Before** you start your final back swing, After you have completed your cue action , Make a pause at the cue ball, and before you make your back swing, get your eyes focused on the spot on the object ball, then make your back swing and deliver the cue through the ball.

The Back Pause

The Back Pause is : **During** your final back swing, After you have completed your cue action, bring your cue action back and make a pause at the end, and before you deliver the cue , get your eyes focused on the spot on the object ball, then deliver the cue to hit the cue ball.

The pause I recommend is using both a front pause and a slight back pause. This will help you achieve a smoother and more consistent cue delivery every time.

What-ever pause you play with : “ you must get your eyes on the object ball before you deliver your cue smoothly through the ball ”

The Perfect Pause

- 1.. Get tip to ball.
2. Smooth Straight cueing
3. Pause at the cue ball and get your eyes on the object ball.
4. Bring back cue and make a natural Pause at the back.
5. Deliver the cue straight and finish on the line.

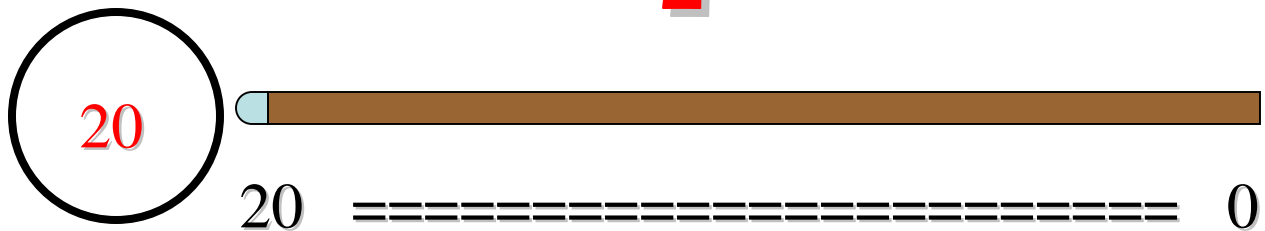
Common Faults

1. No rhythm in the cue action.
2. Not getting eyes on object ball.

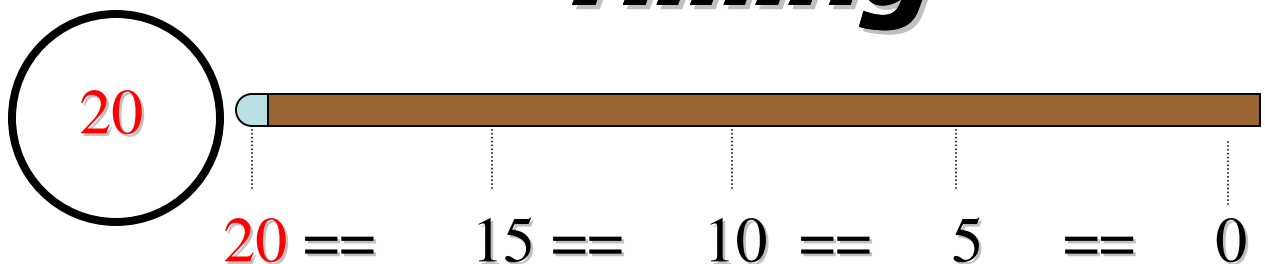
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Cue Speed



“Timing”



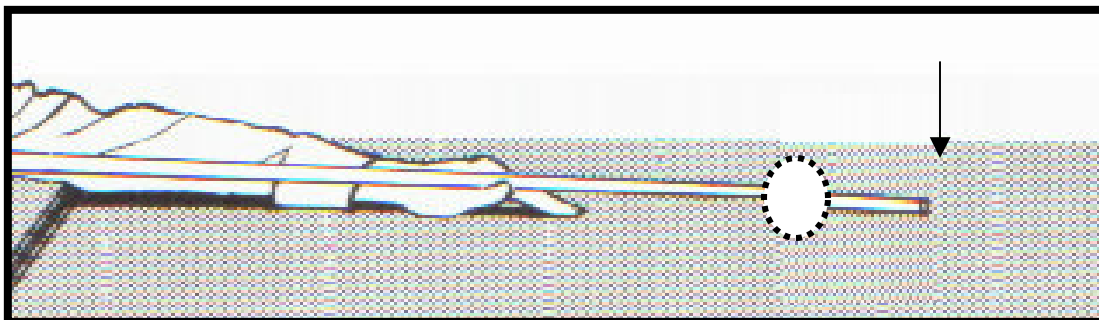
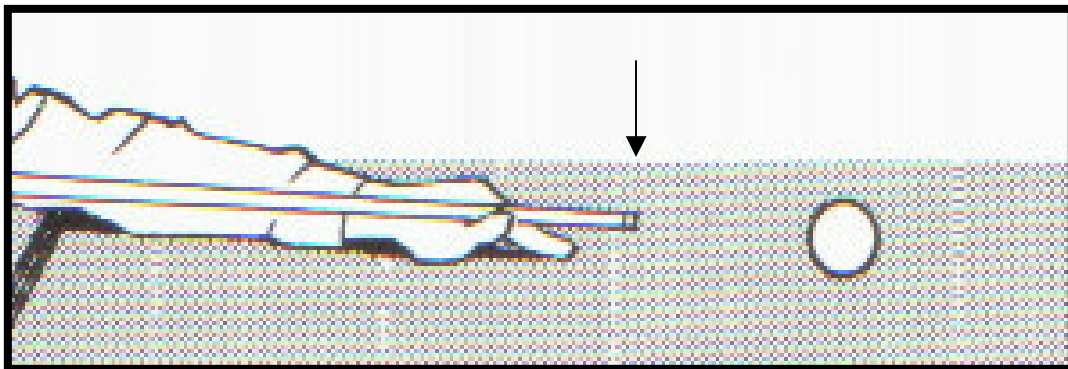
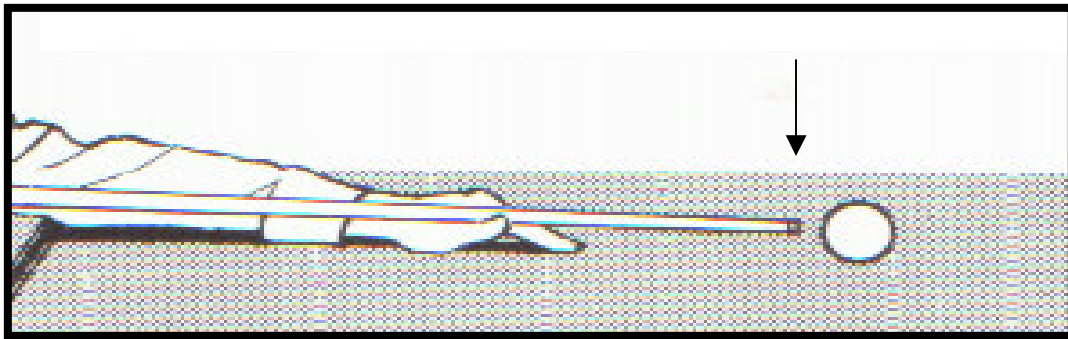
“The Quickest point is at impact”

**You must accelerate your cue action,
when making the follow through.**

“Keep it smooth”

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The Follow Through



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The Follow Through



The secret of the follow through is to have an even balance in your follow through and back swing.

Concentrate on the way you strike the cue ball, Make it a positive punch and not a half hearted jab and you will find your follow through comes a natural part of your cue action.

The more compact you keep your cue action and follow through the more consistent your game will be.

If you bring back your cue four inches playing a certain shot, then follow through four inches.

The more power you require for the shot the more you will have to follow through. But the most important aspect is to have the fastest point at the moment of impact, this will ensure good timing in the stroke.

During the follow through hit your chest moments after you hit the cue ball, never allow your grip to go under your body and over do your follow through.

Always finish on the line of aim after your follow through and keep your head down as much as possible on every shot.

To Check The Follow Through Length

At your normal address; position mark your cue with a pencil where your cue is; on your bridge hand.

Now push the cue until your grip hits; your chest and mark the cue again, This; will show you the maximum length of your follow through. Keep every shot in this; zone.

COMMON FAULTS

- 1. No Balance in the follow through**
- 2. Not finishing on the line of aim**
- 3. Over doing the follow through to finish outside the zone**

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Follow Through

The Follow Through Test

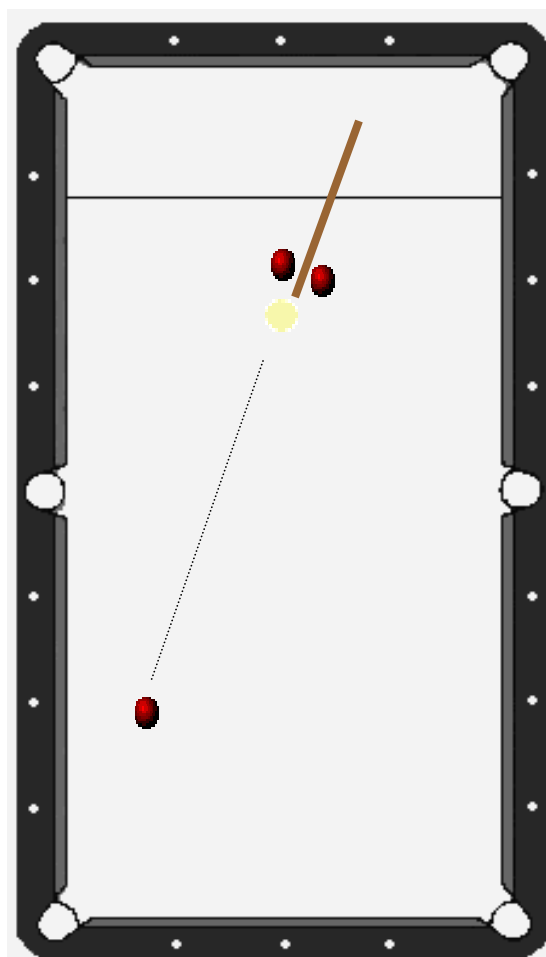
Put the two reds close to your cue with enough space to easily cue through to hit the cue ball.

Do not put the reds too tight to make it difficult cueing

Make your normal cue action rhythm and pause.

Most players keep their cueing straight during their cue action, but push there cue to the left of right when hitting the ball and move a red during their follow through.

If you do not hit a red and pot the object ball you will know your cueing and follow through is smooth and straight.



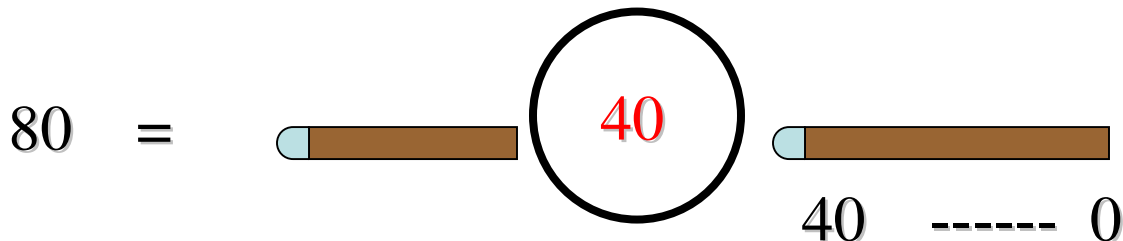
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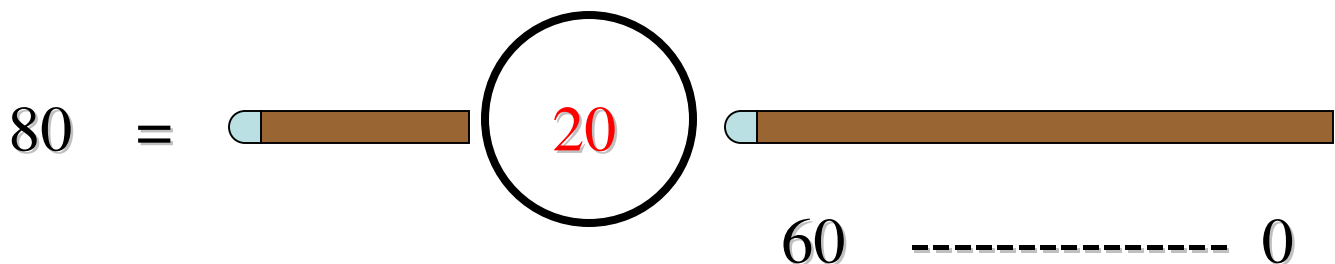


The Back-Swing

The Short Back swing



The Long Back swing



Long and Smooth Through The Ball

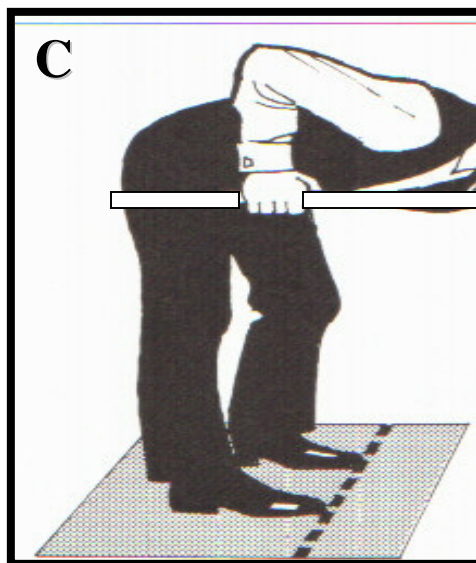
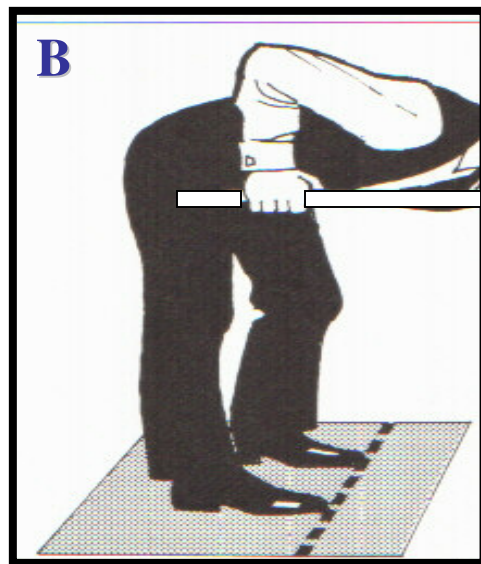
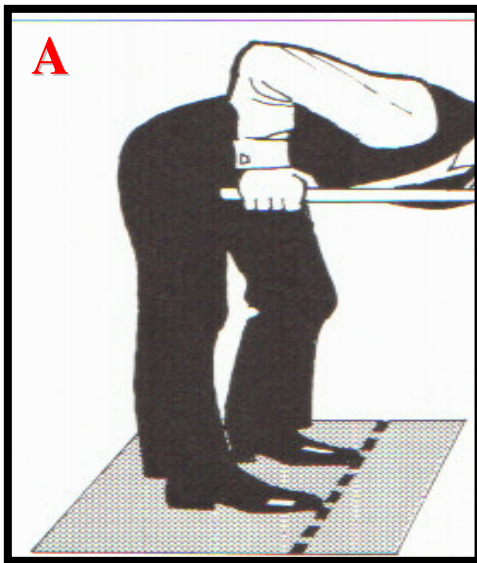
The longer Back Swing gives you time to generate the power, and achieve a smooth acceleration in your cue action through the cue ball.

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Cue Action

Length

A = Large : B = Medium : C = Small



There are three kinds of power shots

Small Power 0-4 power : Medium Power 5-7 power : Large Power 8-10 power

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Cue Action Length



The secret to every shot is to have the a smooth cue action and the proper length back swing and follow through for the kind of shot you want to play.

There is no need to hold the cue at the butt and make long cue action, addressing the cue ball, when you really only need a small cue delivery.

The longer your cue action the more danger you have of coming across the ball and play unwanted side.

I recommend that if you are playing a shot that needs only a small follow through and small power, you should hold like **Photo C**.

If the shot requires medium power and a medium follow through then hold like the **Photo B**.

But if the shot requires Large power and you need a long follow through hold the cue at the back and play it like **Photo A**.

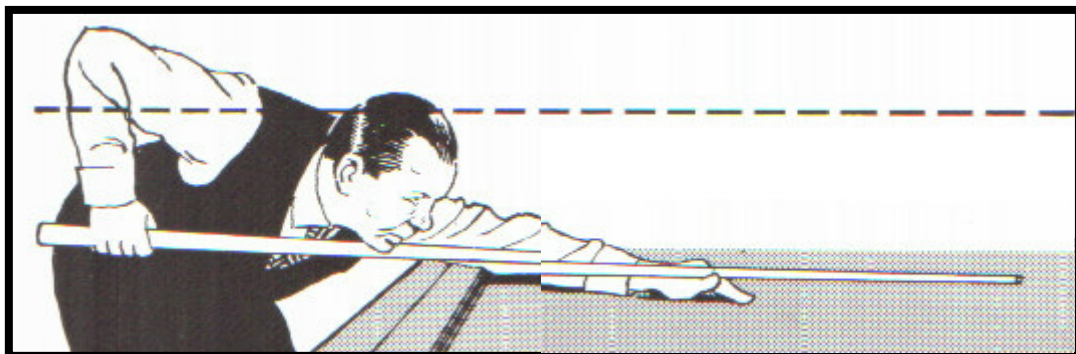
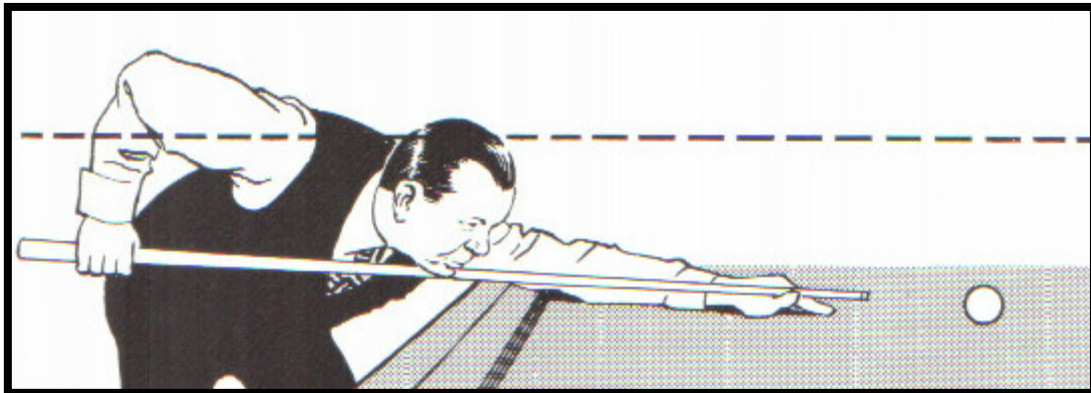
The main aspect is, The more power you require for the shot the further you need to bring your hand back along the butt of your cue, after this it is up to the individual own style.

Remember this is only a guide and with good practice the player will develop his own style and where he grips the cue, But this technique will help you achieve the perfect back swing and follow through.

Common Faults

1. Holding the cue too short playing a large power shot.
2. Holding the cue long and slowing down through the ball making the follow through.

Keep Your Head Down



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Keep your Head down



It is very important to stay down on every shot you play.

When you keep your chin on the cue after hitting the cue ball your technique will solid and there will be no body movement.

Some players lift their chin slightly off the cue when hitting the cue ball, but the most important aspect is to keep as still as possible on the shot.

You must practice staying still on the shot during your training because it will help you on an important shot in a tournament match, but don't expect to do it in your tournaments when you have not practiced it during your training.

Concentrate on keeping your head still during the shot and you will guarantee stillness through out the cue delivery and never lift your head until the object ball is in the pocket.

Always keep your cue on the line of aim after you have played the shot, This will help you keep your head down.

The 4 Point Drill

All the four points should stay in contact with your body :
Before / During and **After** each shot.

1. The Chin
2. The Bridge hand
3. The Chest
4. The Grip

**During your shot routine,
Say the word "Smooth" or "Still" every
time you hit the cue ball.
This will help you stay down on the shot**

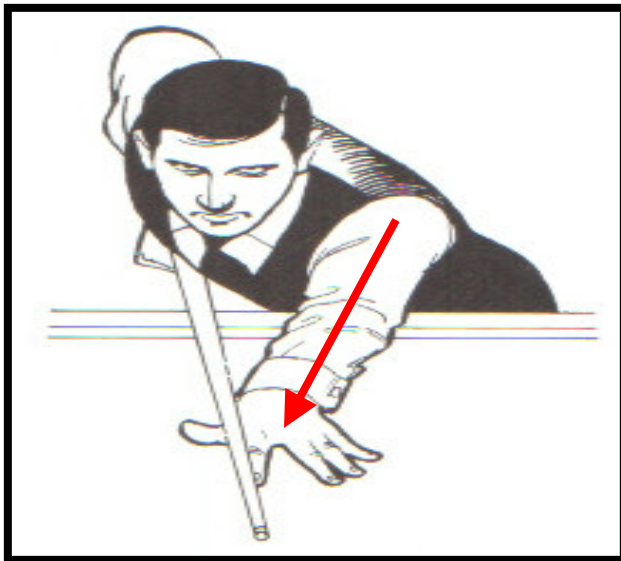
Common Faults

1. Lifting the head when to watch object ball.
2. Not doing it in practice and expecting it to happen.

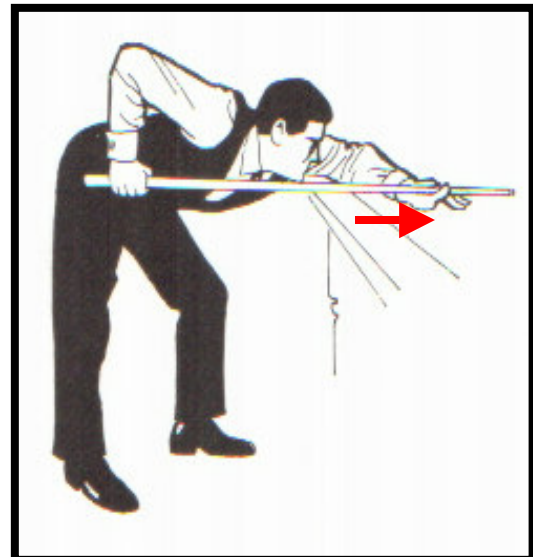
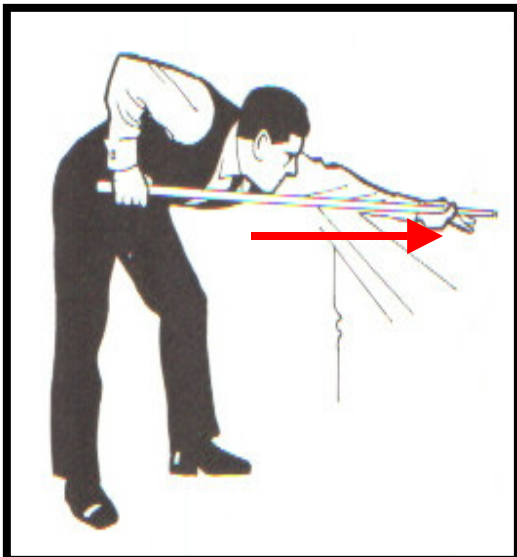
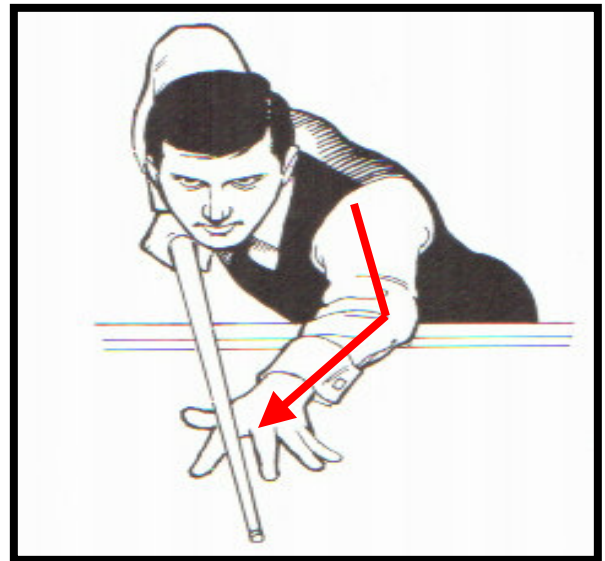
The Address

Position

**Straight
Bridge Arm**



**Bent
Bridge Arm**



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The Address Position



The are two different type of address positions you can achieve.

One is for your bridge arm to be straight and rigid from the shoulder. The other is to bend your bridge arm at the elbow.

The address position i recommend for you, is to bend your bridge arm slightly at the elbow this will give you the perfect position down on the shot.

Most of all the top snooker professional players adopt the bent bridge arm address position.

Having as much of your arm on the table will give you added support and provide a more solid base for your bridge hand.

This address position will make your technique more compact, but the arm should only be slightly bent, because the more you bend the arm, will affect your follow through and twist your bridge hand off line.

Another advantage of bending your arm at the address position is to enable the cue run freely and unobstructed from the body and allow you cue along the line.

When you get down to play a shot, bend your arm until you are comfortable down on the shot and that your stance, bridge hand feel like you could deliver the cue straight, but remember the more you bend the arm the closer your body will be to the table.

Common Faults

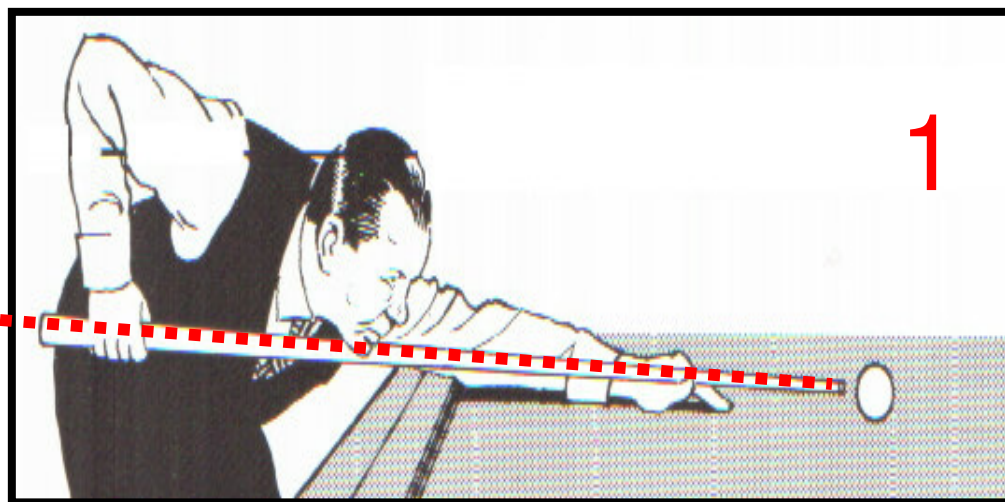
- 1. Over bending of the Bridge Arm.**
- 2. Not compact and solid on the shot.**
- 3. Shoulder blocking the shot because arm is straight**
- 4. Bridge hand off line**

The Line Of Aim

Line Number

1

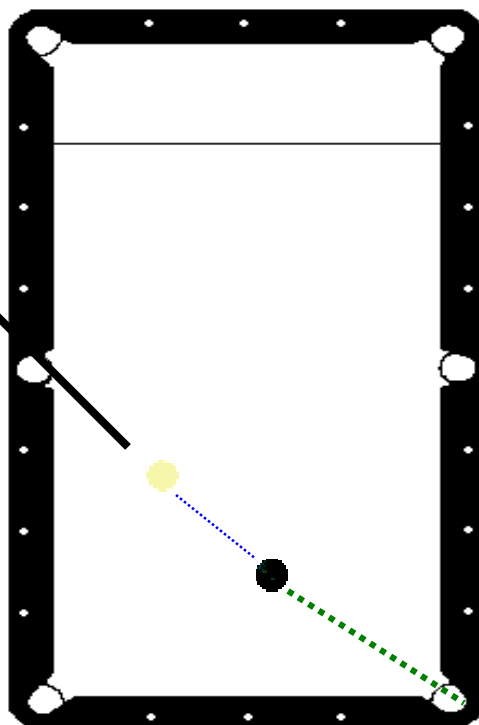
**From butt
end of cue
to the
cue ball**



Line Number 2

**From Cue Ball
to the
spot on
the
Object Ball**

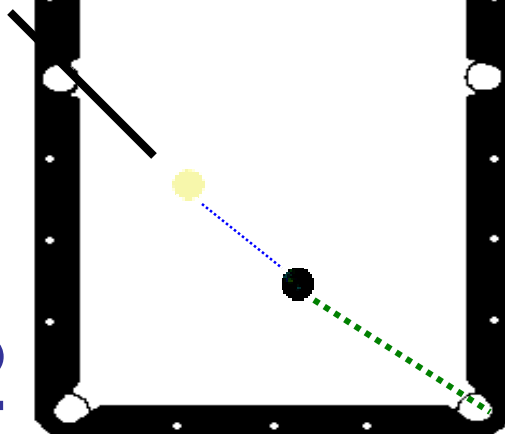
2



Line Number 3

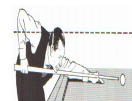
**From the spot
on the
Object Ball
in to the
middle
of the Pocket**

3



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The Line Of Aim



The Line of aim is a very important part of your game if you want your potting to be of a high standard.

The complete line of aim starts at the butt end of your cue and finishes in the pocket.

Line Number 1 :

Line number one is from the butt end of your cue to where your tip addresses the cue ball.

Line Number 2 :

Line number two is from the tip on your cue through the white, on to the spot on the object ball.

Line Number 3 :

Line number three is through the object ball and into the pocket.

Looking at the Right Line

During your cue action your eyes will flicker from the lines 1,2,3, to get the feel of the shot and to check and re-check the line of aim.

But it is very important when you are striking the cue ball that your eyes should stop on the number two line, until the shot has been completed.

The Potting Angle :

The Potting Angle is a straight line from the pocket, back through the middle of the object ball.

Common Faults

1. Not Checking the line of before the getting down on the shot.
2. Moving the body at the moment of impact to look at the object ball going to pocket.

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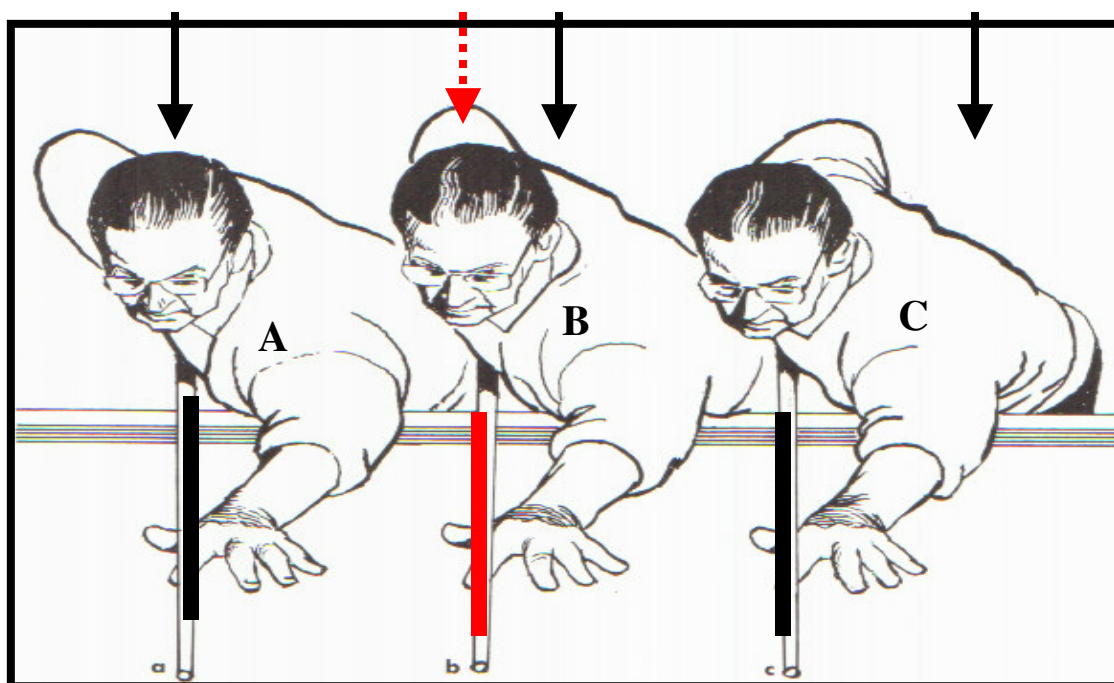
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The Elbow



The Elbow

A : Elbow to the left B : Elbow Center C : Elbow to the right



When the elbow is in line with the shot, then your wrist will be hanging down, and is the perfect technique.

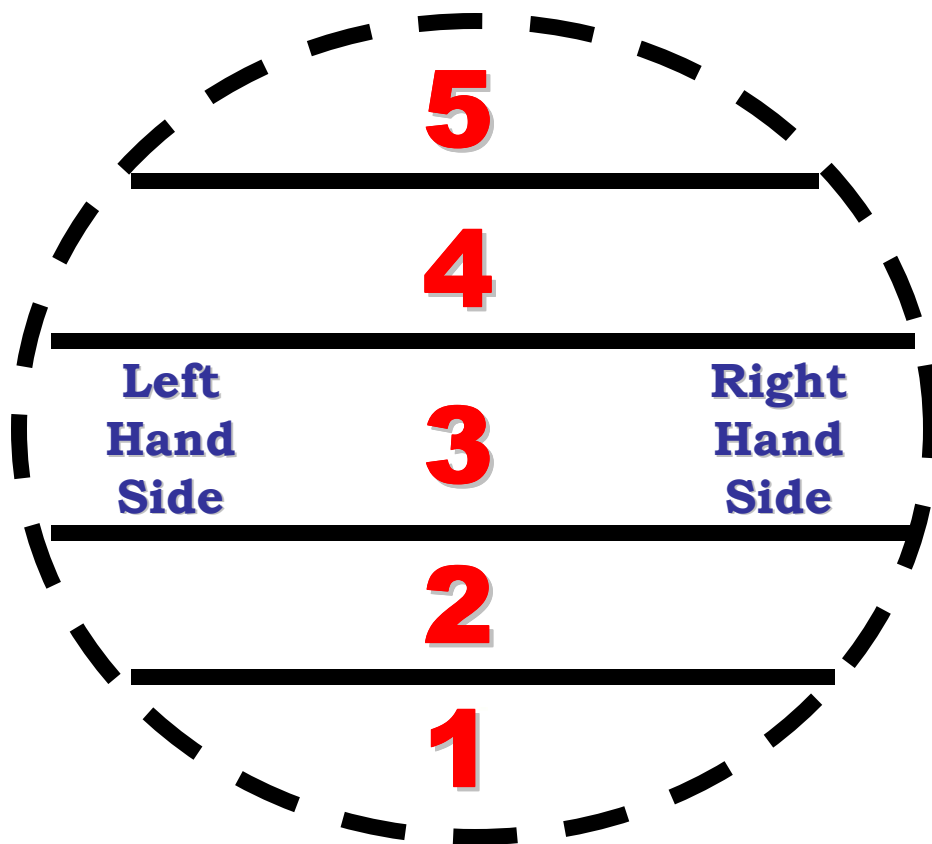
If your elbow is to the right or left, then your wrist be be cocked into the body or away from the body.



When you elbow is to the right or left, you will encounter problems coming across the shot playing unwanted side.

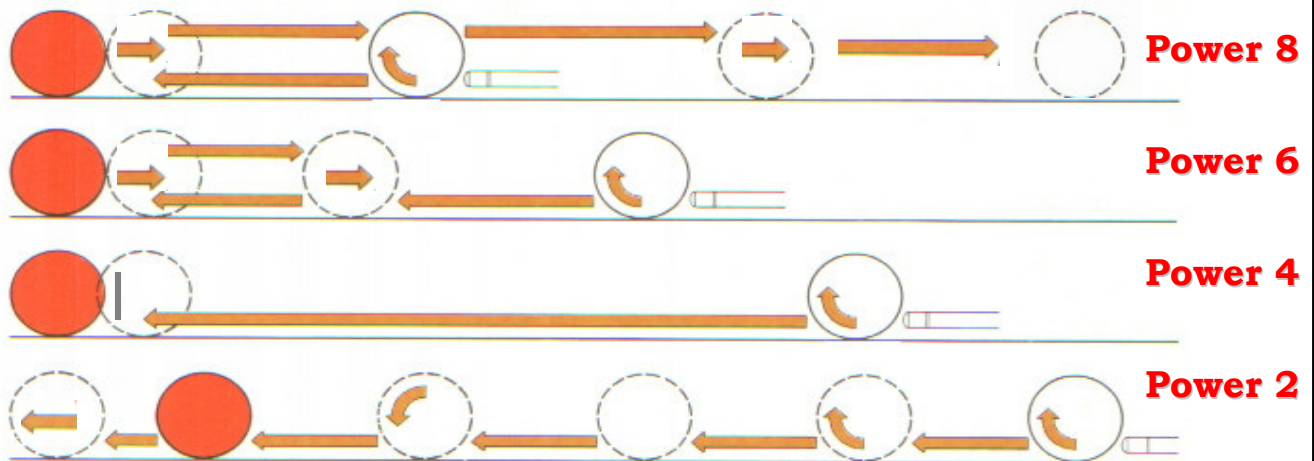
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The Cue Ball



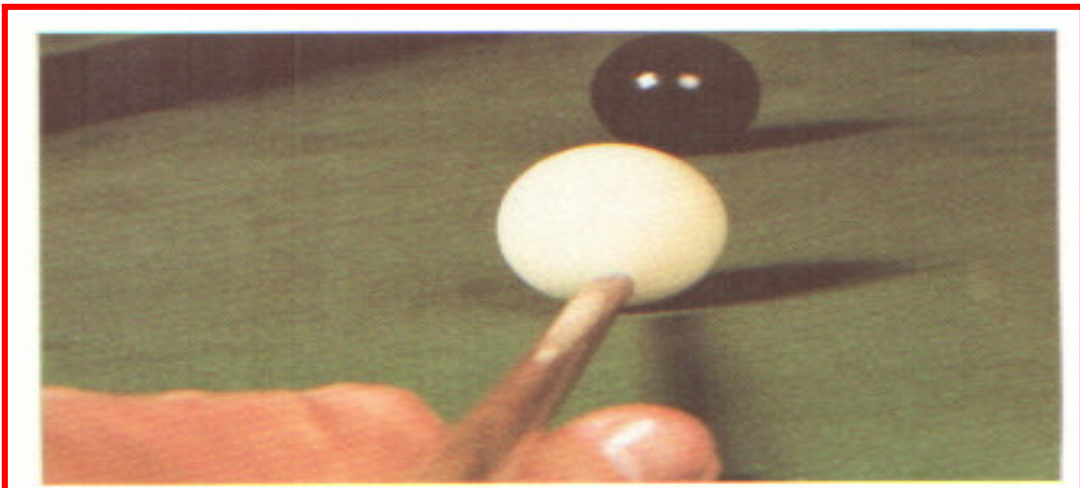
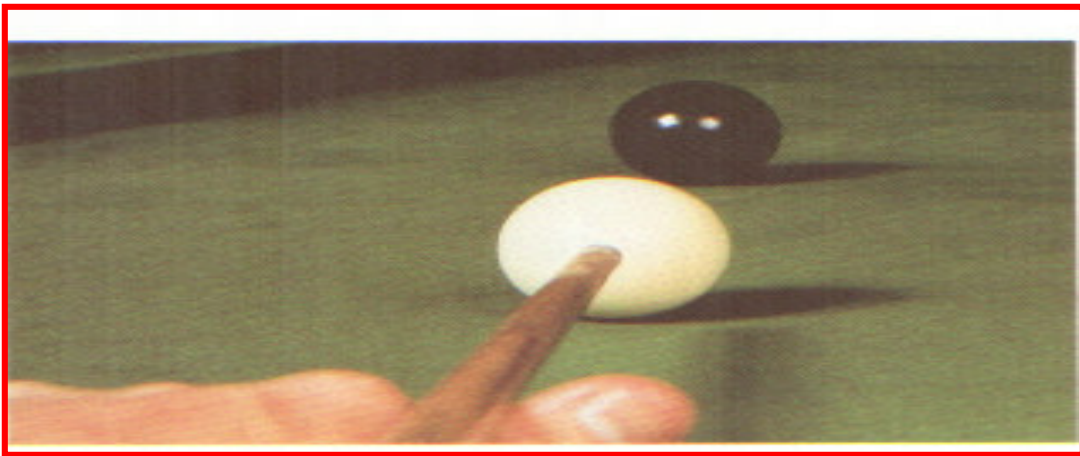
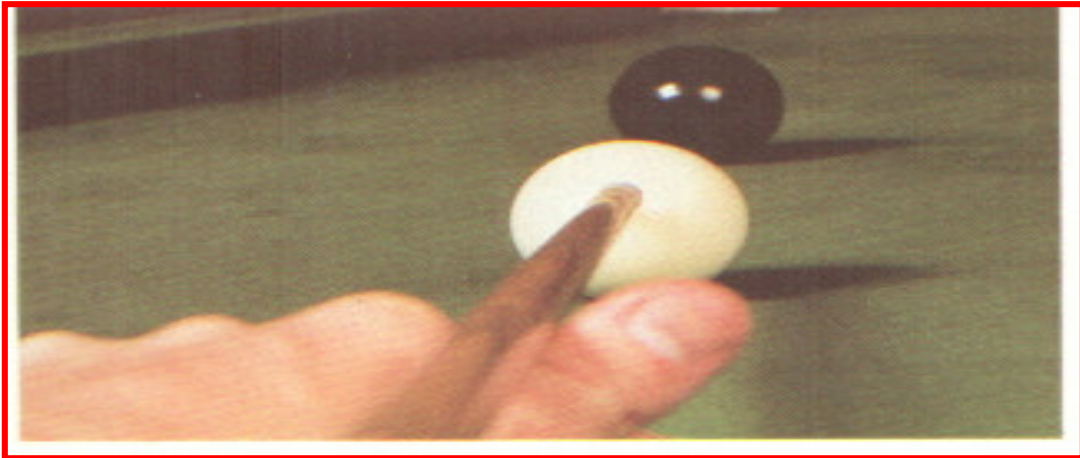
**All shots played with No 1's (Screw)
with different kinds of power**

Power 1 = Very Easy :: Power 10 Very Hard



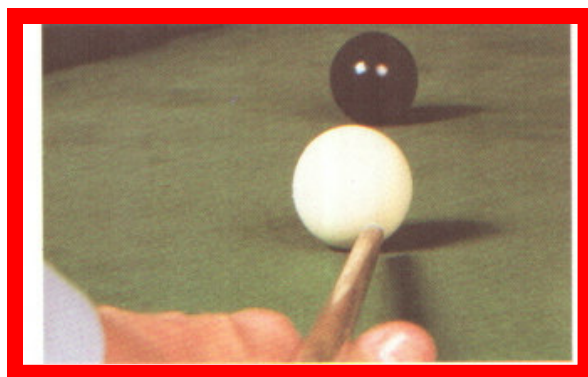
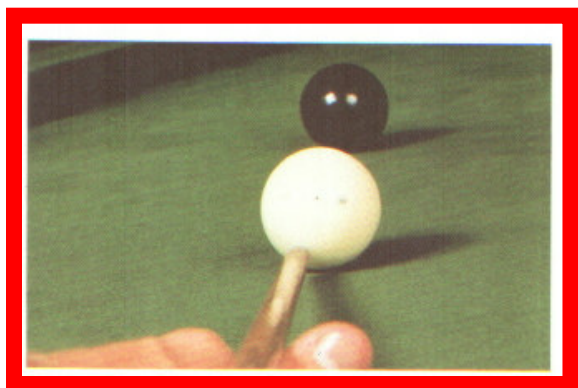
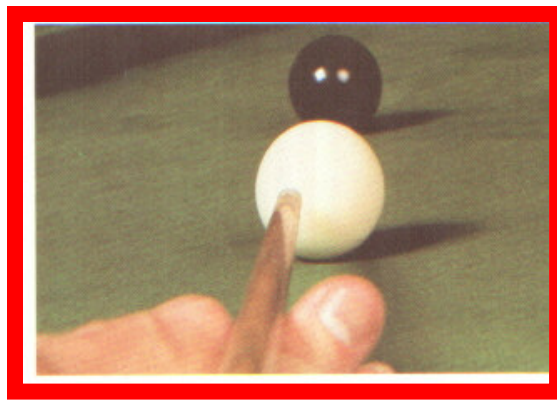
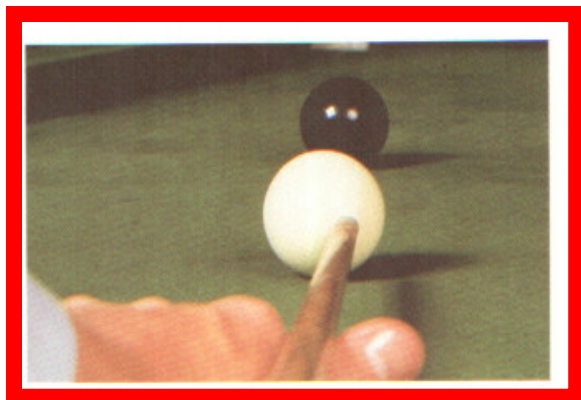
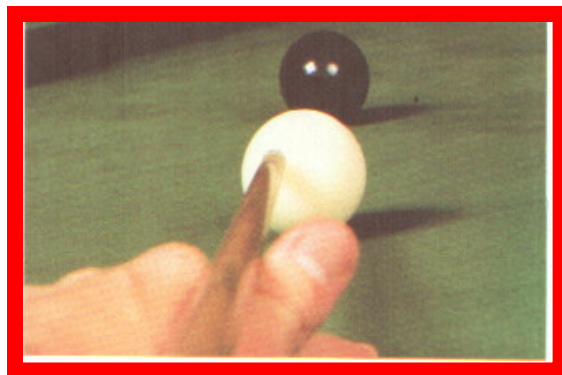
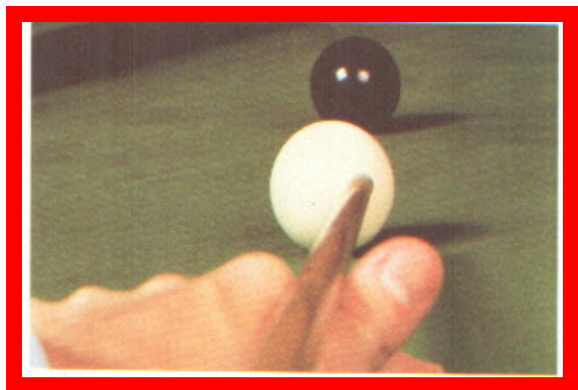
The Cue Ball

Hitting Plain Ball



The Cue Ball

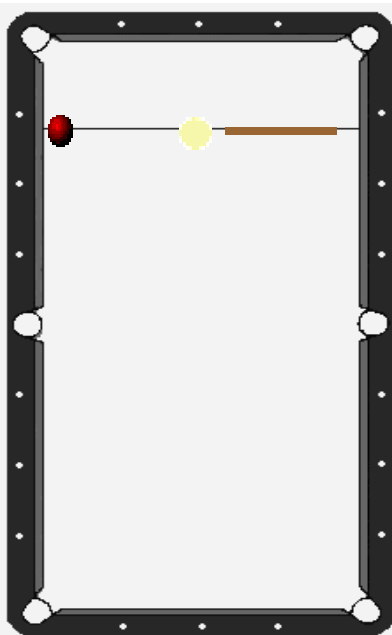
Hitting Right & Left Hand Side



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The Side Test



Check if you are Cueing
to the middle of the cue ball.

Put the red on the Baulk Line and the white on the Brown Spot.

Make your normal cue action and cue up to hit the middle of the red.

Now drop your tip of your cue on to the cloth, If your tip is on the middle of the line then you were hitting the middle of the cue ball,

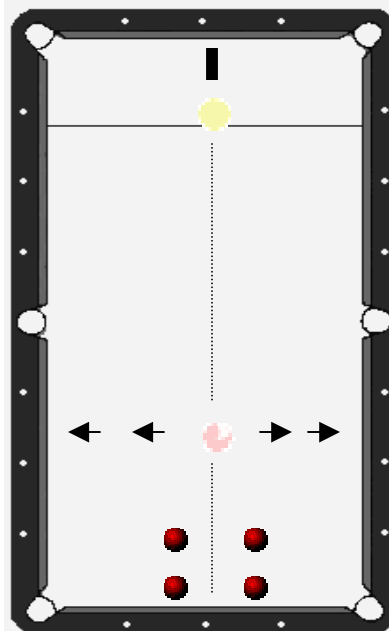
If your not then you will know if you are playing Right of Left Hand Side.

Check if you are Hitting
Right or Left hand side on
the cue ball.

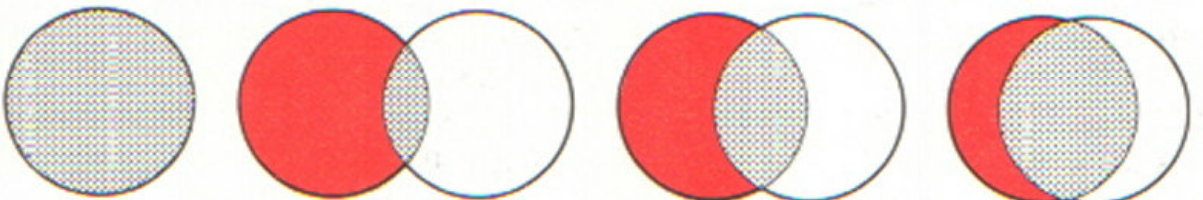
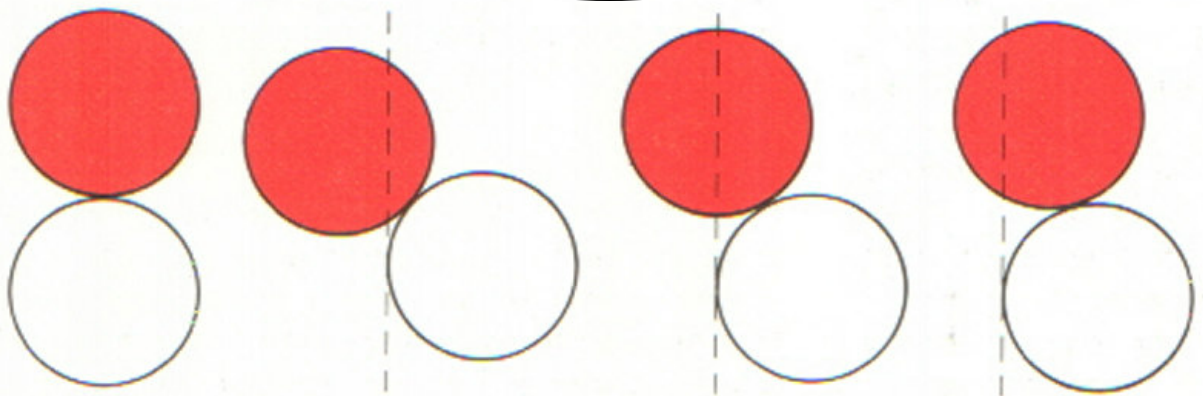
Pot the pink between the Reds : Play
1. Easy Follow. 2. Follow with Power.
3. Stun. 4. Screw. 5. Screw with Power

When the Cue Ball is close to the pink,
Move the pink away and check the
reaction of the white for unwanted side
when it hits the bottom cushion.

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THE OBJECT BALL



full ball

$\frac{1}{4}$ ball

$\frac{1}{2}$ ball

$\frac{3}{4}$ ball

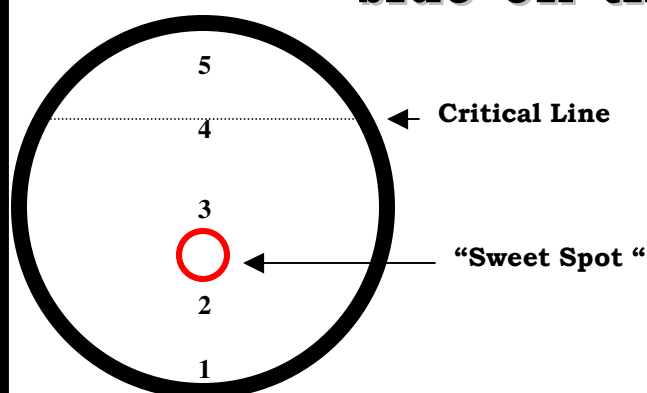
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Cue Ball Throw

Below The Critical Line

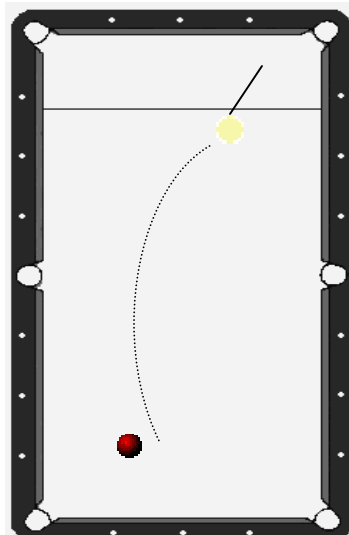
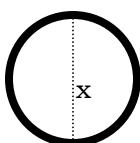
“Cue Ball Throw is the affect of unwanted side on the cue ball “



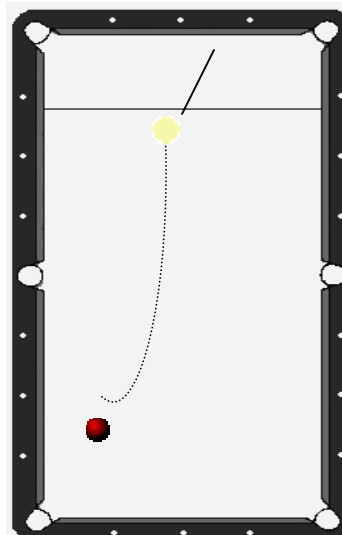
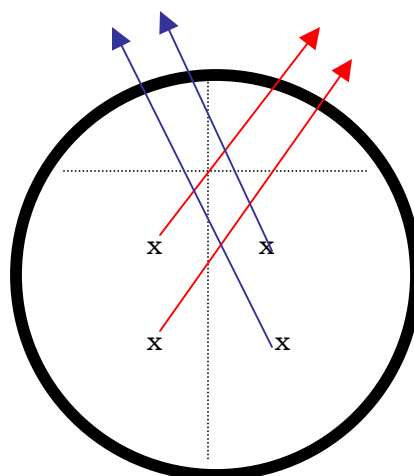
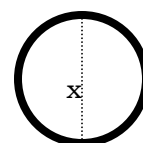
“ Below the critical line “
The cue ball will throw across
the line when played with
unwanted side.

The lower you hit below the
critical line with unwanted side,
the more the ball will throw.

Shot played with **Unwanted**
RIGHT HAND SIDE



Shot played with **Unwanted**
LEFT HAND SIDE



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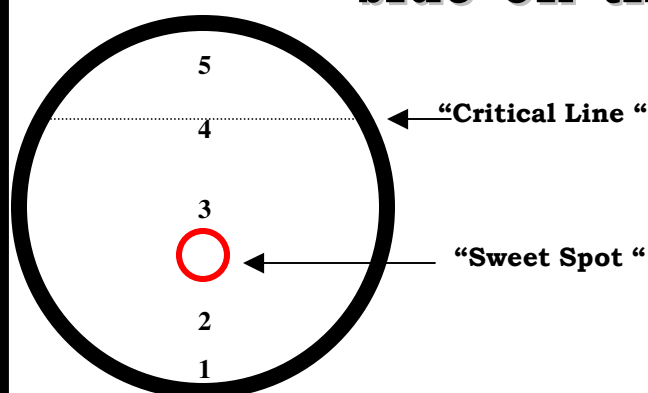
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Cue Ball Throw

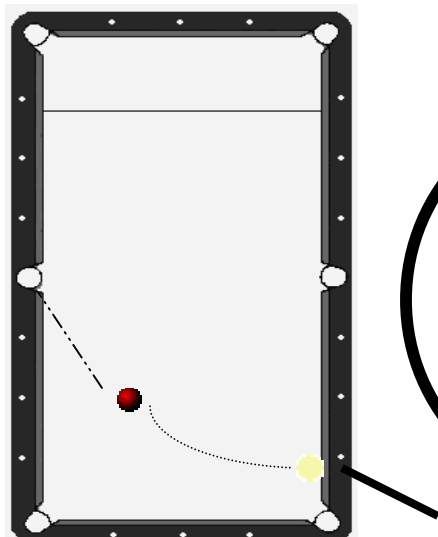
Above The Critical Line

“Cue Ball Throw is the affect of unwanted side on the cue ball “

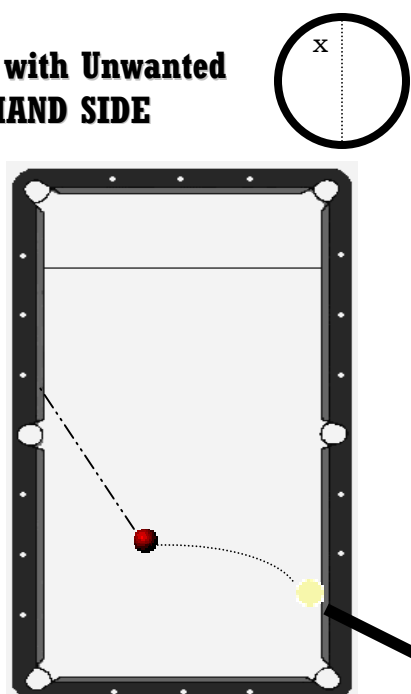


**“ Above the critical line ”
The cue ball goes straight
and then suddenly throws
off line when played with
unwanted side.**

**Shot played with Unwanted
RIGHT HAND SIDE**



**Shot played with Unwanted
LEFT HAND SIDE**



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Aiming Test

Check Your Aiming

To most players “long potting” is the hardest part of the game to master.

After you have worked on your cueing and are able to hit the center of the cue ball and deliver the cue straight.

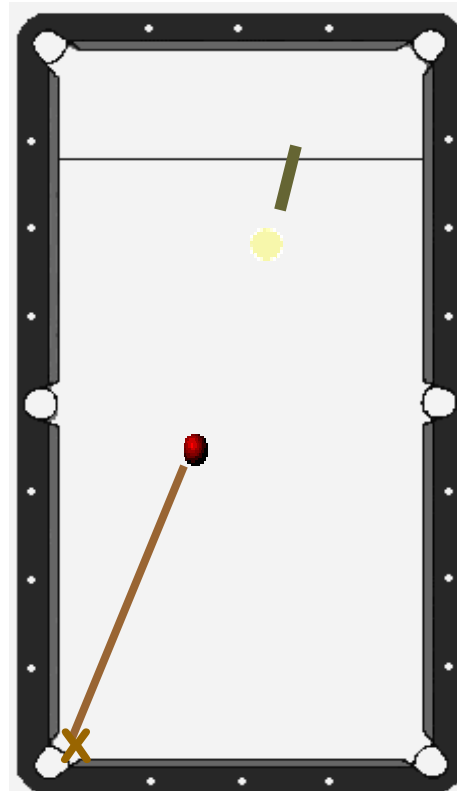
Then you must work on the line of aim to pot the object ball.

In my experience most long pots are missed because of bad aiming.

The best way to check you aiming is to attempt a long red and get your friend to line up the shaft of the rest on the line of the shot.

Get down and make your normal cue action and cue to pot the ball along the line of the shaft of the rest and get a friend to remove the rest stick moments before you strike the cue ball.

If you are a beginner or a top professional this will help you improve your aiming and improve your long pots.



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**The key problem for a player is to identify
a sequence of training routines that
will eventually lead you to becoming
a champion**

P.J. Nolan

Weekly Practice Routine Book

***All The Practice
Routines Are***

The Best of 7 Challenge

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Player Name : _____ Date : _____

Playing Technique

Comments

Very
Poor Good Good

Master Eye <input type="checkbox"/> Left <input type="checkbox"/> Even <input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/>			
Approach - Line Of Aim _____			
Bridge Hand _____			
Rest Play _____			
Stance <input type="checkbox"/> Boxer <input type="checkbox"/> Square			
Grip - Wrist _____			
Cue Arm - Elbow _____			
Address Position _____			
Back swing - Follow Through _____			
Cue Action - Timing _____			
Pause <input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Back			
Horizontal Cue Delivery _____			
Head or Body Movement _____			

Overall Game

Poor Good Very Good

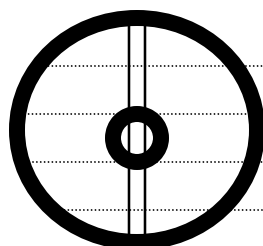
Long Potting _____			
Break Building _____			
Clearances _____			
Control Using Side _____			
Safety & Tactics _____			
Equipment - Cue - Tip _____			

The Mind Game

Poor Good Very Good

Concentration _____			
Confidence _____			
Commitment _____			
Control _____			
Relaxation _____			
Preparation _____			

Aiming To Hit Cue Ball



Aiming	
Left Hand Side	
Center Ball Aiming	
Right Hand Side	

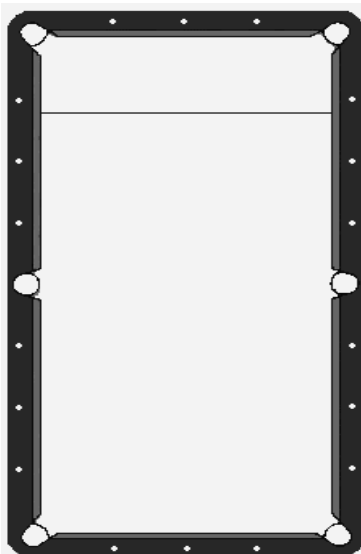
The Player Needs To :

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Practice Routines

Cue Ball Control

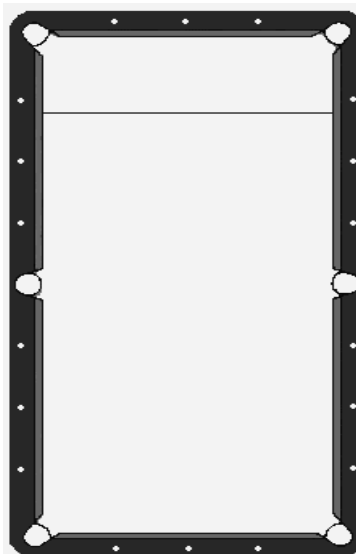


Practice

1

Need to :

Technique

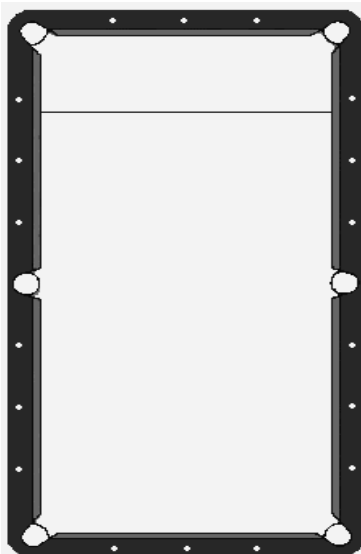


Practice

2

Need to :

Tactical

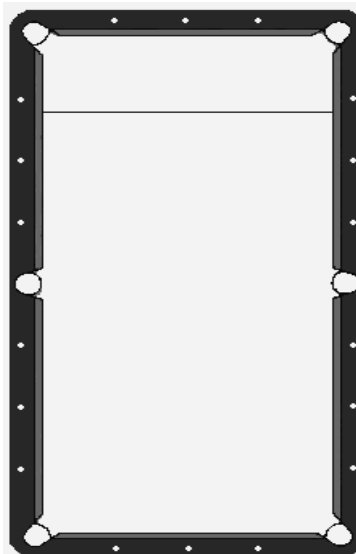


Practice

3

Need to :

Concentration



Practice

4

Need to :

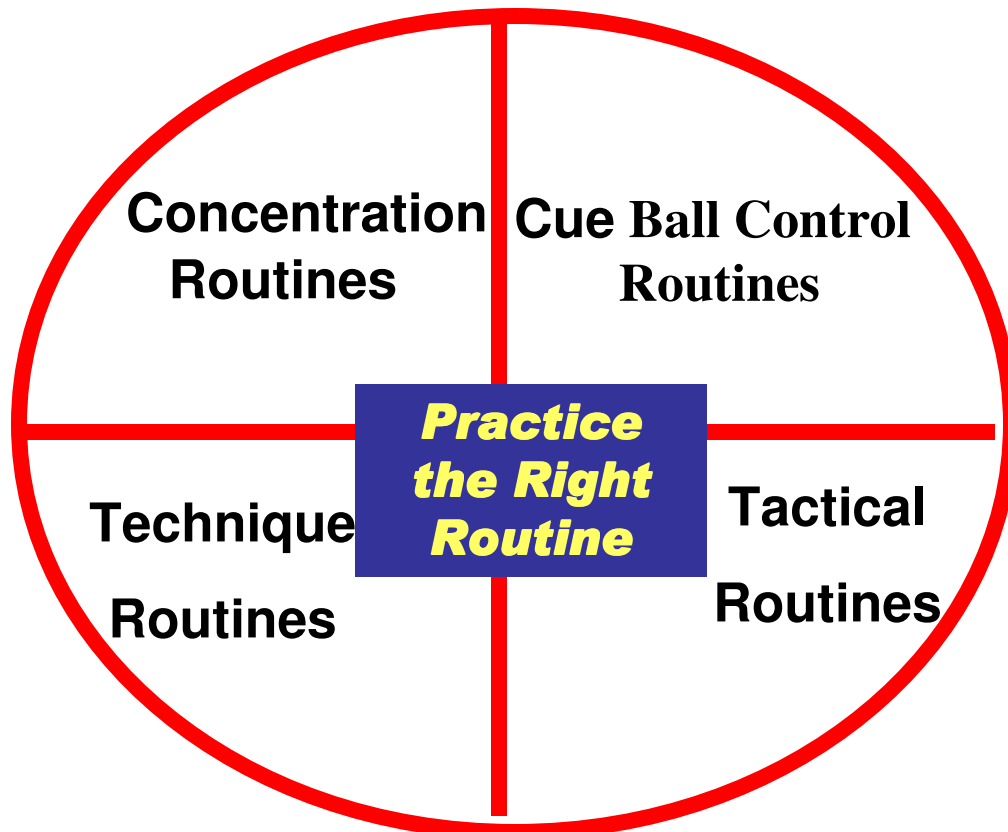
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Training Routines

Four Different types of Training Routines

The key problem for a player is to identify a sequence of training routines that will eventually lead to becoming a champion



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The Winner Vs Loser

When a winner makes a mistake, he says, “I was wrong” when a loser makes a mistake, he says, “it wasn’t my fault”

A winner works hard on his game, but the loser has more free time on his hands and is always too busy.

A winner always goes through a problem ; the loser goes around it and never gets past it.

A winner says, “ I am a good player , but I am going to improve” a loser says, “ I am not as bad as a lot of other players.

A winner listens ; a loser just waits until it is his turn to talk.

A winner respects the coach and learns from him how to be a winner, a loser resents anyone superior and tries to find faults in everything they say.

A winner is made to feel like a role model for the young players, a loser is just one of the player who is jealous of the winner.

A winner says “ there must be a better way to do this and is not afraid to change “ a loser says “ that’s the way I have always done it and I am not changing now.

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Strategies To Develop Commitment

•Goal Setting : Analyzing Performances : Fitness Program

Commitment

Commitment is the effort and energy that goes into turning dreams into reality.

Winner Vs Loser

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| •Show Enthusiasm | •Complain Frequently |
| •Practice Properly | •Poor Attendance At Training |
| •Desire And Ambitious | •Not Analysing Defeats |

Strategies To Improve Concentration

•Trigger Words : Holding a Image : Good Shot routine

Concentration

Concentration is the ability to maintain your attention when everyone else are loosing there's.

Winner Vs Loser

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| • Focused On The game | •Easily Frustrated |
| •Unaffected By Distractions | •Unable To Refocus After A Miss |
| •Understanding Concentration Techniques | •Easily Distracted |

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Strategies to Build Confidence

- Positive Self Talk : Self Belief : Quality Practice

Confidence

Confidence is a state of mind that comes from knowing you have the ability to do anything.

Winner Vs Loser

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| •Positive Approach | •Negative Play |
| •Strong Self Belief | •Fear Of Failure |
| •Controlling Negative Thoughts | •No Preparation |

Strategies to Maintain Control

- Breathing and Relaxation : Refocusing Exercises

Control

Control is taking charge of the mental process and being immune to the pressures.

Winner Vs Loser

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| •Relaxed | •Inconsistent Play |
| •Composed | •Not Prepared For Match |
| •Professional Attitude | •Banging Cue and Table |

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“Winners”

It is assumed that all successful snooker champions are born not made. Some are blessed with good technique and mind fitness, but behind almost every snooker champion there is a coach helping them.

Analyse Your Own Snooker Game

Concentration	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Technique	1	2	3	4	5
Commitment	1	2	3	4	5

•Which player has the best
Concentration ?

•Which player plays with the
best **Commitment** ?

•Which player has the best
Technique ?

•Which player plays with the
most **Confidence** ?

• How many of the above
champions are coached ?

If you believe having a qualified snooker coach helps a player become a champion like the players above, Then you must get a coach helping your game, if your true potential is to be realised.

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Trigger Word

**Think of a Motivational
Trigger Word
that you want to use**

**A Trigger Word is used when you are trying
to get extra efforts from yourself.**

**The Ability to stay focused in a match
is developed with practice.**

**Using a Trigger Word can help you
achieve a higher concentration level**

**When you feel your concentration slipping
use your Trigger Word to Re-focus**

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Setting Goals

Setting Goals and Targets allow the player to choose where he wants to go with his game

Dream Goal : _____

Restraining Forces





Driving Forces

Players Name : _____



'Restraining forces' are things against you reaching your goal.



'Driving forces' are things helping you achieve your Dream goal



Your Goal should be : Specific, Challenging, Attainable, Realistic, Personal .

Goal setting gives you long term vision and short motivation

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Analyse Best & Worst Performances

**Recall when you played your best, and worst ever
snooker match and analyse what made the difference.**

**Recall when you played to the
best of your ability**

Vs

**Now your worst
ever performance**

- **Name of tournament** _____
- **Opponent and score** _____
- **Preparation** _____
- **Concentration** _____
- **Control** _____
- **Technique** _____
- **Confidence** _____
- **What was the biggest lesson :
you learnt from the match** _____

Analyse :

- **Opponent / Score / Preparation / Concentration**
- **Control / Technique / Confidence / Biggest Lesson.**

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Relaxation Exercise

1. – 4. – 2. Ratio

Example :

- ☐ **Breathe for 3 seconds**
 - ☐ **Hold breath for 12 seconds**
 - ☐ **Push out breath for 6 seconds**
- X 5 times**

**Total relaxation will send
oxygen to the brain and help
you to think clearer
when you need it.**

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Analyse Match

**The most effective way to start winning,
is to understand the way you played
the last time.**

Players Name : _____

Opponent : _____ Score : _____ -- _____

Tournament : _____

Analyse your Performance

P = Poor : G = GOOD : VG = VERY GOOD

PREPERATION

☐

CONFIDENCE

☐

PERFORMANCE

☐

CONCENTRATION

☐

CUE ACTION

☐

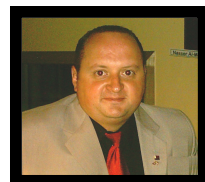
SAFETY GAME

☐

: Match Comments

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Match Reports



Player Name : _____ **Vs :** _____
Tournament : _____

Frame Reports :

Frame 1 : _____	Score -
Frame 2 : _____	Score -
Frame 3 : _____	Score -
Frame 4 : _____	Score -
Frame 5 : _____	Score -
Frame 6 : _____	Score -
Frame 7 : _____	Score -

The Players Performance : Poor. Good V.Good

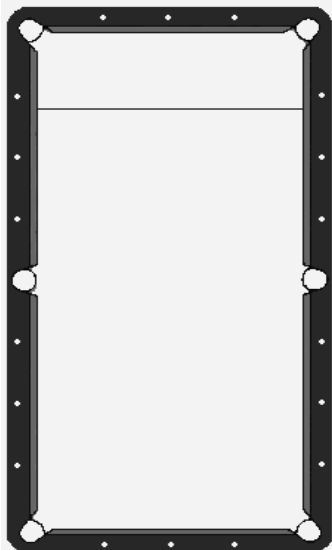
Concentration	Technique	Confidence	Tactical Game	Clearances

Match Breaks : _____

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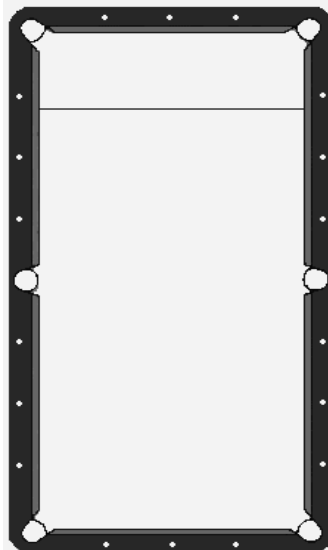


Frame



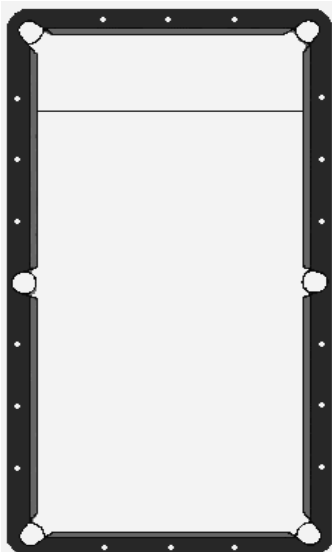
Key Shot :

Frame



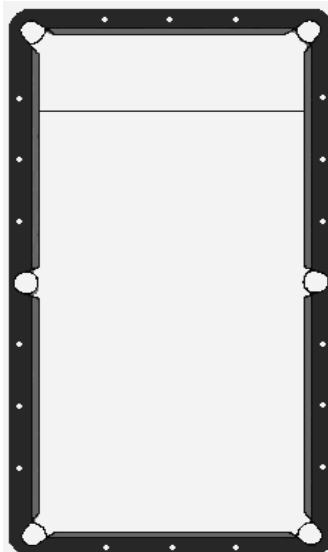
Key Shot :

Frame



Key Shot :

Frame

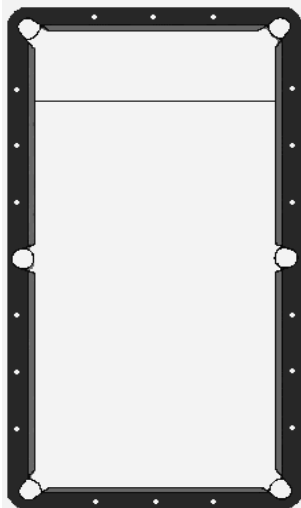


Key Shot :

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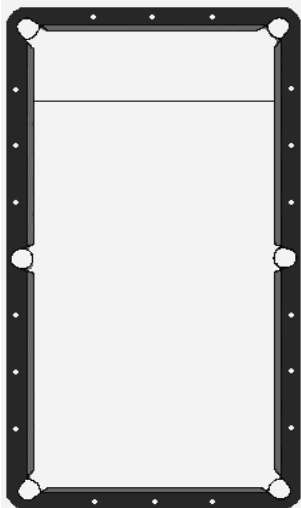


Frame :



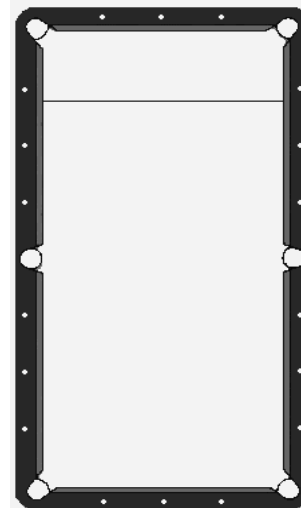
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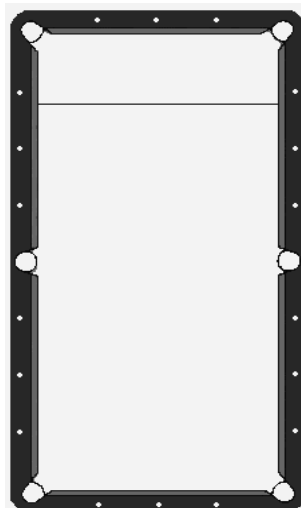
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Frame :



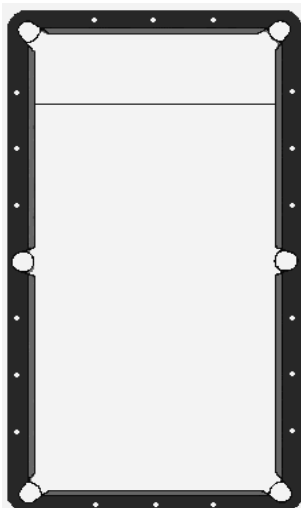
Key Shot :

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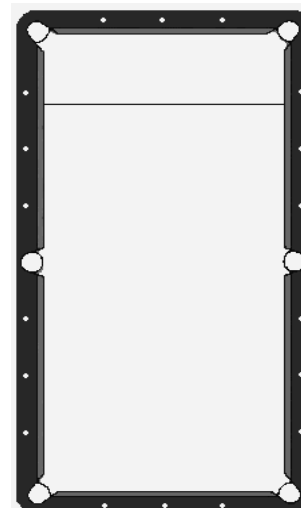
Key Shot :

Frame :



Key Shot :

Frame :



Key Shot :

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Self Talk

“Self Talk are the thoughts you experience and comments you make to yourself during a match”

This can be the difference between winning and losing

Negative Vs Positive Self Talk

A player misses a easy
pot to win the match.

I have blown it, how
could I miss that

I am playing good, but I must
refocus and wait for my next chance.

A player is 3 nil down
in a best of 7 frame match

It is all over,
I have no chance

I am not giving up, I am going
to win the next frame and I can
still win 4-3.

I have never beaten this
opponent in 5 matches

Every time I play in
this club I lose

**All players practice their potting, but the elite
players practice their mind fitness**

**Negative Self Talk has been described as the
most formidable opponent you will ever play.**

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Re-focusing

**“ It is inevitable that your
concentration will slip
sometime during a match “**

**The ability to re-focus your attention
is the vital part of your concentration**

You can not plan for everything, but planting the seed in your mind,
gives you a better chance of repeating it when a situation happens
in the match.

Make the response to the following :

- Missing an easy pot.
- 3 nil up in best of 7 match.
- Disagreement with the referee.
- 3 Nil up and now 3 frames each
- Loosing a black ball game.
- Playing a deliberate slow player.
- Missing frame ball.
- Playing a higher ranked player.
- Consistent bad luck.
- 3 nil down in a best of 7 match

**You must visualise yourself making the appropriate
response in the weeks leading up to the competition**

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Shot Routine

**“ If you have a consistent
Shot Routine you will be a more
successful snooker player ”**

Design your own Shot Routine

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

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THE MIND GAME



“ The Mind Game ”

**Will help you to control your mind,
and nerves and improve your
confidence, and temperament to win
under pressure.**

Written by P. J. Nolan © 1999

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Successful Snooker

“ The Mind Game ”

Written by P.J. Nolan



If you take snooker seriously, it's not just about playing well in practice ; It also means competing and winning matches. Most people are competitive by nature and like to be successful . The more you improve your standard, the better you should be in matches. Always play to win, but practice to improve.

There are plenty of players who are good in practice but go to pieces in a match. All good players revel in match - play, Steve Davis says a good player has got a good temperament and enjoys playing in front of an audience. Of course there are pressures on you playing in a match and that is why you don't play like you do in practice, as in a tournament. Having people watching you for example and the pressures of winning and the disappointment of losing.

One of the main things to remember is not to get upset or annoyed. I agree it is easier said than done ! But there will be times in a match when your opponent gets lucky or you start to play badly. If you get upset, or annoyed and bang the cue, you will only spoil your own game, but it also gives your opponent more confidence, and with the greater confidence often goes a greater share of the luck, so the situation gets worse instead of better and it will lead to bad lapses of concentration and that is unforgivable if you want to win.

Always keep your feelings inside and under control if you can, bring this into your Practice game and it will be a part of your routine in match-play . Sometimes you will feel frustrated, but you have got to learn not to show it.

Nerves are another problem and there is no magic cure, the best way to overcome this is to force yourself to play and enter as many big tournaments as you can, to try and get accustomed yourself to big games. Everyone has nerves and has gone through this. Stephen Hendry still gets butterflies in his stomach before the start of big matches but when the match starts he has learnt how to control them.

Relaxation helps control nerves and I recommend do whatever you find helps you personally to relax before or between matches, Listening to music, going for a walk, reading, or watching t.v.

At certain points in a match, the pressure tends to build up as you reach a crucial stage. Certain balls become big pressure shots, which you are liable to miss. It then boils down to who is most consistent under pressure and who plays the right shots.

It is not a question of how good your best game is, but how good your worst game is. One bad spell in a match can finish you. It is better to be consistent, than to be erratic with flashes of brilliance. You might have a purple patch, but that won't guarantee you to win the match as much as a bad patch will lose the match.

When you start to lose frames and the going gets tough, that is when your ability to fight comes in. All good players never think they are out of a game until the last ball goes in that makes it physically impossible to win

When the chips are down, there is a great tendency to take risks and try to get back into the game. Do not be tempted. It is far better to wait for your opponent to get over confident and go for too many shots. That is where you will get your chance to get back into the game, and you must take full advantage of whatever chance you get. In top class snooker, sometimes you only get one or two chances per frame.

Obviously you must try not to give your opponent too many chances either. If things are going bad it is far better to play a safety shot and wait to get a easier chance to build your confidence with a break, than try and attempt any ambitious shot and find you have let your opponent back into score.

Having said that you should not take risks, you certainly do not want to adopt a totally defensive attitude, That will never win you matches either.

You will find the better your standard improves the better you will be able to judge the situation and weigh up the percentages on each shot. Before you decide particularly in a tournament match, to when you have a good difficult chance to win the frame and you have played the shot in practice, and you are confident, you must be prepared to go for it.

The hallmark of a good player is being able to think under pressure and not panic. When you are faced with a difficult shot and you can not make up your mind whether to go for it or not, what should you do ?

I suggest you ask yourself the following question : Can I pot this ? , What are the chances of getting it and continuing the break ? Is it worth the risk and give my opponent a chance ? , If your answer is in the affirmative to all the questions then by all means go for it.

You often find the same shots cropping up at different times in the match, but depending on the circumstances you have to decide whether to play a particular shot, even though you have done it successfully earlier in the game. Your decision will depend on where the remaining balls are positioned, and what your opponent needs and so on!.

All good match players always play the correct shot. The better player you become the better you will weigh up in your mind whether you are prepared to take the calculated risk or not, you can never advise someone on what shot to play in a match, that is what makes a good tactician.

For me that is what makes match - play so exciting . If you make the right decision, everyone applauds. Equally everyone will be quick to criticize the wrong decision and it is all just down to the individual.

Another imponderable is the frame of mind you are in at the time.

You may be faced with a shot you should get, but something inside tells you that you do not fancy it and you will not get it, and sure enough you do not get it. Sometimes this happens when you are already down on the shot and cueing. If this is the case get up and start your routine again.

Everyone has favorite shots, if you look at the shot and feel that you can get it, by following your instinct you will often get it, even though it may be a very difficult shot. You have to rely on your own judgment.

A final word on match - play. If you are serious about your game, enter as many competitions as you can, whether at club or national level. You do not have to feel left out because you are a junior or that your standard is not good enough.

You must always make a point of playing people you do not know and therefore not knowing how they play. This is the best test of how much your game is improving and will help you develop a better temperament for tournaments. Never be scared of an opponent, it is up to you what you do and how you play. It should never be up to your opponent because when you get on the table there is only one person in control of the game at that stage.

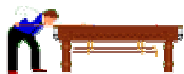
In some way matches will improve your game better than practice. Some players do not learn much from practice but learn so much from tournaments and it is mainly tactical and the excitement of the challenge of match-play

Of course you still must make sure that the standard of your technique is maintained. If necessary as your coach I will spend time correcting a fault that might develop. keep practicing your cue action and improving the pause and focusing on the spot on the object ball and practicing your set routines

Finally, you must learn as much when you loose a match as you win. When you win you often overlook where you went wrong or the bad shots you played. When you loose you must force yourself to analyze where you went wrong. If you do not you will simply go on loosing.

**My entire coaching book is covered on the Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Official Web Site on www.ribsa.net / Coaching
For more information on The P.J. Nolan Snooker Coaching Guide
E Mail : PJCOACH147@hotmail.com : Mobile : 086 - 8634507**

“ Remember fail to prepare, be prepare to fail “

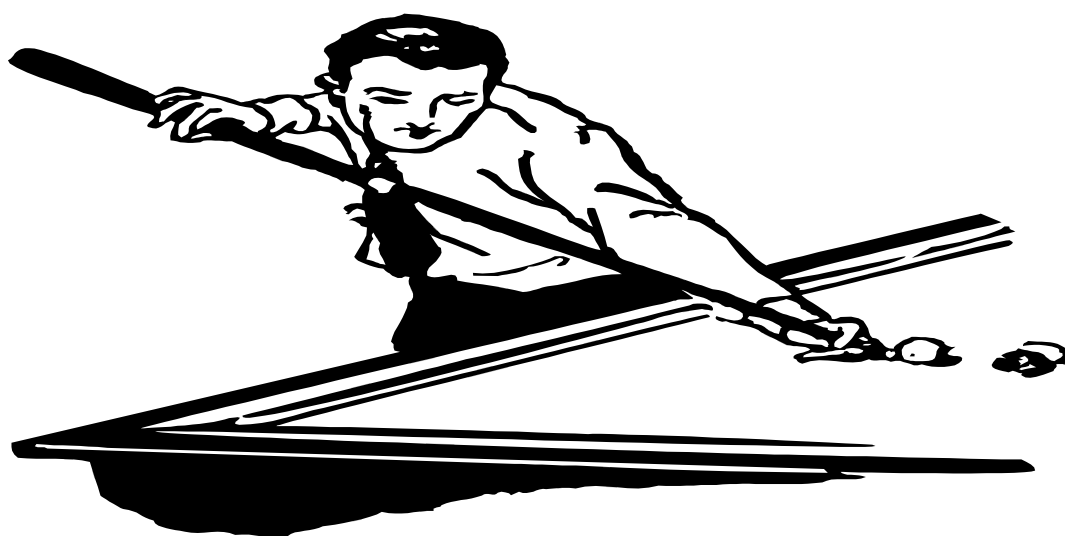


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THE PRESSURE GAME



“ The Pressure Game ”

**Will improve your mental
preparation, and help you clear
your mind of negative thoughts
to become a champion.**

Written by P.J. Nolan © 2001

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Successful Snooker **“ The Pressure Game ”**

Written by P.J. Nolan



Snooker is a game that involves the control of the mind as the control of the cue. You need to practice this control, so that when you are under pressure in a match, you will be in control of yourself and the Situation, : for instance, you have just missed an easy shot and slammed the butt of your cue on the floor, this is a very negative response. You have immediately let your opponent know now that you are under pressure and not happy with your game, you have also passed the initiative to your opponent and given him more confidence So instead you must try to think positively.

Ask yourself - Why did I miss that shot ? and learn what you did wrong. You cannot play that shot again, so prepare yourself for the next shot and be ready to take full advantage of the next chance that comes your way.

Preparation :

One of the most common mistakes is when the player approaches the table before deciding which shot he or she is going to play.

I stress this, because the greater the knowledge, the better the player will become in deciding on the correct shot.

How often have you got down to play your shot and at the last second Changed your mind during the shot, and missed it.

Whilst doubts can creep in relating to whether it is the right shot (pot or safety), you must give every shot you play 100%.

Pressure :

Pressure plays a major part in all sport. Pressure increases the negative thoughts. It is not possible to get rid of the pressure, but you can learn to cope with it better. You must recognise that pressure reaches peaks during the match learning to control yourself is the key to success.

Negative thoughts :

When a player loses a match, they often re-set the shot they felt cost them the match, and they usually pot it.

What they should be doing is thinking about why they failed in the match.

What were their thoughts at that crucial moment and how they could learn from them.

There are a numerous things that can trigger off negative thoughts under pressure, which leads to lack of mental control.

- * Missing a frame winning shot.
- * Bad luck / Opponents good luck.
- * Fear of failure.
- * Expectation / I should win.
- * Table.
- * Playing a bad shot.



Terry Griffiths
Director of World Coaching

I am sure you have experienced a few of these, if not all of them.

You should know how your thoughts were at that time in the match.

But do you learn enough from them.

Negative thoughts must be rejected as soon as possible, as this allows you to keep your mind in the present time. It is the next shot that counts, You can not do anything about the past, you can now keep your mind clear and focused.

Mental Preparation :

Preparing your mind for any future adversity gives you a better chance of keeping control. Your objective is to win, Controlling your thoughts will help you achieve it.

1. **Opponent** : it does not matter about previous matches, or if he plays fast or slow or if he plays a lot of safety or goes for everything.

I am there to win.

2. **Venue** : Did you feel comfortable last time ? Did you win or lose ?.

It does not matter, I am going there to win, I must think positively and play with confidence, I will not allow anything to affect me.

(If you have not played there before, get there early to get a feel for the venue)

3. **Composure** : If you miss a pot, or play a bad safety, do not loose control Everybody is entitled to make mistakes, But you must learn from your last shot.

and try and not make any more mistakes

(You are now in a positive frame of mind, ready for your next visit to the table)

Keeping your Head :

It is a fact that losing control of your mind under pressure during match-play leads to you missing pots that you would pot all day in practice.

Do you think that the fault is in your cue action or in your mind ?

If this is the case, why do all players practice their cue actions, but never practice mental control.

Practice Form :

If you have practiced properly and analyzed all aspects of your game, then you are ready to perform to the best of your ability.

But remember how you performed in practice is irrelevant to the match.

We have all played good in practice and badly in a match, and badly in practice and good in the match, the big difference is whether you are focused and concentrating 100% on the match.

In my opinion quality practice preparation is 50% to success.

Putting it together :

A great way of concentrating is to picture the completed shot you want to play in your mind, it also forms part of your rhythm.

When you get down on the cue, start your cue action, make your pause and focus on the object ball and deliver the cue smooth and straight, finishing with the cue on line and your head down.

Summary :

Keeping composed for any length of time is very difficult if linked with negative thoughts. Try to recall the negative thoughts you have experienced in other matches. You must analyse them and if they occur next time, you will be able to reject them. Mental control needs practice, your mind is not like a tap that can be turned on and off when you feel like it.

Remember :

“ If you fail to prepare, be prepared to fail ”

My entire Coaching book is covered on The Republic of Ireland
Billiards & Snooker Association Official Web Site on www.ribsa.net

If you want more information on The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide

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Republic Of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association
National Snooker Coach (P.J. Nolan)
House Of Sport Dublin

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THE WINNING

GAME



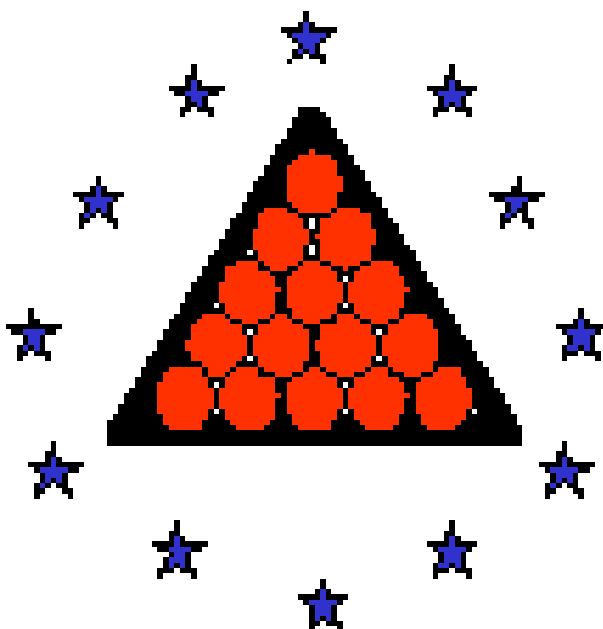
**“ The winning game “
will help you win,
and become a
champion.**

**Psychology
Game**

**Preparation
Plan**

**Training
Program**

**Overall
Technique**



Written by P.J. Nolan © 2004

The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide

“ The Winning Game ”

Written By P.J. Nolan ©



Have you ever wondered how the top professional snooker players play at their highest level when they need it most.

Professional and top amateur players use mental preparation for all competitions. This ensures the player starts their performance in a state of total control.

I have been coaching for over 18 years and was appointed the Qatar Coach in the middle east in 1988, and the Director of Irish Coaching in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002. In 2003 I returned to Qatar to be the director of Qatar Coaching.

I have been lucky enough to coach fantastic Junior, Ladies and Senior champions and work with the top coaches from all around the world, like them, you must keep on working on improving your knowledge of this game, if you want to stay successful.

I have written “ The Winning Game “ to help players and coaches understand the importance of preparing their player properly and how to improve their training.

All this preparation is done in the weeks and days running up to the competition.

What the player does in his preparation in the five stages below will determine the kind of performance he makes in the match and through out the competition.

Here are the five crucial stages :

- The weeks and Days leading up to the competition.
- 3 hours before the start of the match.
- 45 Minutes before the start of the match.
- 15 Minutes before the start of the match.
- 1 Minute before the start of the match.

Ask yourself what would you like to do in all the five stages, and remember all players are different, what might work for one player might not work for another.

That is why you must design your own preparation plan, because the first frame in every match is very important and your opening shots will determine if you put your opponent under pressure from the start, or let him put you under pressure. That is why you must start with 100% Concentration.

I believe this preparation gives you an extra edge on your opponents, because the player needs to practice and prepare properly If he is to perform at his highest level.

Training Program

My best advise on your training is to have your practice sessions structured, challenging and fun, If you can not enjoy it, you will soon get bored and inevitably your game will suffer.

The most common practice is the line up, but in my opinion, this practice is only a warm up practice, because the player has so many options.

It takes more control and concentration and skill, to make a two red clearance of 43 than the player to score 80 in a line up.

I give all my players weekly routine books for them to record their practice and to help them stay focused during their training.

In my own coaching i have broken down the training routines into four areas for the player to work on all aspects of the game.

1. Tactical.
2. Cue Ball Control.
3. Concentration.
4. Technique.

Ask yourself what category would your regular practice routines be in.

Tactical practices : are Set Safety Routines, Escaping and laying snookers, One Red games, and mini games.

Cue Ball Control Practices : are Routines you need to control the cue ball and pot the balls into nominated pockets.

Concentration Practices : are Routines you count the balls you pot, not the break, and replace them on the table after each pot, to count your score.

Technique Practices : are Routines for Long Pots, Angle pots, Pots from tight on the cushion. Rest Shots, Bridging over balls, Shots to open the pack.

Snooker Champions

What make a good Snooker Champion is a player who understands snooker is 80% in the mind and works on his mind as much as his cue action during his training, and always believes he will win.

His playing technique has a Solid Bridge Hand & Stance, Good Pause & Approach, Stays still on the shot, and has a smooth and consistent cue delivery.

His Commitment : is measured by his practice, his enthusiasm, and his ambition.

His Concentration : is measured by his focus, and is unaffected by distractions.

His Confidence : is measured by his strong self belief, and positive approach.

His Control : is measured by his professional attitude and is always relaxed.

Competition Preparation plan

The following preparation plan has worked for champions I have coached over the years, and will give you some ideas for your own personal plan.

- Arrive early and do a light practice to loosen your arm and develop a smooth rhythm in your cue action.
- Think of the word “ *smooth* “ every time you strike the cue ball.
- Practice potting the black and pink and keep control of the cue ball, using only the middle and corner pockets.
- Practice your safety by hitting the pack of reds and finding the baulk cushion.
- Practice medium and long pots and make position on the Black and blue.
- Fifteen minutes before the start of the match find a quiet place on your own to get your concentration, This is as important as your potting practice, If anyone speaks to you, tell them you will talk to them after the match.
- One minute before the start of the match, Close your eyes and believe in your own ability, remember the time you played your best ever match and how relaxed and focused you were, and how confident you played.

Now open your eyes and do it again because you are a true champion.

•Enjoy the whole experience, if you won congratulations, but if lost you must identify why you lost and practice it more, so you will win the next time.

Do you need a snooker coach

Having a qualified coach to help the player choose the right sports Psychology skills and the right training is in my mind the biggest difference in helping a player become a champion.

Think of a player who receives coaching that you recently played against, and ask yourself has the coach improved his overall game.

Some amateur players are still afraid to ask for advice, but nowadays all the top professional snooker players have some kind of a coach.

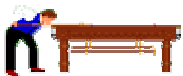
A good snooker coach will only help you, Some players need advice on how to improve their overall technique and some need help with their training, and some need help with the mental side of the game.

Everyday I coach my players, I try to be the best, because if you believe you do not need to work hard because you have been successful in the past as a player or a coach, that is when you will start losing.

“ Remember fail to prepare, be prepare to fail “

My entire coaching book is covered on the Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker
Official Web Site on www.ribsa.net / Coaching

For more information on The P.J. Nolan Snooker Coaching Guide
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The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide

THE CHAMPIONS APPROACH



“ The Champions Approach ”
**Will help you analyze your game,
and focus on your training to
become a champion.**

Written by P.J. Nolan ©

The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide

Successful Snooker **“ The Champions Approach ”**



Written by P.J. Nolan

To get the real benefit out of Coaching, you have got to be serious about improving your game.

It takes years of dedication and practice to reach the standards and consistency to become an Irish or World Snooker champion.

If you want to be successful at snooker you should aim high, but remember champions are not made overnight.

It has taken me over 15 years to improve my own coaching techniques, I was appointed the Qatar National Coach in the Middle East in 1998, and the Irish National Snooker Coach in 2000.

I am not claiming that my way is the only way, but I do know that my way works.

I have tried to get all the players I coach to understand the importance of a basic solid technique. Some people are lucky and have a natural good style, others have to work hard to perfect theirs.

Over the years I have coached a number of junior & senior champions and last year the Home International Senior Champions.

All these players had great dedication and practiced very hard but having a qualified coach to monitor their progress is in my mind, the big difference in helping them become champions.

Before you become a good snooker player you must learn a variety of shots. There are millions of different kinds of shots. Every good shot you play in a tournament depends on how much groundwork has been done on the practice table.

Having a qualified and experienced snooker coach to monitor the player, will make the player more successful.

To get the right stance and cue action, you may have to go right back to the beginning. The longer you are playing the harder it will be to lose bad habits and develop good ones.

Before you play consistent, you must first develop a good stance, bridge hand, learn proper cueing, and be able to control the path of the cue ball, whether it is full ball, half ball, or the control of side, screw, and stun.

Nowadays the Mind Game is becoming the major part of success in Snooker both professional and amateur.

In my opinion

I rate: The Mind Game as 70%, Your Preparation as 20%, and Your Talent as 10% of your complete game.

I have designed a number of mind fitness programs to help the player to achieve his true potential.

A "goal setting program" which sets achievable goals that are updated during the snooker season, with two types of forces, " **Restraining** " and " **Driving** "

The Restraining force is the negative, and is against you reaching your goal, the Driving force, is the positive in helping you achieve your goal.

This will keep the player focused throughout the whole snooker season with goals to achieve.

I designed a "**fitness program**" to monitor all aspects of a snooker player in the following six categories: **Technical, Tactical, Life Style, Physical Fitness, Mental Fitness, and Support.**

Analyzing every tournament match performance on a performance sheet, covering the following : Overall Performance, Preparation, Concentration, Shot Selection, Players Confidence and Pressures, will keep the player Focused on working hard on improving his match play.

One question I am asked regularly is what makes a good player, my answer is always good dedication, good temperament, and most important an accurate and consistent cue delivery. After all this game is basically all about hitting the ball in the middle and where you have aimed.

I believe the better the cue action, the better the player will play under pressure and all my players try to perfect their cue action.

Over the years that I have been coaching I have learnt that each player has their own individual style of play and no two players are alike.

Stephen Hendry and John Higgins are considered to have two of the best cue actions of the top professional players.

If you look at all the top players you will see that no two players have exactly the same style.

It is not imperative for you to develop a style like these players or of your favorite player.

I spend a lot of time with my players working on their game and analyzing every aspects of their technique, Using video analyses, the player can watch himself play and see his own faults, in my opinion this is very important.

Some players do not believe they need coaching but every player needs someone. Players like Steve Davis, and Stephen Hendry were coached. Even golfer Tiger Woods is coached and goes back to basics when things start to go wrong in his game. I believe snooker players should adapt the same approach.

Within my coaching series there are five different grades of practice routines to suit each standard of player.

Each Coaching Session the player receives a players profile progress chart to monitor their technique, and is given a set practice routine.

The shots that I have selected will improve the player, and help him improve his cue ball control, and understand his cue action.

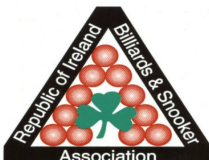
Remember if you can learn how to control the Cue-Ball, you will control your match.

In 2001, 110 Sport.com and R.I.B.S.A. teamed up to form the Ken Doherty Junior Snooker Academy, and to further develop the R.I.B.S.A. Coaching Foundation they will be free coaching at official R.I.B.S.A.tournaments All registered players can avail of this coaching.

My entire Coaching book is covered on The Republic of Ireland
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The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide

Sports Psychology

In Snooker

Goal Setting

Mind Exercises

Relaxation

Holding an Image

8 Fundamental Aims

**P.J. Nolan
Snooker
Guide**



“ Sports Psychology in Snooker ”
**Will help you focus on your goals and teach
you new mind exercises to improve your
concentration and give you 8 fundamental
aims to become a champion.**

Written by P.J. Nolan © 2003

The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide

Successful Snooker

“ Sports Psychology in Snooker ”



Written by P.J. Nolan

Winning snooker matches at the highest level is all about controlling your mind as much as the control of your cue action.

All Champions have a high concentration level and are able to control themselves when they are under pressure.

Remember all the top players had to lose first, before they won.

Sports psychology is becoming a major part of success in snooker and being able to control your mind under pressure is the difference in becoming champions.

Practicing your mind is vital if true potential is to be realised.

Every player practices their cue action but how many players practice their mind control.

The skill of maintaining concentration for the entire match will help you in every match you play.

1 . Goal Setting

Goal setting is a powerful technique that can yield strong returns

At its simplest level the process of setting goals and targets allow the player to choose where they want to go with your game.

Your goal should be :

Specific, Challenging, Attainable, Measurable, and Personal.

Goal setting gives you long term vision and short term motivation
By setting goals you can :

- Achieve More.
- Improve Performance.
- Improve the quality of your training

The first step in setting sporting goals is to decide your level of commitment to your sport.

If you only play for a bit of fun, then you should have different goals from someone who has decided to dedicate their life to achieving excellence in snooker.

Feedback on Success :

If the goal was a significant goal, remember how hard you worked and take the opportunity to reward yourself appropriately.

Feedback on Failure :

When you have failed to reach your goal, ensure you learn from the failure.

Following Possible Reasons:

- that you did not practice enough.
- that your technique was faulty and needs to be improved.
- that the goal was unrealistic.

2. Positive Mental Approach

A positive mental approach can perhaps best be characterised by saying that your thoughts are strongly focused on the here and now and drawn towards specific future goals.

"An example of Negative versus Positive Mental Approach can come from negative predictions of the future.

Have you ever heard a player say, for example "... and then my opponent fluked a ball in the second frame and then went on to win the match 3-0.

These thoughts are often in the beaten players mind long before the end of the match .

Its far better for the player to ignore the fluke or, perhaps even better, to rehearse the "match report" that they will be telling their friends, along the lines of "...

"Although my opponent got a fluke in the second frame, i didn't let it unsettle me and went on to win 3-1."

3 . Relaxation

Relaxation is vital in snooker, the five breath technique will help you achieve total relaxation during and between matches.

The Breathing Technique

The five breath technique removes tension and clears the mind. Once mastered, this technique will help you to relax.

It can be used at any time you feel yourself tensing up and will be effective even in highly charged situations

First, you will need to spend time perfecting the technique. This is best done in quiet surroundings where you will not be disturbed. Just five minutes a day practicing should enable you to relax at will in about four to six weeks.

In order to avoid the reading of these instructions to get in the way of the relaxation it is best either to learn the technique by heart or record on a personal cassette to replay each time.

- Lie or sit comfortably, arms by your side.
- Take a deep breath. Concentrate on allowing the muscles of your face and neck to relax as you breathe out.
- Take a second deep breath. Allow the muscles in your shoulders and arms to relax as you breathe out.
- Take a third deep breath. Allow the muscles in your chest, stomach and back to relax as you breathe out.
- Take a fourth deep breath. Allow your legs and feet to relax as you breathe out.
- Take a fifth deep breath and focus on relaxing your whole body as you breathe out.
- Target - aim to build up to staying in this relaxed deep breathing state for five minutes.
- When you are ready to finish each session, count slowly with each breath from five back to one and you will be in a state of relaxed alertness.

4 . Holding an Image

This exercise develops the skill of maintaining concentration on a specific object for extended periods.

- Find a comfortable chair in a place where you will not be distracted or disturbed. Sit upright, feet flat on the floor, and both hands resting in your lap.
- Spend a short time relaxing using the five breath technique
- Visualize something in the room. Notice every detail, its texture, its size, any reflections
- Once you have the image in your head, maintain the clear image. If the image fades or your attention is drawn to any distracting thoughts or sound, then your concentration has been broken
- With practice you will gradually maintain concentration for longer and longer periods.

5 . Imagine the shot

Close your eyes and imagine the shot you want to play, take a few moments to experience the shot in your mind from your "experience". Try and use as many senses as possible. Imagine yourself going to the table and see yourself getting into position, and cueing up to the cue ball

Get a mental rehearsal of the strength of the shot; see, hear, and feel the delivery of the cue. the sound of the cue striking the cue ball, cue ball striking object ball and the object ball going in the pocket and then the cue ball finishing in position for the next shot.

How many times have you heard a player say.....

"I knew I was going to miss that".

Visualization is largely about listening to that little voice and not playing the shot until you've got a positive video preview in you mind.

6 . The 8 Fundamental Aims

1. Study : Question yourself ? Am I doing this right ?
Use a video camera to check your technique and listen to your snooker coach

2. Learn : Learn through observation, practice, and evaluation. Learn from other players
Many things can be learnt from watching other players; especially the different array of shots.

3. Evaluate: Evaluation is the key to self-improvement. Analyze your matches, your technique, and the way you play, learn from your mistakes.
Practice hard to reduce your mistakes

4. People : There are three roles to consider!
1. The Player. 2. The Coach. 3. The Manager.
All three are necessary at professional level
If one person fails in their role then it will effect the others.

5. Practice: Practice routines, experiment with different ideas either in solo practice or in frames.

" Remember practice like you play, and play like you practice"

Approach it in a professional manner.

6. Patience : Be patient within yourself, on the table and off the snooker table.

Improvement comes to those that wait.

If you do not have patience as many people do not, then you will have to learn how to be patient.

7. Time Management : Use your time effectively, Manage your time, do not waste it, you do not get a second chance.

Too many players' waste time, then wonder why they are not improving, they then start to make excuses for their poor performance.

8. Enjoy :Enjoy your practice, sometimes it is difficult to be motivated especially with hours of solo practice. However it is necessary, it needs to be completed. Enjoy the game, the high points, and the low, Winning is not everything.....

You now have to follow them as best as possible, not just for one day or a week but for the next 12 months and more.... They have to become second nature so that they become automatic, when the pressure hits you in the match

Summary :

If you believe that poor concentration skills are punished in snooker and that good concentration skills gives the player a 'winning edge', then you must train your Mind, along with practicing your cue action, if you want to become a champion.

One of the best ways is through ' mental control practices Visualization, Relaxation, Setting Goals and Positive Mental Approach are the keys to sport Psychology.

Finally the next time you see a top professional snooker player sitting down closing his eyes while the referee is setting up the next frame, you will know what he is doing

Remember :

**IF YOU FAIL TO PREPARE
BE PREPARED TO FAIL**

My entire Coaching book is covered on The Republic of Ireland Billiards & Snooker Association Official Web Site on www.ribsa.net

If you want more information on the P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide

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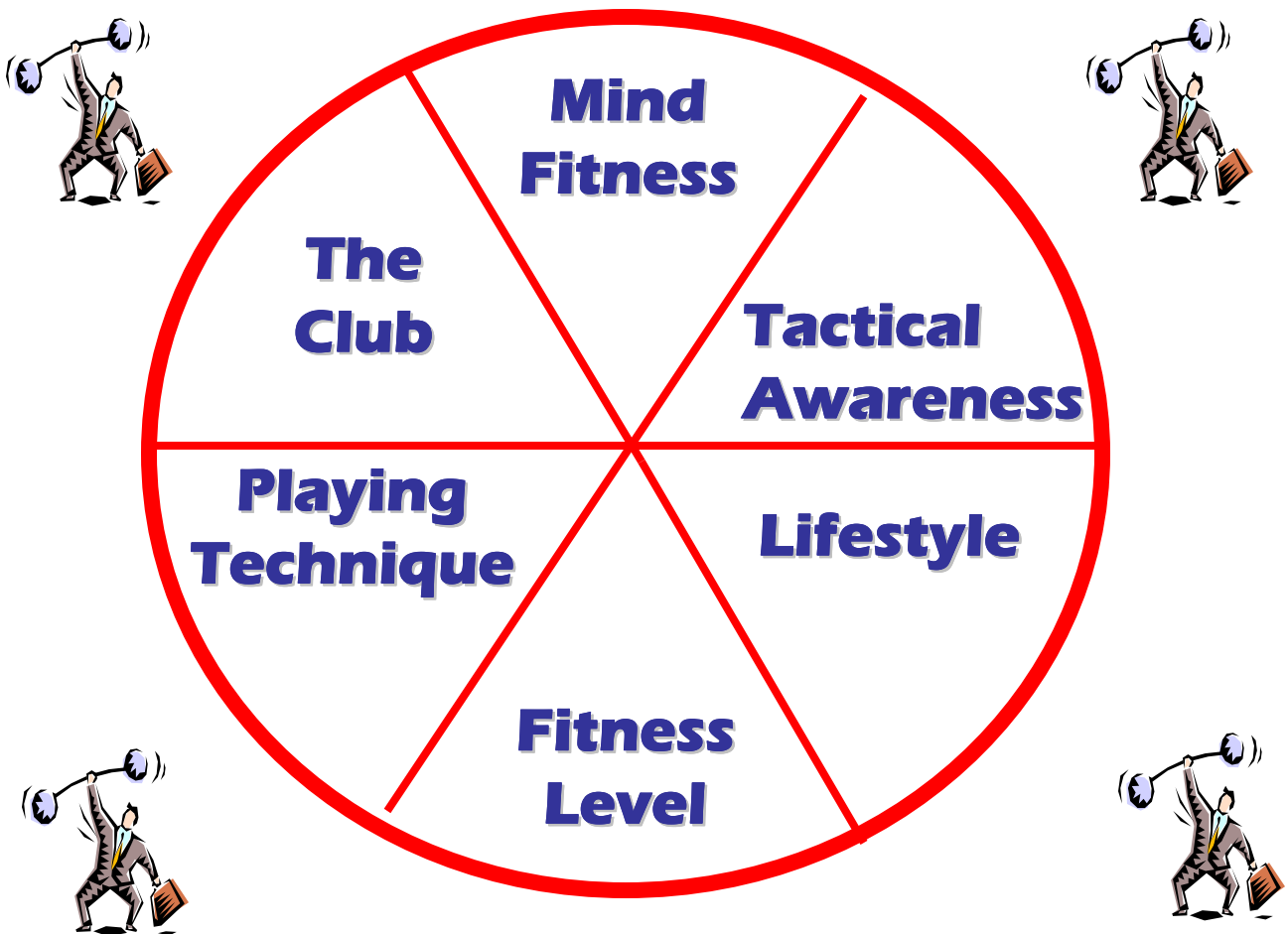
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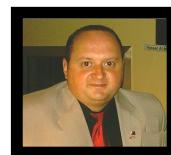


Analyse Your Overall Fitness



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Analyse Your Technique

The Approach	1	2	3	4	5
The Stance	1	2	3	4	5
Bridge Hand	1	2	3	4	5
Cue Action	1	2	3	4	5
Speed of play	1	2	3	4	5
Using the Rest	1	2	3	4	5

1 = Weak / 5 = Strong

Analyse Your Overall Game

Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Break building	1	2	3	4	5
Clearance	1	2	3	4	5
Long Potting	1	2	3	4	5
Cue Ball Control	1	2	3	4	5

1 = Weak / 5 = Strong

Analyse Your Club

Tables	1	2	3	4	5
Tournaments	1	2	3	4	5
Coaching	1	2	3	4	5
Support	1	2	3	4	5

1 = Weak / 5 = Strong

Analyse Your Fitness

Fitness	1	2	3	4	5
Diet	1	2	3	4	5
Weight	1	2	3	4	5
Strength	1	2	3	4	5

1 = Weak / 5 = Strong

Analyse Your Mind Fitness

Concentration	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Commitment	1	2	3	4	5
Self Control	1	2	3	4	5

1 = Weak / 5 = Strong

Analyse Your Lifestyle

Work	1	2	3	4	5
School	1	2	3	4	5
Social Life	1	2	3	4	5
Other Sports	1	2	3	4	5

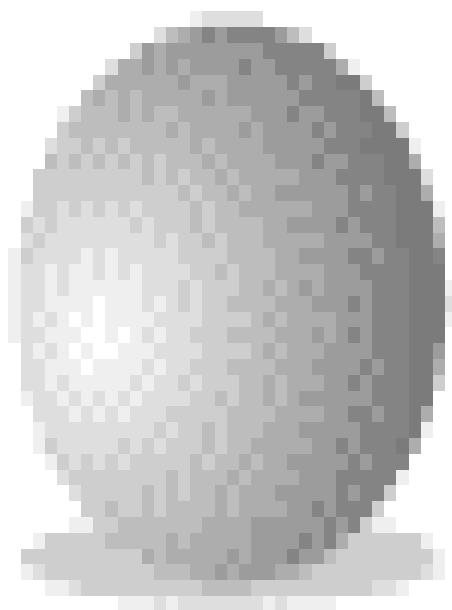
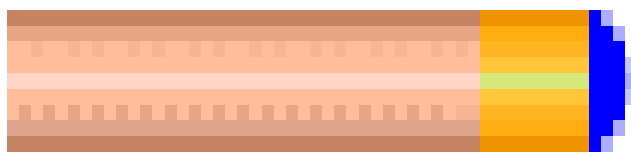
1 = Weak / 5 = Strong

**It is vital to analyse your complete fitness level in all categories
If you want to become a Champion,
To neglect anyone of them is to limit you chance of being the best.**

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The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide

THE COMPETITION GAME



Written by P.J. Nolan © 2005

The P.J. Nolan Snooker Guide



“ The Competition Game ”

Written and Designed By P.J. Nolan



Most snooker players do not understand or practice exercises on psychology skills to improve their mind fitness.

In my experience having poor mind fitness is the difference between winning and losing matches and tournaments.

Some players do not believe they need to practice their mind and believe it comes natural and will happen when they need it, but these kind of players always struggle to win at the highest level, because to win, you need to be a complete player.

The player who concentrates on all aspects of his game, from his playing technique, to his mind fitness, and has a good training program, is the kind of player who will perform good in competitions.

I have written the “ **Competition Game** ” to simplify psychology skills and help players and coaches understand mind fitness programs.

I have been coaching for over 19 years and was the national coach of the Republic of Ireland and Qatar, and I have been lucky enough to work with great players, but one vital part all my players had to improve was their mind fitness.

I have broken down my own personal mind fitness programs that have helped all the players over the years to become champions.

These programs help the player choose and understand which category they need improvement, because each player needs improvement in different areas.

Some players need help with their **Confidence** and **Commitment** and others need help with **Concentration** and **Control**.

The first step a player must do is focus on where improvement is needed in their own individual game.

Commitment: Goal Setting Program : Fitness Program : Analyzing Performances.

Control : Breathing and Relaxation and Refocusing Program.

Confidence : Positive Self Talk and Quality Training Program.

Concentration : Good Shot Routine and Trigger Word.

I have summarized the mind fitness programs and exercises, and detailed what each exercise works on and what each program covers , you must now choose which psychology skills you need.

Overall Fitness Program :

Works on identifying your overall weak point

Covers : Lifestyle, Technique, Club, Fitness Level, Overall Game and Mind Fitness.

Specific Training Routines :

Works on the 4 different categories of practice routines.

Covers : Technique, Cue Ball Control, Tactical, and Concentration practices

Goal Settings Program :

Works on setting targets and goals with restraining and driving forces.

Covers : Identifying your goal and what is helping you, and what holding you back.

Shot Routine :

Works on helping you understand your own playing technique.

Covers : Tip to ball to get the line, Smooth cue action, Pause and keeping still.

Trigger Word :

Works on helping you to concentrate.

Covers : A special chosen word to make you focus when you need it most.

Self Talk :

Works on Helping you to think positive and not negative.

Covers : Making a response to certain situations that happen in matches

Analyze Performance :

Works on understanding the way you played in your last match.

Covers : Cue Action, Safety Game, Concentration, Confidence ,Shot Selection

Relaxation Exercise :

Works on you understanding the 4 – 2 – 1 Breathing Ratio

Covers : Breathing and sending oxygen to the brain

Competition Plan :

Works on preparation leading up to the match

Covers : Mental preparation leading up to the match

Refocusing Program :

Works on rehearsing a response to situation in a match

Covers : Mental preparation

I am not claiming that my programs are the only way to improve your mind fitness, but as long as your willing to work on your mind as much as your cue action, then success is only around the corner.

The 10 fundamentals to winning competitions has worked for various champions over the years, and will help you win, but remember all players are different, but this kind of approach will help you win

10 fundamentals to winning competitions

▪Game Plan :

It is very important to play natural and to your own strength, but always have a game plan depending on type of opponent you are playing.

▪Enjoy the match:

Try to enjoy the match, because when you enjoy it, you will play your best.

▪Practice :

Practice before the match is personal choice, but in my experience most top players practice a set routine to loosen their arm and develop a smooth cue delivery

▪Before the start of each frame :

Close your eyes and go through your mental drill to focus.

▪When your opponent is playing :

Sit in your chair and relax and thinking positive and wait until he misses.

▪Before approaching the table :

Use your own special *trigger word* to get yourself into the zone.

▪If you have played a number of bad shots :

Refocus your concentration and remember your shot routine – Tip to Ball, Focus on line of aim, pause and smooth cue delivery, and stay still on the shot.

▪Showing Disappointment :

Never let your opponent know that you are upset or annoyed in the match.

▪Finish like a champion :

Any snooker player can start with style, but only champions finish in style.

▪Frames Decided :

Almost 40% of frames are decided on the last red or on the colours, so keep your focus until the end.

“ Remember fail to prepare, be prepare to fail ”

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