Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, technical proofs (TP), and all of my past articles can be accessed and viewed online at billiards.colostate.edu. The reference numbers used in the articles help you locate the resources on the website. If you have a slow or inconvenient Internet connection, you might want to view the resources on a DVD. Details can be found online at: dr-dave-billiards.com.

This is the first article in a series dealing with the *"Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB),"* a five-disc instructional-DVD set I recently created with fellow *Billiards Digest* columnist Bob Jewett. VEEB teaches all of the skills, knowledge and strategy one needs to excel at 8-ball. Topics include offensive and defensive strategy, position play, shot types, safety play, advanced shots, and run-out planning. An outline of the entire VEEB series along with video excerpts from each DVD can be viewed online at: *dr-dave-billiards.com/8-ball*.

The topic for this month is how to deal with various pocket-blocker situations that can come up in 8-ball. It is very common for balls to be blocking pockets in 8-ball, especially on a "bar box" that has limited "real estate" for 15 balls. **Diagram 1** illustrates an example where we are shooting solids and the 11 blocks the corner from both the 1 and 8. A good approach here is to carom the cue ball (CB) off the 2 into the 11 to remove it as a blocker and leave short-side shape on the 1 in the opposite corner. Pocketing the 11 also opens the pocket for the 8 later. On this shot, the tangent line heads in the perfect direction, so a hit a touch below center at medium speed results in perfect stun along the 90-degree direction to the 11. With the 11 clear and the final CB position as shown in the diagram, the solids can now be run, starting with the 1.
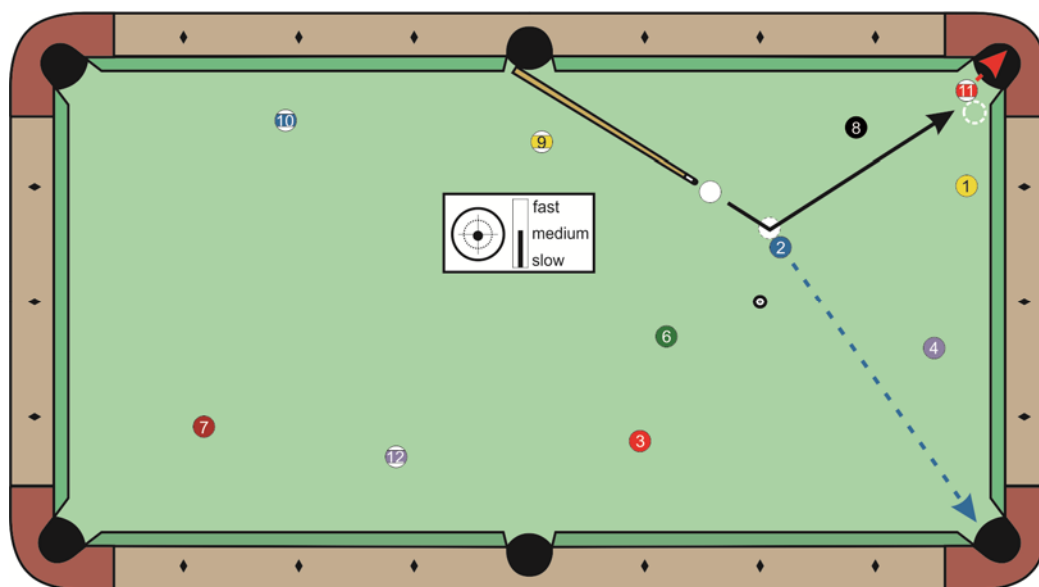

Diagram 1 **Clear a pocket blocker for short-side shape**

Diagram 2 shows another example where the 10 ball blocks the corner for the 1. When an opponent's ball is this deep in a pocket, often a good option is to pocket a ball by driving it through the blocker, especially when there is a straight-in shot opportunity like the 4 ball here. The key is to hit the blocker as squarely as possible with a rolling object ball (OB), so it will follow straight in. Here, since the 10 is in the left side of the pocket, the aim should slightly favor the right side of the center of the 10 because if the 4 hits to the left of center even a hair, it won't follow into the pocket. We can also "hedge our bets" by hitting a stop shot in case we miss the shot … these shots are more difficult than they can look. With a stop shot, if the 4 isn't pocketed, the only stripe the opponent will have as an option is the difficult 11, since the solids block all other stripes. But we expect to make this shot and run out the solids. Remember to not use too much speed on shots like this. If you do, the OB won't have time to develop enough forward roll to follow the obstacle into the pocket.
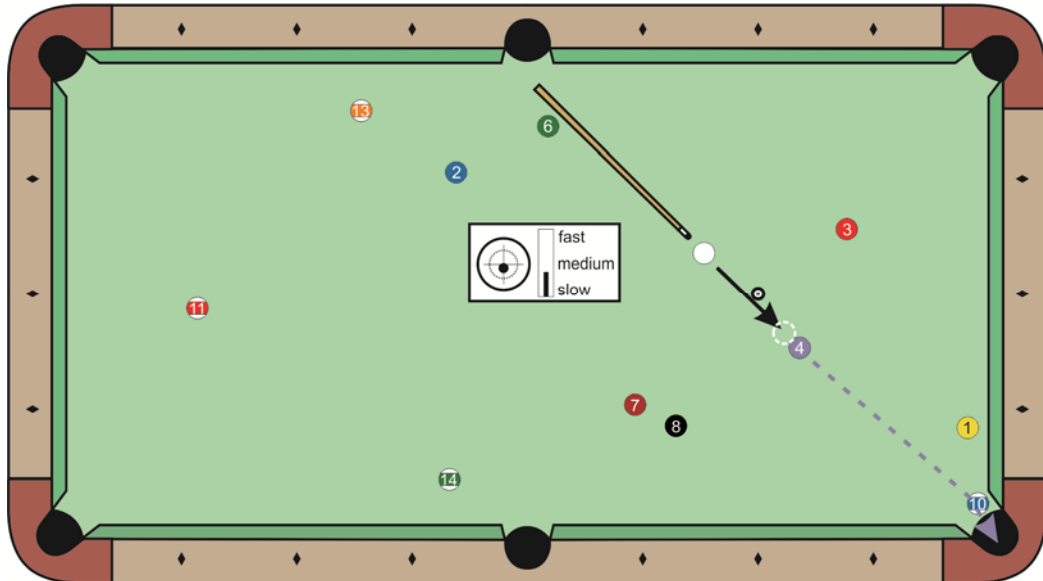
Diagram 2 Drive a ball through a pocket blocker

Diagram 3 illustrates another example, playing solids, where the 12 blocks both the 3 and 5. A good approach here is to attempt to drive the 5 though the 12. This would require a really good hit; but, fortunately, even if we don't pocket the 5, we can still come out good. We just need the replace the blocker with the 5, and play safe at the same time for an excellent two-way shot. With the CB left as shown in the diagram on the rail behind the 13, our opponent doesn't have a reasonable shot at a stripe, and if the 13 isn't sent up table, our 5 is now a pocket blocker. Regardless, if we get another open shot, which is very likely to occur, the run-out will be easy.
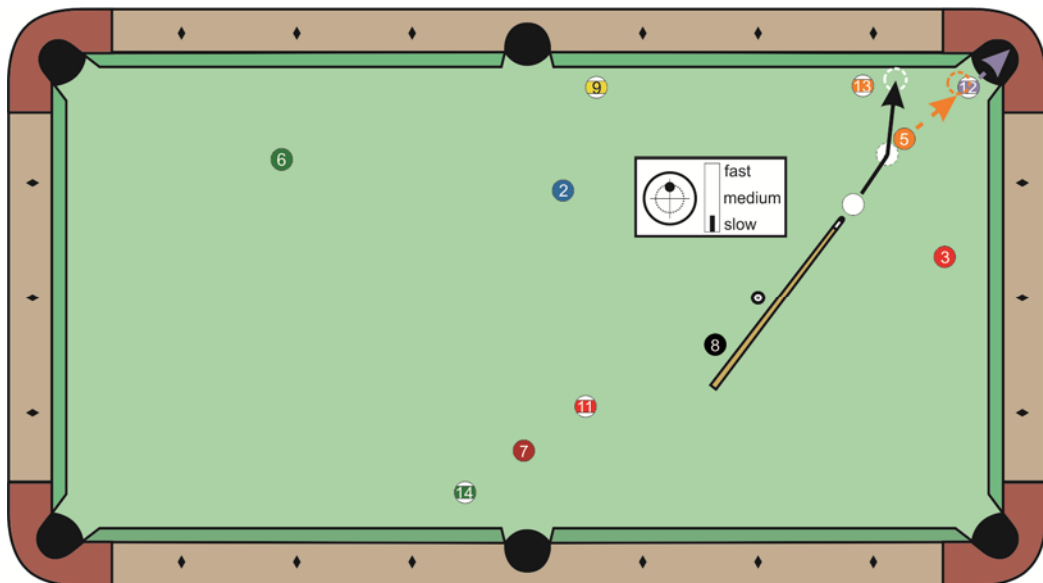

Diagram 3 Replace a pocket blocker and play safe

Demonstrations of all of the shots in this article can be viewed in online video **NV G.2**, and the VEEB-I DVD includes many more game-situation examples dealing with post-break analysis, opening-shot options, choosing key balls, position planning, solving problems, safeties and two-way shots. As always, you should check out the videos and try the shots yourself the next time you are at a table. Reading is good, and watching is better, but trying is best.

I hope you enjoy my series of articles dealing with the "Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB)." If you want to view video excerpts from the entire DVD set, check out online videos **NV G.1** through **NV G.11**. Enjoy!

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave

NV G.1 – Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB) Overview
NV G.2 – How to Deal With Pocket Blockers in 8-ball, from Disc I of VEEB
NV G.3 – How to Select Key Balls in 8-ball, from Disc I of VEEB
NV G.4 – How to Use Cue Ball Drag to Enhance Sidespin in 8-ball, from Disc II of VEEB
NV G.5 – How to Use Spin-Induced Throw to Hold the Cue Ball in 8-ball, from Disc II of VEEB
NV G.6 – How to Come Into the Line of Blockers When Playing Safeties, from Disc III of VEEB
NV G.7 – Various Straight-In Shot Options in 8-ball, from Disc III of VEEB
NV G.8 – How to Deal with an End-Game Ball Tied Up with the 8-ball, from Disc IV of VEEB
NV G.9 – 2nd-Ball 8-ball Break, from Disc IV of VEEB
NV G.10 – Rack 8 Run-Out Example from Disc V of VEEB
NV G.11 – Rack 9 Run-Out Example from Disc V of VEEB

normal video

PS:

- I know other authors and I tend to use lots of terminology, and I know not all readers are totally familiar with these terms. If you ever come across a word or phrase you don't fully understand, please refer to the online glossary at *billiards.colostate.edu*.

Dr. Dave is author of "The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards" book and DVD, and co-author of the "Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots (VEPS)," "Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice (VEPP)," "How to Aim Pool Shots (HAPS)," and "Billiard University (BU)" instructional DVD series.