Note: Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, and 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 article help you locate the resources on the website. If you have a slow or inconvenient Internet connection, you might want to view the resources from a CD-ROM or DVD. Details can be found online at: dr-dave-billiards.com.

I am very excited because this is my six-year-anniversary issue as a BD instructional columnist. The reason why six years is an important benchmark for me is I’m a university professor in my “day job,” and in academia, six years is the amount of time you have to prove yourself for tenure. If you do a good job during those first six years, you get tenure and basically have a job for life (because you have earned it). If you don’t meet expected standards, you are “downsized” (i.e., “canned”). Now I feel like I have Billiards Digest “tenure.” I can’t believe it has been six years already, and I look forward to many more. When I wrote my first article, I had a list of about 50 topics I wanted to cover. At first, I was concerned I might eventually run out of ideas; but now, I’m sure I’ll never get to all of them. After covering 72 topics, my “list” has grown to about 80 topics yet to be covered!!! That’s more than 6 more years’ worth, even if I don’t think of anything else to add.

I’m also excited this month because Tom Ross (a past BD columnist) and I just finished an ambitious project called “The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots (VEPS).” We started planning VEPS over a year ago, and we spent most of the past summer filming and editing video. Over the next several months I would like to highlight some interesting shots and “gems” from the series.

Have you ever thought about how many different types of shots are both possible and realistic at a pool table? Well, the goal for me and Tom was to address this question … and not leave any rock unturned. We wanted to include only shots that are practical and useful in typical game situations at a pool table, but we couldn’t resist including a few proposition and trick shots. Our goal wasn’t to invent many shots, but to catalog everything we could find and think of, and present all of it within an organized, progressive, bottom-up tutorial framework. We drew inspiration from Ray Martin’s “99 Critical Shots in Pool,” which does a good job of summarizing many of the most common types of shots, and Byrne’s “Complete Book of Pool Shots,” which is an impressive collection of 350 different shots, with many inspired by three-cushion billiards. However, our intention was to provide an exhaustive compilation in video format, where each shot could be demonstrated on a real table. It’s one thing to see a shot diagrammed in a book, but it’s another thing entirely to actually see it executed. We also liked that video would allow us to add the extra dimensions of overlaid graphics, narration, and slow-motion replay.

The complete catalog of shots that Tom and I came up with, organized into five major areas and fifty distinct categories, is listed below. The total number of shot types within the fifty categories amounts to over 750!!! The complete list can be viewed online at: dr-dave-billiards.com/veps. Isn’t it amazing how many options exist at a pool table? That’s one of the reasons why this game is so much fun. Here’s the list of the fifty main categories:

I. Basic Shot Making and Position
   1. cut shots
   2. stun shots
   3. follow shots
4. draw shots  
5. CB direction control  
6. CB speed control  
7. avoiding a scratch  
8. combination shots  
9. carom (OB kiss) shots  
10. billiard (CB kiss) shots  

II. English and Position Control  
11. English (sidespin) basics  
12. English effects and aim correction  
13. rail cut shots  
14. CB path control  
15. basic position play shots  
16. advanced position play shots  
17. center-of-table position shots  
18. straight-in position play shots  
19. OB-hanger CB path control  
20. multiple-rail position play shots  

III. Safety Play and Strategy  
21. defensive safety shots  
22. offensive safety shots  
23. safety replies  
24. ball-in-hand options  
25. general strategy  
26. 8-ball strategy  
27. 9-ball strategy  
28. rail-first shots  
29. clearance and cluster break-out shots  

IV. Banks, Kicks, and Advanced Shots  
30. bank and kick shot generalities  
31. one-rail kick shots  
32. multiple-rail kick shots  
33. bank shots  
34. frozen-ball shots  
35. frozen-rail shots  
36. ticky shots  
37. double kiss shots  
38. kiss-back shots  
39. throw shots  
40. spin-transfer shots  

V. Skill and Specialty Shots  
41. power shots  
42. jump shots  
43. massé shots  
44. break shots  
45. cushion and point compression shots
46. pocket point and wall shots
47. game run-outs
48. fouls
49. proposition and “cute” shots
50. famous trick shots (“Top Ten”)

If you look at the complete list of shots online, you will notice that many of them are designated as “GEMS.” The “gem” label helps us emphasize a shot or concept that we feel is particularly important to know as a pool player, whether understood explicitly or in a more intuitive way. Over the next several months, I will present and discuss some of the more interesting “gems” from each of the five major areas. If you would like to see a preview, samples are provided online. NV B.64 provides an overview of the entire series, in “trailer” format. NV B.65 discusses and demonstrates proper technique for executing long power-draw shots. NV B.66 demonstrates the 30° rule and the peace-sign technique, along with examples of how to use them to predict cue ball direction. NV B.67 presents the trisect system for draw shots, and shows how you can use a modified peace-sign to help visualize the final cue ball motion. NV B.68 demonstrates how to plan and execute cluster break-out shots using cue ball reference directions. Finally, NV B.69 illustrates how to aim various types of carom shots using the 90° and 30° rules. If you want more information on any of these topics, they are covered in several of my recent articles, which can be viewed at my website (billiards.colostate.edu).

Well, I hope you enjoy and benefit from my series of articles highlighting shots and “gems” from the “Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots” series. I look forward to sharing as much as I can from the series because it has been a true labor of love for me and Tom over the last year. Next month, we’ll look at selected “gems” from the first main category of shots.

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave

PS:
• If you want to refer to any of my previous articles and resources, you can access them online at billiards.colostate.edu.
• I know other authors and I tend to use lots of terminology (e.g., squirt, throw, stun, impact line, etc.), 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 on my website.
• I want to thank Jim Valasina. He graciously proof-reads my articles every month to help find errors and make suggestions. My article quality is better as a result of his efforts. Thanks again Jim!