

“VEPP – Part V: Hanger Table-Center Drills” David Alciatore, PhD (“Dr. Dave”)

ILLUSTRATED PRINCIPLES

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 from a CD-ROM or DVD. Details can be found online at: dr-dave-billiards.com.

This is the fifth article in a series based on the “[The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#),” a five-disc instructional DVD series I recently created with fellow BD columnist Bob Jewett. VEPP is an organized and methodical training program and pool workout. It teaches you how to develop, assess, and track progress of skills for all aspects of your game. An outline of the entire VEPP series along with video excerpts from each DVD can be viewed online at: dr-dave-billiards.com/vepp. Last month, we looked at useful position-control target-practice drills from Disc II: “[VEPP II – Position Control and English](#).” This month, we’ll look at center-of-table drills, also from the second DVD.

Getting position in the center of the table is a critically important skill in pool. From the center of the table, you often have the most options for follow-on shots since many shots can be pocketed from the center of the table. Position routes through the center of the table are also important because they are useful in getting around the table and have the added benefit of being scratch-free. **NV B.74** shows examples of this and demonstrates the useful 45° rule that states: when the CB rolls into a short rail at close to a 45° angle, it will head off two rails fairly close to the center of the table.

NV C.7 demonstrates several drills to help you develop your skills for getting the CB to the center of the table. **Diagram 1** illustrates one of the drills, where the goal is to get to the center of the table off a side-pocket hanger shot. Pocket hangers come up fairly often in game situations, and they are often useful to help you achieve good position for the next shot. With hangers, you can focus more on CB position and less on pocketing the ball, since the pocket can often be “cheated” quite a bit to create various angles. It is important to have a good feel for the angle the CB comes off the rail for different hits on the hanger. Useful benchmark rules-of-thumb for this can be found in shots 308-317 on [Disc II](#) of the [Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#).

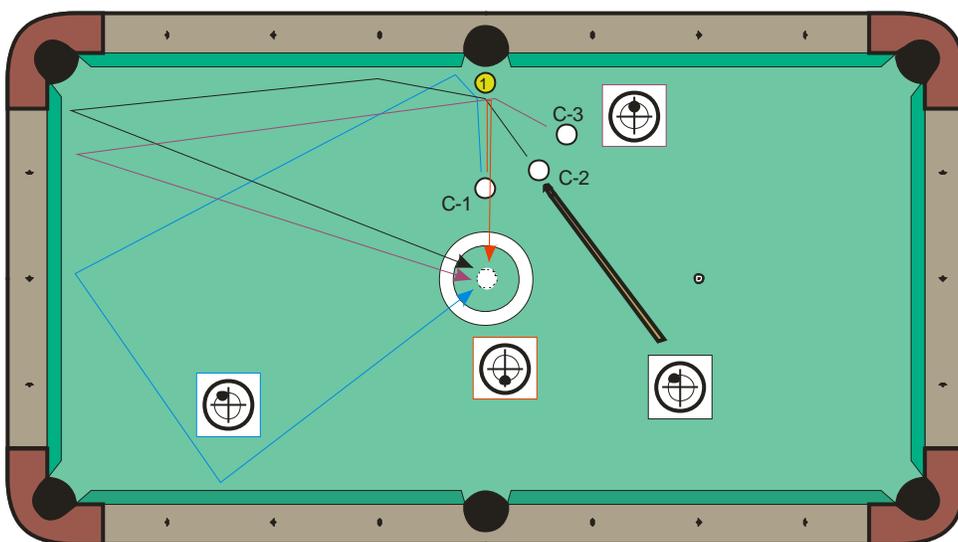


Diagram 1 Side Pocket Hanger Table-Center Position Drill

For the drill in Diagram 1, the goal is to find as many routes to the table-center target as possible. A printable “target” is available on the [resource page available on the VEPP website](#). You get CB in hand for each attempt. To score the drill, award yourself a point for each unique and successful path, with the CB ending up inside the target. Give yourself up to three attempts at each path. Shoot from only one side of the table. You are not allowed credit for the symmetric paths on the other side of the table ... that would be cheating (although, it is good practice to hit the shots from both sides of the table to make sure you don't favor one side over the other). **NV C.7** demonstrates many example paths.

In Diagram 1, two possible paths are shown from CB position C-1. The first (red) is a straight-back draw shot. If you have good draw control, this is a good option. The second (blue) is a natural-angle three-cushion path with running English. The shot from C-2 (black) is a natural-angle two-cushion path with running English. The shot from C-3 (purple) is a natural-angle path off one cushion. In general, natural-angle rolling-CB paths are the most reliable because the only thing you need to control is speed (and the amount of sidespin for shots with English). Try to think of and attempt as many paths as you can before watching the video.

Diagram 2 illustrates a similar drill, this time shooting at a hanger in a corner pocket. Again, the goal is to pocket the hanger and send the CB as close to the center-table target as possible (ideally, inside the target). Three paths are shown from CB position C-1. The first (black) is a draw shot at a slight angle straight back to the target. The second (purple) is a thin-hit rolling path off one cushion. The third (blue) is a stun shot with slight running English off four cushions, which requires good control of speed, angle, and spin. All of these shots require a fairly accurate hit (cut angle). The shot from C-2 (red) is a more-natural two-cushion path with running English. The one-cushion shot from C-3 (orange) is probably the most natural for most people. The rolling-CB natural angle is fairly consistent over a range of cuts and the running English helps get the CB to the table center easily with a soft shot. Again, **NV C.7** includes these and additional examples.

The next time you practice, try all of the position routes illustrated above and demonstrated in the video, and try to think of others. As with all of the drills on VEPP, you should record your scores and track your improvement over time. The “[How to Use VEPP](#)” document on the VEPP website contains some sheets to help with this. Scores are useful for assessment and to provide a challenge. You can also use them to set goals for future improvement.

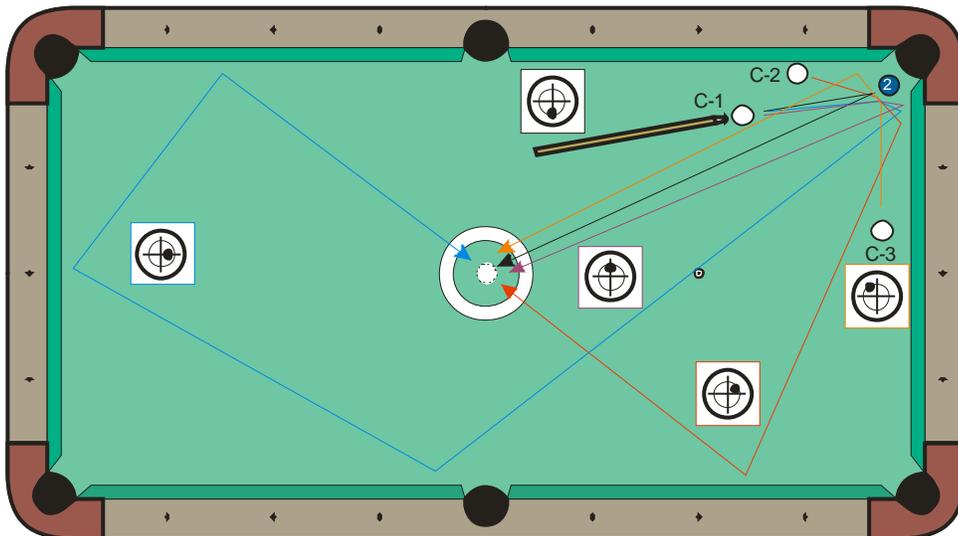


Diagram 2 Corner Pocket Hanger Table-Center Position Drill

I hope you enjoy and benefit from my series of articles featuring drills from the “[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#).” Example clips from the second VEPP DVD can be viewed on the [VEPP website](#) or at

billiards.colostate.edu under **NV C.5** through **NV C.8**. Next month, we'll look at some additional CB control drills from the second disc.

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave



- [NV B.74](#) - Center-of-table position and routes, with the 45° rule, from VEPS II
- [NV C.5](#) - Wagon wheel cue ball control drill, from VEPP II
- [NV C.6](#) - Target practice for position control, from VEPP II
- [NV C.7](#) - Center-table position-off-hanger drills, from VEPP II
- [NV C.8](#) - Line-of-balls position control drill, from VEPP II

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](#) on my website.

Dr. Dave is author of the book, DVD, and CD-ROM: “[The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards](#),” and co-author of the DVD Series: “[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#)” and “[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#).”