
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.

Recently, I posted a video on YouTube showing elevated-cue follow shots that might be considered fouls under a strict interpretation of the rules. **Diagram 1** illustrates the shot in the video, which can be viewed online at [NV H.1](#). The shot is from a game of 8-ball where we need to elevate the cue to clear the obstacle 3 ball. We need to follow forward after pocketing the 1 to get a shot at the 2 to continue the run-out. If you shoot this shot and look at the cue ball (CB) after, you will notice a trail of chalk marks. That's because the tip skips across and hits the CB surface multiple times as it pushes the CB forward with the elevated hit. Watch [NV H.1](#) and you will clearly see the multiple chalk marks, sometimes as many as 10 or more, and sometimes extending almost over half of the CB's circumference. Given this, do you think this shot is a foul?

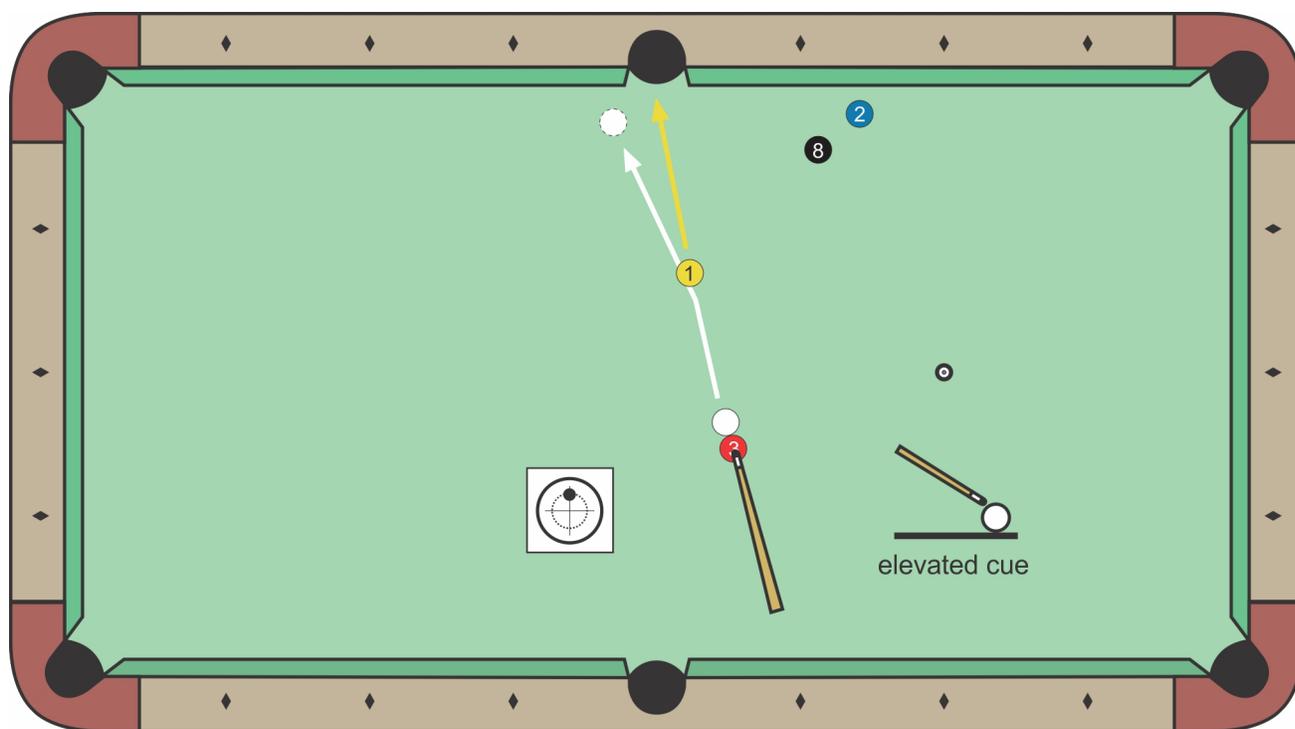


Diagram 1 Elevated-cue follow shot over an obstacle ball

With a strict interpretation of the rules, where multiple hits or prolonged tip contact is not allowed, these shots might be considered fouls. However, would this be the appropriate ruling in these situations? What if you ask a referee to clean the CB before an opponent's shot like this, and then ask the referee to inspect the CB after the hit. Would the evidence of multiple hits (i.e., the multiple chalk marks and skids) be sufficient to rule the shot a foul? It is probably not appropriate to declare this shot illegal because there is no clear evidence of a multiple hit during the shot. Also, there is no real advantage gained by the unintentional (and unnoticeable) multiple hits. With no direct evidence of a foul during the shot, the shot should be considered legal.

Now, if the cue is too level and a miscue results, where there is secondary contact from the shaft hitting and riding over the top of the CB, then the shot would definitely be a foul. An example of this is shown in [NV H.1](#). If it is visually obvious during the shot that the tip contacts the CB multiple times or if the ferrule or shaft contacts the CB after the initial hit, then the shot is clearly a foul.

With enough cue elevation, it is possible to execute the shot in Diagram 1 with a single clean hit. However, it is best to limit cue elevation because more elevation can hurt shot accuracy. [NV H.1](#) shows an example of a clean elevated hit. Looking at the CB after the shot, it was clear that the tip hit the CB only once. So this shot is obviously legal, even under an overly strict and narrow interpretation of the rules. You might think it would be obvious if the shot is a foul or not by the look or sound of the hit, but the clean-hit elevated shot feels and looks no different than the slightly-lower-elevation shots that did involve multiple hits. This is clear in the video examples. There is really no way to detect the difference in hit, other than by looking at the chalk marks on the CB after the shot. Regardless, none of the shots in [NV H.1](#) should be considered illegal, except for the miscue with obvious multiple hits.

In Mike Shamos' Dec '15 "You Make The Call" article, he actually suggested that if a referee saw the multiple chalk marks on the CB after an elevated-cue shot, he or she would need to call a foul as a result of the double-hit rule. Mike cites WSR Rule 6.7: "*If the cue stick contacts the cue ball more than once on a shot, the shot is a foul.*" He also suggested that it is not "good for the game to outlaw elevated-cue shots, and the rule ought to be changed." He suggested returning to an older version of the rule which was eliminated in 1967 allowing for any "shot made with one continuous stroke of the cue" (even if that stroke resulted in multiple hits). Obviously, I disagree with Mike's strict interpretation of the current rule, and I think his suggestion of allowing any continuous forward stroke of the cue (even with double hits and miscues, intentional or not) would open up a wide range of shots which would probably be considered as abuses of the game by most players. Examples of such abuses could include blatant and purposeful double hits, intentional miscues used to create an advantage, and maybe even push and scoop jump shots (unless those would still be prohibited by separate rules). These are shots that are strictly forbidden by the current rules. They are also very easy to detect by anyone familiar and knowledgeable with pool rules, which is unfortunately not the case with many league players (and even some pros and referees).

An "anything-goes single continuous stroke" rule would certainly simplify the rules and greatly reduce the need for a referee or judgment calls, especially with double hits, which often create disagreements among players. (BTW, for those who want to improve their knowledge and understanding of how to detect and avoid double hits, see the "[double hit](#)" resource page in the "foul" FAQ section at billiards.colostate.edu.) Another good thing about a "one continuous stroke" rule is that we would no longer need to know whether or not the CB and an object ball (OB) are frozen together. Currently, if you shoot into the CB frozen to an OB, the shot is not a foul; but if you hit into a CB barely not frozen (i.e., just "cold"), with a very small gap between the balls (even less than the width of a human hair), the shot is a double-hit foul, even though the action of both shots is quite similar. I always thought this was a bit odd, that with two shots so similar, one is a foul and the other is not. However, as mentioned above, the new rule could result in much more bad will and arguing since some of the "new shots" that would now be legal would not be very palatable to the people that lose as a result of them. **Diagram 2** shows some examples of a few of these possible "new" shots.

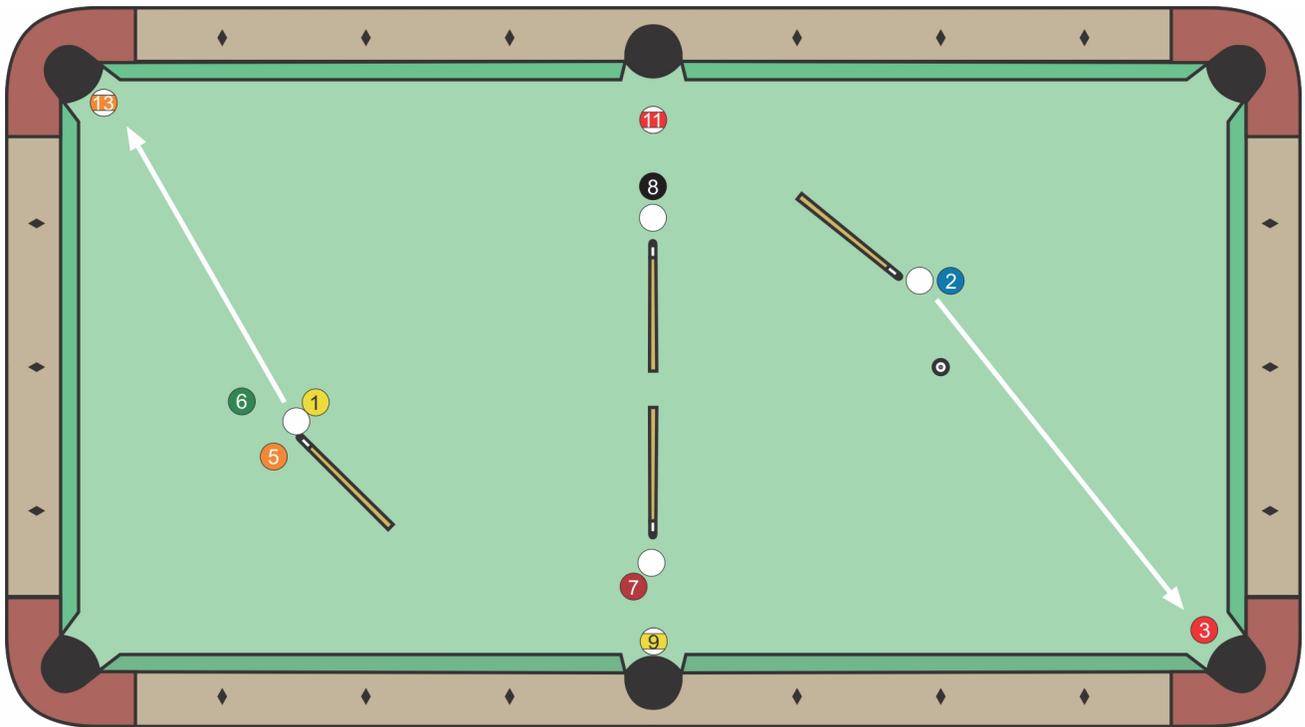


Diagram 2 “New” shots allowed by anything-goes “one continuous stroke” rule

The shot into the top side pocket is an 8-ball situation (shooting solids) where the 8 is hit into the 11 but it doesn't have enough forward roll to follow the 11 into the pocket. But with a double hit of the CB with “one continuous stroke,” the shot is quite easy for the win. The shot into the bottom side pocket is a classic 9-ball “cheat” where “one continuous stroke” can be used to hit both the CB and 9-ball with the tip for the win. A demonstration of this shot, both in regular speed and slow motion, can be found in [NV H.7](#) (the 1st shot). Although, maybe this “cheat” would be prohibited by a separate rule requiring that the “one continuous stroke” result in the tip hitting only the CB. The shot into the bottom-right corner is using an off-center and offline hit into the 2, and a double hit, to send the CB straight to the 3. Double hits with a “one continuous stroke” would enable CB direction changes like this. The final shot into the upper-left corner is a classic push-shot cheat, shown here as an 8-ball example. The CB is frozen to the 1, and we are not allowed to hit any of the solids to pocket the 13. We need to shoot away from the 1, and the 5 and 6 block kick and masse options (although, a jump-masse shot is still an option). Here, “one continuous stroke,” starting with the cue tip touching the CB, with an off-center hit and forward push, allows the CB direction shown without moving the 1. Again, maybe a push shot like this would still be prohibited by a separate rule. A demonstration of the push shot can be found in [NV H.7](#) (the 3rd shot). With a little practice, all of the shots in Diagram 2, and other variations on these themes, are easy to execute. Would we want to allow “new” shots like these with a new anything-goes “one continuous stroke” rule? My first reaction is no, but part of me (my devious side) likes a rule change that creates a whole new repertoire of creative shots. What do you think?

Other examples of illegal shots that a “one continuous stroke” rule might enable are intentional miscues like those demonstrated in [HSV B.28](#) and scoop jump shots demonstrated in [HSV B.2](#), both of which are currently illegal. For much more information and demonstrations of all sorts of shots that are and aren't fouls, under the current official rules of pool, see the “[fouls](#)” resource page in the FAQ section at [billiards.colostate.edu](#). Enjoy!

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave



normal video

[NV H.1](#) – Elevated-Cue Pool and Billiards Shots ... Are They Legal?

[NV H.7](#) – Mike Massey trick shot collection (from exhibition)



high-speed video

[HSV B.2](#) – Illegal "scoop" jump shots

[HSV B.28](#) – Frozen-ball kiss, miscue, and push shots and fouls

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 Encyclopedias of "[Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#)," "[Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#)," and "[Eight Ball \(VEEB\)](#)," and the "[How to Aim Pool Shots \(HAPS\)](#)" and "[Billiard University \(BU\)](#)" instructional DVD series, all available at: dr-dave-billiards.com.