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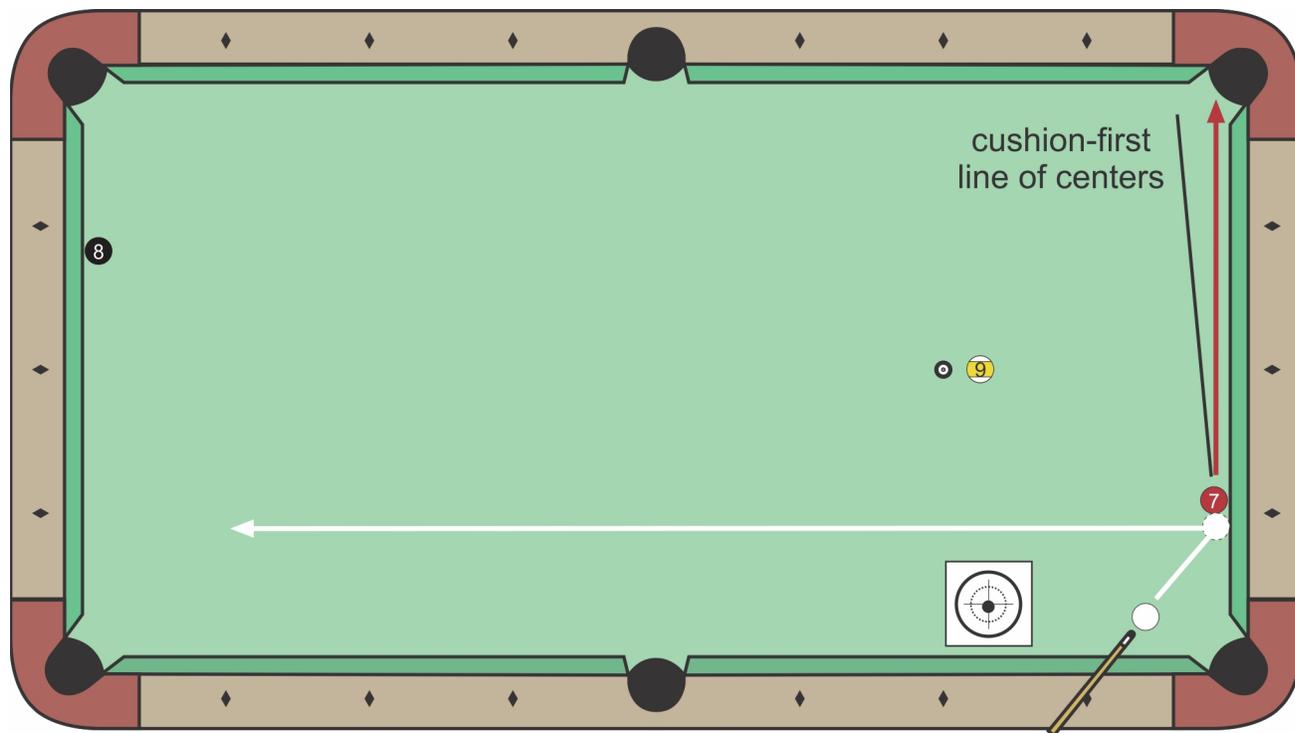
Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, technical proofs (TP), and all of my past articles are available at [billiards.colostate.edu](http://billiards.colostate.edu). Reference numbers used in the articles help you locate the resources on the website.

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This is the ninth article in a series dealing with the “Video Encyclopedia of Nine-ball and Ten-ball (VENT),” a five-disc instructional DVD set I recently created with fellow Billiards Digest columnist Bob Jewett. VENT teaches all of the skills, knowledge and strategy one needs to excel at 9-ball and 10-ball. Topics include racking and breaking strategy and effects, game planning, position play and english, safety play, and advanced principles, shots, and strategies. An outline of the entire VENT series along with video excerpts from each DVD are available online at [DrDaveBilliards.com/vent](http://DrDaveBilliards.com/vent).

The topic for this month is rail cut shots, where the object ball (OB) is frozen to a cushion, featuring shots demonstrated in online video [NV I.10](#) (an excerpt from Disc V of VENT). Some people, books, and videos often give the advice that one should hit the cushion and OB at the same time with rail cut shots. This is valid advice for a shot with gearing outside english, but not for any other shots unless the OB is close to the pocket or if the pocket plays large.

**Diagram 1** shows a good example where if you hit the ball and cushion at the same time using stun to send the cue ball (CB) straight up table for the 8, you will miss the shot badly. With a simultaneous hit, the CB will throw the 7 into the cushion causing the 7 to rebound off the cushion away from the pocket. We have a very clear and convincing demonstration of this in online video [NV I.10](#). Remember, throw is largest with a stun shot. If you are not very familiar with throw concepts (or gearing outside english), see the [“adjusting aim for throw”](#) section in the [“Online Pool Tutorial”](#) at [billiards.colostate.edu](http://billiards.colostate.edu).

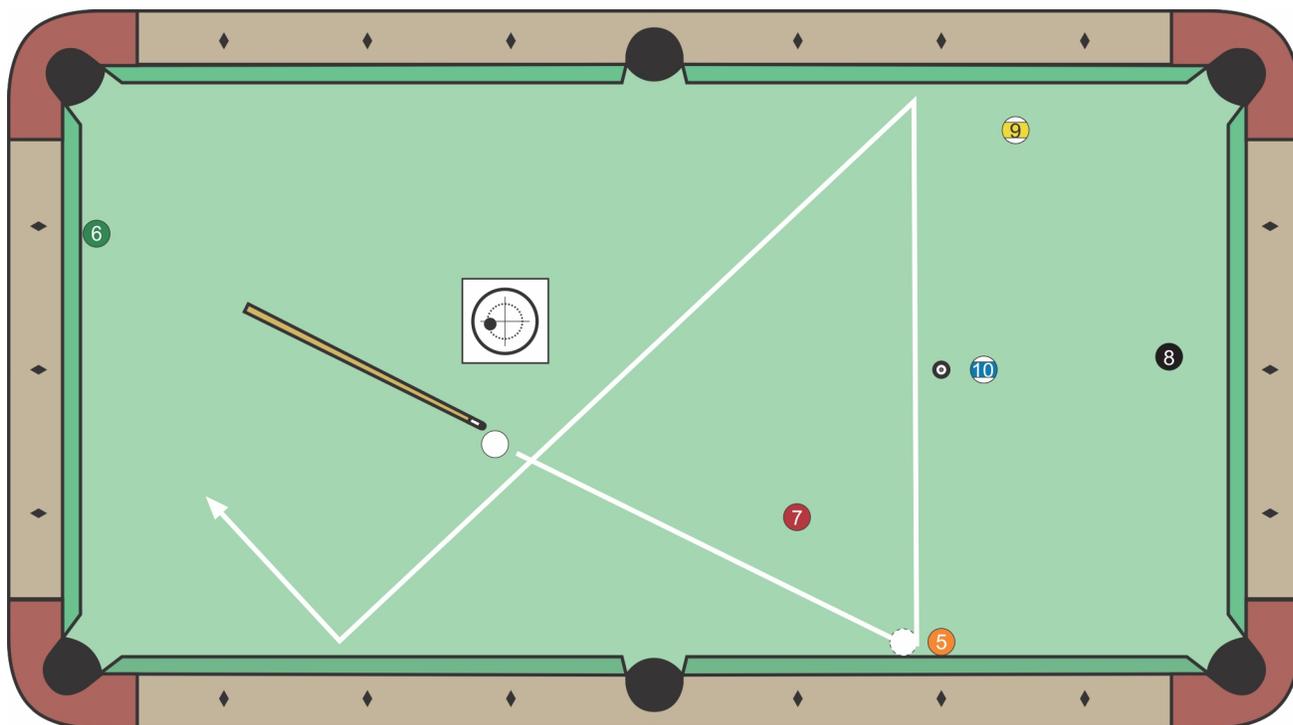


**Diagram 1 Cushion-first rail cut-shot throw**

This shot can be pocketed with stun, but you must hit the cushion first, just in front of the 7. The CB will hit the 7 while compressing the cushion, causing a slight overcut (see the angled “line of centers” in the

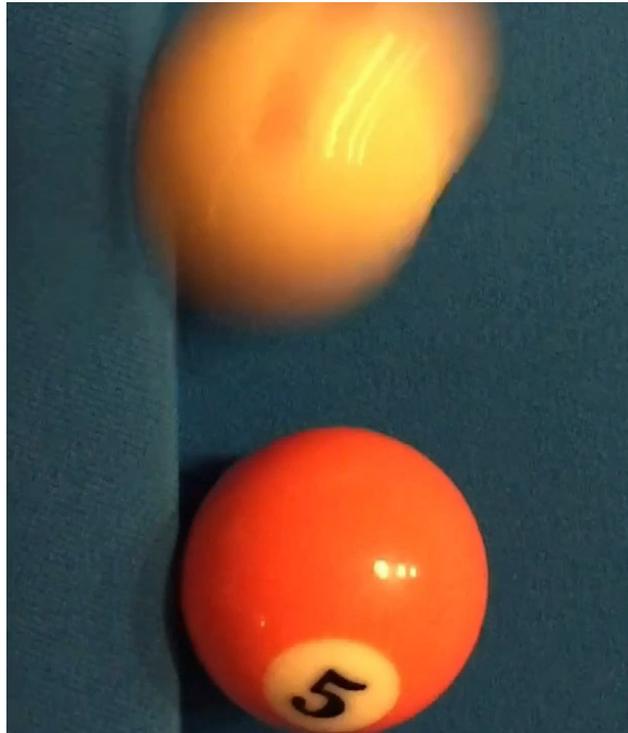
diagram), but throw will push the 7 back on line. You could also hit the cushion a little farther in front of the 7, where the CB hits the 7 after compressing and rebounding off the cushion causing a cut and throw in the other direction, but this approach will be very sensitive to shot speed and cushion conditions. Generally, the best approach is the first, where you simply aim to overcut the shot slightly and hit the 7 as the CB is compressing the cushion.

**Diagram 2** shows another example where you need a cushion-first hit to get shape on the next ball. You are shooting at the 5, which is frozen to the cushion, and you need to get up table for a shot at the 6 next. You could use straight draw but you might hit the 7 or scratch in the side. The 8, 9, and 10 also make it difficult to go forward with or without running english. The right play here is to stun across the table with left sidespin to send the CB up table off the opposite cushion. If you hit the 5 first or hit the 5 while compressing the cushion, the sidespin will take on the cushion after the hit causing the CB to head down table, where you might hit the 8 or 9. So here you need to hit the cushion first, hitting the 5 after the CB has mostly rebounded off the cushion. The demonstration and slow motion footage in online video [NV I.10](#) clearly shows the CB interacting with the cushion before hitting the 5.



**Diagram 2** Cushion-first rail cut-shot position play

The distance in front of the ball you must hit the cushion will vary with cushion conditions, angle into the cushion, and shot speed. With soft cushions and/or shallow angles into the rail, and/or fast speed, you will need to aim farther in front of the ball. And for stiff cushions and/or steep angles into the rail, and/or slow speed, you will need to aim closer to the ball. With the shot in Diagram 2, I needed to aim farther in front of the ball than you might expect. That is partly because of the shallow angle into the rail and the fast speed of the shot, but it is also because the cushions on my table are very soft and compress more than normal. **Diagram 3** shows a still frame close-up from slow motion video of the shot. Look at how far in front of the 5-ball I am aiming. In the diagram, the CB has reached close to maximum cushion compression. After rebounding, the CB overcut the 5 slightly, but the 5 still easily went into the pocket. Again, at softer speed, or on a table with stiffer cushions, or at a steeper angle into the rail, I would need to aim much closer to the 5; but with this shot on this table, I needed to hit the cushion well in front of the ball to get the desired hit.



**Diagram 3** @@@

The shots illustrated in this article are demonstrated in online video [NV I.10](#). Try them out the next time you practice. Reading is good, and watching is better, but doing is best. And if you want to learn more about rail cut shot effects and techniques, see the “[rail cut shots](#)” FAQ page at [billiards.colostate.edu](#). And VENT-V (“Advanced Principles, Shots, Strategies”) includes many more examples of these and other effects and techniques in a wide range of categories including: combos, kisses, caroms, rail cut shots, bank shots, advanced shots, and run-out examples.

I hope you are enjoying my series of articles dealing with the “Video Encyclopedia of Nine-ball and Ten-ball (VENT).” If you want to view video excerpts from the entire DVD set, check out online videos [NV I.1](#) through [NV I.11](#). Enjoy!

Good luck with your game,  
Dr. Dave



normal video

- [NV I.1](#) – Video Encyclopedia of Nine-ball and Ten-ball (VENT) Instructional DVD Trailer
- [NV I.2](#) – 9-ball Side Soft Break, and Corey Deuel Pattern Racking, an excerpt from VENT-I
- [NV I.3](#) – How to Train a Pool Table for Accurate and Consistent Ball Racking, an excerpt from VENT-I
- [NV I.4](#) – How to be Creative and Consider Various Options in 9-ball and 10-ball, an excerpt from VENT-II
- [NV I.5](#) – Defensive Strategy in 9-ball and 10-ball, an excerpt from VENT-II
- [NV I.6](#) – Common Two-Rail Position Plays in 9-ball and 10-ball, an excerpt from VENT-III
- [NV I.7](#) – Common End-Game Patterns in 9-ball and 10-ball, an excerpt from VENT-III
- [NV I.8](#) – 9-ball/10-ball Object Ball Hide Safety Examples, an excerpt from VENT-IV
- [NV I.9](#) – 9-ball/10-ball Ball-In-Hand Shot Option Examples, an excerpt from VENT-IV
- [NV I.10](#) – 9-ball/10-ball Rail Cut Shot Principles and Examples, an excerpt from VENT-V
- [NV I.11](#) – 9-ball/10-ball Advanced Herd and Cushion-Compression Shots, an excerpt from VENT-V

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 do not fully understand, please refer to the [online glossary](#) at [billiards.colostate.edu](http://billiards.colostate.edu).

*Dr. Dave is a PBIA Advanced Instructor, Dean of the Billiard University, and author of the book: [The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards](#) and numerous instructional DVD series, all available at: [DrDaveBilliards.com](http://DrDaveBilliards.com).*