

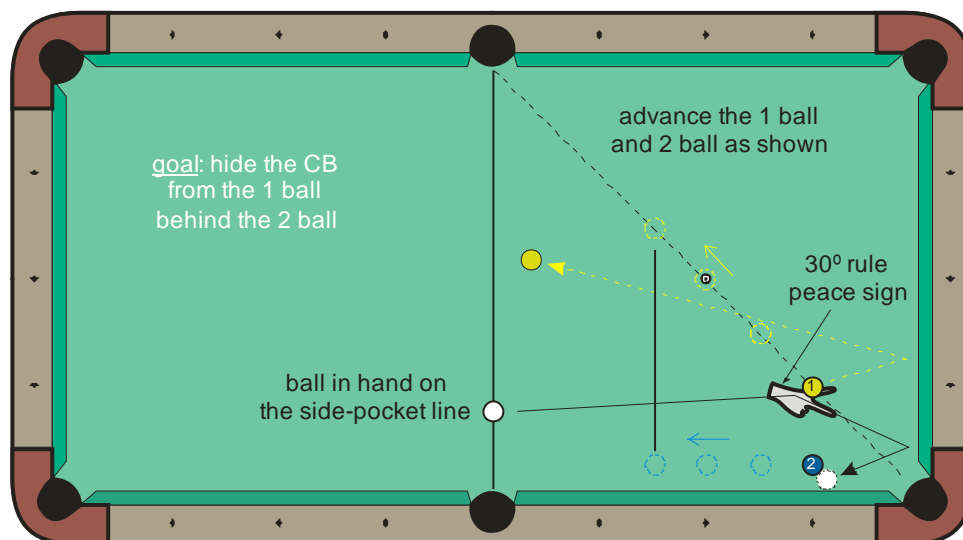
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Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, technical proofs (TP), and all of my past articles can be accessed and viewed online at [billiards.colostate.edu](http://billiards.colostate.edu). The reference numbers used 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](http://dr-dave-billiards.com).

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This is the ninth article in a series based on the “[The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#),” a five-disc instructional-DVD collection 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 facets 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](http://dr-dave-billiards.com/vepp). In the last few months, we’ve looked at some useful position play and pattern drills from Disc III: “[VEPP III – Patterns and Safety Play](#).” This month, we’ll look at some useful safety drills, also from the 3<sup>rd</sup> DVD, to help you develop and improve your defensive play.

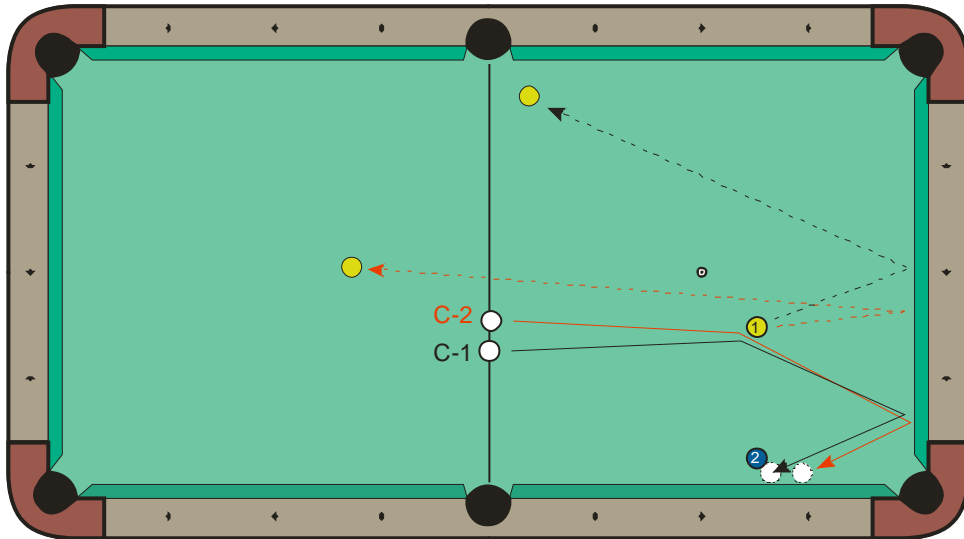
**Diagram 1** shows a safety drill for practicing and improving your skills at hiding the cue ball (CB) behind a blocker ball. The goal is to snooker the 1 ball from the CB by hiding behind the 2. The 1 ball starts one diamond off each rail and the 2 ball is a couple of inches off the cushion across from the 1. On each attempt, take CB in hand on or above the line through the side pockets. Obviously, a good position for the CB is one that allows a natural angle deflection off the 1 ball in the desired direction. The 30° rule peace sign (see the [30° rule resource page](#) in the FAQ section of my website for more info) can be helpful in finding the necessary CB position. The best hiding place for the CB is between the 2 ball and the side cushion, as shown in the diagram. With a natural-angle shot, the only thing you need to control is speed, and there is a fairly wide margin for error for shot success. If you can leave the CB and 1 ball as shown in the diagram, you’ve played an extremely effective safety. After succeeding with the first ball position in multiple attempts, advance the 1 ball along the diagonal line between the corner and side. Also shift the 2 ball up table with the 1 ball as shown in the diagram, moving the balls up table in half-diamond increments.



**Diagram 1** Angled safety drill setup

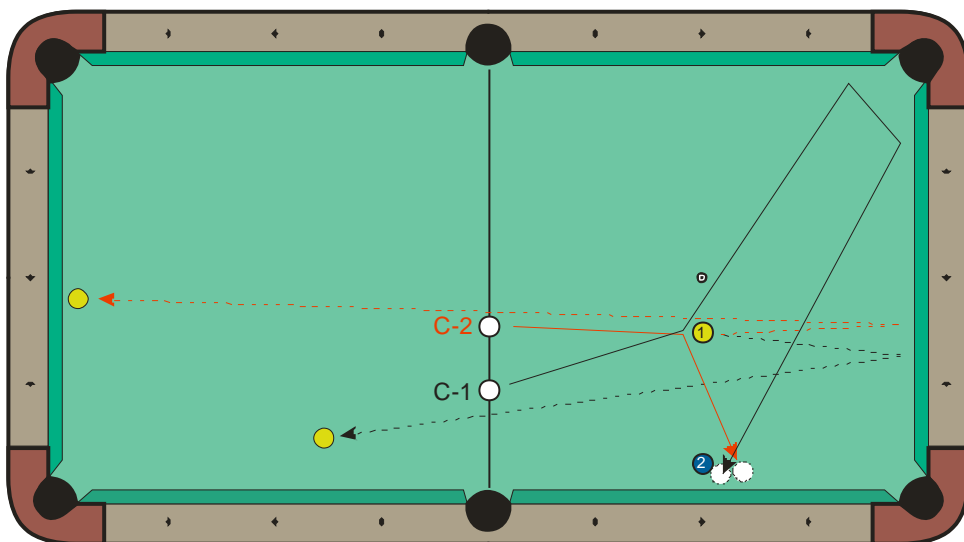
**Diagram 2** shows two possible shots for the next ball position. With the shot from C-1 (see the black paths), the CB is hidden so well, if almost doesn’t matter where you leave the 1-ball. However, if the speed or

angle is off a little, and you don't hide the CB as well, you might leave a shot for your opponent on the 1 ball in the side pocket. That could spell doom for the game (and maybe even the match and tournament!). A better option might be to send the 1-ball farther up table, while still trying to hide the CB (see the shot from C-2, shown in red). This can help provide a larger margin for error in hiding behind the 2.



**Diagram 2** Two options at the 2<sup>nd</sup> position

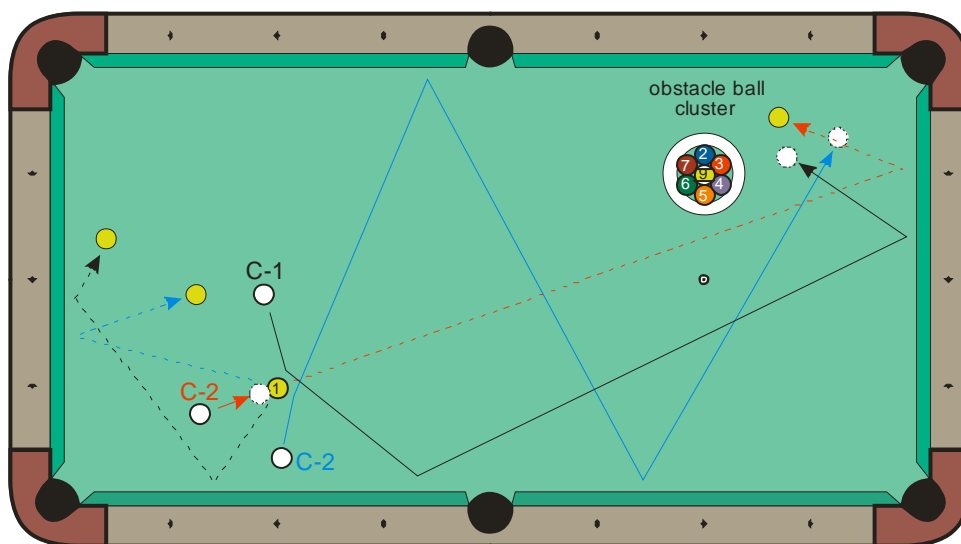
**Diagram 3** shows two alternative paths you can try as the balls are advanced farther up table. The first (from C-1, shown in black) uses a two-cushion path to hide the CB while sending the 1-ball close to the side rail, making it easier to hide behind the 2 ball. Another option (from C-2, shown in red) is to send the CB directly behind the 2 with slight follow, while sending the 1 ball up table toward the center of the head rail. This shot can be difficult to control, due to the precise amount of forward roll required, but this could be a good choice in some game situations, where you attempt to both hide the CB and create distance for a two-way safety. Even if you don't hide the CB, you won't leave a good shot on the 1 ball. Both of the options in Diagram 3 require good speed control because the CB is not coming into the line of the hiding direction behind the 2.



**Diagram 3** Two options at the 3<sup>rd</sup> position

At each ball position in the drill, you should try as many paths as possible to help you develop a feel for different speeds, English options, and angles that might be required in various game situations. In the process, you can determine what approaches seem to work best for you. See **NV C.11** for more examples and advice.

**Diagram 4** shows another safety drill and challenge. It helps give you practice with different position routes to hide the CB or object ball (OB) behind an obstacle ball or cluster. As with the target drills presented in my [July '12 article](#), start by choosing the OB and cluster target positions randomly (e.g., using the “card trick” described in the article). The target can be printed and cut out from the [template](#) provided on the VEPP website (under “VEPP Online Resources”). Fill the target with 7 balls as shown in the diagram. In this drill, starting with ball in hand for each shot, your goal is to think of and execute as many different shots as possible to hide either the CB or OB behind the cluster. You're not allowed to touch the balls in the cluster. Give yourself three attempts at each shot and award yourself a point if you hide the CB from the OB for the chosen shot. Obviously, the goal is to get as high a score as possible. The drill rewards and helps you develop both creativity and shot execution skills. The diagram shows a few shot options, and **NV C.12** demonstrates many others. The shot from C-1 (in black) shows a fairly easy natural-angle path. The shot from C-2 (in red) is also fairly easy, sending the OB behind the cluster with a stop shot. In some game situations, even with ball in hand, depending on other balls that might be on the table, a path like the one shown from C-3 (in blue) might be an appropriate choice. Again, be creative and find as many shot options as you can. For more examples and advice, see **NV C.12**.



**Diagram 4 Target safety drill**

I hope you are enjoying and benefitting from my series of articles featuring drills from the “[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#).” Example clips from the third DVD can be viewed on the [VEPP website](#) or at [billiards.colostate.edu](#) under **NV C.9** through **NV C.12**. Next month, we'll look at some useful kick drills from the 4<sup>th</sup> DVD: “[VEPP IV – Banks, Kicks, and Advanced Shots](#).”

Good luck with your game,  
Dr. Dave



- [NV C.9](#) - 9-ball pattern drills, from VEPP III
- [NV C.10](#) - 8-ball pattern drills, from VEPP III
- [NV C.11](#) - Angled-hide safety drill, from VEPP III
- [NV C.12](#) - Hide-behind-target safety drill, from VEPP III

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 \(VEPP\)](#).”*