

## “VEPP – Part II: Progressive Practice, and Draw Drills” ILLUSTRATED PRINCIPLES David Alciatore, PhD (“Dr. Dave”)

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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).*

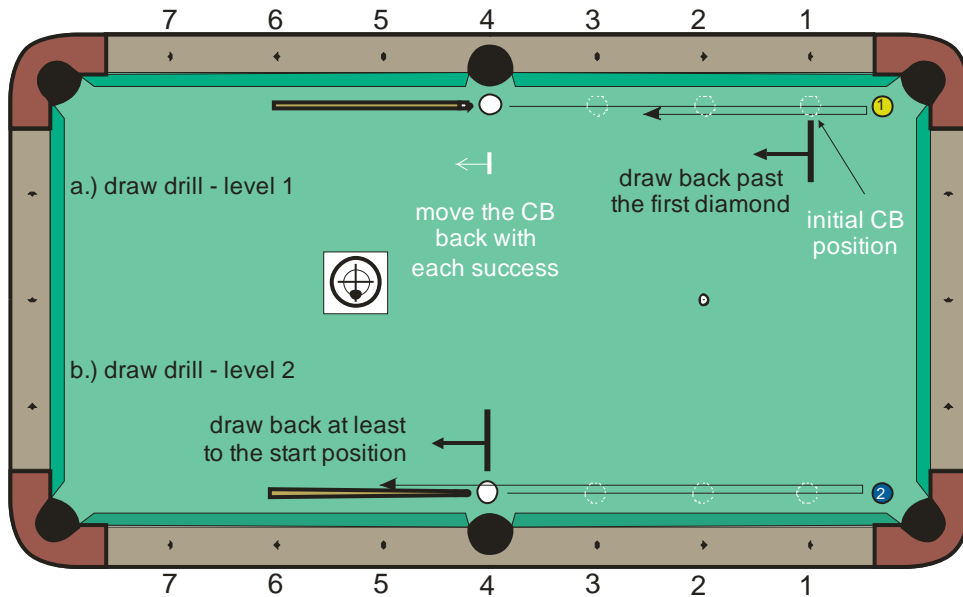
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This is my second article based on the “[The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#),” a five-disc instructional DVD series I recently created with fellow BD columnist Bob Jewett. VEPP is an organized and methodical training program and pool workout. It teaches you how to develop, assess, and track progress of skills in all aspects of your game. An outline of the entire VEPP series and video excerpts from each DVD can be viewed online at: [dr-dave-billiards.com/vepp](http://dr-dave-billiards.com/vepp). Last month, I introduced the series and looked at visual alignment and pre-shot routine advice from the first disc: “[VEPP I – Fundamentals and Basic Position Control](#).” This month, I’ll present a drill approach called “progressive practice,” and show some useful draw shot challenge drills, also from Disc I.

“Progressive Practice” is a drill approach developed by Bob Jewett, where the difficulty level of the drill adjusts automatically to match your skill level and improvement. Also, the result of each drill is a score that offers a realistic assessment of your skill in a particular area. Many of the drills and workouts in VEPP are designed around this approach. To better understand how progressive practice works, see **Diagrams 1-3**, which show a set of draw drills of increasing difficulty.

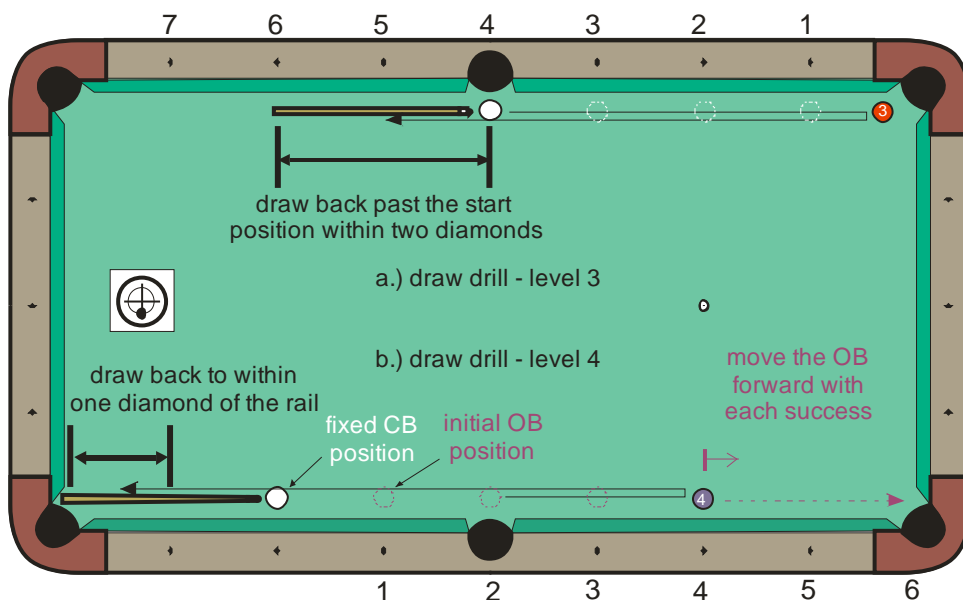
In the first drill (see **Diagram 1a**), the object ball (OB) is close to the corner pocket and the cue ball (CB) starts one diamond up table. The goal is to pocket the OB and draw the CB past the first diamond up table. You are allowed to draw back any amount, as long as you go past the first diamond. With each success, move the CB up table one additional diamond. The diamond number indicates the current score for the drill. With more distance to the OB, you will need to hit lower on the CB and/or use more speed to ensure there is enough backspin at OB impact to create enough draw. If you miss the OB and/or don’t draw the CB back past the first diamond, move the CB back down table half a diamond and continue the drill, moving the CB in half-diamond increments with each success or failure. After 10-15 shots, the final CB position is your score for the drill. For example, if you execute the shot shown in Diagram 1a and you have previously had a miss, the current score for the drill would be 4.5 (a half diamond past position 4). See **NV C.3** for a thorough explanation and demonstration of the drill and how it is scored.

Level two (see **Diagram 1b**) works the same as the first level, but now the goal is to draw back at least to the starting position of the CB. Again, the set of drills is referred to as “progressive practice” because the difficulty level increases within each drill and from one level to the next. 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.



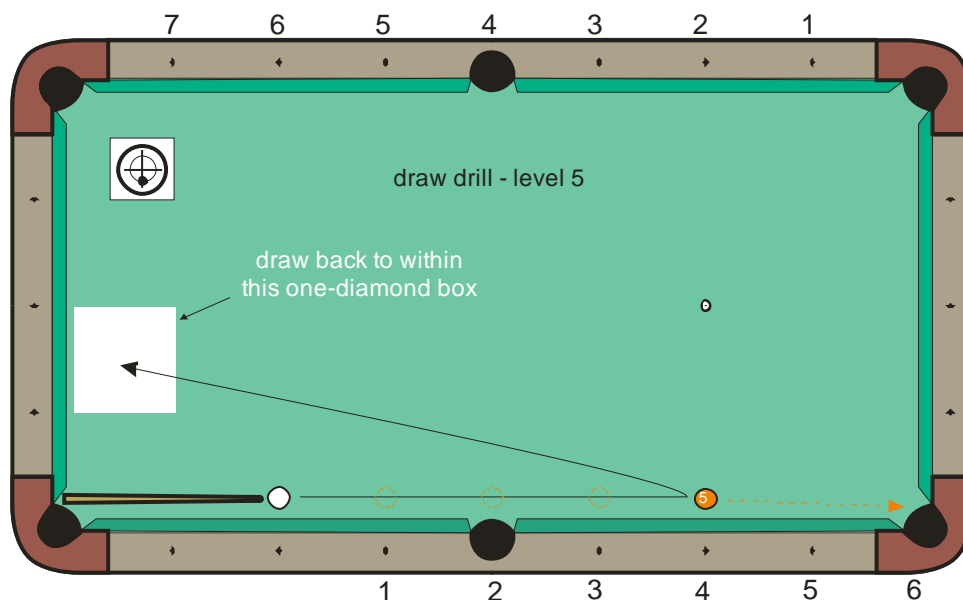
**Diagram 1** Progressive Practice Draw Drills – Levels 1 and 2

In level three (see **Diagram 2a**), again you are required to draw back at least to the starting CB position, but this time no more than two diamonds beyond. In level four (see **Diagram 2b**), the CB is always placed two diamonds above the side pocket and the OB starts one diamond from the CB. Here, the OB advances forward with each success. The goal is to pocket the OB and draw the CB back to within one diamond of the foot rail. You are allowed to rebound off the cushion. With the higher level drills, the difficulty level grows more quickly with each success. Again, if you fail to pocket the OB or draw the CB back to the target area, move the OB back half a diamond and continue in half diamond increments, and record your score after 10-15 attempts. Notice that the ball position numbers (and drill score) in level 4 correspond to the OB position. This is different from the earlier levels that numbered the CB positions.



**Diagram 2** Progressive Practice Draw Drills – Levels 3 and 4

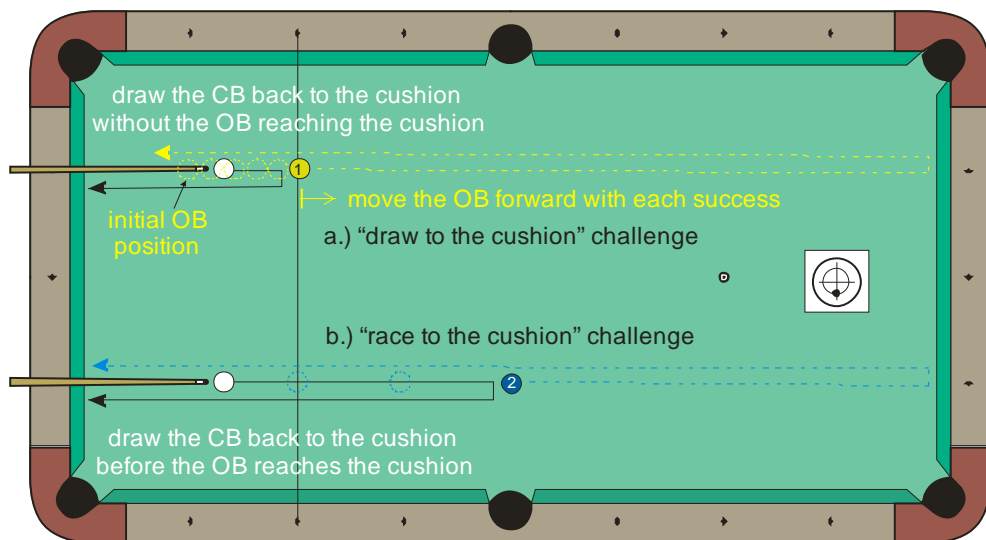
Level five (see **Diagram 3**) is the final and most difficult level of the set of draw drills. It is identical to level four, but here you must control the CB a little more precisely. The CB must end up within the one-diamond box between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> diamonds on the head rail. Here you need to develop a feel for tip position, shot speed, and the angle of the shot. Again, advance the OB down table one diamond with each success. And after the first failed attempt, move back half a diamond and continue in half diamond increments. Don't forget to record your score (the final OB position) and see how you improve over time. See **NV C.3** for a demonstration and further explanation of the entire set of drills.



**Diagram 3 Progressive Practice Draw Drills – Level 5**

As with all of the progressive practice drills on VEPP, if you routinely score high in the lower-level drills, skip them in the future and go right to the higher level drills that give you more of a challenge. More information on the progressive practice approach can be found on the [progressive practice resource page](#) under “drills” in the FAQ section of my website.

VEPP-I contains several more draw drills and a set of challenges to test your draw ability. **Diagram 4** shows two draw challenges that are fun to practice and use as proposition shots. The “draw to the cushion” challenge drill (see **Diagram 4a**) tests both your draw technique and speed control. The goal is to rebound the OB off the foot cushion and draw the CB straight back to the head cushion without allowing the OB to reach the head cushion. You are required to keep the cue as level as possible. Start with the OB one diamond above the rail. From here, the challenge is very easy. With each success, shift the OB forward one ball width and continue. Place the CB as close to the OB as you want. As with all progressive practice drills, if you fail to draw the CB back to the cushion, or if the OB reaches the cushion, shift the OB back half a ball and continue in half-ball increments. Continue for 10-15 attempts to find your limit. How far up table can you go? On most tables, depending on cloth and cushion conditions, surpassing the head line is a good goal. As we demonstrate in **NV C.4**, you can cheat by elevating the cue. With the cue jacked up, it is very easy to draw the CB back while imparting little speed to the OB. Again, this isn't allowed in this challenge drill, but it is a good technique to know when you need it in a game situation.



**Diagram 4** Draw Challenge Drills

A related draw challenge is called “race to the cushion” (see **Diagram 4b**). The goal is to have the CB reach the head cushion before the OB does. Start with the OB on the head line and move down table one diamond with each success, changing to half-diamond increments (or smaller) after the first failed attempt. For the best results, you want to hit the CB as low as possible, using just enough speed to draw the CB back to the cushion. With typical equipment, a good goal is to advance the OB beyond the side pockets.

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 first VEPP DVD can be viewed on the [VEPP website](#) or at [billiards.colostate.edu](#) under **NV C.1** through **NV C.4**. Next month, I’ll present some useful drills from the second disc: “[VEPP II –Position Control and English](#).”

Good luck with your game,  
Dr. Dave



- [NV C.1](#) - "Vision center" alignment drill, from VEPP I
- [NV C.2](#) - Pre-shot routine recommendations, from VEPP I
- [NV C.3](#) - Progressive practice draw drills, from VEPP I
- [NV C.4](#) - Draw shot challenge drills, from VEPP I

**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: “[The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#)” and “[The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#).”*