
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 third in a series of articles dealing with the Billiard University (BU). The mission of the BU is to provide assessment tools, a rating system, and learning resources to help pool players strive for and achieve excellence, and to officially acknowledge excellence through the awarding of diplomas (Bachelors, Masters, or Doctorate of Pool). The BU was cofounded by me and Randy Russell, with support from a “dream team” of well-known and respected instructors and instructional authors: Jerry Briesath, Mark Finkelstein, Randy Goettlicher, Bob Jewett, Mike Page, Tom Simpson, and Mark Wilson. Online videos **NV D.1-D.6** explain every step of the BU process and demonstrate the BU playing-ability exams, which are available for free on the BU website: BilliardUniversity.org. **NV D.7-D.14** include excerpts from the 3-DVD BU Instructional series that provides advice for improving your fundamentals, teaches useful aiming systems for various types of shots, and offers “hot tips” for how to do well on the exams. In the last two months, I described the BU exam structure and showed example drills from both the Fundamentals Exam (Exam I) and the Skills Exam (Exam II). This month, I’ll cover at how to determine your BU score and player rating. We’ll also look at how to use your exam results and the BU learning resources to help you improve your game.

Remember, the score you get on the Fundamentals Exam (Exam I) places you into the appropriate Skills Exam (Exam II) based on the score ranges in **Table 1**. The sum of the Exam I and Exam II scores is your BU score, which corresponds directly to your level of playing ability as indicated by the ranges in **Table 2**. For example, if your score on the Fundamentals Exam is 65, you qualify for the Masters level Exam II. If your score on the Exam II is 55, your BU Score would be 120 (65 + 55). This would classify you as an “advanced - level 1” (lower intermediate) player. This corresponds to a “B” or “B-” on the traditional [A/B/C/D player-rating scale](#). The BU score also indicates whether or not you qualify for a [BU diploma](#) according to the score ranges in **Table 3**. The BU score of 135 would qualify you for a “Master of Pool with Honors” diploma.

There is a [ratings comparison table](#) on the BU website that correlates the BU score and rating with other common rating and league handicap systems. However, unlike league handicap and other match-statistics-based rating systems, the BU scoring and rating system is independent of league competition level which can vary significantly from one league to the next and from one region to the next. The BU rating offers the significant advantage that it is based solely on individual performance and not on the performance of others. Therefore, the ratings are meaningful across all regions and internationally.

Table 1 Exam II placement based on the Exam I score

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Exam I score | 0-49 | 50-69 | 70-100 |
| Exam II | Bachelors | Masters | Doctorate |

Table 2 BU player rating score ranges

| BU Score | BU Player Level | Traditional Player Level | A/B/C/D Rating |
|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| 180-200 | pro | touring pro (pro) | A+++ |
| 160-179 | semi pro | semi pro (master) | A++ (AAA) |
| 140-159 | advanced-3 | tournament player (expert) | A+ (AA) / A |
| 125-139 | advanced-2 | upper advanced | A- / B+ |
| 110-124 | advanced-1 | lower advanced | B / B- |
| 95-109 | intermediate-3 | upper intermediate | B- / C+ |
| 70-94 | intermediate-2 | mid intermediate | C+ / C |
| 55-69 | intermediate-1 | lower intermediate | C |
| 40-54 | beginner-3 | upper novice | C- |
| 30-39 | beginner-2 | mid novice | D+ |
| 20-29 | beginner-1 | lower novice | D |
| 0-19 | beginner-0 | absolute beginner | D- |

Table 3 BU diploma qualification score ranges

| BU Score | 55-84 | 85-99 | 100-124 | 125-139 | 140-179 | 180-200 |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Diploma Awarded | Bachelor of Pool | Bachelor of Pool with Honors | Master of Pool | Master of Pool with Honors | Doctorate of Pool | Doctorate of Pool with Honors |

The assessment nature of the BU Exams can be very useful to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. And the exam drills provide a good workout to help you develop and improve skills in a methodical and purposeful way. You should especially work on drills for which you receive low scores, indicating weaknesses in certain skills areas. If you need instruction or advice related to any of the required skills, the [Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#) and the [Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#) provide focused and specific learning resources. These DVD series include detailed and well-illustrated instruction, countless game-situation examples, and collections of drills to help you develop and improve skills in all areas. **Table 3** and **Table 4** identify the skills important to each BU Exam drill. They also list the VEPS and VEPP disc and section numbers to help you locate the relevant learning resources.

Table 3 Fundamentals Exam (Exam I) drills and learning resources

| drill number | drill topic | required skills | VEPS Sections | VEPP Sections |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| F1 | cut | aiming, stroke | I-1 | I-2 |
| F2 | stop | stop shot control | I-2 | I-4 |
| F3 | follow | follow control | I-3 | I-5 |
| F4 | draw | draw control | I-4 | I-6 |
| F5 | stun | stun control, speed control | I-2, II-14 | II-8 |
| F6 | potting | aiming, stroke | I-1 | I-2 |
| F7 | wagon | CB direction control | II-14 | II-9 |
| F8 | target | position and speed control | II-15, II-16, II-17 | II-13 |

Table 3 Skills Exam (Exam II) drills and learning resources

| drill number | drill topic | required skills | VEPS Sections | VEPP Sections |
|--------------|-----------------|---|------------------|---------------|
| S1 | line of balls | aiming, position control | II-14, II-15 | II-16 |
| S2 | rail cuts | aiming, position control | II-13 | II-16 |
| S3 | 9-ball patterns | position control and strategy | II-15-17, III-27 | III-18 |
| S4 | 8-ball patterns | position control and strategy | II-15-17, III-26 | III-19 |
| S5 | safeties | safety strategy, position and speed control | III-21 | III-20 |
| S6 | kicks | kick shots | IV-31 | IV-21 |
| S7 | banks | bank shots | IV-33 | IV-24 |
| S8 | elevated cue | elevated cue shots | I-4, V-42 | IV-25 |
| S9 | jumps, massé | jump, swerve, and massé shots | V-42, 43 | IV-26, 27 |
| S10 | break | break shot | V-44 | V-28 |

If you haven't taken the BU playing-ability and rating exams yet, give them a try. Everything you need to prepare for and take the exams is available for free on the BU website (BilliardUniversity.org). It's time to see where you rank and work to graduate your game to the next level.

Good luck with your game,
Dean Dave



- [NV D.1](#) – BU - Part 1: Introduction - overview of the BU process for earning a pool diploma
- [NV D.2](#) – BU - Part 2: Table Setup - preparing to practice and take the BU exams
- [NV D.3](#) – BU - Part 3: Video Recording - recording official exam runs for online submittal
- [NV D.4](#) – BU - Part 4: Exam I Overview - demonstrations and scoring of the Fundamentals Exam
- [NV D.5](#) – BU - Part 5: Exam II Overview - demonstrations and scoring of the Skills Exam
- [NV D.6](#) – BU - Part 6: Submittal and Wrap Up - applying for a BU diploma online
- [NV D.7](#) – Pool Fundamentals - The Stance - from Vol-I of the BU instructional DVD series
- [NV D.8](#) – Stun Shot Drill - from Vol-II of the Billiard University instructional DVD series
- [NV D.9](#) – How to Aim Pool Shots - from Vol-II of the BU instructional DVD series
- [NV D.10](#) – Draw Shot Trisect Aiming System - from Vol-II of the BU instructional DVD series
- [NV D.11](#) – Cue Ball Control Target Pool Drill - from Vol-II of the BU instructional DVD series
- [NV D.12](#) – Safety Drill - from Vol-III of the BU instructional DVD series
- [NV D.13](#) – Kick Shot Aiming Systems - from Vol-III of the BU instructional DVD series
- [NV D.14](#) – Pool Break Technique Advice - from Vol-III of the BU instructional DVD series

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 Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards](#)” book and DVD, and co-author of the “[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#),” “[Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#),” and “[Billiard University \(BU\)](#)” instructional DVD series.