

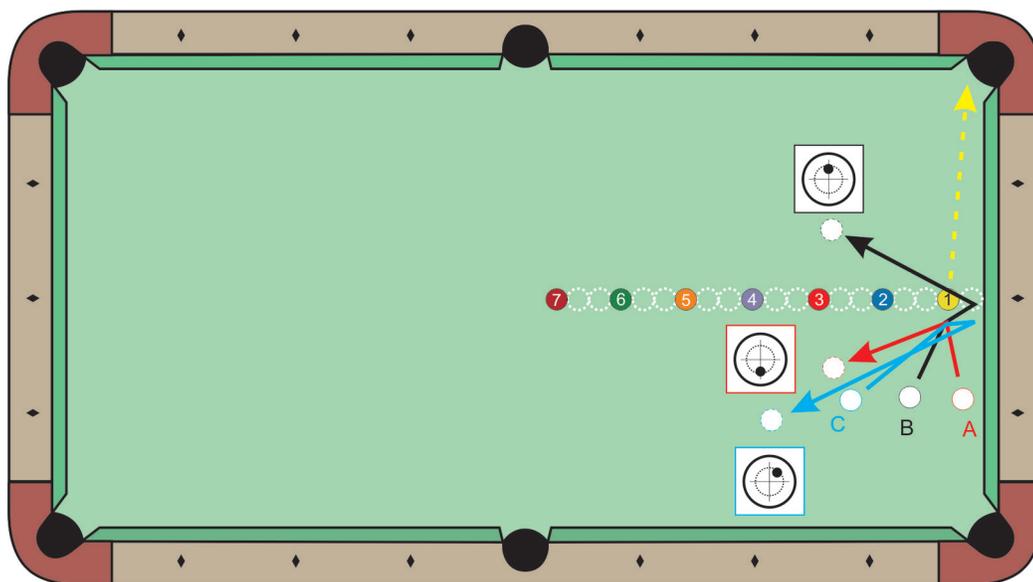
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*Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, technical proofs (TP), and all of my past articles can be accessed and viewed online at [billiards.colostate.edu](http://billiards.colostate.edu). The reference numbers used 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 second 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 myself 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](http://BilliardUniversity.org). Online videos **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. Last month, I described the BU exam structure and showed example drills from the Fundamentals Exam (Exam I). This month, we’ll look at two drills from the BU Skills Exam (Exam II).

**Diagram 1** shows the first drill in Exam II. It is the classic line-of-balls run-out drill. Starting with ball in hand, the goal is to run out the balls in rotation. You can pot each ball in any pocket, but you are not allowed to disturb any of the remaining balls. As with all of the Exam II drills, the difficulty level and number of points available vary with Exam level. The version shown in the diagram is the Masters version. The Bachelors version has fewer balls with larger gaps, and the Doctorate version has more balls closer together. Remember, the score on Exam I places you into the appropriate Exam II level based on your performance.

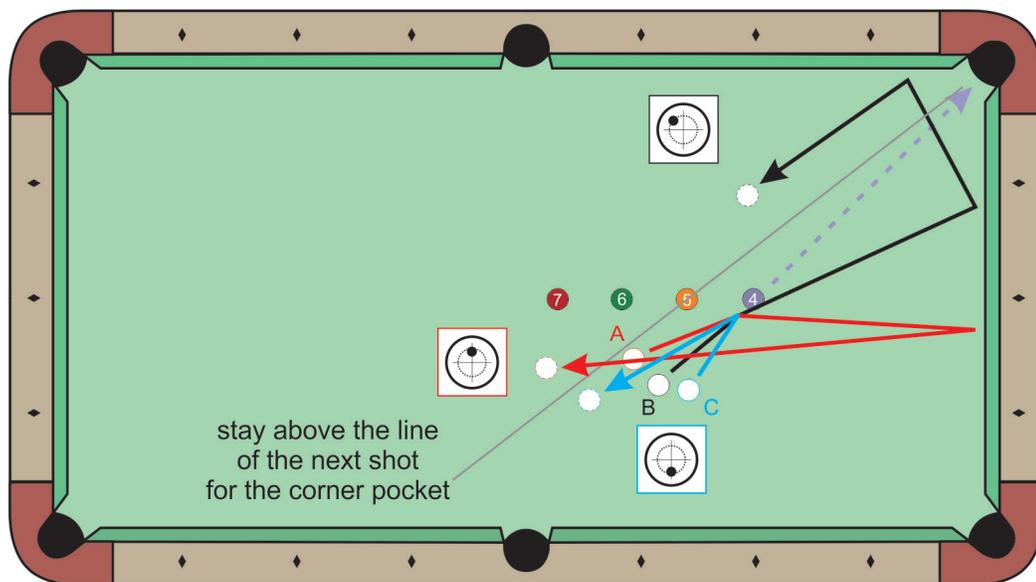


**Diagram 1** Line-of-balls drill starting options

**Diagram 1** shows several alternatives for the first shot. A draw shot from cue ball (CB) position “A” is one option (see the red CB path). Another option is to roll forward and cross to the other side of the ball line from CB position “B” (see the black CB path) This option works well for the Bachelors and Masters levels but it is

too risky in the Doctorate level where there is less space between the 1 ball and 2 ball. Another approach is to use outside follow to roll up on the same side of the balls (see the blue CB path from CB position “C”). Try these and other options and determine which works best for you. Regardless of the option you choose, make sure you don’t come up short on position for the 2 ball. If you leave the wrong angle, you might be forced into a low-percentage bank shot to avoid contact with the 3.

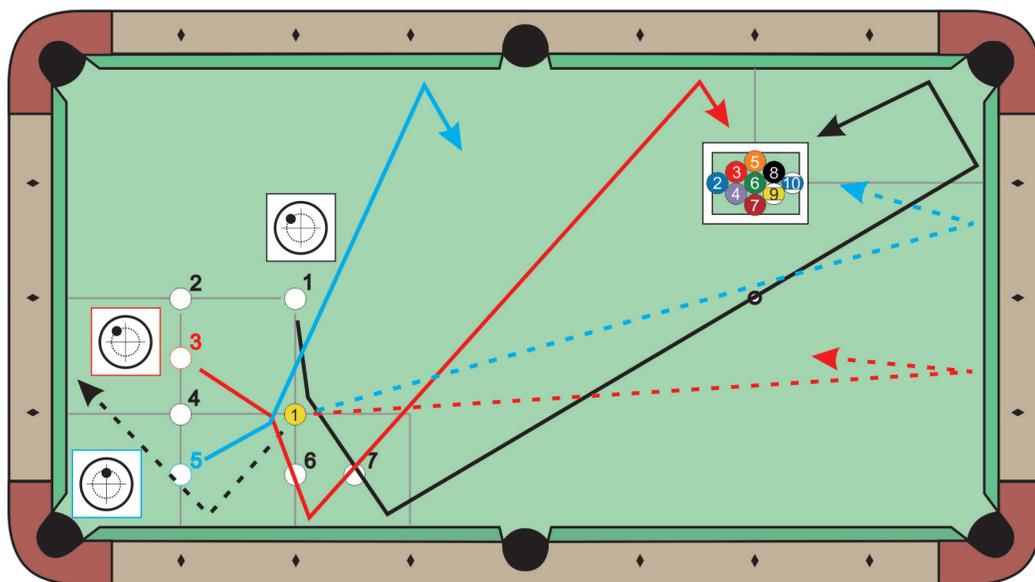
**Diagram 2** shows several alternatives for the middle balls (2 through 5), in this case ball 4. If you are far enough above the 4-ball line to the pocket, as in CB position “A,” you can use straight follow to come up for the next ball (see the red CB path). If you are shooting from a CB position like “B,” an option is to use inside follow to come off two rails into the line of the next shot in the side pocket (see the black CB path). This offers a large margin for error with shot speed. The side pockets can sometimes be easier for getting position, especially on the later balls. From CB position “C,” depending on the exact angle and the gap between the 4 and 5, you could roll forward for a shot at the 5 in the lower side pocket. Instead, you could also draw back (see the blue CB path). Again, if you are playing position for a corner pocket, make sure come up high enough for the next ball. Generally, you should plan to come above the line of the next shot (see the grey line through the 5 ball). Again, there are many options for CB control in this drill, and you will need to experiment during practice to see what works best for you.



**Diagram 2** Line-of-balls drill middle-ball options

In **NV D.5**, we show examples of all of the Exam II drills along with how to score them. Try the different approaches demonstrated for various positions in the line-of-balls drill and see what is most consistent and accurate for you. For more information and advice on how to approach the line-of-balls drill, especially the Doctorate version, see **NV C.8** and my [September '12 article](#), both of which cover the drill in more detail.

**Diagram 3** shows the fifth of the ten drills in Exam II. This drill gives practice and tests skill with safety play. The goal is to hide the 1-ball from the CB, using the cluster of 9 balls as blockers. You are allowed to contact the rack of balls but all of them must remain within or overlapping the rectangle target. You get 2 attempts from each CB position. In the Doctorate version of the exam, you shoot from each of the seven CB positions shown. In the Bachelors version, only three CB positions are used (2, 5, and 6); and in the Masters, five are used (1, 2, 4, 5, and 6). The difficulty level associated with the CB positions increases with exam level.



**Diagram 3 @@@**

**Diagram 3** shows possible shots for three of the CB positions (1, 3, and 5). From CB position “1,” a good approach is to hit about a third of the 1 ball with running follow sending the CB off 3 rails into the line of the blockers, leaving the 1-ball up table, ideally also along this line (see the black ball paths). This path offers a fairly good margin for error with speed assuming the shot angle and spin are good. The shot from position “3” uses inside follow to send the CB and 1-ball to opposite sides of the obstacle cluster (see the red paths), again offering a good margin for error with speed. The shot from position “5” is a simple roll shot. Here, the 1-ball is sent off the end rail into the line of the blockers, with the CB also ending up close to this line. Again, this approach offers a fairly wide margin for error. Again, practice these and other paths and determine which are the most accurate and consistent for you. Online video **NV D.12** demonstrates several options for each of the seven CB positions. Practice all of these to improve your confident and effective with safety shots.

I hope you enjoy and benefit from my series of articles dealing with the Billiard University Exams and instructional DVD series, and I hope you try the exams and use them as a training tool. Good luck with your practice, and I look forward to awarding you a pool diploma someday. It’s time to graduate your game to the next level.

Good luck with your game,  
Dean Dave



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