

“Stalemate, or Smart Way Out?”
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ILLUSTRATED PRINCIPLES

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

What would you do in the 8-ball situation shown in **Image 1**, with ball in hand, shooting stripes or solids? Options were discussed recently on the AZBilliards forum; and online video [NV J.109](#) demonstrates those and other alternatives. Before reading on or looking ahead, study the layout some and try to figure out what you would do in this situation.

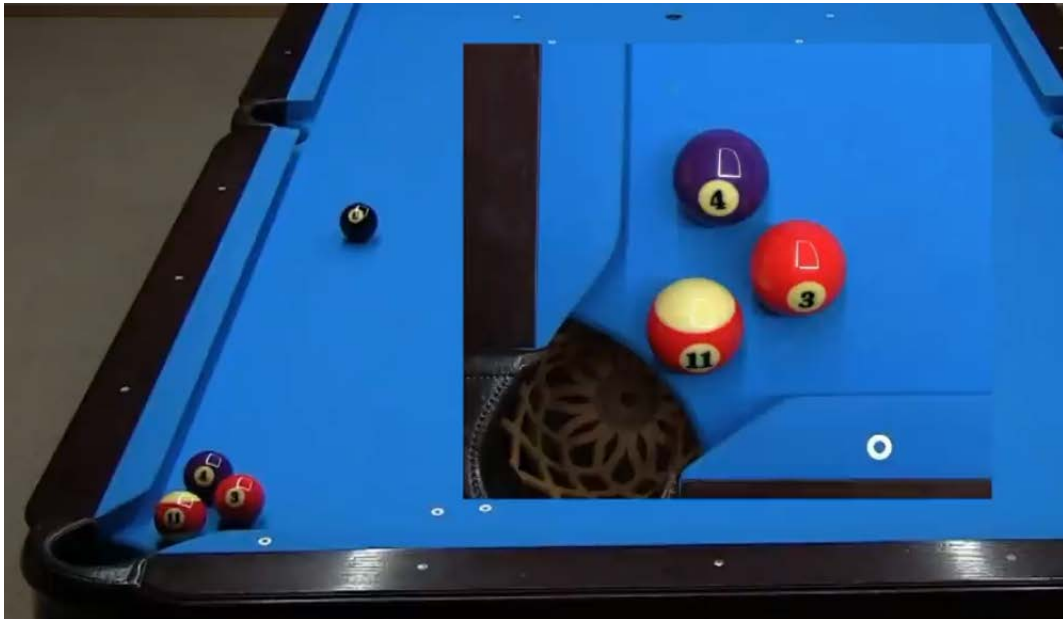


Image 1 Situation ball layout

Options for Stripes

If shooting stripes, you are in a bad situation, but there are several reasonable options. You could try to move the 3 and 4 a little to try to open a look at the 11. For example, by banking the 4 into the 3 with the CB close to the end rail, you can leave the balls as shown in **Image 2**. This would be an intentional foul, giving your opponent ball in hand, but you might get lucky and get a look at the 11 later, especially if the 4 were a little closer to the 11. But as demonstrated by several examples in the video, if you move the balls too much, your opponent can easily win the game.



Image 2 Move the solids a little

Image 3 shows an example leave by hitting the bottom side of the 3 softly. That can open a look at the 11, but my opponent (with ball in hand) can play an easy safety by pocketing the 3-11 combo and locking up the CB on the back side of the 4.



Image 3 Open a small look at the 11

The video demonstrates many more options for stripes, including attempting to tie up the 8 ball with the solids to attempt to limit options; but as shown in the video, there are several good ways out for solids. Another option is to just send the 8 to a tougher position, making a runout of the solids more difficult. A good place to leave the 8 is in the middle of the top rail; and, as demonstrated in the video, the best way to do this

to bank the 8 off the side rail. But then your opponent could just pocket the 11 and herd the 3 in with follow, and then play a good safety behind the 4. A final low-percentage option for stripes is to jump onto the top of the 11 to attempt to pocket the ball and get a look at the 8. I almost got it to work in the video, but this is a desperate move.

The best stripes could hope for is convincing solids to agree to a stalemate and re-break a new game, but no smart player would accept such a proposition. Other than that, the best possible scenario for stripes, assuming your opponent doesn't see any good options, is to move the solids a little and hope to get a look or kick at the 11 at some point. The video shows examples where this approach works out, but some luck (or bad play by your opponent) is required.

Options for Solids

Shooting solids, there are many good options to win the game. You can pocket the 11 and leave the CB safe behind the 3 and 4 as shown in **Image 4**. From there, stripes is forced to go off two rails to get a hit on the 8. And even if stripes gets a hit on the 8, solids will likely have a shot at the 3 or 4.



Image 4 Hide behind the 3 and 4

If the 3 were frozen to the 11 instead in the original ball layout, a good option would be to use backspin to drive the 3 through the 11. As demonstrated in the video, this results in an easy out. However, with a gap between the balls, this is tough to do, and you might sell out the game. Another option is to try to thin or nudge the 3 to freeze it to the 11 first. If your opponent isn't very savvy, he might leave it there, allowing you to get the easy win with the backspin drive-through.

Probably the best option for solids is to herd the 3 in after the 11 with follow. You can hide behind the 4, ideally frozen to the back side. Or you can try to leave a gap between the CB and 4 as a two-way shot, as shown in **Image 5**. If it ends up nearly straight, you have an easy out with short-side shape on the 4. If not, you can play a finesse lock-up safety.



Image 5 Two-way shot with short-side shape

Check out online video [NV J.109](#). It provides demonstrations of everything in the article and more, providing an in-depth look at this interesting situation. Even better, try out all the options on your own at a table. That's the only way you will know what choices are best for you if you come across a game situation like this in the future.

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave



normal video

NV J.109 – STALEMATE or SMART WAY OUT? What Would You Do Here?

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.

Dr. Dave is a PBI A Master 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.