

BY Bob Jewett



MORE THE MERRIER IV

Golf and pool are linked by more than a few similar concepts

POOLED AND golf have many similarities: the flow of the game, precise ball placement, judgment of speed, the green. There are several top pool players, including Johnny Archer and John Schmidt, who do well at both games. It's not surprising that concepts from golf have been adapted to indoor play on pool or snooker tables. It is surprising how many different games of "golf" have developed over the years. The Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company rulebook of 1916 has two different forms for pool tables. I won't describe the one with a ditch, a sand trap and "long green" on the table, but the simpler form is below.

First I'll describe the most common form of cue-sport golf in the U.S., which is played on a snooker table. Like all forms of golf that I've found, it is very well suited to multiple players — even 7 or 8 is not too large a crowd. If you're still learning the basics, you could play the game on a pool table, but with more skill, the challenge of a larger table and smaller pockets makes the game much more interesting. A full set of rules is in the BCA rulebook, but there are many local variations; I'll summarize the printed version and then mention a few alternate rules I've gathered from local players. If you are a new player in an established group, it's best to ask when you are unsure.

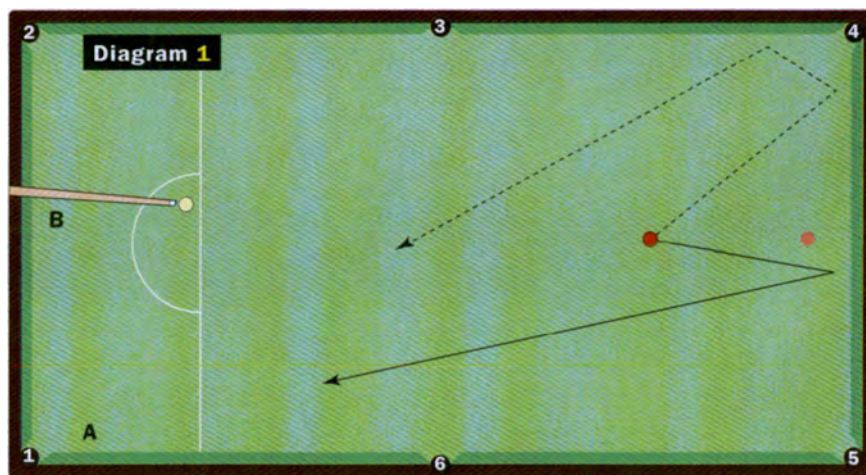
Each player has his own object ball, and all players use a common cue ball. The goal is to make your ball in each of the six pockets in order. The break shot is shown in **Diagram 1**. The cue ball begins in the D, and the standard shot is to bank your ball one cushion to pocket 1. If the first player does not make the break shot, the next player shoots his break shot with the cue ball in the D. After the last player has had his break shot, the cue ball is played from where it lies. When a player pockets his ball in the proper pocket, it spots back up and he gets to shoot for the next pocket in

numerical order. An alternate path for the break is also shown. It is used when the direct path is blocked or the final breaker wants to get the cue ball to the other end of the table for a safe.

Play usually proceeds with a series of soft shots intended to leave the object ball very near the pocket. This is useful offensively since each shot is difficult and a soft shot at least makes some progress toward the pocket, and is useful defensively since a ball close to the pocket can block an opponent who is trying for the same pocket. Hard shots

else's ball first, he has the choice of putting his ball back where it was. You must make rail contact at some point in the shot, either before or after ball contact and with either the cue ball or some object ball. All other normal fouls, even touching a ball by accident, cost a hickey. Making any ball in the wrong pocket — that is, not the pocket that ball is intended for — is a foul.

If you foul and leave the next player snookered, he is entitled to a "lift." This means that any blocking ball between the cue ball and his ball are marked and



are restricted to bank shots, position play from a ball very near the pocket, or safety shots where speed is required to foil the player who follows you.

In order to keep track of who is on which pocket, you need a chalkboard, which is also needed to keep track of fouls, which in this game are called "hickies." At the end of the game, which happens when a player finally makes the "six hole," he collects a sum from each of the other players as well as a smaller sum for each hickey that each opponent has collected. If you win, your hickies are cancelled.

There are many ways to collect hickies. You must hit your own ball first on every shot. If you contact someone

temporarily removed from the table so he has a direct shot. In case a ball moved on the shot blocks replacement of a lifted ball, there's a problem and the rulebook provides no good solution. I propose spotting the lifted ball if it can't be replaced. The BCA rules suggest spotting balls as soon as they are off the table, but a common variation is to spot a ball when the owner's turn comes around. After a scratch, the cue ball is in the D and may be shot in any direction.

Often you will want to bank the cue ball off a cushion to hit your object ball. For example, on the opening break, you have left your object ball at A in Diagram 1. The player before you has

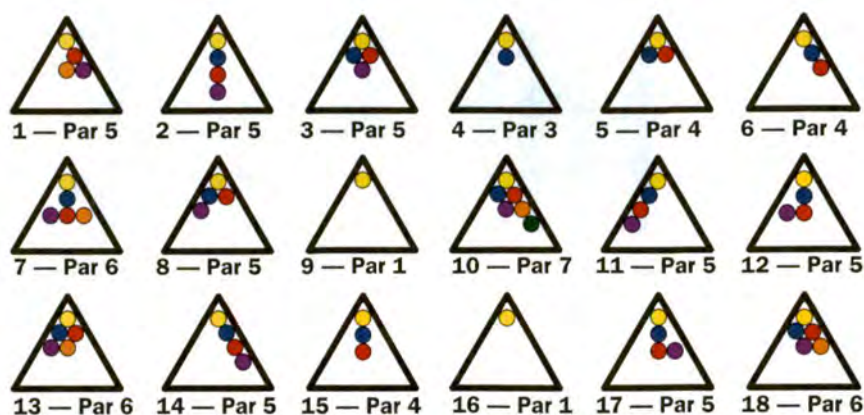
been careful to leave the cue ball at B so you have no direct shot. A standard shot in this situation is for you to play the cue ball off the far end rail with just enough speed to progress your ball toward the 1 hole, even though you can play directly at your ball. This situation has an added penalty: if you fail to contact your ball when you have a direct shot, you get a hickey and your ball spots so you lose your investment in the position.

The best way to get yourself barred from playing with a group of veteran players is to fail to play a reasonable level of safety; you should almost never leave the next player a direct shot. This means that if you are snookered and have no good shot to hit your ball, your main goal is to deny the next player any way to advance his position. That might involve just rolling the cue ball to the end cushion and taking a hickey. Remember that the lift rule may be in effect after such a push-out. A common safety technique when an opponent's ball is very close to the hole is to play a combination or carom to move it away.

Some local variations that I've seen or heard of include: for any foul, your ball comes off the table; the 6 hole cannot be scored by a direct shot, it must be a bank or a kick; if you hit an opponent's ball first, you must pay him an immediate fine; after a foul or on a small table, the alternate spot is used; the person who precedes the winner must pay double for letting him win. Some of these conflict with each other. If you have other variations and especially if you have a complete set of written rules, I'd like to hear from you.

The version of golf described in the 1916 rules uses only one object ball for all players or teams. The cue ball begins on the head spot and the object ball on the center spot. The first player shoots until he makes the ball in the left side pocket, counting total strokes. Then the next player shoots from the break position until he makes the same pocket. After the last player has made the first hole, the cue ball remains in position when the next player comes up. (Of course, when you make the ball and thereby end your turn, you want to leave the cue ball in a bad place for the next player.) Scratches are a three-stroke penalty, and you continue to play with the cue ball being returned to the "tee" or head spot. Making the ball

18 Holes of Golf



in the wrong pocket or not hitting a cushion on a shot is also a three-stroke penalty. After the first hole, the pockets are played in clockwise order for a total of six holes.

A third form of golf is shown in **Diagram 2**. The balls are racked according to the drawing for each "hole" at the start of each player's turn and the total strokes a player needs to clear the table are counted. A scratch is just a one-stroke penalty, but you have to

spot any ball you made on the shot. If you want to break par, you will need to make balls on the break or slop (or carom or combo) them in on subsequent shots. Study how the breaks work and find out which balls are dead or can be made dead. This game is from the excellent booklet, "The First Five Years of Chalk-Up" which was published by the A.E. Schmidt company in the 1960s. It has lots of interesting games and promotions for room owners to use.