

THE MECHANICS: Fundamental Facilitators

By Roger Long

I recently wrote an article that focused on pool's fundamentals. In it I pointed out that there are only four things that are truly fundamental in the making of a good stroke. Those four things are: 1. Straight alignment, 2. Level cue, 3. Stay down, and 4. Follow through.

Now it is time to talk about some things that will help to develop and maintain a good stroke. These things involve the stance, the bridge, the head, the elbow, and the grip, and they are the things that make up the actual mechanics that are employed in any given player's style.

At this point you might be saying to yourself, "Wait a minute, I thought all those things were part of the fundamentals." To that, I answer, no.

If you read my other article you might remember that I said many things have traditionally been accepted as fundamental truths, but those things are not truly fundamental; they are merely accessories in the acquisition of good fundamentals. That's because the particular way a player goes about getting his cue to go through the cue ball straight and level is of no real consequence as long as he indeed gets the job done. But at the same time, I feel that any player who practices certain recommended mechanical techniques will, in the long run, have an advantage over those who do not.

Let's look at a couple of examples of what I'm talking about.

If your swing arm, from the elbow down to the grip hand, points straight up and down as you set up for the shot, then it is a simple matter of pulling straight back on the cue, and then letting it go straight forward. But if you have an angular alignment in your forearm, it will equate to stick movement at an angle to the line of aim, and that will have to be adjusted in mid-stroke in order to achieve a straight-on-line hit on the cue ball. Not that this can't be done; but why take the hard route?

The same applies if you are in the habit of twisting your grip hand in or out, rather than letting it hang straight down. A twisted wrist puts twisting action on the cue, and again, that is something that has to be compensated for in mid-stroke.

There are a few other recommended mechanical techniques to go along with these two that can help facilitate better motion efficiency in the stroke, and in my next article I'll be presenting all of them in a little more detail.

In the meantime remember, all good strokes may not include good mechanics, but good mechanics almost always make for good strokes.