

January 2010

## Two Good Caroms

For most of last year I enjoyed the pleasure of collaborating with *Billiard Digest* columnist, Dr. Dave Alciatore, as we filmed the most comprehensive collection of pool shots ever published—*The Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots*—a five-DVD series that offers more than 750 shots in 50 distinct categories. Discs I and II are currently available and, much to our delight, being received very favorably by those who've purchased them. As one of pool's leading authorities on the game's technical aspects, Dave, a CSU engineering professor, provides detailed and clear narration with graphics to guide the viewer's execution for every shot throughout the series.

At the end of Disc I we explore kiss and carom shots in great depth with dozens of examples to cover all of the various possible setups one may encounter for those two families of shots. Because most of the kiss and carom shots that we demonstrate are somewhat straightforward I thought I would pull out two that may not seem so obvious at first glance because of the techniques they employ for successful conversion. In addition to their usefulness, both shots are fun to shoot once the player feels comfortable with them.

In the Diagram we see two 9-Ball setups where we don't have a good shot on our object ball but we have an opportunity to win the game with a carom. In Shot A, #159 from the VEPS series, we have no good shot on our object ball, the solid closest to the bottom left corner pocket. Hanging in the top corner however is the 9 ball, just waiting there for something to come along and knock it in for the game winner. Unfortunately our path to the 9 ball is blocked by that second solid ball that lies on the rail. Despite the obstacle ball we still have a viable carom shot on the 9 ball by employing a technique known as rail dribble. To make the shot, hit the object ball as shown with the dashed-outline ball and maximum follow on the cue ball. As a rule of thumb for shots like this we want to hit the first object ball as full as possible while avoiding a double kiss. With a full hit and good follow the cue ball will go to the rail, come out around the obstacle and back to the rail in time to pocket the 9 ball. While this shot is no gentle tap, many players are tempted to hit it too hard, which may keep the cue ball from returning in time to pocket the 9 ball. Think of medium-firm speed and maximum follow.

Shot B, #160 from the VEPS series, employs a similar technique to pocket the game-winning carom. Here the obstacle ball is too close the object ball to hit the cushion in front of it and then rail dribble around it to the 9 ball. So, instead trying to go around that ball as we did in Shot A, we will go through it to pocket the 9 ball. For this shot we aim at the left side of the first ball, again with a somewhat full hit and maximum follow. If the cue ball glances off of the first ball to hit the top side of the second ball as shown, it will continue through that ball to pocket the 9 ball for the game winner. As with Shot A apply maximum follow to the cue ball with the same medium firm speed.

When we watch great pool we're likely to see methodical and systematic runs of one easy shot after another, and mastering that should be every player's number-one goal. Occasionally however, when the opportunity arises to pull a rabbit out of a hat to win the game it's nice to be prepared to meet it. So here are two shots to learn and practice for when those opportunities do present themselves.

*To view clips from the Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots and to order discs please visit:*

[dr-dave-billiards.com/veps/](http://dr-dave-billiards.com/veps/)

