

# Advanced Draw

With all of the information that we need to play great pool it's not surprising that we can forget something we know while playing. This month I want to discuss one specific shot that I have seen many good shooters misplay when it comes up. Though the shot is often misplayed, it's doubtful that the shooter lacks knowledge of the principle needed to execute the shot effectively. It's more likely that in the particular setup what is required is not instantly recognizable.

Look at the shot in the diagram and before reading further, decide how you would move the cue ball into position for a shot on the striped ball. Most players can see that the best and, in many various setups for this shot, the only way to get position is to draw the cue ball to the left, side rail with outside (left) english. Any attempts with follow could lead to a scratch in the top left corner or wind up with no position.

While this shot is fairly common, perhaps it comes up too infrequently for most players to spend time learning it. Maybe they attempt it and fail and then hope that they never see it again. The truth about this shot is that it is not difficult and once you execute it successfully you will never have a problem with it again.

The number-one cause for failure with this shot is hitting it too hard. The result of playing it with too much force is a cue ball that doesn't move very far and maybe the memory of that in subsequent attempts, which can lead a player to hit it even harder on the next try. But the harder you hit this one the farther away you will end up from your intended position.

Let's discuss briefly why more force leads to less travel in this situation. On any cut shot, regardless of where you hit the cue ball, the cue ball starts out moving on the line perpendicular to the line of the object ball to the pocket. Some folks call that the tangent line; it's the dotted line in the diagram. If you play a stop shot, the cue ball will stay on that line. With follow or draw you can control how far the cue ball travels on that line before leaving it. The most influential variable on that travel is speed. The harder you hit the shot the farther down that line the cue ball will move before the follow or draw changes its path. Clearly, for the shot in the diagram, you want the cue ball to leave the perpendicular line as quickly as possible to hit the left long rail near point X and then spin off down table.

Set up the shot and try it with a smooth draw stroke. Hit it firmly without slamming it. Make sure to hit it low with left english and follow through. You need the english to spin the cue ball down table because of the direct angle at which it hits the rail. Keep shooting until you feel that you are executing the shot smoothly and effortlessly. Once you achieve that, set it up and hit one really hard. No matter how well you can draw the ball, if you hit this one with too much speed the cue ball will hit the side rail somewhere near point Y. From there it is simply impossible to bring the cue ball back down table.

After mastering the shot in the diagram you can try it at more difficult angles by moving the object ball to the left for a thinner cut. Move it gradually, maybe an inch or so for each shot, until it just seems too thin to get enough draw action to bring the cue ball down table. When you find that threshold you can attempt a different technique to draw the cue ball as quickly as possible off of the perpendicular line. Shorten your bridge to about three or four inches and hit the cue ball with as much low and left as you can find. You may need to miscue a couple of times to determine how low you can hit the ball. Now, without a lot of force, apply a very snappy but short stroke and limit your follow through to an inch or two. When drawing the cue ball on a cut shot, a short stroke with a short follow through minimizes lateral drift and pulls the cue ball back as directly as possible. Remember, that you are only shortening your follow through, not eliminating it, so complete the stroke. Do not pull your cue stick backwards after hitting the cue ball. It also helps to remind yourself to play the shot with a very relaxed and loose shooting hand since grabbing the butt of your cue on impact usually causes a miscue.

As we learn the many techniques that make up a complete pool game we typically learn them with an illustration from a book or setup that someone shows us. Sometimes the setup changes and what we know does not appear so obviously as what we need. That is a natural and fascinating part of the learning process.

