

## Kissing Safe

Minutes after the conclusion of a successful Kicking and Banking Workshop a few days ago Samm Diep decided that we should start planning our next event. And she suggested that we put together a complete workshop devoted entirely to safety. Well, since I'm sometimes known as the guy who would hook his own mother, Samm is clearly speaking my language. With all of the possibilities related to safety play and the pages of notes I've assembled diagramming the ones I know, I have to wonder why I had never designed a safety workshop before. Now of course I'm glad that I hadn't since planning and then conducting the upcoming one with Samm will be so much more enjoyable than a solo effort.

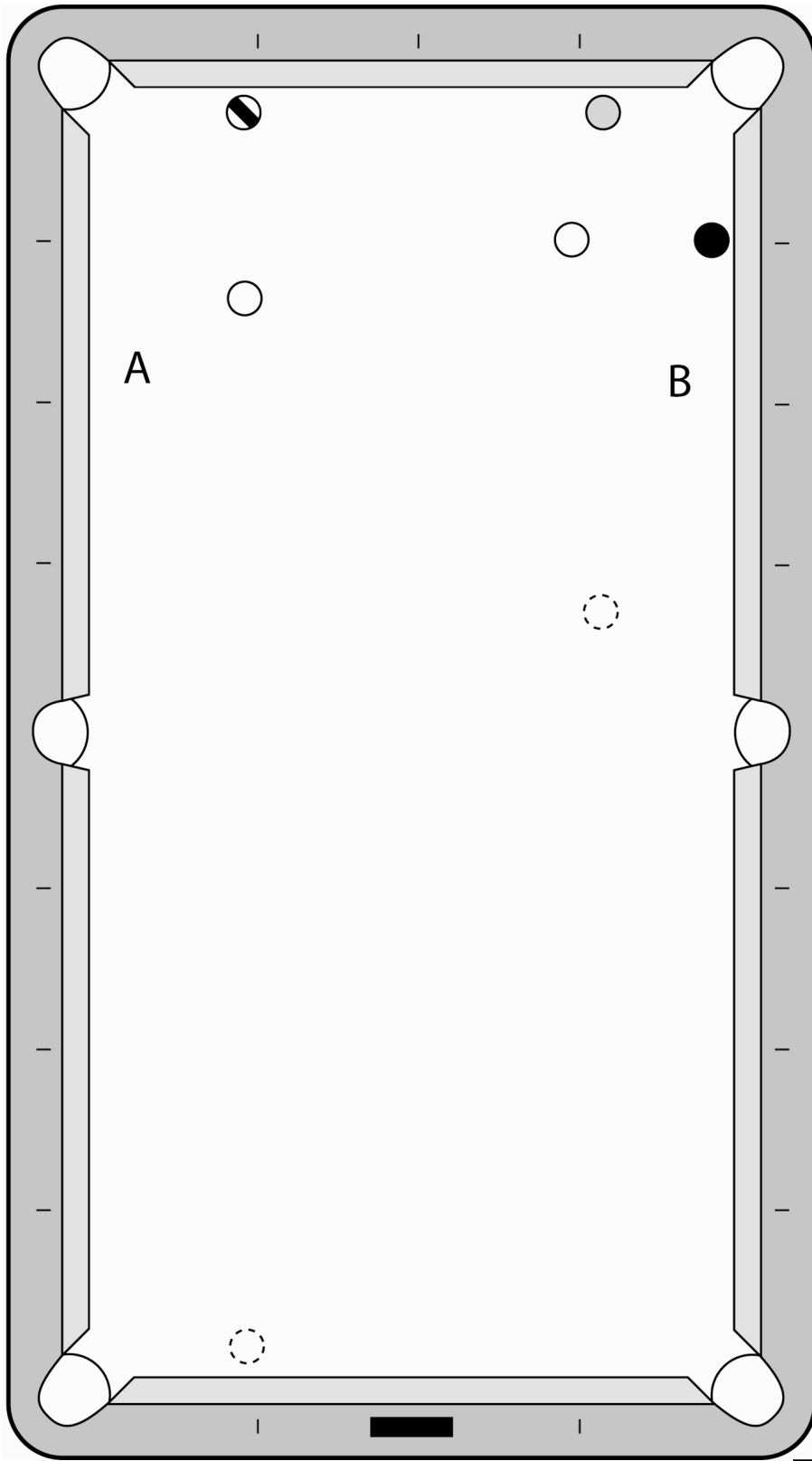
On most pool shots we pocket a ball and play position for another one after assessing the layout and determining exactly what to do. On other shots, when we cannot pocket a ball or when we cannot see a complete run out, we typically answer with a safety. And because we tend to employ safety after concluding that the normal, offensive preference is not an option, the set of possible responses in a safety situation is widely variable. Sometimes the problem calls for a solution unique to that particular setup, which makes it impractical to attempt a complete discussion of all possible safety shots. More commonly however we employ safeties that repeat themselves frequently enough to merit memorization and learning.

In the diagram we have two shots that we shall examine in a 9-ball context, neither of which offering an easy offensive option. Both shots are similar, differing primarily in the rails on which the object balls lie. And both shots will wind up with similar results through the application of slightly differing techniques.

Anyone who recognizes shot A and the kiss-back technique for playing an effective safety will also identify it as a relatively easy shot to execute. Here we face a shot with the striped ball on the rail in a spot with no practical pocket for it. Ideally we would leave that stripe right where it is and send the cue ball to a more difficult spot on the table, one suggested by the dotted-outlined cue ball at the bottom of the page perhaps. Doing so requires a simple yet not so obvious technique. To execute the shot, hit the cue ball slightly below center and shoot straight at the stripe. The stripe will hit the rail, rebound directly backwards and knock the cue ball down table. Make sure to hit the object ball precisely straight to keep it in place on the rail and to send the cue ball backwards on the line of the shot. As diagrammed the shot will not require much speed. If the object ball is frozen to the cushion you must be sure to hit it hard enough to make the cue ball hit the bottom rail. Failing to do so with a frozen object ball would be a foul. This shot works best when the object ball is close to the rail (less than an inch) and the two balls are close to each other. Answering with the same shot from the bottom rail is possible but exceedingly more difficult.

In shot B, we have a similar setup but, because the solid ball is on the short rail, we will employ a slightly different technique to leave a more difficult shot than a short-rail imitation of shot A. This time, hit the cue ball slightly above center and cut the object ball slightly to the left. Make sure to cut it only slightly so there is still a double kiss between the two balls. With a double kiss after a slight cut and relatively slow speed the balls will move reliably into the positions shown with the shaded object ball and the dotted cue ball near the right, side rail. Employing the same technique as shot A and sending the cue ball across the table to the left, side rail will also work to leave a difficult shot and would be somewhat easier to execute. However, some situations may call for the trickier, yet more effective technique of double kissing with a cut. With another ball nearby to leave the cue ball behind, this shot would demand the tougher choice. Because shot B is considerably more sensitive it requires more practice to acquire a good feel for executing it.

Usually when a shot presents a potential double kiss, that kiss will serve to cause a miss and we work to avoid it. So, it's very instructive to see a situation where the double kiss can be exploited for a positive outcome as we see with the two shots presented here. It's merely one of the many hidden surprises from the world of safety.



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