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Two Important Kiss Shots

When Dr. Dave and I set out to film the Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots last year our goal was simple—to produce the most comprehensive collection of shots ever published in any medium. After viewing the finished product's eight hours of video together we confidently agreed that we met our goal and maybe then some. One thing viewers do not see is the occasional dispute that arose between us, usually over terminology, and the two shots shown here provide an example of a disagreement that went unknown to the world—until now. In my lexicon a carom shot is one where the cue ball rebounds from one object ball to pocket another. And a kiss shot is one where an object ball uses another object ball to direct itself to the pocket. I like that distinction. Regardless of how we refer to them however here are two important shots and techniques that will serve to win many games, especially in the heavy traffic of a bar table.

In the diagram we see two shots where the 8 ball's direct path to the pocket is blocked by one of our opponent's stripes. However in both cases we have an excellent opportunity to win the game by employing one of pool's most important principles—the fact that object balls behave the same as the cue ball when rebounding off of other balls.

Shot A offers us an opportunity to employ Dr. Dave's 30-degree rule and his famous peace-sign method for predicting a rolling ball's path after hitting another ball. Also, we should remember that the 30-degree rule applies across a wide range of places to hit the second ball, from a one-quarter-ball hit to a hit to a three-quarter-ball hit with only slight variation across that range. After checking the 8-ball's path with the middle finger of our peace sign and seeing that the index finger points to the pocket, we should also see that we have a relatively easy kiss into the corner for the game winner. To pocket the 8 ball aim the center of the 8 ball at the stripe's left edge and hit it with modest speed to ensure that the 8 ball develops full forward roll before reaching the stripe. After contact the 8 will proceed along the dashed line into the corner pocket even if the 8 hits the stripe a little more or less full than the aim point.

Shot B is a little trickier and requires a more accurate hit on the stripe with the 8 ball. Since we know that a sliding cue ball rebounds from an object ball on a path that's 90 degrees to the balls' line of centers at the moment of contact, a sliding 8 ball will behave the same way. We refer to that 90-degree line as the tangent line and a full understanding of it becomes one of our first important position principles early in our learning. Here we shall employ it to pocket a ball. If the 8 ball were frozen to the stripe as shown with the shaded ghost ball we would have what's called a dead kiss into the corner because the 8 cannot develop any roll before rebounding from the stripe. The same rule would apply if the 8 were very close to the stripe with the tangent line going to the pocket. In either case we could pocket the 8 by hitting it almost anywhere to the left of the line of centers.

Here, although we face a somewhat more challenging shot than a dead kiss, we still have a great opportunity to win the game. After checking this shot with a peace sign we would see that a rolling 8 ball would fall short of the pocket, hitting the cushion at or very close to the X. So we must hit that stripe where the shaded ball touches it with a sliding 8 ball. To make the shot, aim the 8 ball to replace the shaded ghost ball with firm speed to prevent the 8 from developing roll on its way to the stripe. Practice the shot with focus on your aim and speed until pocketing the ball feels second nature.

Because Dave provided the superb narration and editing for VEPS he got his way with naming the shots in the video. And, since I am in charge here, I get to straighten things out according to my way. In reality however we know that pocketing the ball is what really matters and how we refer to the shots means nothing when we're collecting our first-place money. You, of course, are welcome to call them however you wish, and you are also welcome to find 30 more excellent examples of both kisses and caroms on Disc I of the Video Encyclopedia.



