

# Refining Draw

One of the reasons that great pool remains elusive to many of the game's regular players is that much of the knowledge and many of the techniques that comprise a great pool game are not self evident to the player. In fact the knowledge for some of the techniques required to play a complete game is counterintuitive and remains hidden from many players in the vault of "pool's secrets." Because of this phenomenon many players become discouraged with a game that appears too difficult for them simply because their first attempts do not work as predicted. This month we shall work with the relationship between the speed of the shot and cue ball's path to open the door to further exploration in other areas where your first guess might have been incorrect.

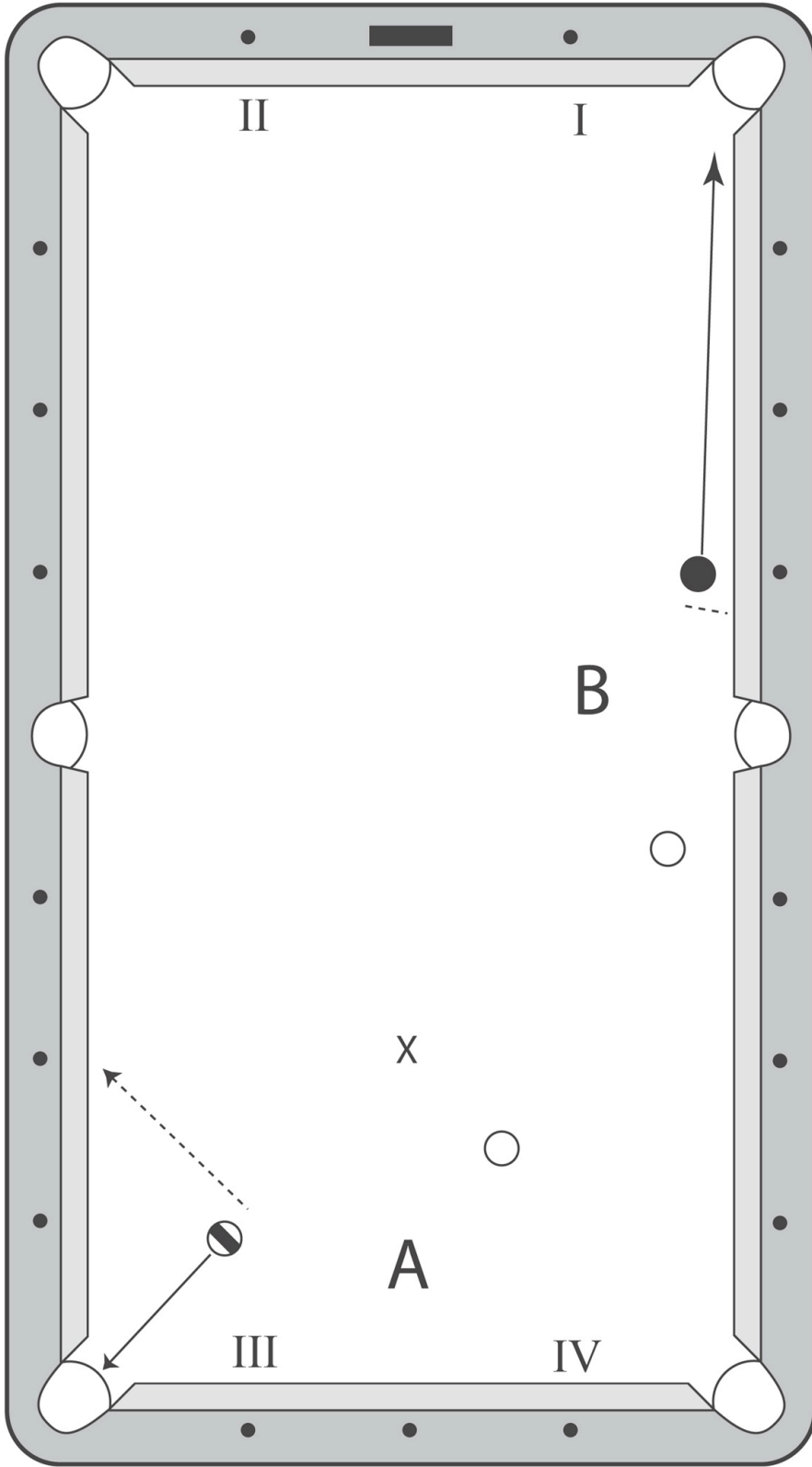
A few months back we spent some time shooting stop shots while cutting the object ball to develop the feel for keeping the cue ball on the line perpendicular to the path of the object ball into the pocket. Let me take this opportunity to badger you some more to spend the time with the necessary work to master the stop shot. As you work with draw and follow you will realize the benefit of having the stop shot in all situations as your benchmark for position play.

This month we shall work with the draw shot to refine our skill with it and to study the relationship between the cue ball's speed and the path it takes after hitting the object ball on a cut shot. First set up shot A marking the positions of the cue ball and object ball noting the perpendicular line that goes from the object ball to the second diamond on the long rail. Begin by hitting some stop shots at different speeds to nail down your feel for the shot and for keeping the cue ball on the line. Now move the cue ball to position X to practice some draw shots at various speeds; remember to hit the cue ball at the bottom with a level stroke for maximum draw and to move your bridge hand closer to the cue ball for the softer shots. When you are drawing the cue ball well at all speeds you can move it back to its original position to study what happens with draw on a cut shot.

Hit a few draw shots and, after watching the object ball go into the pocket, move your eyes to the cue ball to study its path. Regardless of the speed, if you are drawing the cue ball it will move off of the object ball wide of the perpendicular line. Its exact path is determined by how well you draw it and the speed you use. What you must see is that the cue ball does not move in a straight line to its ultimate path. Instead, after hitting the object ball, it moves along the perpendicular line before the backspin makes it draw; the harder you hit it the farther it moves on the perpendicular line. Practice drawing the cue ball down the long rail for a shot on a ball at position I. Consider now what speed you would use to draw the cue ball as directly as possible off of the object ball toward the diagonally opposite corner for a shot on a ball at position II. Intuition might tell you that for more draw you need more speed. You will see in shooting the shot that the opposite is true; for maximum draw on a cut shot you must hit the cue ball more softly to pull it off of the perpendicular line as quickly as possible.

Now we can move to B to work with a shot that's critical in every pool game. Set and mark an object ball on the first diamond past the side pocket about one ball width away from the rail. Place the cue ball as shown about two to two-and-a-half ball widths from the rail. Note the perpendicular line, which is very short and goes directly to the rail. Look at the shot to predict how you must hit it to draw the cue ball along the same rail for a shot on a ball at position III. Try to predict how you need to hit the shot to get the cue ball directly to the rail to draw it across the table for a shot on a ball at position IV. You will find that for the first shot, in order to make the cue ball snap back off of the object ball directly along the same rail, you must hit it rather softly but with smooth, gradual acceleration. A medium bridge works best for this shot. Usually, you will use right-hand english for these shots to help keep the cue ball close to the rail, but shoot a few at first with no english. For the second shot, where you want the cue ball to hit the rail and draw across the table, you will find that you need more speed to keep the cue ball on the perpendicular line to hit the rail sooner for the rebound across the table. Elevating the butt of your cue also helps to move the cue ball laterally, directly to the rail for that bounce across the table.

Mastering the shots above will not be difficult. More valuable than the shots here is learning something that can lead to breakthroughs in your entire pool game. Several very common shots and situations come to mind where the most reasonable guess does not produce the desired result. Someone said that a crazy person is one who does the same thing repeatedly and expects different results. If you encounter situations where your desire seems possible but is not being realized take a chance and try the shots again with a different or perhaps opposite technique to the one that seems logical. A significant part of great pool is the willingness to step outside of what you already know.



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