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## A Slight Throw

Because safety plays such an important role in all pool games, the serious player will spend considerable time learning how to kick, jump or massé to hit and sometimes pocket balls that can appear hopelessly hidden. Many top players routinely make two and three-rail kicks or jump over obstacles to make shots that may look impossible seem like hangers. But a ball does not have to be buried to be out of reach and there's a certain, hidden-ball shot where another technique works to get around an obstruction to pocket the object ball.

In the diagram we see a shot where we must shoot at a partially hidden solid ball. A careful look at the setup shows that the right edge of the striped ball will catch the left edge of the cue ball in an attempt to make the otherwise easy, straight-in shot. Here's a problem that, owing to usual heavy traffic at one end of the table, arises most often in straight pool, but it can turn up in any pool game.

Setting up this shot precisely can be a little tricky. Begin with a straight in shot on the solid ball and the two balls about 12 to 14 inches apart. Then, while looking very carefully at the line of the shot, bring the striped ball into the picture from the left until you can see that the right edge of the stripe is in play to block the straight-in shot on the solid. It only takes a small fraction of an obstacle ball to block the cue ball's path and that's exactly what we want here. If the balls were farther apart perhaps a jump would be the answer. Or if more of the stripe were in the way I might attempt a standard, elevated massé. The precise setup we see here however calls for a different approach

Although the technique for this shot is unique in contrast to other methods for getting around obstacles, it is also relatively simple. Essentially you're going to hit as much of the solid ball as possible and use english to throw it into the pocket. In this case, because you want to throw the solid to the right you're going to use left-hand english. So, with a level cue and maximum left english (9 O'clock), and a slow, soft stroke, aim to hit as much of the solid as you can. If your cue ball has enough spin, it will throw the solid enough to the right to meet the pocket. Along with maximum english and a soft stroke, the keys to this shot are the precision to pass the stripe as closely as possible along with the necessary courage to aim the solid as if you were shooting it to the X. You must trust your english to throw the solid ball. Because we rarely shoot with a perfectly level cue, you may see the cue ball curve slightly to the left around the stripe, but this is a throw shot more than a curve.

Although the setup we see here is relatively simple, it provides a nice introduction to the art of throwing an object ball with english, a tool that we can employ in many more situations. Proficiency with this month's shot will lead to confident execution of the same technique when you can identify its necessity in other setups, giving you one more skill to keep you at the table when you might otherwise have to sit down.

