*Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, technical proofs (TP), and all of my past articles can be accessed and viewed online at **billiards.colostate.edu**. The reference numbers used in the articles help you locate the resources on the website. If you have a slow or inconvenient Internet connection, you might want to view the resources on a DVD. Details can be found online at: **dr-dave-billiards.com**.*

This is the second article in a series dealing with the *"Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB),"* a five-disc instructional-DVD set I recently created with fellow *Billiards Digest* columnist Bob Jewett. VEEB teaches all of the skills, knowledge and strategy one needs to excel at 8-ball. Topics include offensive and defensive strategy, position play, shot types, safety play, advanced shots, and run-out planning. An outline of the entire VEEB series along with video excerpts from each DVD can be viewed online at: **dr-dave-billiards.com/8-ball**.

After selecting solids or stripes, and after checking for and developing plans for any problem balls, an important step before beginning an 8-ball run-out is choosing a key ball for the 8. This is the last ball to be pocketed before the 8 that results in good position for an easy 8-ball shot for the win. **Diagram 1** illustrates an example where stripes is the best choice. There are no problem balls, and it is easy to get on the 8 ball, even though the 2 and 4 balls do limit access to and block pockets for the 8. A good key ball for the 8 is the 15 since a stop shot on the 15 results in perfect position on the 8 in the bottom-right corner. The 10 ball is a good key ball to get on the 15 ball. Almost any angle into the 10 can result in near straight position for the key 15-ball shot.
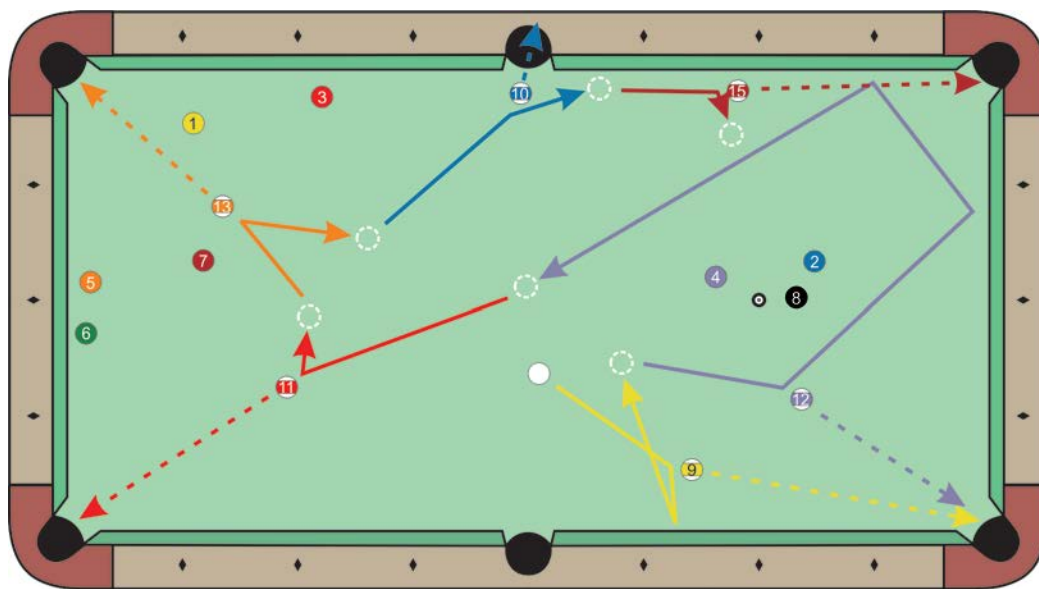

Diagram 1 Dealing with potential problem ball early to set up for the best key ball

Even though there are no real problem balls in this rack, the 12 can be slightly troublesome since other balls (the 2, 4, 8, 9, or 15) can be hit if we don't get a good angle for the 12-ball shot. It is best to avoid moving balls if it is not required or natural. As shown in the diagram, a good start in this layout is the 9, then the 12, and then the 11 and 13, leaving the 10 as the key ball for the 15 as the key ball for the 8. Starting with the 12 is also a good option since we can get a similar cue ball (CB) path from the starting CB position as with the 12-ball shot shown in the diagram. With this layout, center-table position for the CB (after the 12-ball shot) offers many options. Regardless of the exact ball-order chosen, the final stop shot on the key 15 ball leaves a very easy shot on the 8 for the win.

Sometimes what might appear to be a good key ball isn't always the best choice. **Diagram 2** illustrates an example where this is the case, shooting stripes. The 13 might seem to be a good key ball choice to get on the 8 with a simple follow shot through the gap between the 2 and 6. However, with the 2, 6 and 7 where they are, this

choice can be problematic. Even if we get good position on the 11 as a key ball for the 13, we would still need to be very careful. For example, if you were to leave the CB at position C-1 for the final 13-ball shot, the 2 presents a problem since it blocks the natural path forward to a shot on the 8. And if the CB were instead left in position C-2 for the 13, both the 6 and 7 present potential problems. A better approach from the beginning might be to avoid the 13 as a key ball for the 8 since it does require fairly tight position control. One good plan, as shown in the diagram, is to take care of the 10, 11 and 13 first, and then use the 9 and 14 to approach the 8 from below. This pattern requires very little CB motion, which is often a sign of a good plan. Reducing CB motion automatically reduces error in CB positioning since there is less motion over which error can occur. This pattern does result in a longer shot on the 8, as compared to following forward on the 13 to the 8, but the run-out is fairly safe and straightforward.
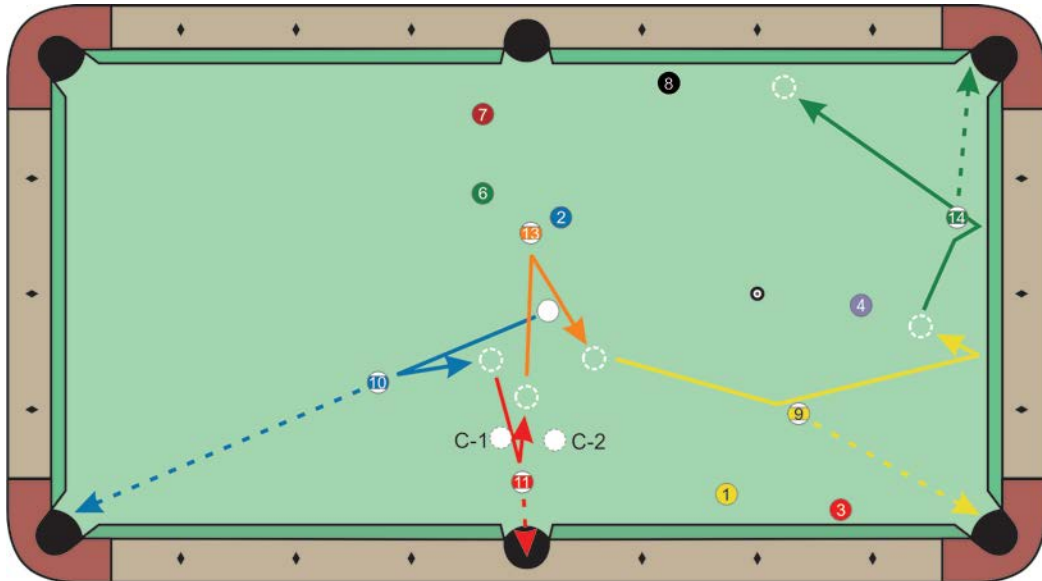

Diagram 2 Don't choose a key ball requiring tight position

Demonstrations of all of the shots in this article can be viewed in online video **NV G.3**, and the VEEB-I DVD includes many more game-situation examples dealing with post-break analysis, opening-shot options, choosing key balls, position planning, solving problems, safeties and two-way shots. As always, you should check out the videos and try the shots yourself the next time you are at a table. Reading is good, and watching is better, but trying is best.

I hope you enjoy my series of articles dealing with the "Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB)." If you want to view video excerpts from the entire DVD set, check out online videos **NV G.1** through **NV G.11**. Enjoy!

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave

NV G.1 – Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB) Overview
NV G.2 – How to Deal With Pocket Blockers in 8-ball, from Disc I of VEEB
NV G.3 – How to Select Key Balls in 8-ball, from Disc I of VEEB
NV G.4 – How to Use Cue Ball Drag to Enhance Sidespin in 8-ball, from Disc II of VEEB
NV G.5 – How to Use Spin-Induced Throw to Hold the Cue Ball in 8-ball, from Disc II of VEEB
NV G.6 – How to Come Into the Line of Blockers When Playing Safeties, from Disc III of VEEB
NV G.7 – Various Straight-In Shot Options in 8-ball, from Disc III of VEEB
NV G.8 – How to Deal with an End-Game Ball Tied Up with the 8-ball, from Disc IV of VEEB
NV G.9 – 2nd-Ball 8-ball Break, from Disc IV of VEEB
NV G.10 – Rack 8 Run-Out Example from Disc V of VEEB
NV G.11 – Rack 9 Run-Out Example from Disc V of VEEB

normal video

<u>PS</u>:

- I am happy to announce that my entire collection of instructional DVDs (23 total to date) is now available for streaming via YouTube. For more info, see: dr-dave-billiards.com/stream.html.

- I know other authors and I tend to use lots of terminology, and I know not all readers are totally familiar with these terms. If you ever come across a word or phrase you don't fully understand, please refer to the online glossary at ***billiards.colostate.edu***.

Dr. Dave is author of "The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards" book and DVD, and co-author of the Video Encyclopedias of "Pool Shots (VEPS)," "Pool Practice (VEPP)," and "Eight Ball (VEEB)," and the "How to Aim Pool Shots (HAPS)," and "Billiard University (BU)" instructional DVD series.