



*Tina Pawloski is an APA member from San Diego, Calif. She is a Skill Level 7 in 8-Ball and a Skill Level 9 in 9-Ball. Tina began playing pool in 1992 and has 8 years of experience playing in the APA. After competing in a number of Women's Professional Billiard Association (WPBA) qualifiers in 2005, she earned a spot in every WPBA Classic Tour event in 2006. After spending a year on tour, Tina decided professional pool wasn't for her and returned to San Diego and began playing in the APA again. She has spent the past few years helping fellow members of the San Diego APA improve their game through instructional lessons.*

*By Tina Pawloski*



First and foremost, you must hit the rack square, or head on. If you see your cue ball deflect to the right or left, you aren't hitting the rack square. You want all of the energy from the cue ball to be transferred completely to the rack. Ideally, the cue ball should hit the rack and stop dead in the center of the table. If this is a problem, here are a couple ways to fix it.

First, take 50% power off your break. Concentrate on hitting the rack as square as possible, so that the cue ball sits in the middle of the table after hitting the rack. Start by adding a little more power each time it appears you're breaking well. Repeat this process until you can hit the rack with maximum power, while still maintaining accuracy.

NEVER sacrifice accuracy for power. A big powerful guy can completely smush the balls, but should he? His goal is to be accurate every single time, not to demonstrate his power.

I hit the cue ball just below center like a powerful stop shot. I "pop" it. I normally use a long bridge when I shoot, but not when I break. I shorten my bridge. The less distance the cue stick has to travel from my bridge hand to

the cue ball means more accuracy, and when you are hitting the ball that hard, that small adjustment counts. One of the things I also do is look at the cue ball last. On any other shot, I teach that you have to look at the contact point of the object ball last. The break shot, and when you are jacked up, are the only exceptions where it is allowable.

So as I get down, I look at the rack, so my body naturally gets in-line with the shot. Do not get down looking at the cue ball. As I am down, I am taking my practice strokes, getting comfortable, aiming. Once I feel I am ready, the last thing I do is look at the cue ball, and I imagine literally punching a hole through it with my cue stick. There are many ways to address the break shot.

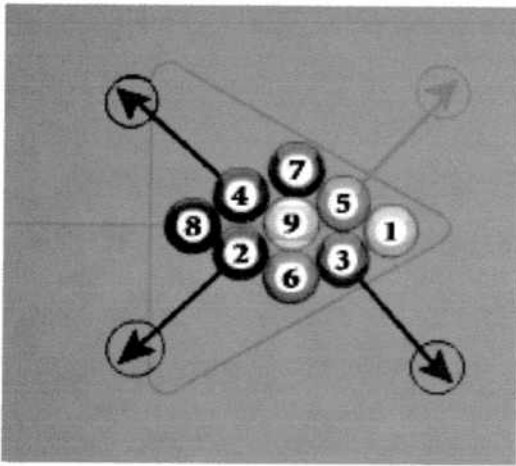
Most people underestimate the importance of a good rack. After I win a game, I always make sure I'm at the head of the table watching my opponent rack. That doesn't mean being obtrusive about it, or leaning over, or at the side of the table past the line that you would break from. Your opponent will always give you a better rack when they know you're watching. This is not to imply that people are inherently bad sports. But, when you're not watching, your opponent may let a ball that rolled off, roll off, because it *looks good enough*. Generally if you've watched, and they know you saw that ball roll off, they'll always rack it perfect until nothing rolls, or let you know that they are having difficulty and where that difficulty is so you can adjust. I cannot stress enough how important this can be.

## Cue ball placement . . .

The cue ball should be placed wherever you feel is the most conducive spot for you to hit the rack as square as possible. In 9-Ball, most pros like to break from the side rail at the line, as it frequently makes the corner ball. This strategy is useless if you don't hit the rack square. If you do not hit it square from the side rail, don't shoot it from there! I don't break from the side rail because I'm more accurate closer to the center of the break line. Because I hit the rack square, I still make the corner ball just as often as most do from the side. Again, accuracy is vital.

## The rack . . .

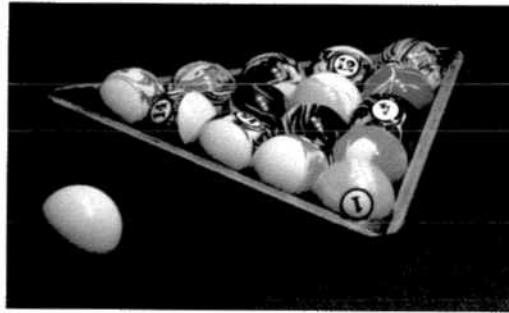
When I played my first pro event, Tiffany Nelson and I were becoming friends. During practice, she asked if I knew what the professional way to rack was. She showed me how and why, and I'll share it with you now. Look at the picture below. This is the order the balls should be racked in 9-Ball.



Notice how the arrows are drawn. When the breaker is breaking from the right side of the table (from their perspective, not the racker's perspective) this is how the balls should be racked.

When the balls are broken, this is what generally happens:

- The 1-ball typically goes toward the side pocket (not drawn) or above.
- The 2-ball which is placed under the 9 goes down toward the foot rail. (*The foot rail is the short rail closest to where you rack.*)
- The 3-ball goes up the table toward the head rail. (*The head rail is the short rail closest to where you break from.*)
- The 4-ball goes down like the 2-ball toward the foot rail.
- The 5-ball goes up the table toward the head rail.



**Note:** If the person breaks from the right side of the head rail. The only thing that changes if the person likes to break from the left side of the head rail is that the 2 and the 3 switch sides with the 4 and the 5, staying either below or above the 9-ball as they were before, just the opposite side.

On the bar table, the balls tend to get a bit more jumbled and knocked around, so placement might be less of a concern. On the regulation size table (4-1/2 x 9), I am very sure to rack them in this order. On the bar table, I am sure to have the 2-ball below the 9 and the 3-ball above the 9 at the very least.

## Etiquette . . .

When I am playing 9-Ball, I have to get a good rack. It doesn't matter if I am playing a Skill Level 3 or another 9. When I am playing a 3, I am giving up a whole lot of balls. I need to make a ball on the break to either run out or attempt a safety. I never want to give up a ball, ever. When I am playing a 9, either I make a ball and run out, or they run that rack and the next three. As you can see, it is so very important to get a good rack.

If you are playing, it is your responsibility to get a good rack, not necessarily the person that is racking for you. What that means is, in the end, you need to watch out for you. If you are asked by your opponent to re-rack, it is not to be seen as being difficult or accusatory like you meant to give them a bad rack. Do not take it this way! When I am asked to re-rack, I say, "No problem!" and do so with a smile. I know they are trying their best to get something that they deserve to get. Sometimes I miss if a ball rolls off, or the rack is tilted, and I didn't/couldn't see it from where I was. The worst thing you can do is get upset over it, because this is surely not the intention. This only affects your game, makes you upset, and this may affect a future shot.

In the next article, we'll go over proper 8-Ball strategy. Whatever skill level you are, you will get something great out of it!

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# TRICK SHOTS BY DR. CUE

Tom "Dr. Cue" Rossman has been performing trick-shot exhibitions for over 30 years. He has won numerous awards, including the World Masters Trick Shot Competition, the North American Professional Trick and Fancy Championship, the World Artistic Championship, the ESPN Trick Shot Magic Event, and the WPA World Draw Shots Discipline. He is known as the Doctor of Billiardology. He currently does trick-shot exhibitions throughout the U.S., performing in college, military, corporate, mall, prison, billiard and special event arenas. Dr. Cue has agreed to give APA members a special look at how he performs some of his favorite trick-shots.

## A "New" Angle to an "Old" Shot

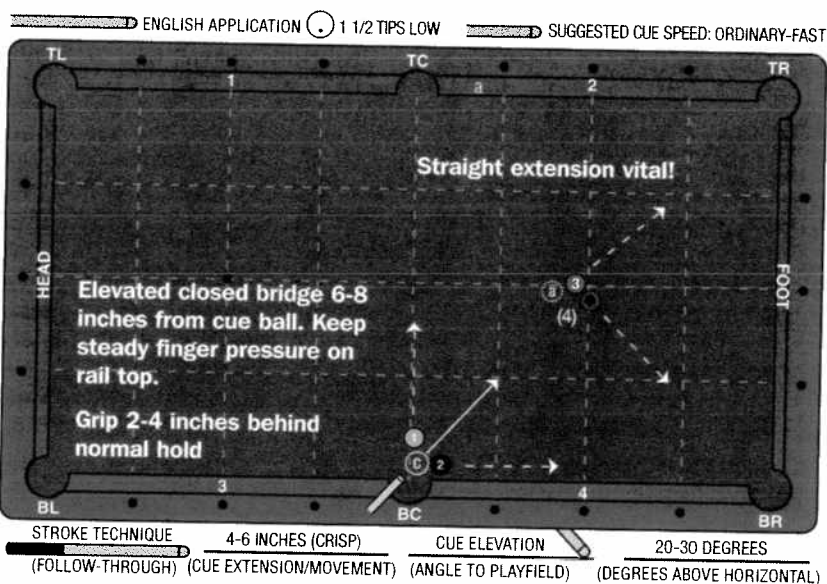
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: **3.9**

CONFIDENCE FACTOR: 7 minutes, 48 seconds per day for 3 days

**SETUP/POSITION:** Cue ball 2 inches out from edge of pocket BC and right edge of (c) even with right point of BC; 1-ball frozen to (c) and aim setup line to left center of TC; 2-ball frozen to (c) and setup aim line to right center of BR; 4-ball on foot spot and 3-ball on setup aim line to right center of BR as one would stand behind 3-ball (frozen). **DOUBLE CHECK SETUP!**

**BALL(S) POCKETED/OBJECTIVE:** Cue ball is aimed to (a) on 3-ball, which is exactly at 1/2 of the 3-ball to the left; 3-ball goes in TR and 4-ball makes at BR. Before these go in, cue ball makes 1-ball in TC and 2-ball in BR. 4-ball is the last ball to drop if hit properly!

**ADJUSTMENT ANALYSIS:** Our "old" shot on the 3-ball and 4-ball set up is common to many shots. We have changed our angle to the (3) - (4) by moving our cue ball over by the side pocket. If 1-ball hits to the left of TC, adjust setup line to right slightly, and vice-versa, while adjustment to 2-ball is similar. If 2-ball hits to left of BR, adjust setup line aim to right slightly, and vice-versa. The critical element of this shot is to follow-through straight and extend!



## Dipsy-Doodle!

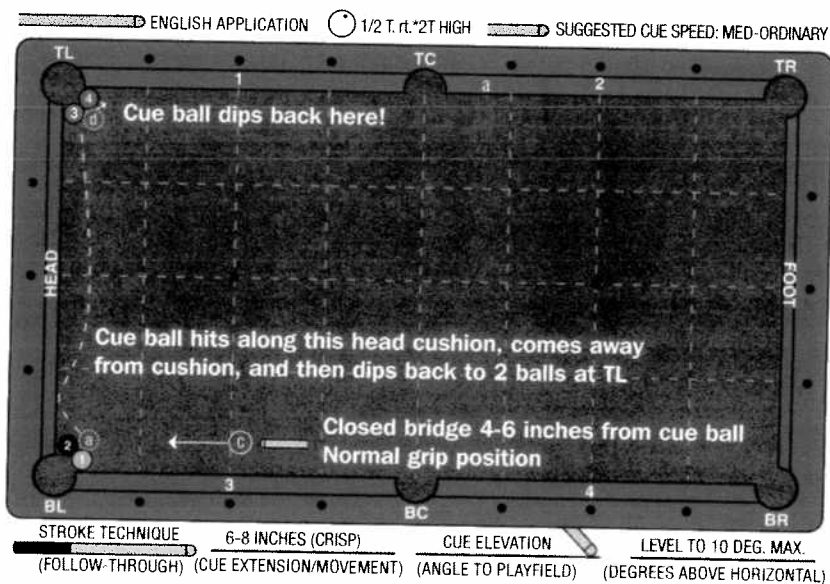
DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY: **4.0**

CONFIDENCE FACTOR: 8 minutes per day for 3 days

**SETUP/POSITION:** Cue ball 2 diamond segments away from head cushion and 1/2 ball's width off cushion #3; 1-ball inside left jaw of BL as viewed from behind cue ball toward pocket. This ball should be deep as you can place it in pocket opening. 2-ball in right jaw but not as deep as 1-ball—you can see past (1) to 3/4 of (2); (3) same as (1)\*(4) same as (2). **DOUBLE CHECK SETUP!**

**BALL(S) POCKETED/OBJECTIVE:** Shoot cue ball (c) to aim point (a), which is just barely catching edge of 1-ball and hitting (2) nearer full. Cue ball will hit head cushion, then come out and spin over and back (dipsy-doodle!) to hit (3)-(4) to TL. (1)-(2) fall in BL pocket.

**ADJUSTMENT ANALYSIS:** If you make 1-ball, but 2-ball does not fall, chances are you hit too much of the (1)! If cue ball goes to head cushion, but doesn't dip back, the high application of your tip was not maintained throughout the stroke. This I call doodle, without dipsy! If you get too much dip action, you might catch the 4-ball and not hit the 3-ball at all. This of course, is too much dipsy, without doodle! Make sure balls in setup to opening are not frozen to each other! There should be as much space between them as possible, but on some small pocket tables, this is very difficult to arrange. Large pockets are best.



*Few people know the story of how the American Poolplayers Association (APA) began. In the following article, APA Co-Founder Terry Bell recounts how the APA came into being 30 years ago . . .*

# How It All Began

by Terry Bell



During the mid-1960s the Beatles were in, flower children were just emerging, and I was a young army artillery officer. While stationed in Korea there wasn't much to do, so I began playing pool. I found the game intriguing—and addictive—so I spent many hours in the recreation room. Although I didn't realize it at the time, pool was destined to become a big part of my life.

Originally, just as I believe everyone does with the arts and sports, I played strictly for the love of the game, never suspecting I would become a nationally known professional player. Between 1968 and 1978, I drove more than a half-million miles around the country playing pool. I played in every state except Hawaii—from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Kissimmee, Fla., and from Lewiston, Idaho to Portland, Maine, and all points in between.

There were plenty of tournaments to play in but, similar to what Lee Trevino said about his early days of golf, mostly it was playing for money. There were probably no more than 25 to 30 players traveling the national circuit at the time. In defense of us "road players," unlike the publicly held view that there was always a shark and a victim, 90 percent of the games involved two players of considerable talent, and winning was tough.

I felt the first inklings of an entrepreneurial adventure during these travels. Here was a game being played by millions of people—statistically more than golf and tennis combined—and yet there was no structure! Pool didn't have an official or governing body like bowling, golf or tennis. Not only did the rules vary from place-to-place, so did the game itself. Players didn't know how or where to buy cues, tables and other equipment. Generally, they didn't know how to improve their game and were largely unaware of the many ways to enjoy the sport as a life-long challenge and source of pleasure.

One evening in 1976, I attended a meeting called and held by a group of investors interested in further developing the Pro Tour. Virtually every great player was in attendance. This is where it happened! I remember raising my hand and commenting that some dollars should be devoted toward the development of amateur pool. I suggested pool wouldn't have stars until there were fans. A solemn silence fell upon the room as developing amateur pool probably sounded suspiciously like work. Larry Hubbard, generally considered among the best two or three players in the world during the '70s and '80s, was the only person in the room who echoed my sentiments. I had known Larry casually and as a fellow competitor for several years, but our friendship grew from that point on.

During the next two or three years, I remember having many conversations with Larry as we discussed the essential elements necessary for success (money) and the hurdles (raising money) we faced. We developed *The Equalizer*® handicap system so players of all abilities could compete more equally. Formats, rule books and national championships were also created. We chose franchising as our business model. We felt we could expand more rapidly through franchising and that we'd have a more highly motivated network of representatives, as franchisees are also owners. We also successfully attracted major sponsorship and launched what became the American Poolplayers Association in the summer of 1979.

The blastoff wasn't filled with fireworks, cigars and champagne toasts—not by

a long shot! Instead, Larry and I agreed to pour all our existing and future funds into the vision we shared. The project would demand sacrifice on both our parts. I think back to one memorable meeting, when a new franchisee approached me and spelled out the difficulties he'd been enduring while trying to sign up more teams. He explained how tough it was to spend day after day trying to spread the APA word only to gain one rejection after another. I knew exactly where he was coming from, and I let him know about it. After taking the frustrated gentleman aside and explaining that this was a process that would take time to get off the ground, I shared a few of our own personal struggles, holding firm to the belief that greener pastures lie ahead.

What he didn't know was what Larry and I had been sacrificing to realize our dream. For more than two years, our company didn't make enough profit for the founders to write themselves a paycheck. Living off the income of our wives, we needed to find an outside source of cash flow to keep the company afloat, so we decided to make a return to the area we knew best—playing pool. The problem with getting back into competition was that the company was still in full operation and required our complete attention. So we made a decision.

Larry and I decided the only option for financial survival was for him to hit the road for an occasional tournament and let me run the business in his absence. I gave up my professional status and Larry, whom I believed was the better poolplayer, went back on the Tour. We shared all his winnings evenly, as our two lives continued to merge. When it came to combining resources, that was the only way. Our families rented apartments a mere 60 yards apart so we could save a few pennies by carpooling to work. Sure, it wasn't the most convenient of arrangements, but that's what we agreed it would take. We could see past the coupon clipping and grueling road trips for one persisting reason: We not only loved what we were doing—we believed in it!

So, too, would a few others, as we soon found out. One by one, many of those prospects that claimed we were out of our minds trying to create a business out of common people who simply enjoyed playing pool had a change of heart. One by one, we would sign up another team and a new franchisee.

We continued to make steady progress during the next several years, and the APA has since become generally recognized as the Governing Body of Amateur Pool in the United States. We overcame many obstacles, including the skeptics who said it couldn't be done. Today, I'm proud to say we succeeded. We now have nearly 270,000 members throughout the United States, Canada and Japan.

We knew that making our vision a reality required more than just a wish. That's why we had to stick to the long-range plan, and be sure to invest all the necessary time to organize our efforts before the company got off the ground. Once it did, we knew we'd be in for a rocky ride. Fortunately for me, I had the support I needed to satisfy the niche of amateur pool. Without the certitude I embraced and the unconditional faith my wife, family, the Hubbarts and other friends placed in me, my vision would still be a daydream.

I also owe a special thanks to our League Operators network (both past and present), our National Office staff and, of course, our members.

