



Pattern Play

CHOOSE YOUR PATH WISELY

When playing position we often have a choice of paths for our cue ball to take to arrive at the desired spot for the next shot. We can take the different routes by deciding to use one or more cushions, follow, draw, etc.

When one choice has the cue ball arrive at the spot by taking a route that is on the same line that you will be shooting after it gets there, that's the path to choose. In this situation, even if you end up a little short or a little long, you will still have essentially the same shot and the same angle to your next shot.

However, when you attempt to arrive at your desired position by crossing over the line that you will eventually be shooting on, a little long or a little short could very well not leave you with any shot at all. And, even if you still have a shot, chances increase that you could end up on the wrong side of the ball for your next shot. So, choose your path wisely.

PATTERN PLAYS

It's wonderful to be a good shot maker, but planning a pattern and playing position are the two skills that will result in your running out.

Pattern play is simply developing a plan on how you intend to run the balls. Sometimes it is necessary to develop a new pattern after every shot if you get out of line. But it is important to always have a pattern.

If you have trouble with pattern play, practice by throwing three balls out at a time and keep creating different patterns to run them until it becomes second nature to your game.

PLAN AHEAD, REALLY!

A common mistake many players make when planning position is only considering the sequence of balls and not focusing on which side of the ball they should try to land on.

If, for example, you are playing 9-Ball and have the seven, eight and nine left for the run out. When shooting the seven, make sure you arrive at a place from which to make the eight and have an easy way to get on the nine. If you only focus on arriving at a place to make the eight, you may be on the wrong side of the ball, too straight in, etc., and suddenly faced with a very tough situation when trying to get to the nine ball.

Planning ahead means planning position, not just planning to make balls.

PLAN YOUR WORK

To the professional players, the choices they make and options they choose when planning how to proceed in any table situation are often more instinctive reactions than conscious decisions.

Most amateur players, however, must take the time to assess the table each time they approach it and make a plan. The pro players will tell you that they had to devote the time and patience to making conscious plans to arrive at the skill level they have achieved.

PAY ATTENTION AND REMEMBER

Memory is extremely important when playing position. When you execute a shot and pay attention to where the cue ball goes and then make a mental connection with the path it took and how you hit it, you can be reasonably sure that it will react very similarly under similar circumstances.

Some say that as much as 50% of your position play is memory. Pay attention to what happens after you execute a shot and make those mental notes.