

UNT's Guide to Good Billiards

Chapter One: Types of Billiards Games

Billiard Games

There are many different games that can be played in Billiards.

8-Ball

In the game of 8-ball you actually have 15 pool balls on the table. The balls are set up at the end of the table with the 1 ball in the front. Then to follow is any stripe ball on both sides, then solid, stripe, alternating as you fill in. The 8-ball is then placed right behind the 1 ball in the middle.



Once the balls are racked and placed, remove the triangle. Now you are ready to break. The person who is going first is the breaker. They have the cue ball at the opposite end of table of the balls. The cue ball has to remain behind the second white dot that is located on the side of the table before you shoot the ball.

Different things can happen when you break:

1. You break, and the balls are split up, but nothing goes in the pockets. Now the next player is up to shoot with no restrictions on which ball to aim for.

2. You break, and you make a ball in, either solid or stripe. The pattern of your ball that you shoot in the pocket determines which pattern you will be aiming for the remainder of the game.
3. You break, and you make two balls of different pattern into the pockets. When this happens, the breaker is allowed to choose which pattern he or she would like to keep aiming for. Once chosen, it is their turn, and they keep shooting.
4. You break, and you make the 8-ball into a pocket. This means the breaker wins the game.
5. You shoot, and you do not hit any of the balls. The next team gets to shoot from where the ball is.
6. You shoot, and you scratch. The next player then gets to break.

After the breaking portion of the game, you begin targeting your pattern (solid/stripe) if either team has successfully made a ball into a pocket. If a team has yet to make any ball in any pocket then any ball can be hit into any pocket EXCEPT the 8-ball.

Once you have your pattern (solid/stripe) your goal is to make that entire pattern into the pockets on the table.

If someone makes their ball into a pocket, they shoot again UNLESS:

They scratch the ball

-the next team gets the cue ball behind the second white dot on the side

The cue ball hits the other team's pattern before it hits your pattern

-the other team gets to shoot the ball from its position

The 8-ball is hit in before your team's entire pattern is in the pockets

-the team that hit the 8-ball in the pocket, loses

Once you have hit your entire pattern into the pockets, now it is time to shoot for the 8-ball calling the pocket you are shooting the 8-ball in.

If your team does not hit the 8-ball, the other team gets ball-in-hand.

If you hit the 8-ball into a pocket that you did not intend it to go into, then your team loses.

If you scratch the cue ball shooting for the 8-ball, your team loses.

If you shoot the 8-ball into the pocket you said it would go into, and do not scratch the cue ball, your team wins.

Objective: You want to hit your entire pattern into the pockets, and then be the first to hit the 8-ball into the pocket you call.

9-Ball

In the game of 9-ball, you have nine balls on the table along with the cue ball. The balls are set up in a diamond shape at the end of the table with the 1-ball facing the middle of the table and placed with the 9-ball in the middle of all of the balls.



Once you have set your pool balls with the diamond rack, remove the rack and set the cue ball at the other end of the table behind the second white dot on the side of the table.

Now it is time to break. The first team has the cue ball at the opposite end of the table from the set behind the second white dot on the side of the table.

Different things can happen when you break. The player breaks and:

1. The 9-ball goes into a pocket. The team that broke wins the game.
2. The cue ball goes into a pocket. It is a scratch, and the next team gets to place the white ball behind the second dot on the side of the table where the cue ball started.

3. Different balls go into the pockets. For example: the 1, 3, and 5 balls are hit into the pockets. That team continues to shoot, shooting in ascending number order. So, 2, then 4, then 6, 7, 8, and finally the 9-ball.
4. No balls are hit into any of the pockets. The next team is now up to shoot.

After the break, you shoot in ascending order of the remaining balls on the table. It is important that you only hit the lowest ball on the table with the cue ball. There are combo shots, which you can hit the cue ball into the lowest number ball, and then the lowest number ball into any other ball on the table.

Objective: You want to be the first team to shoot the 9-ball into any pocket.

Scratching

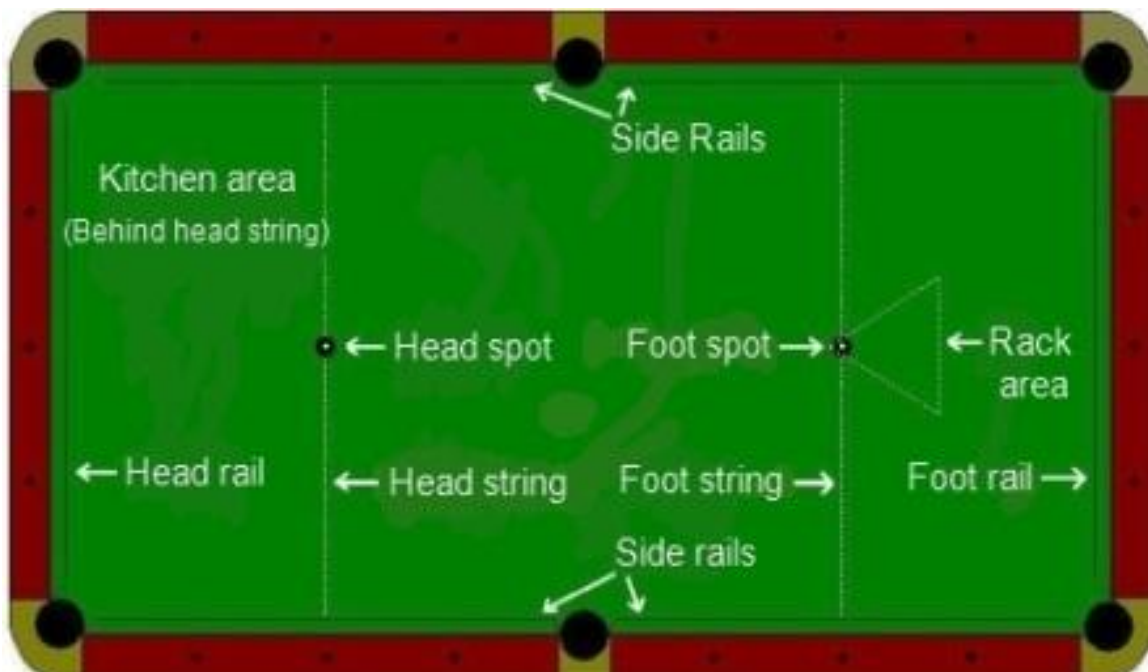
It is a foul (scratch) if on a stroke

- The cue ball is put into a pocket
- The cue ball doesn't hit a/the correct object ball
- The cue ball goes off the table

When a scratch happens, there are two rule variations.

The first is called ball in hand. This is when the opposing player gets to place the cue ball anywhere on the table.

The second rule is called in the Kitchen. This is when the opposing player gets to put the ball behind the second pair of dots (in the Kitchen) on the side of the table you originally broke from.



Chapter Two: Pool and You

Pool Cue Care

The most important tip for maintaining a pool cue is to never wave it around like a sword or use it for something else besides playing pool.

Pool Cue Storage

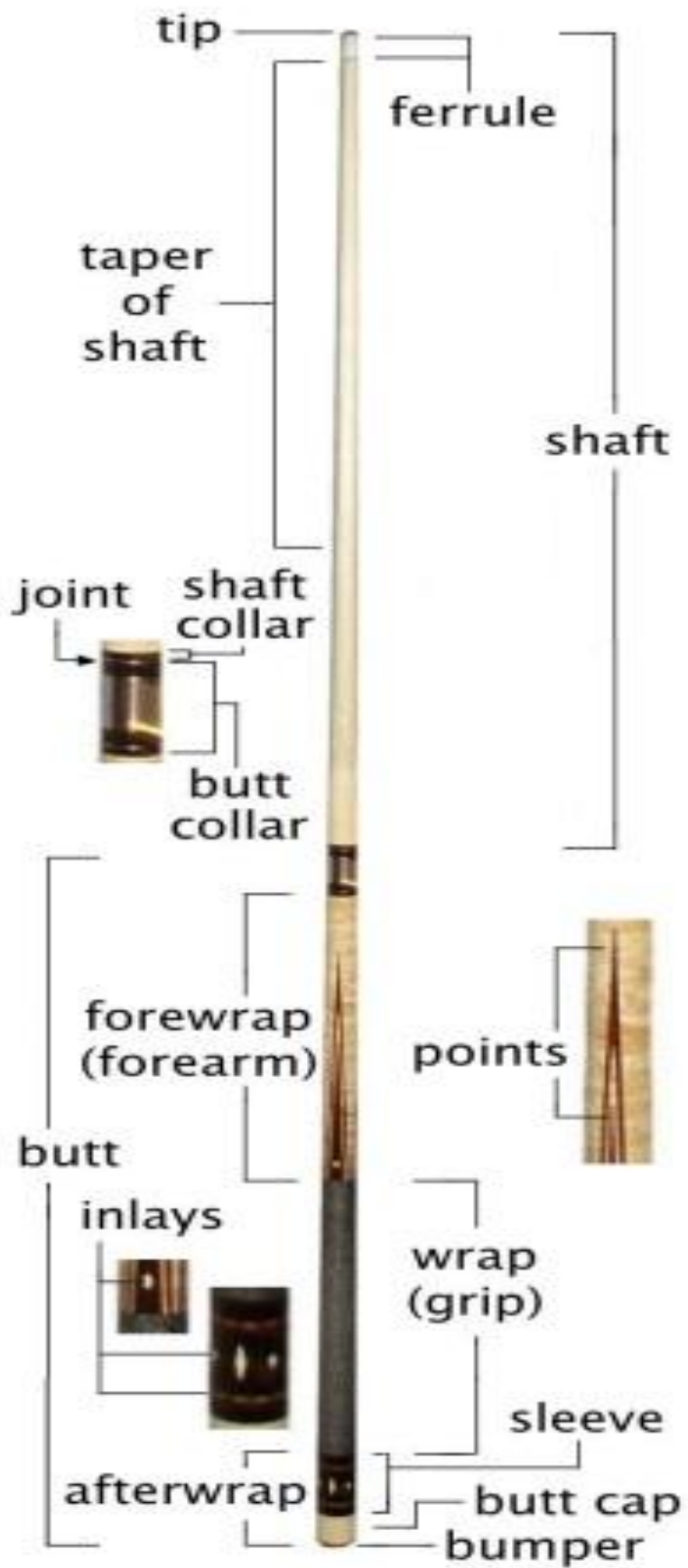
You need to store your cue in the full upright position that a cue rack provides when it is not being used in a billiard game. Avoid leaving a cue leaning up against a wall or otherwise unsupported for an extended period of time, if it bends it will be almost impossible to make it straight again. Always protect your pool cue from any and all external conditions such as extreme temperatures both hot and cold, humidity, and of course, direct sunlight.

Cleaning Your Pool Cue Shaft

After every game you should clean the shaft of your pool cue with an alcohol base cleaner to remove all the bacteria that sweaty hands can leave behind. Wipe off the ferrule and tip of your pool cue after you clean the shaft of your pool cue.

Maintaining the Ferrule and Pool Cue Tip

The actual pool cue tip is also very important to keep clean; this will affect backspin, accuracy, touch, smoothness of stroke, and precision of each and every shot that you take. When the pool cue is not in use, it should be maintained by protecting the cue's tip from any dings, scrapes, gouges, or anything else that may otherwise be of potential danger. This can be achieved by placing it in a cue case. Finally, you must remember that the tip itself should always be covered when not in play.



Pool Hall Etiquette

Pool halls on campus are slightly different than other pool halls and require different common courtesies. For starters, each hall plays with their own set of rules. One reason for this is because all players grew up knowing different “pool bar” rules, making each person’s rules different than the next.

To respect this and avoid confrontation, when a new player comes to a winner’s table he plays by the winner’s rules. If he wins, he holds table and may change the rules to how he is accustomed to playing as long as he announces to all upcoming opponents of the rules change.

Another common courtesy that helps avoid confrontation is the courtesy of not walking into a pool hall and grabbing someone else’s personal pool cue, always ask before using someone else’s equipment. As obvious as this may sound, this courtesy is lost to a lot of college players. The main reason for this is because it is someone else’s property, and in some cases, some cues may cost \$200-\$400 and a person may not know about it.

Respect and the lack of respect is one of the largest problems when it comes to pool hall etiquette. Respect comes down to many things when in the pool hall. The main form of respect, outside of the obvious being nice to your fellow pool players, is being semi-quiet during someone else’s shot. Some people require some concentration to make their shots, and being quiet during this time is the best way to keep respect for them in the pool hall.

A UNT pool hall runs off of a line system. When you come in, you call last in line and then you wait until your turn. You have to stay during your wait, otherwise you give up your spot, unless you work something out with everyone in the pool hall before you leave. This system makes sure everyone gets a chance to play.

Chapter Three: Pool Halls on Campus

Bruce Hall

Bruce Hall is one of the better places to play on campus. It is secluded and great for practicing, because no one plays there. The tables are nice and have few problems. The only problem with Bruce is that it gets a little warm playing in the back of Bruce and some pockets are messed up and mess the shot up as it goes into the pocket.

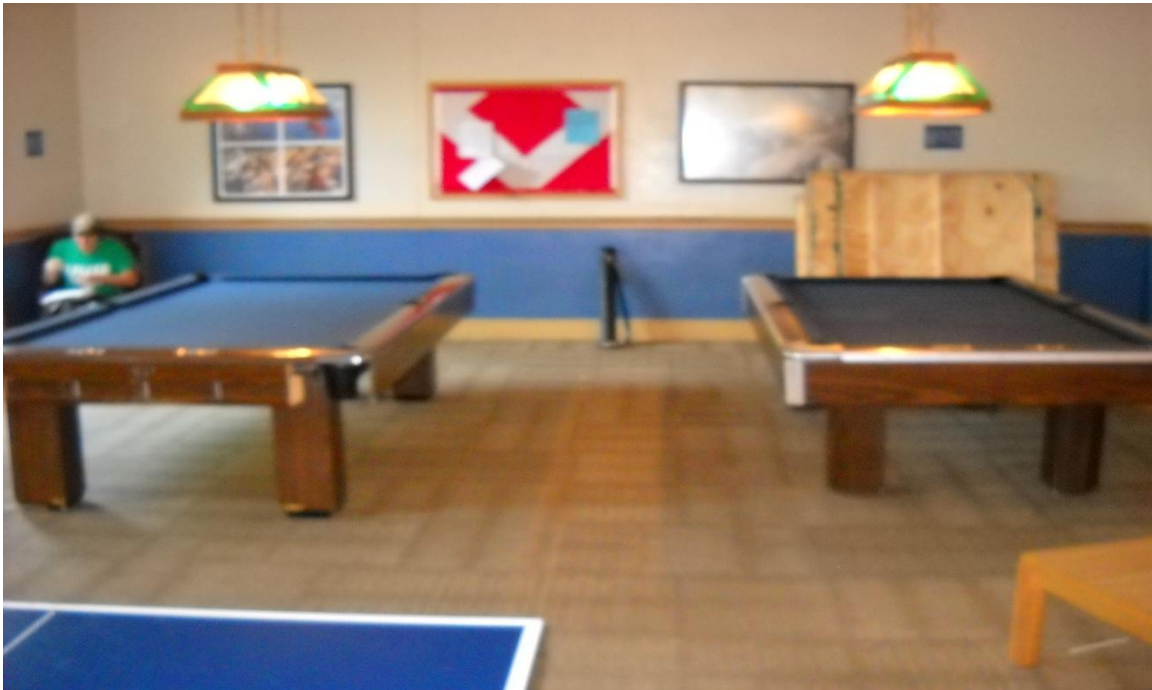
- Good felt
- Decent speed
- Problem pockets
- Gets stuffy
- Walls mess up shot sometimes
- No lines



Clark Hall

Clark Hall is a decent place to play. One of their two tables is very nice with no table lean, but the other has a terrible table lean. Clark is fine to go and play at as long as you get the table on the left, but you do not want to be stuck there playing on the right table. It is a very comfortable place to play except for the constant stop and go play thanks to ping pong in the same room.

- Roomy-Two tables
- Felt is in decent condition, rips
- Left table is 9ft long, larger than normal
- Right table has a bad lean
- Felt has good grip on the cue ball
- No dead spots
- Ping pong gets very annoying



Honors Hall

Honors Hall's pool table is very nice and there is hardly ever a line to play. The only problem is that only Honors students are allowed to play on this table, making it pretty much useless to majority of the students on campus. If you have a friend that lives in Honors that will play with you at Honors, it is definitely worth the time.

- Only Honors students can play
- Secluded
- No checkout required
- No dead spots
- Table has little grip for English
- Hardly played on



Kerr Hall

Kerr Hall is a great place to play and is one of the most lively places to play on campus. The table itself has little problems, and is open later than other dorms. The problem with Kerr is that there are often long lines to play a single game of pool and there are not enough seats for the number of people that are in the room majority of the time.

- Great atmosphere
- 1 table for large dorm
- Good felt
- Slow table
- No lean
- Open late
- Good players/ good place to learn



Legends Hall

Legends Hall is an alright place to play. It doesn't have anything that would attract you to it, but doesn't have any problems either. It is really crowded with other things around the table which leaves you room for no more than four or five people. Trying to find Legends Hall is more fun than actually playing at Legends Hall.

- Not good for a lot of people
- Good felt
- Not worth walk
- Semi-fast
- No dead spots
- No lean
- Has a hotel lobby feel to it



Maple Hall

Maple Hall is a very good place to play. It has great atmosphere, with a TV. in the same room and seats for you to sit in while you wait for your turn. It only has one table that is a little crowded around the table with a bookshelf and piano. As long as there are not a large number of people waiting to play, it is worth the walk.

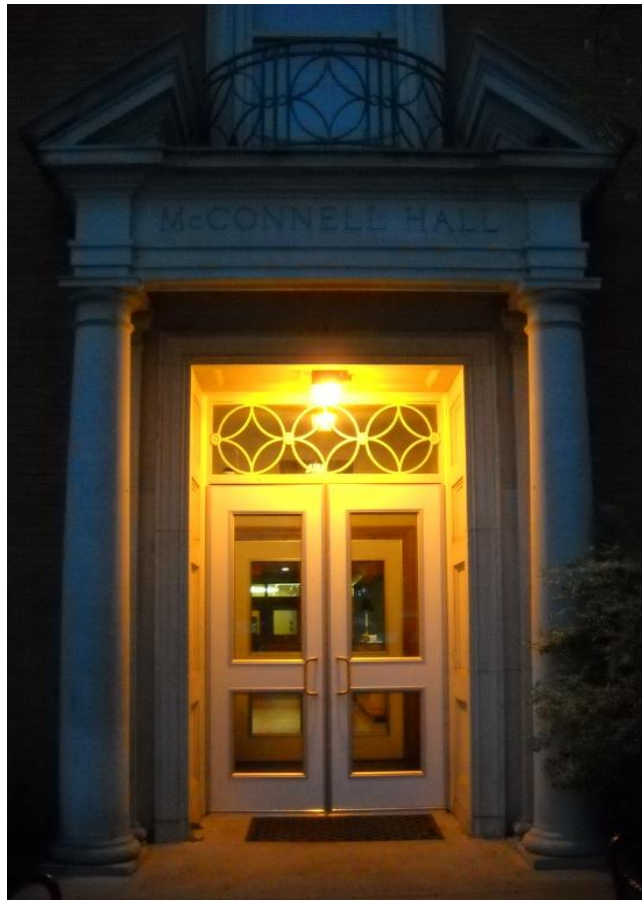
- The table is faster than most
- The felt is in good condition
- Felt has good grip on cue ball
- Little crowded around the table
- Great atmosphere
- No dead spots



McConnell Hall

McConnell Hall has a pool table. When you walk by the front you can see it through the window. Take a good look, because that is as close as you will ever get. To get into McConnell Hall, you must be a TAMS (Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science) student or be accompanied by a McConnell Hall Resident Assistant. TAMS is a two-year residential program at UNT for high school-aged Texas students who are interested in mathematics and science and want to take classes at college level.

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Sante Fe Hall

Sante Fe has a pool table, but was not played on because the front desk to check out equipment was never found. Looking at the table it is deduced that it has a decent felt and a slight lean. It has leather pockets, but the numerous futons around the table would make it hard to shoot at times. Aside from the pool table Sante Fe itself is creepy on the inside and smells.

- Decent felt
- Table lean
- Smells like a nursing home
- Futons in way of shot
- Leather pockets
- Reminds one of an insane asylum



Traditions Hall

The table at Traditions is probably one of the worst tables on campus, due to a frozen pipe bursting and causing a terrible table lean. Besides the table lean, the room the pool table in is very small, not big enough for more than four people. Aside from the leather pockets and speed of the table, there is no real reason to come and play at Traditions.

- Terrible table lean
- Crowded, walls mess up shots
- Leather pockets
- Thermostat
- Extremely fast
- Good felt



West Hall

West Hall is another good place to play. It has a nice atmosphere with a lot of things to do while you are at West. It has two tables that have no problems except for some dead spots on the table. The area around the tables though is sort of crowded and gets aggravating while trying to shoot, but besides these problems it is a great place to play and worth the walk if you do not live on that side of campus.

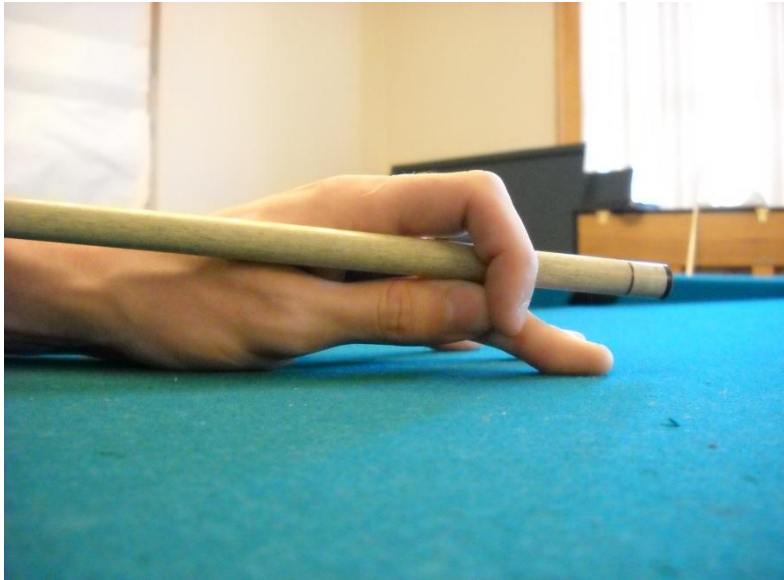
- No lean
- Dead spots
- Good felt
- Faster than normal speed
- Good atmosphere
- Slightly crowded
- Temperature is nice-cool
- Plenty to do



Chapter Four: Bridge, Stroke, and Techniques

Bridge

A bridge is what the cue rests on during the stroke. It can mean using the front hand to control the shaft of the cue during the aiming, stroke, and follow through of a billiard shot. When using a hand bridge, the shooter can rest the cue between the thumb and index finger for an open bridge or he or she can rest the cue on their thumb with their index finger wrapped over the top for a closed bridge. This is only two examples of a bridge, and there is many variations. Experiment and find the one that's most comfortable to you, while still making it as stable as possible.



Stroke

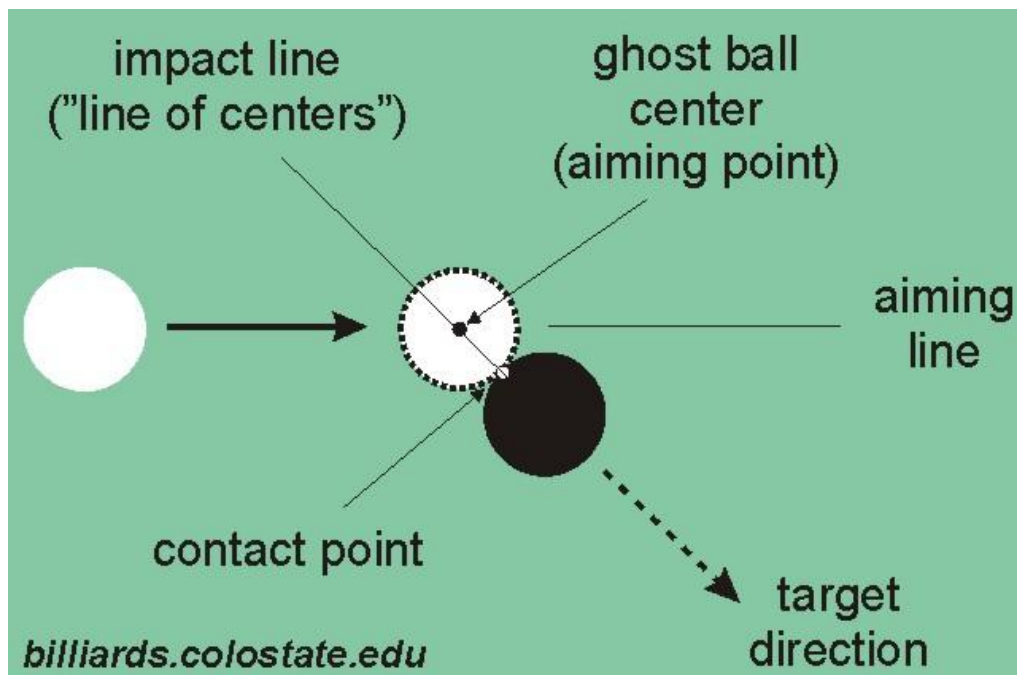
In its most basic form, the term stroke refers to the physical movement or motion of the shooter's arm and the cue stick. This includes the movement itself, the speed, the angle, the precision, and all other aspects of the act of making the shot. It may also refer in general to a particular player's shooting technique and abilities. Different strokes apply different affects to the cue ball.

Ghost Ball Technique

An easy technique for beginners to be able to see angles at which to hit the object ball to get it to go the direction you want it to.

To start, you visualize a straight line from the object ball to your desired pocket.

Then you place an actual ball (the “Ghost Ball”) to where it touches the back of your object ball on your visualized line. After this is done, aim with the cue ball at the direct center of the “Ghost Ball” you just placed behind your object ball. Then have someone remove the “Ghost Ball” while you visualize that it is still there, keeping your aim at the direct center of where it was. Then shoot. If done properly, the cue ball will hit your object ball at the desired angle and send the object ball down your previously visualized line and straight in the pocket. After practice, you will eventually not have to place an actual ball behind your object ball, and can just visualize the “Ghost Ball” in your head to aim at.



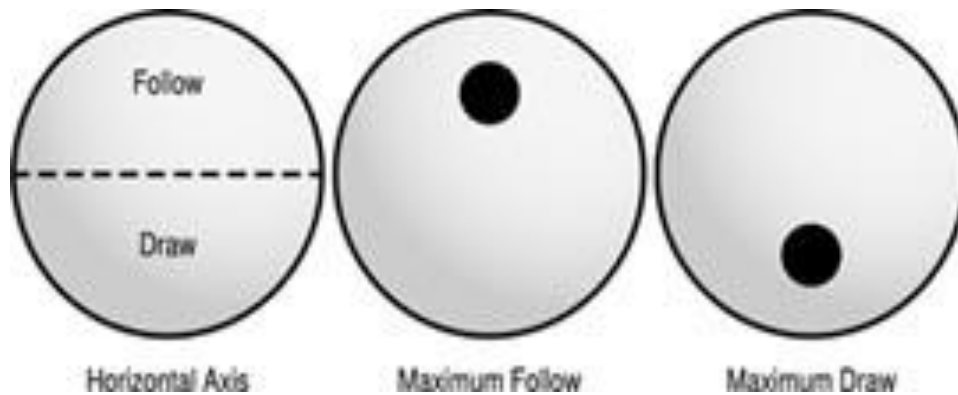
Follow Shot/Top Spin

A follow shot is a shot in which the cue ball continues traveling forward after it has struck the target object ball. When the cue ball, to which follow has been applied, hits the object ball center to center squarely, it should travel directly forward through the exact path the object ball has taken ahead of it. This sometimes allows a second ball to be pocketed. A follow shot is executed by striking the cue ball with the cue stick just above the equator and with adequate topspin applied. The opposite of a follow shot is the cut shot, where instead of traveling directly in the path of the object ball ahead of it, the cue ball veers on a tangent to either the right or left of that path.

Draw/Back Spin

A draw shot is a shot in which the cue ball is struck below center so that it draws back from the object ball after impact. This is accomplished through application of backspin.

A draw shot refers to any shot to which draw is applied to the cue ball. Any draw back of the cue ball after striking the object ball should be straight back, if the shot was a true draw shot.



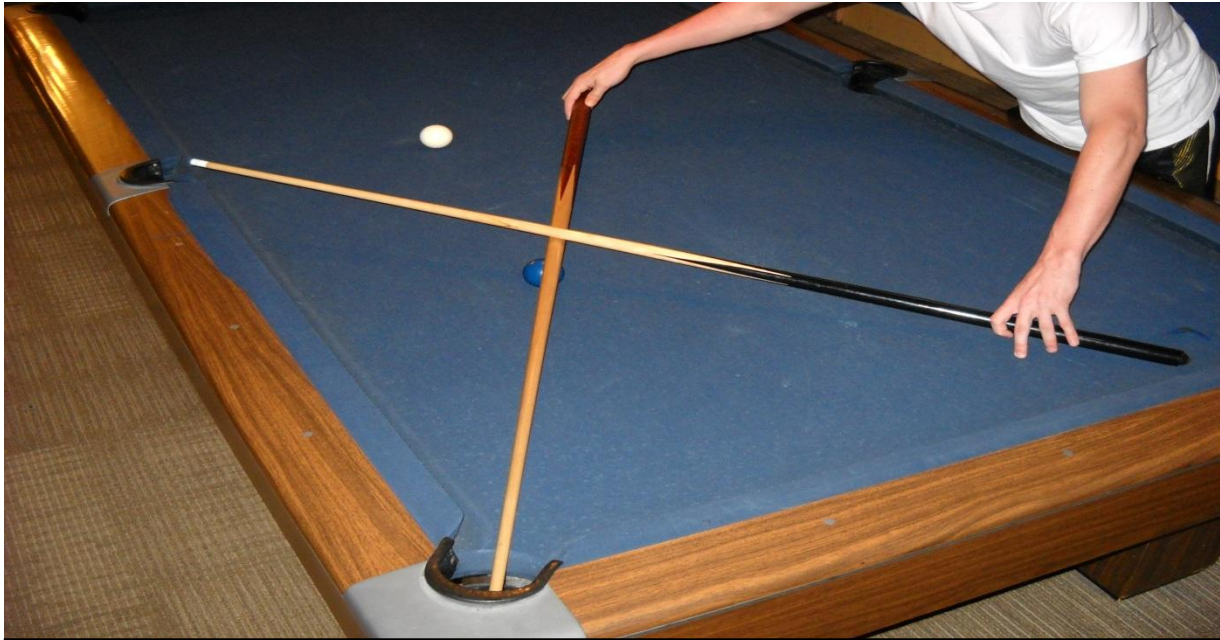
Alternate Uses for Follow shot and Draw

Draw and the follow shot can be used for their obvious intention (backing a ball straight back, or moving straight forward), but it can also be used while cutting a ball into a pocket to better position the cue ball almost anywhere on the table. When someone is going to cut an object ball into any pocket, the angle that the cue ball is going to bounce off the object ball at a ninety degree angle to the angle that the object ball is going to travel. Using this you can estimate where the cue ball will end up after the shot. An easy way to see the angles is to use pool cues to actually map out the angles on the table.



Follow shot and draw with the angle trick

Once you learn to see the cue ball angle after shot, you can use topspin and backspin to alter these angles to fit your needs. If you put topspin on the shot, it will decrease the angle that the cue ball bounces off the object ball. If you put backspin on the shot it will increase the angle that the cue ball bounces off the object ball. When you start to master this trick and normal side English, you will be able to place the cue ball almost anywhere that you want to on the table.



Cue ball trajectory with topspin



Cue ball trajectory with backspin

