

GAME ON

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The goal of practicing is to improve. The goal of playing a match is to win. It sounds simple enough but don't ever get the two confused with each other. When it is Game Day, your attitude should be completely different. Forget about mechanics, just concentrate on making the ball and getting position. Don't worry about being nervous, if you're like me, you will shoot better when you're nervous. Before you get up to shoot, grab hold of your seat and pull it hard (like dynamic tension) it will help you to relax more. Don't shoot over your head. We all believe that we are a little better than we actually are. That's because we remember our "glory" shots and forget about the times we dogged the game ball and it cost our team the match.

Keep everything as simple as possible. If center ball english will get you where you want to go, use center ball english. Do all your planning before you get into your stance. Once you get into your stance you should be aware of exactly what you want to do. Don't change your mind. Trust yourself and trust your feel. If something doesn't feel right or look right, stand up and start all over. Make everyone wait for you if you need the extra time. Never rush any shot.

If you get out of line, don't get rattled. If it's a little harder shot than you intended to have, just settle down and make it. Take your time. Be sure your aim is right before you shoot. Stop completely right before you shoot. Use this time to double check your aim. When it starts getting toward the end of the game, start playing it backwards. In other words, look at the nine and then the eight and then the seven. Plan ahead so you don't get into trouble. Nineball is a game of angles, use them wisely. If it looks like you can't get out, make sure your opponent can't either, or at least make it awfully tough.

Stay in the game, don't ever give up on yourself. Always be prepared to shoot if your opponent misses. Even if it looks like he will run out, don't give up. Stay positive. If you are playing 5 games that night, consider each one a new opportunity to do well. Don't dwell on your mistakes. Win or lose, always thank your opponent for the game.