

FINE TUNE YOUR GAME - PRACTICE SESSION PART FIVE

April 14, 2010 ~ by Tom Pringle



Before I go on introducing other shots and techniques, now would be a good time to slow down and elaborate on some of the information that has been written in previous articles. Hopefully, these articles have helped you. I know when I learned some of these techniques, my game improved immeasurably.

First, I cannot stress how valuable the short firm stroke is. It over comes many obstacles. You'll play better on a table that rolls bad; it improves your accuracy because there is less chance for error, IT SIMPLIFIES THE SHOT. Remember to always stop dead before actually executing the shot. Count to one. Double check your aim and make sure that you are right. Then let the shot go.

Another very good habit to get into, especially in league play, is to walk completely around the table. You can not get the entire picture by directly addressing the shot. Take a lap or even two laps sometimes. This helps slow you down which is important in league play. When you get towards the end of the game, start playing it backwards. Look at the 9 then the 8 etc. This will also help to slow you down.

Some players have a tendency to become more nervous toward the end of the game. If that describes you, don't let your nervousness affect your game. Overcome it with concentration. Talk to yourself, not out loud, but convince yourself you can make the shot you are facing. If you have made the shot before, then you *know* you can make it so *COMMIT* to it. Don't tense up, stay as relaxed as possible.

Don't be wishy washy while you are in your shooting stance. Do all your planning before you get down to shoot. Once you get into your stance, stop all your planning and concentrate on aim, english and speed. Apply the speed you've decided on to your practice stroke. Put your cue tip close to the cueball without touching it. Concentrate on where you want to hit the cueball. While you are doing that zero in on your aim. When you are satisfied with the feel and the direction of the shot, Stop dead. Double check your aim and shoot. Play most of your shots this way, and keep your wrist limber, don't lock it.

Establish a pre-shot routine for the break and another pre-shot routine for every other shot. Start the routine after you decide what you are going to do. You will be surprised how much this will help your game.

It is important to employ a balanced and solid stance. The bridge and the grip also play a vital part in successful competitive play. You'll have a hard time concentrating if you are uncomfortable and/or awkward in your setup. If you're new to the game, it may be a good idea to take a couple of lessons from a pro, so you can correct your bad habits before they become ingrained. Take the right approach now and maybe someday you'll be the one giving the lessons.