

MAKE PRACTICE SESSIONS COUNT PART SEVEN - POSITION

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Good shotmaking makes the challenges of positioning the ball much easier, so dedicate a lot of time into improving your shotmaking. The secret is to know your game. Place the cueball in a position where you know you can make that ball at least 7 out of 10 times. As you abide by this rule, you will find that your shotmaking percentage will increase to possibly 9-10 out of 10 times. You don't need to map out the entire rack, but you do need to plan at least 3 or 4 shots ahead. You will need a plan that is flexible and allows for error. If you go too far (or not far enough) on a certain position shot, you will need to regroup and develop another plan.

Be constantly aware of the angles, they are especially critical in 9-ball. Remember to always do all of your planning before you get into your shooting stance.

Practice randomly setting up 3 balls and strategizing how to run them out in order. Go different ways until you are satisfied with your moves. Then set up 4 balls and try the same thing. Make the drills more difficult as you improve.

Practice position shots that require the cueball to go down table on the first shot and back up table on the second shot and then back down again. On this drill, try to consciously avoid straight on position. This will condition you to be aware of the angles. Select some position drills from books or YouTube and practice those.

When you practice, use a lot of center ball english. That way you will learn the natural path of the cueball. Once you know the natural path, it will be easier to figure out which english to use.

It is usually not advantageous to try to pinpoint the exact placement of the cueball. It is far better to try to get the cueball to a general area. Visualize the largest circle (or oval) possible that will insure that you will have the proper angle on the next object ball.

It is usually safer to go to the rail and back out rather than trying to baby the cueball to a stop. When the cueball is resting up against the rail it makes the shot much more difficult so plan your positioning to keep the cueball off the rail.

If there are problem clusters in the rack, try to force your opponent to deal with them rather than running the balls until you get into trouble. However, if you are satisfied you can break them up and continue running the rack, go for it.

When you get toward the end of the rack, slow down. Be especially aware of the angles you will need to make the last couple of balls. Walk completely around the table and study it. Keep telling yourself you can do it. After all, you probably can.