



## Breaking Tips

### 9-Ball Break Tip #1

One of the corner balls in the 9-Ball rack (the balls farthest from either side of the nine ball) have a good chance of making it into a corner pocket if the break shot is made by placing the cue ball near the side cushion. Position the cue ball on the headstring, a couple inches off the cushion, and hit the one ball full. This is so effective that at one time the pros had to break from a box drawn around the center of the headstring.

### 9-Ball Break Tip #2

Another fairly predictable shot that professional players employ in their 9-Ball break shot is attempting to make the head ball (one ball) in the side pocket. At least they could send it in that direction. This shot requires the cue ball to be placed on the headstring, about halfway between the center of the table and a side cushion. Again, a full hit on the one ball is needed. This is a fun break to spend some time experimenting with.

### 9-BALL BREAK TIP #3

Many professional players look for the "sweet spot", a place on the line (headstring) for the cue ball that seems to consistently produce good results on a particular table. Some even make note of the place their opponents are breaking and having success from and then try to break from the same spot. As you can imagine, a "sweet spot" for one player might not work for another because of the differences in their execution (speed of hit, amount of follow through, contact angle on the cue ball, etc.).

### 9-BALL BREAK TIP #4

A few pro players have noticed that a softer 9-Ball break seems to produce results that are as good as a high speed break, but also allows the shooter to control the cue ball better (scratching far less often). A bonus is that even the one ball seems to have a better chance of rebounding from the pack into the side pocket. Give that softer 9-Ball break a chance in your next practice session and see if it works for you.

### 9-BALL BREAK TIP #5

One of the basics that apply to all 9-Ball break shots is that the one ball has to be hit full in the face, no matter what angle you use on the approach. If you shoot from anywhere but center table, the sight of the rack can make you subtly shift your aim without you even knowing it. Picture the one ball as the only ball on the table and aim to hit it as a straight-in shot.

### 9-BALL BREAK TIP #6

Another basic that applies to almost all 9-ball break shots is a center ball hit. Until you have experimented and determined that you need a slight bit of draw or follow on the break shot, concentrate on hitting the cue ball in the dead center.

Watch where the cue ball goes after it strikes the one ball and you may be surprised to see that you've put draw or follow on it without meaning to. Using a faster and more powerful stroke than normal is most likely the cause since it can throw you off a bit. A stronger bridge in this instance will help combat any mis-hits on the cue ball.

### **9-BALL BREAK TIP #7**

Balance becomes very important on the break shot. You don't want your stroke to waver because your body is having to flex other muscles to keep you upright. Pro player Ewa Laurance let P&B's readers in on a secret in her article on 9-Ball Breaks back in the P&B March of 2004 issue.

She said, "It's the old Luther Lassiter (legendary Hall of Fame player) trick of getting into place for a power break, then 'scootin' forward an inch or two before starting your warm up strokes. It moves your center forward and adds power." As in all other parts of the game, get the basics down, practice, and go for it.

### **BREAK SPEED**

Many players have trouble with the power breaks used in 9-Ball and 8-Ball.

A powerful break comes from the speed of the stroke. A primary reason for not being able to develop the needed speed is the dropping of the elbow as the player strokes through the shot. Dropping the elbow cuts down on the speed of the cue.

Dropping the elbow also results in the cue tip striking the cue ball above center when you want a center ball (stop shot) or even a little below center (draw) hit on the break shot.

### **TENDENCIES OF THE SIDE BREAK**

Did you ever wonder why so many pro players position the cue ball near one side of the table when breaking in 9-Ball?

All top players look for the sweet spot to break from because the player having the most success breaking is usually the one that will have the most success in the tournament. And, knowing the tendencies of how the balls will react from a side break is a good starting point.

### **RESULTS OF THE SIDE BREAK**

1) Corner balls tend to fly toward the corner pockets. In a 9-Ball rack the corners are the third balls on either side.

2) The head ball (one ball) tends to be forced toward the side pocket and falls in quite often.

3) After being forced toward the side, the one ball has a tendency to rebound back toward a corner pocket and becomes easy pickings to start the run.

### **BREAK STANCE**

A helpful tip to break stronger in 9-Ball or 8-Ball is to stand in a way that allows your body to rock back and forth. In essence, you will be putting your body behind the shot and moving forward as you contact the cue ball. Many players find it helpful to bend the front knee to accomplish this.

You may also want to stand a little to the side of the cue so your body does not inhibit the complete follow through of the stroke needed for the power break shot.

Experiment quite a bit with your break stance because in power break games, especially 9-Ball, the break is very important.

