*Supporting narrated video (NV) demonstrations, high-speed video (HSV) clips, technical proofs (TP), and all of my past articles can be accessed and viewed online at **billiards.colostate.edu**. The reference numbers used in the articles help you locate the resources on the website.*

This is the sixth article in a series dealing with the *"Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB),"* a five-disc instructional-DVD set I recently created with fellow *Billiards Digest* columnist Bob Jewett. VEEB teaches all of the skills, knowledge and strategy one needs to excel at 8-ball. Topics include offensive and defensive strategy, position play, shot types, safety play, advanced shots, and run-out planning. An outline of the entire VEEB series along with video excerpts from each DVD can be viewed online at: ***dr-dave-billiards.com/8-ball***.

This month, we look at some offensive and defensive options you have when faced with straight-in shots. **Diagram 1** shows an 8-ball situation, shooting stripes, where you are facing a straight-in shot on the 14 and a small position window for the 12. And to get good position on the 8, you would need to end up fairly straight on the 12 to be able to draw straight back to the long side of the 8. One option here (not shown in the diagram) is to pocket the 14 and roll forward with the cue ball (CB) to leave a long shot on the 12, but it would be very difficult to reliably execute a draw shot at this distance and with the CB so close to the end rail. Another, more aggressive option is to draw back with sidespin to get the CB closer to the 14 (see the blue CB path in the diagram). This is a tough shot to control with CB accuracy. If you come up a little short, you would need to go rail first to pocket the 12 and get position on the 8. And if you go too far with the wrong angle, it is possible to scratch in the side. In other words, this difficult and risky option is probably not a good choice.
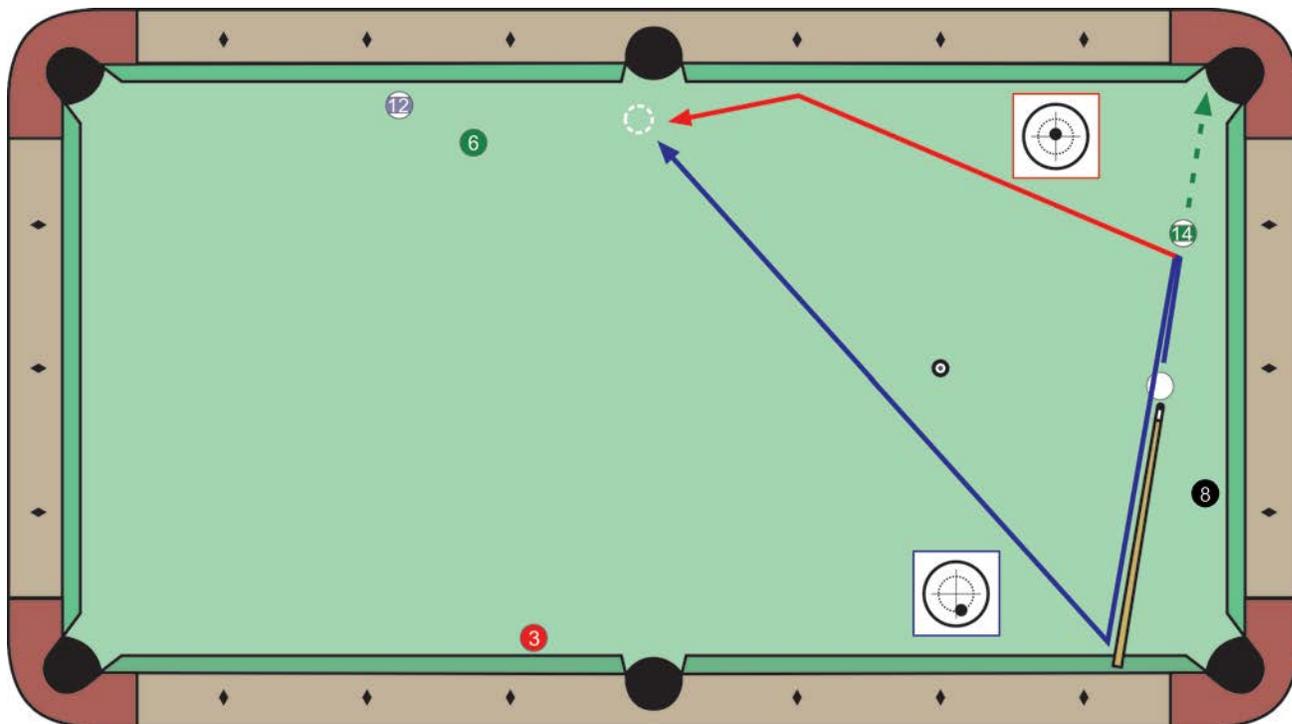

Diagram 1 Straight-in-shot offensive options

Another offensive option is to cheat the pocket slightly and stun forward with fast speed, as shown with the red CB path in **Diagram 1**. This doesn't involve a risk of scratching, as with the previous shot, but it can be risky cheating the pocket at fast speed because the ball can easily rattle out, especially on a table with tight pockets. Also, as with the previous shot, if you leave an angle on the 12, you might not be able to draw straight back and avoid the 6; although, you might be able to use soft draw and sidespin to attempt to hug the rail and leave a

longer shot on the 8. If there is too much angle on the 12 to avoid the 6, another option is to follow forward and go off 2 or 3 rails to the short side of the 8. However, none of these options are ideal.

In situations like this, where the offensive options are difficult, sometimes a safety is a better play. **Diagram 2** shows two defensive options. One option is to bump the 14 close to the pocket and leave your opponent with the CB at position C-1 facing a long, tough shot on the 3 (see the blue CB path). One risk with this shot is if you don't block the pocket with the 14, your opponent has fairly natural shape on the short side of the 6 if he or she pockets the 3, so you could lose this game with a poor hit. Therefore, this safety isn't as effective as we might like.

The best option here is to feather the 14 and leave the CB in position C-2 behind the 14 (see the red CB path in Diagram 2). This shot is fairly easy to execute and will leave you a heavy favorite to win the game, with the opponent not having a good chance to even hit the 3 or 6. That's what safety play is all about.
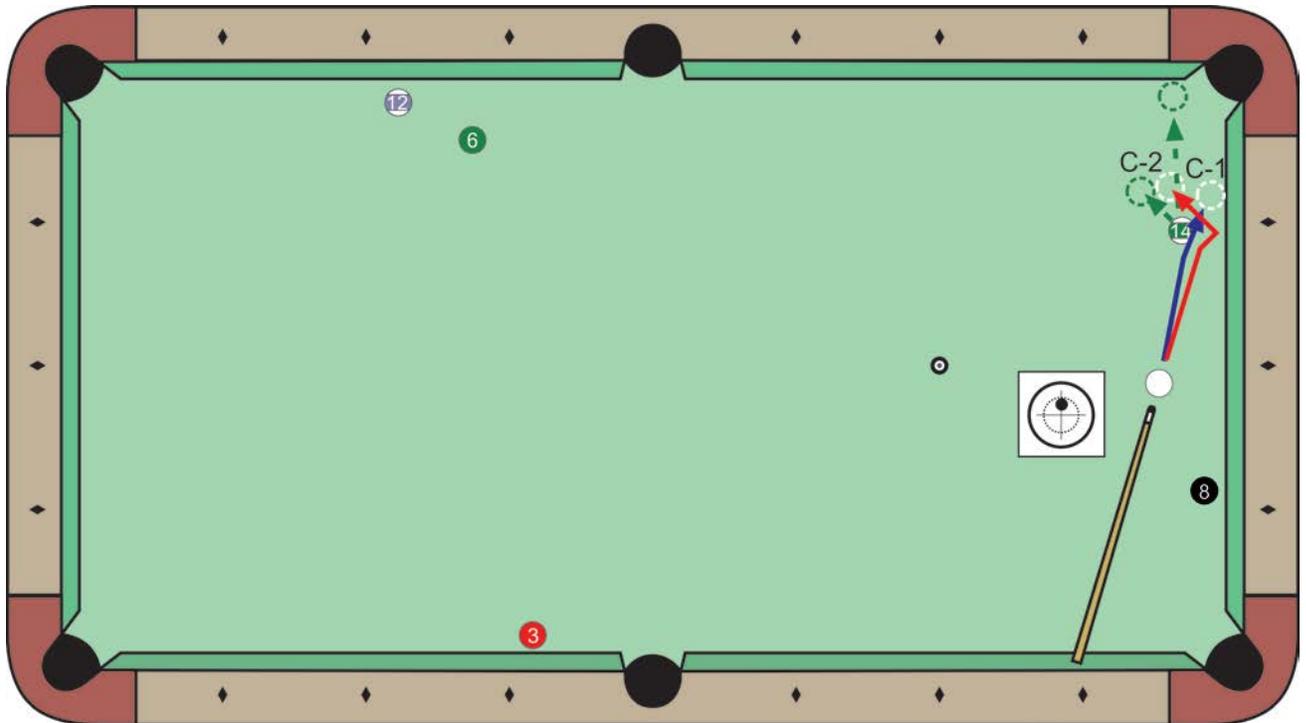

Diagram 2 Straight-in-shot defensive options

Demonstrations of all of the shots in this article can be viewed in online video **NV G.7**, and the VEEB-III DVD includes many more game-situation examples dealing with defensive safeties, offensive safeties, safety replies, and ball-in-hand options. As always, you should check out the videos and try the shots yourself the next time you're at a table. Reading is good, and watching is better, but trying is best.

I hope you enjoy my series of articles dealing with the "Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB)." If you want to view video excerpts from the entire DVD set, check out online videos **NV G.1** through **NV G.11**. Enjoy!

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave

NV G.1 – Video Encyclopedia of Eight Ball (VEEB) Overview
NV G.2 – How to Deal With Pocket Blockers in 8-ball, from Disc I of VEEB
NV G.3 – How to Select Key Balls in 8-ball, from Disc I of VEEB
NV G.4 – How to Use Cue Ball Drag to Enhance Sidespin in 8-ball, from Disc II of VEEB
NV G.5 – How to Use Spin-Induced Throw to Hold the Cue Ball in 8-ball, from Disc II of VEEB
NV G.6 – How to Come Into the Line of Blockers When Playing Safeties, from Disc III of VEEB
NV G.7 – Various Straight-In Shot Options in 8-ball, from Disc III of VEEB
NV G.8 – How to Deal with an End-Game Ball Tied Up with the 8-ball, from Disc IV of VEEB
NV G.9 – 2nd-Ball 8-ball Break, from Disc IV of VEEB
NV G.10 – Rack 8 Run-Out Example from Disc V of VEEB
NV G.11 – Rack 9 Run-Out Example from Disc V of VEEB

normal video

PS:

- I am happy to announce that my entire collection of instructional DVDs (23 total to date) is now available for streaming via YouTube. For more info, see: dr-dave-billiards.com/stream.html.

- I know other authors and I tend to use lots of terminology, and I know not all readers are totally familiar with these terms. If you ever come across a word or phrase you don't fully understand, please refer to the online glossary at *billiards.colostate.edu*.

Dr. Dave is author of "The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards" book and DVD, and co-author of the Video Encyclopedias of "Pool Shots (VEPS)," "Pool Practice (VEPP)," and "Eight Ball (VEEB)," and the "How to Aim Pool Shots (HAPS)" and "Billiard University (BU)" instructional DVD series, all available at: dr-dave-billiards.com.