
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 first article in a series dealing with the “Video Encyclopedia of Nine-ball and Ten-ball (VENT),” a five-disc instructional-DVD set I recently created with fellow Billiards Digest columnist Bob Jewett. VENT teaches all of the skills, knowledge and strategy one needs to excel at 9-ball and 10-ball. Topics include break shot strategy and effects, game planning, position play and english, safety play, and advanced principles, shots, and strategies. An outline of the entire VENT series along with video excerpts from each DVD can be viewed online at: DrDaveBilliards.com/vent.

The topic for this month, soft breaking and pattern racking, is from the first Disc of VENT (VENT-I). These techniques have been used by Corey Deuel and others to gain a big advantage in some tournaments. Pattern racking refers to purposefully racking the balls in strategic positions to take advantage of where those balls typically head. For more information and video demonstrations related to pattern racking and its effects, see the “[pattern racking](#)” resource page under “break” in the FAQ section at billiards.colostate.edu. I should be clear that pattern racking is illegal and unethical unless tournament rules specifically allow it. The World Pool-Billiard Association (WPA) World Standardized Rules (WSR) specifically prohibits pattern racking.

Diagram 1 shows a soft-break pattern-racking trick that is particularly effective. I first saw it used by Corey Deuel in the 2016 Cue Sports International (CSI) 9-ball Challenge. Videos and images demonstrating this break and its sinister effectiveness can be found on the pattern-racking resource page. The 2 and 3 are placed behind the 1. It doesn’t really matter where the other balls are placed. Using a soft, square hit with slight draw from the 3-ball side of the table, the CB bounces straight back a little and the 1 positions itself right in front of the side pocket with a good follow-on shot on the 2 to get easy shape on the 3. The 3 moves very little with a soft break from the side and usually sits nearly perfect for an easy 3-9 combination for the early win.

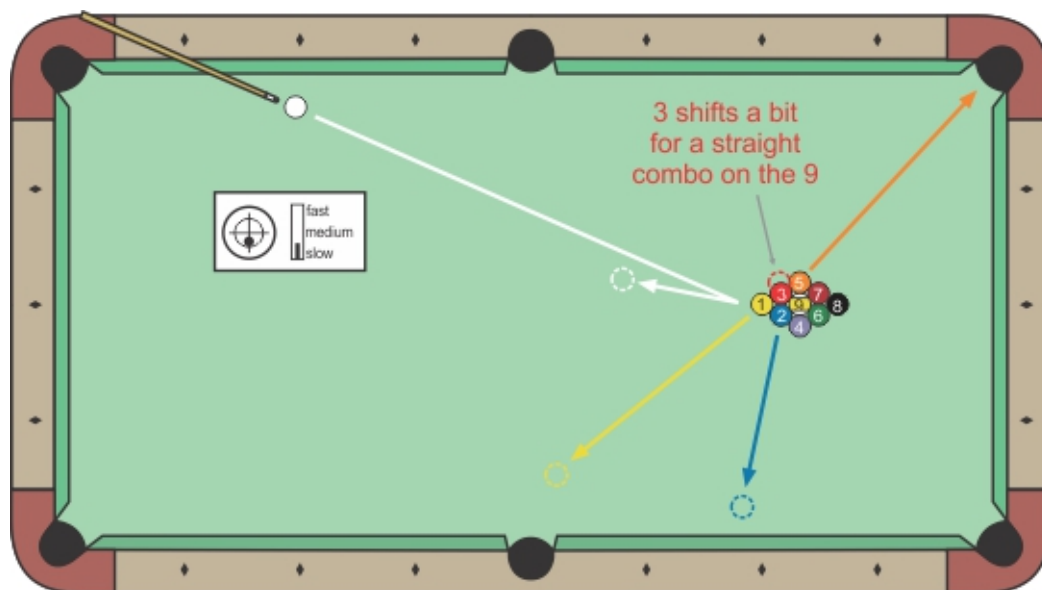


Diagram 1 Corey’s soft-break pattern-racking cheat

As shown on the VENT-I DVD, with a good rack, it is very easy to pocket the wing ball (the 5 in Diagram 1) with a break from the side rail at any speed, even very soft. During VENT filming with Bob, I don’t recall missing the wing ball once during all of our side breaks, except when we purposely added gaps in different

you might be saying: “You won’t be able to execute that soft break well every time.” That might be true, but Bob and I were able to do it fairly consistently after some practice. On VENT-I, we demonstrate many successful attempts (with circus music playing in the background) to show that it is not as difficult as you might think. You can view these breaks in online video [NV I.2](#). Now, one can still use the soft break, even without pattern racking, if the 3-point rule is not being used. Even if a different ball is in the 3-ball position, the game can still be shortened with an easy combo on the 9 once you clear the lower-numbered balls.

Again, it is illegal and unethical to use pattern racking, even if your opponent and/or referee are not noticing what you are doing. Hopefully, this article, my resource page, the YouTube videos, and VENT will help make people more aware of this sort of thing so unethical players cannot use the pattern-racking trick on unsuspecting opponents.

I hope you enjoy my series of articles dealing with the “Video Encyclopedia of Nine-ball and Ten-ball (VENT).” If you want to view video excerpts from the entire DVD set, check out online videos [NV I.1](#) through [NV I.11](#). Enjoy!

Good luck with your game,
Dr. Dave



- [NV I.1](#) – Video Encyclopedia of Nine-ball and Ten-ball (VENT) Instructional DVD Trailer
- [NV I.2](#) – 9-ball Side Soft Break, and Corey Deuel Pattern Racking, an excerpt from VENT-I
- [NV I.3](#) – How to Train a Pool Table for Accurate and Consistent Ball Racking, an excerpt from VENT-I
- [NV I.4](#) – How to be Creative and Consider Various Options in 9-ball and 10-ball, an excerpt from VENT-II
- [NV I.5](#) – Defensive Strategy in 9-ball and 10-ball, an excerpt from VENT-II
- [NV I.6](#) – Common Two-Rail Position Plays in 9-ball and 10-ball, an excerpt from VENT-III
- [NV I.7](#) – Common End-Game Patterns in 9-ball and 10-ball, an excerpt from VENT-III
- [NV I.8](#) – 9-ball/10-ball Object Ball Hide Safety Examples, an excerpt from VENT-IV
- [NV I.9](#) – 9-ball/10-ball Ball-In-Hand Shot Option Examples, an excerpt from VENT-IV
- [NV I.10](#) – 9-ball/10-ball Rail Cut Shot Principles and Examples, an excerpt from VENT-V
- [NV I.11](#) – 9-ball/10-ball Advanced Herd and Cushion-Compression Shots, an excerpt from VENT-V

PS:

- 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 a PBI Advanced Instructor and author of the book: [The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards](#) and the instructional DVD series: [Video Encyclopedias of Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#), [Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#), [Eight Ball \(VEEB\)](#), and [Nine-ball and Ten-ball \(VENT\)](#), [How to Aim Pool Shots \(HAPS\)](#) and [Billiard University \(BU\)](#), all available at: DrDaveBilliards.com.