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

This is the seventh 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 racking and breaking 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 are available online at DrDaveBilliards.com/vent.

The topic for this month is safety play, featuring shots demonstrated in online video [NV I.8](#) (an excerpt from Disc IV of VENT). The focus is on object ball (OB) hide safeties common in the games of 9-ball or 10-ball. **Diagram 1** shows the first example where there is no easy shot at the 5 or an easy run-out, but the 6, 8, and 9 provide a large “wall” of blockers. A good plan is to bank the 5 behind the blockers for a safety. Generally, it is desirable to get the 5 close to the blockers to prevent a one-rail kick escape by our opponent. However, position “A” would be a bad place to leave the 5 because there is enough room between the 6 and 8 for our opponent to get a direct hit. A safer play that avoids this possibility is to leave the 5 well behind the blockers in position “B.” However, as illustrated in **Diagram 2**, leaving the OB about a ball off a cushion is about the worst place to leave an OB when playing safe. The effective size of the ball is huge since a wide range of cue ball (CB) directions and angles will result in a hit. The two paths shown in Diagram 2, and any path in between, will give our opponent an easy kick at the “big ball.”

Position “C” in Diagram 1 is a much better target for the safety shot. There is a fairly large area behind the 8 and 9 that will hide the 5. And by getting the 5 close to the 9, our opponent would be forced to shoot a two-rail kick requiring much more precision than the kick in Diagram 2. All of the shots illustrated here are demonstrated in online video [NV I.8](#). Try them out the next time you practice.

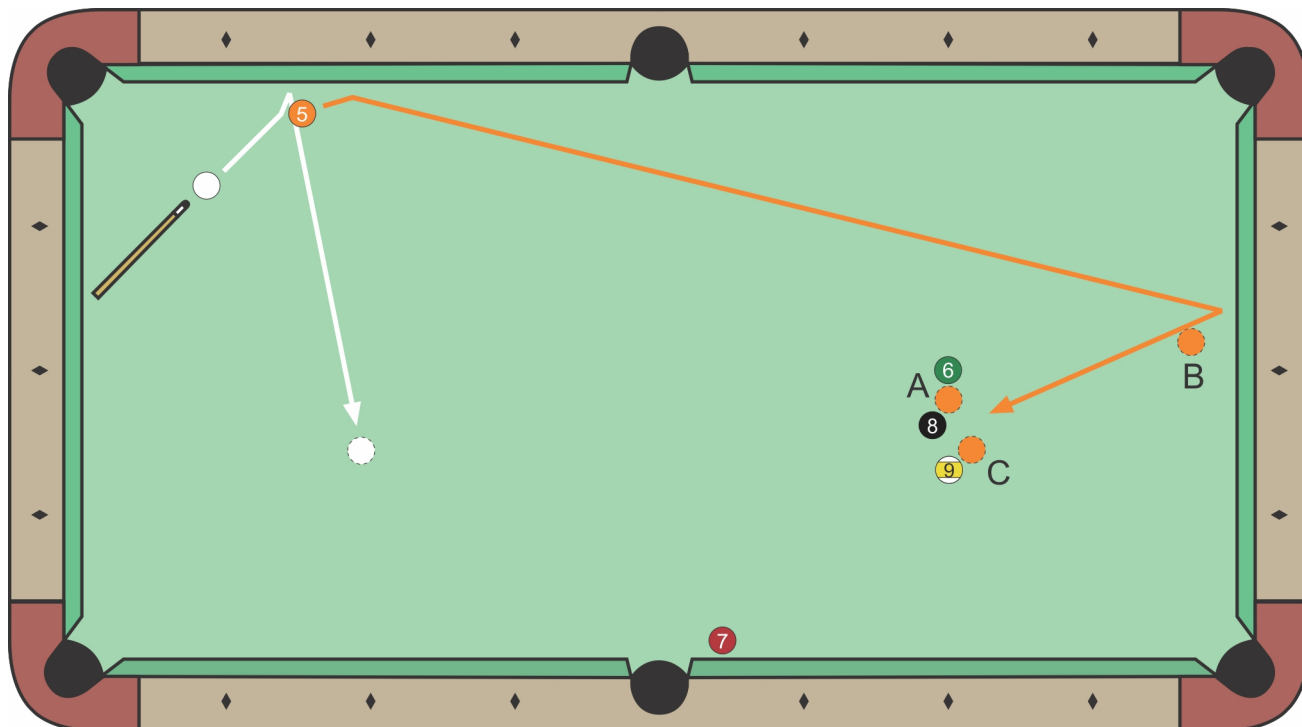


Diagram 1 First safety example

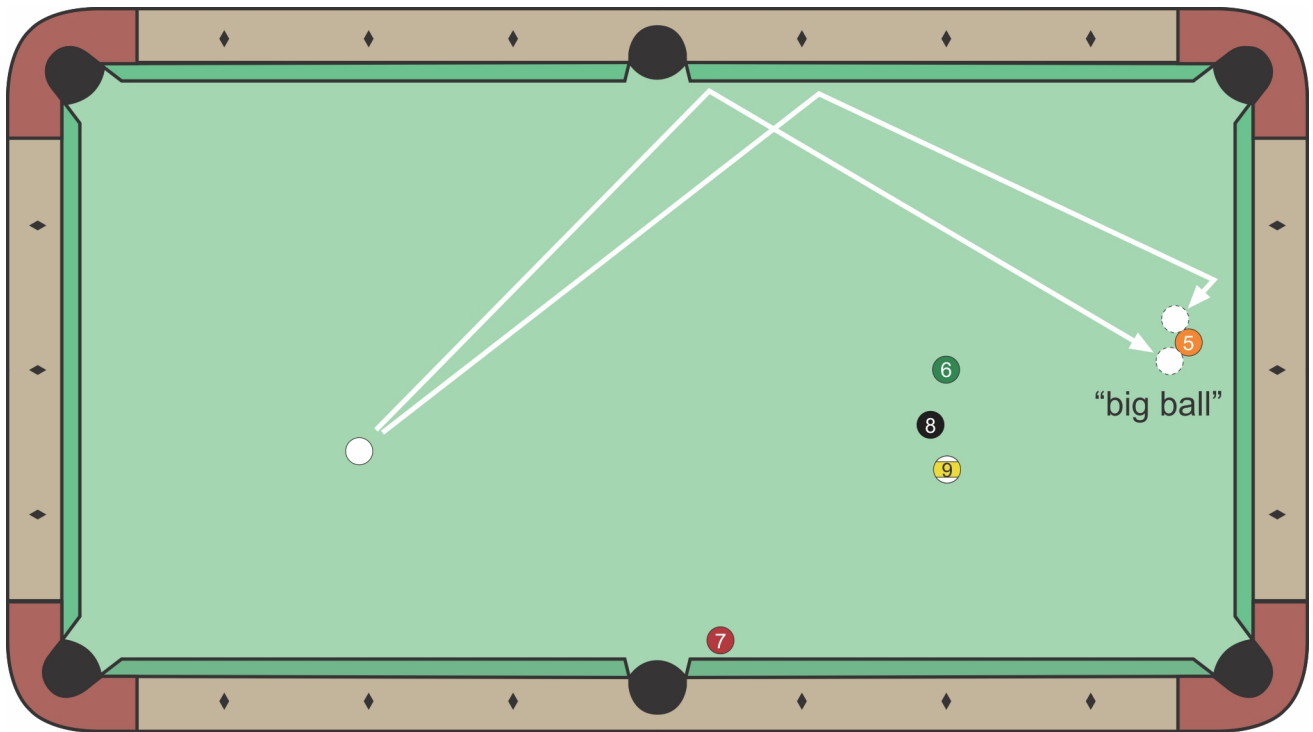


Diagram 2 “Big ball” effect

Diagram 3 shows another example where the shot on the 5 is difficult and you might choose to play safe instead of attempting the risky shot. One option is to bank the 5 one rail into position “A” with the CB ending in position “1.” This could work, but there is a fairly small margin for error and we could leave a direct look or easy one-rail kick at the 5 if either the CB or 5-ball position is off slightly. This is because the 6-8-7 blockers are in line with the CB and 5-ball, making the effective size of the blockers small. A much better approach is to stop the CB in place and bank the 5 off two rails into positions “B,” “C,” or “D.” It is easier to predict the final position of the CB, and this OB path comes into the widest direction of the blockers with a large margin for error with speed. Coming up short of position “B” or long of position “D” still produces a good result.

In Diagram 3, if the angle off the rail is off a little, the 5 could end up in position “E.” Not only does this create a “big ball” as described above, it also opens up the opportunity for a kick-and-stick safety as shown in **Diagram 4**. Your opponent just needs to roll the CB with left sidespin to get a square hit and stop on the 5. A ball rolling nearly straight into a cushion comes off the cushion with stun. This results in a hide behind the heart of the blockers, a large distance to the OB, and the 5 out in the open, away from the rails, where it is a smaller target. This is a good example of how important it is to carefully plan your safety, anticipating what your opponent might do in response, and then strive to leave your opponent as bad as possible.

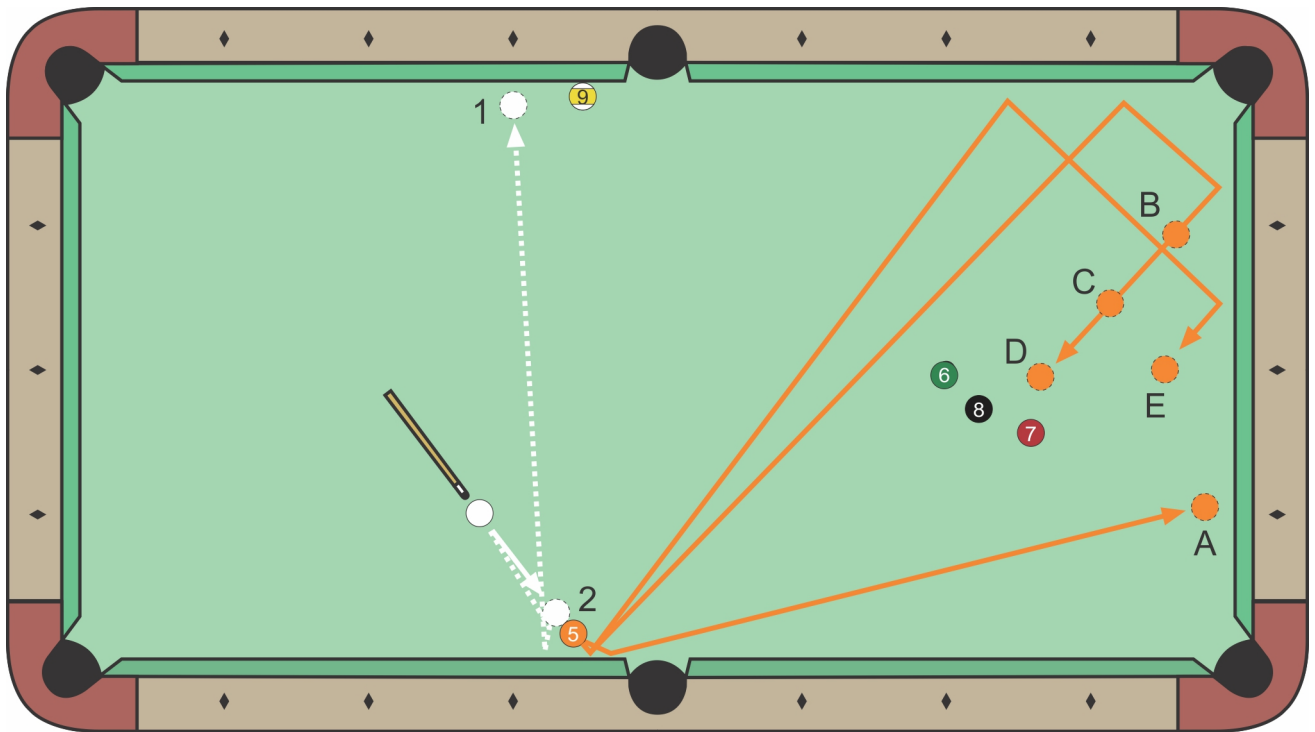


Diagram 3 Second safety example

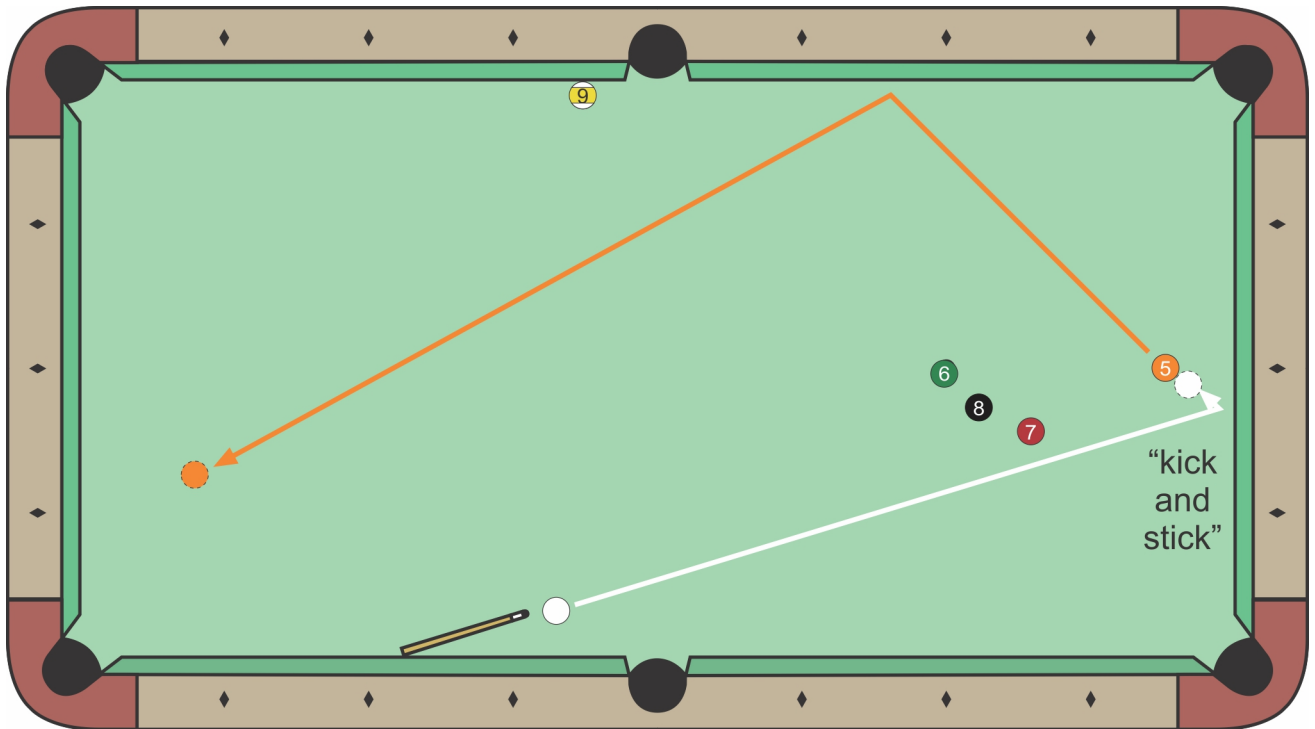


Diagram 4 "Kick and stick" safety reply

Be sure to dedicate practice time to common safety plays and replies like the ones in this article and on VENT-IV ("Safety Play"), which includes many examples in a wide range of categories including: CB hide safeties, OB hide safeties, other defensive safeties, offensive safeties, end-game safeties, ball-in-hand strategy, and safety replies. Solid safety and defensive play is what really separates the great players from good players.

I hope you are enjoying 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 do not fully understand, please refer to the [online glossary](#) at billiards.colostate.edu.

Dr. Dave is a PBI Advanced Instructor, Dean of the Billiard University, and author of the book: [The Illustrated Principles of Pool and Billiards](#) and numerous instructional DVD series, all available at: DrDaveBilliards.com.