*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**. Reference numbers used in the articles help you locate the resources on the website.*

This is the eighth 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**.

Last month, we looked at examples of creative and effective safety play, the goal of which is to force your opponent to foul, giving you ball in hand. The topic for this month is how to be creative and effective with ball in hand, featuring shots demonstrated in online video **NV I.9** (an excerpt from Disc IV of VENT).

Diagram 1 shows an example ball-in-hand safety where there is an opportunity for early win by setting up the 9 ball. A run-out is difficult due to the need to break out the 5-7 cluster and get position on the 4. As shown in the diagram, a good alternative is to send the 3 down table for a future combination on the 9 while locking up the cue ball (CB) behind the cluster. The goal is to leave the 3 in position "A," offering a straight combo shot on the 9. In the video, the CB went a little long to position "B;" but with the CB locked up behind the 5 the shot is still an excellent safety since our opponent is very unlikely to get a hit on the 3. With ball in hand, there is an option to play either a combo or a carom on the 9. A natural-angle carom is available, but the combo is a better option since the CB can be placed close to the 3, lined up perfectly in the desired direction, making it is easy to get an accurate hit on the 9.
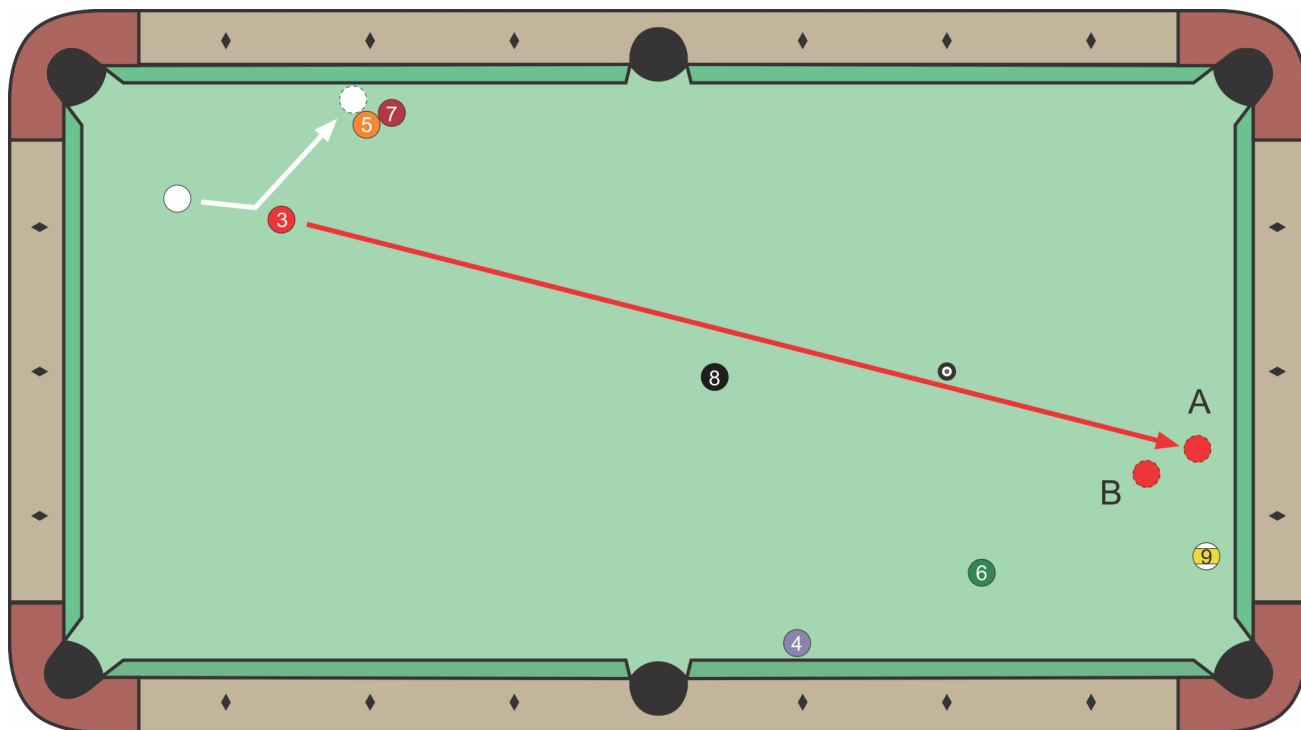

Diagram 1 Ball-in-hand safety for an early win

Diagram 2 shows a layout where ball in hand can be used to attempt to force our opponent into three consecutive fouls for a win. This example was inspired by the famous shot sequence from a 2006 match between Luong Dung and Vilmos Foldes (available online at: youtu.be/Ja9y8Lv_A1s). In online video **NV I.9**, I fouled on the previous shot, giving Bob ball in hand, so I am currently on one foul. Bob does not have a reasonable chance to run out or play an effective safety, so he decides to use an intentional foul, hitting the 7 to tie up the 2. With the 7, 8, and 3 totally surrounding the 2, I have no reasonable chance to get a legal hit, even with ball in hand, unless I can hit a precision jump into the 2. Therefore, Bob will have me on two consecutive fouls, with ball in hand again. I need to make sure Bob can't easily surround the 2 again for my third consecutive foul; so with ball in hand, I decide to break up the cluster while still leaving the 2 and 3 tied up. The resulting ball layout is shown in **Diagram 3**.
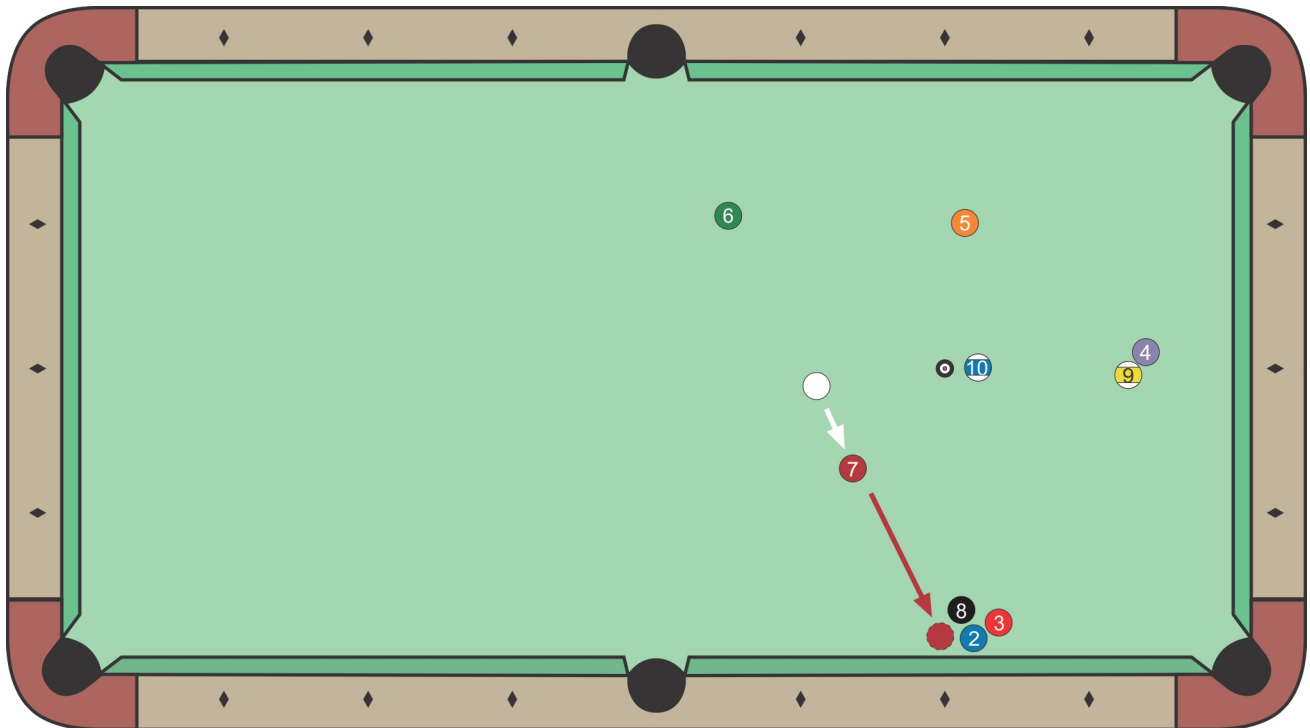

Diagram 2 Ball-in-hand 3-consecutive-foul strategy – layout 1

Since I was on two fouls, Bob decided to play safe again to attempt to get me on a 3rd foul, which would give him the win. As shown in **Diagram 3**, Bob placed the CB very close to the 2 and used a thin hit to send the CB behind the 4-9 cluster, not moving the 2 or 3 very much. Bob was shooting for CB position "A," but ended up a little short in position "B." At this point, before I attempt the shot that could result in a 3rd foul, Bob must inform me that I am on two fouls. ("Dave, you're on two fouls.") Unfortunately for him, he left me a look at the edge of the 2. If Bob had sent the CB a bit farther, I probably would not have been able to get a hit on the 2 and I would have lost the game. From CB position "B," I attempted to thin the 2 for a return safety, as shown by the dashed CB path. I was attempting to leave the CB in position "C," but it went a little long to position "D." I didn't get the hide, but at least I averted the 3rd consecutive-foul loss. Unfortunately for me, from CB position "D," Bob was able to play an even better safety on me by thinning the 2 with a rail-first hit, hiding the CB behind the 4-9 cluster, as shown in **Diagram 4**.
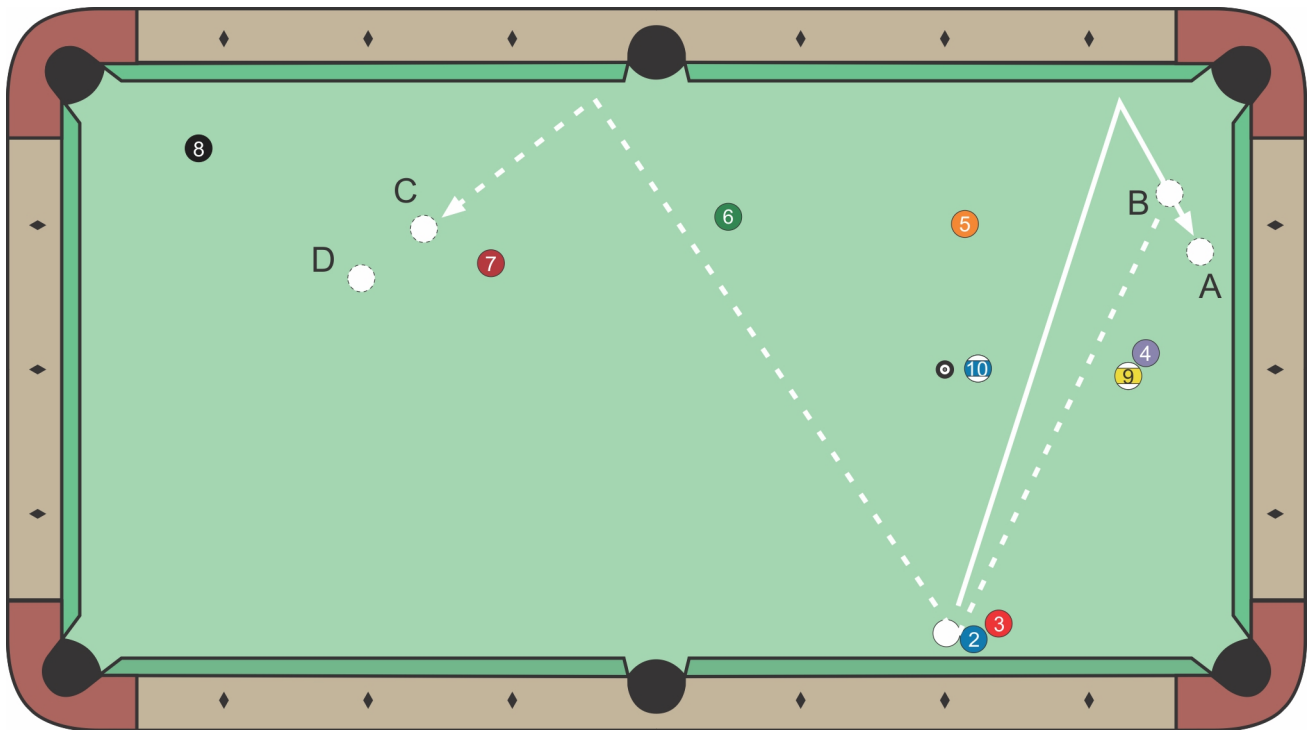
Diagram 3 Ball-in-hand 3-consecutive-foul strategy – layout 2

With the ball layout in **Diagram 4**, I might have been able to get a hit on the 2 with a long kick shot off the head rail, but I decided to use an intentional foul instead to send the 3 up table to make it more difficult for Bob to run out the balls. My shot plan was to kick at the 3, as shown in the diagram. I just needed to make sure I did not break out the 4-9 cluster. Bob will have ball in hand since I hit the 3 first, but the run-out is not trivial from the final ball layout in the diagram. Bob would need to break out the 4-9 cluster, get a shot at the 3, and then get a shot at the 4, wherever it might end up after the break-out shot. This would certainly not be automatic. Sometimes, intentional fouls like the ones used in this example can provide creative solutions to difficult situations.
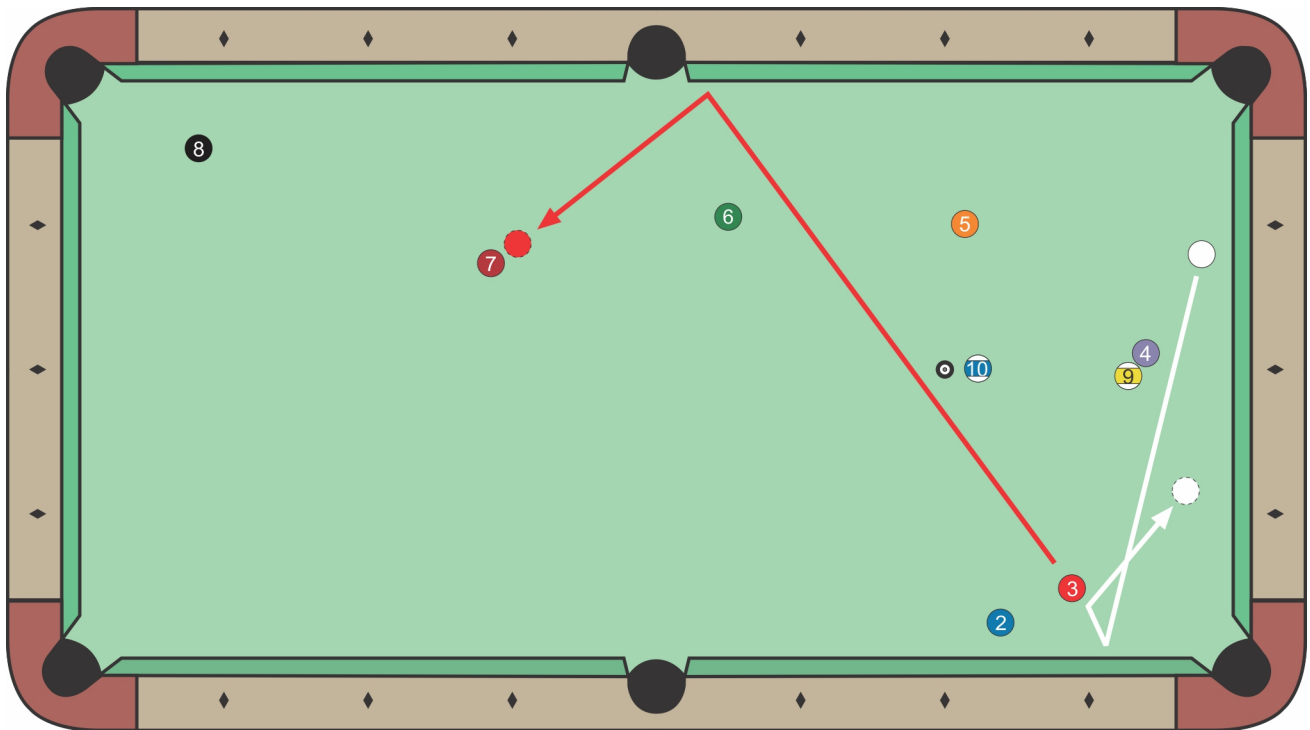
Diagram 4 Ball-in-hand 3-consecutive-foul strategy – layout 3

All of the shots illustrated in this article are demonstrated in online video **NV I.9**. Try them out the next time you practice. Reading is good, but doing is better. Be sure to dedicate practice time to safety and ball-in-hand strategy and execution. VENT-IV ("Safety Play") 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 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

normal video

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 PBIA 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.